



# Access to Excellence

WADHAM COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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## Impact Report

JUNE 2019

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*This report is produced in collaboration with The Bridge Group to provide an overview of Wadham College's access activities and a summary of outcomes during 2017/2018.*

# Epigraph

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*“It was an amazing opportunity...It’s made a huge positive difference to my confidence and encouraged me to apply to Oxbridge and Russell Group universities in the future. We also learnt about ‘super-curricular’ activities that I can do in my spare time to further my knowledge of these subjects that I am passionate about.”*

Year 10 pupil

*“While many Oxford colleges struggle to admit a diverse range of undergraduates, Wadham College stands out as showing what can be done when a college’s leadership and governing body are committed to the cause of widening access.”*

Richard Adams, Education Editor, Guardian

*“I came at an Aspiration Day and was taken around by someone like me, someone from a state school in a disadvantaged area, and it changed my view of Oxford and made me want to apply and I did, and I ended up at Wadham.”*

Dan Gunn (PPE, 2017)

*“Wadham is the living proof that fair access to higher education is not a matter of lowering standards: largely thanks to the exceptionally diverse social and ethnic mix of our undergraduate body, we continue to be one of the academically strongest of all the Oxford colleges.”*

Peter Thoneman, Fellow and Tutor for Access

*“Growing up on a farm in rural Devon, I didn’t know anybody other than my teachers who had been to university. I could not have come to Wadham without the grants I received, and considering recent changes, I think it is more important than ever that Wadham is able to ensure that students are able to come here no matter their financial background.”*

Alumna, Rebecca Rose (Law, 2014)

*“The commitment of our alumni and friends to supporting Wadham’s outreach work has made a genuine difference to thousands of students in our regional schools. Thanks to donor generosity, the College has been able to scale up its work and offer sustained support to more students from disadvantaged backgrounds.”*

Julie Hage, Fellow and Development Director, Wadham College



## Foreword from the Warden

This year, the College has reaffirmed and built on its position as a national leader in advancing fair access. Wadham's commitment in this area has never been more important - my colleagues and I are delighted to share our third annual impact report.

The progress that we have made in recent years is testament to the College's sustained commitment to access, and the critical role that support from our alumni and friends has played in this. In the last three years, we have increased significantly the volume and impact of our outreach activity. More students are progressing from our outreach programmes to Oxford and other highly competitive universities, and next year we will unveil the University's first dedicated access space.

The impact of our work is successfully extending well beyond the College. Wadham's access team are part of the community in many of our target schools, including through the pioneering project in Luton that has been acclaimed by government ministers and policy-makers. Our commitment to evaluating the impact of our access programme means that we can share evidence to support best practice, and we continue to create and contribute to public debates about how universities can most effectively advance access.

The activity captured here also provides an opportunity to reflect on why it is such a fundamental part of College life. Combatting deep-rooted inequalities in our education system will deliver positive societal and economic outcomes: a more meritocratic society where hard work and talent are the main determiners of success.

At Wadham, we also know there are academic benefits associated with learning in more diverse environments.

We are part of a college community with one of the most diverse student bodies in Oxford (on average over the last three years, 69% of our students have been admitted from state schools, compared to around 60% across the University), but also one of the highest ranking in the Norrington table (10th in 2017/18). Access and academic excellence are not dichotomous; rather, they are mutually dependent and reinforcing.

With the support of our alumni, Fellows and students, our Access to Excellence programme is bringing brilliant young people from all communities and backgrounds to live and study here - and their achievements mock the claim that broadening access to our elite institutions means lowering standards.

We are making good progress, but there is much more to do.

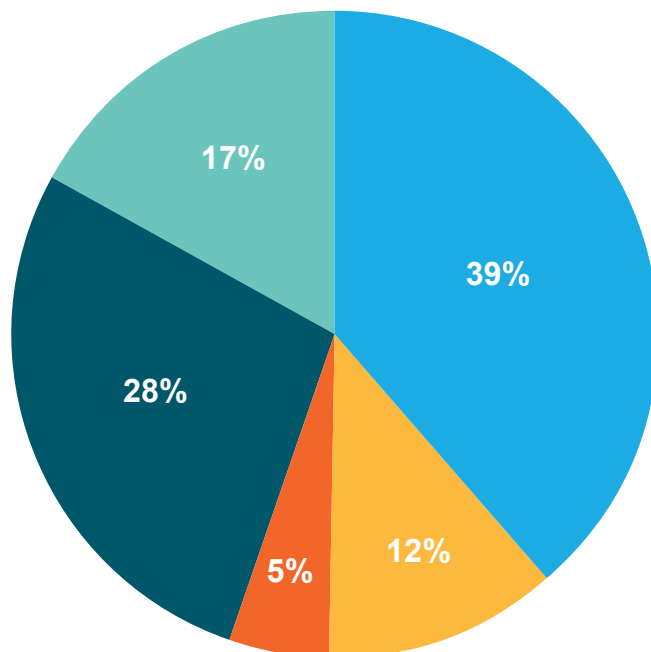
We invite you to join us on this journey.

**Lord Macdonald of River Glaven Kt QC**  
**Warden of Wadham College**

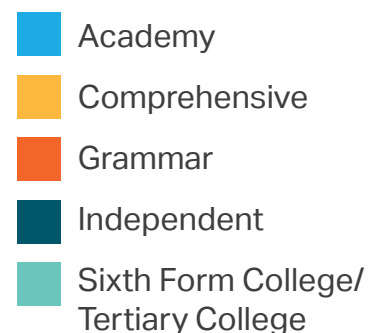


# Key Data Points

- **Increasing numbers of students from our outreach programmes applying to, and securing places at, Oxford. For example:**
  - o amongst our 2018 biology and classics summer school participants, there were nineteen applications and eight pupils received offers to the University (a 42% success rate compared to the wider average success rate of 20%)
  - o Nine students who took part in the Newham/Tower Hamlets based Humanities program 'Wad-HAM' made applications to Oxford of which 3 received offers
- Considering data from one of our key partner organisations, IntoUniversity, 22% of participating school leavers gain a place at a Russell Group university, compared to 10% of those from similar backgrounds. In 2017/18 Wadham hosted 15 IntoUniversity visits with more than 450 students.
- **39 percentage point increase** in the number of students agreeing to the statement "I would fit in at the University of Oxford" after a visit to the College than before.
- **The Luton Project** worked with 50 Year 10 pupils from 10 state schools in Luton with over 90% of the pupils having at least two widening participation flags.
- **120 schools** engaged in this year alone – a 25% increase compared to last year
- **444 access events** in the last three years (15/16-17/18), at the College and delivered by the Wadham Access Team in our link regions
- **18,412 pupils** engaged with Wadham across those three years
- **83%** of Wadham's link state schools which offer academic qualifications (of which there are 203) have engaged with the College in that time



Wadham  
Undergraduate 2019  
Entry - School Types



# Policy Context

*“Our best universities lead the world in the quality of their research and teaching. Surely they should all want to lead the world in demonstrating that their doors are open to ensuring the most talented candidates can attend and succeed, whatever their background?”.*

Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive, Office for Students

The College is closely in touch with the latest developments in policy and research. This ensures our activity is responsive and progressive, and that we can use our evidence base to help inform change.

Deep-rooted inequalities are persistent and complex in the UK; unequal access to higher education is a critical part of this.

The latest data<sup>1</sup> shows that young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds had an entry rate to higher education of 19.7% last year, which is higher than ever before. However, despite this progress in absolute terms, the gaps in higher education participation remain large: those from the most advantaged backgrounds are still 2.4 times more likely to access higher education than their disadvantaged counterparts - and they are 5.7 times more likely to enter a more selective university.

The recently established Office for Students (OfS, the government body that regulates the higher education sector) has set out bold ambitions in relation to access. They have outlined national targets focused on eradicating the gaps in access, success and progression for underrepresented groups.

These reforms to how institutions are held accountable in relation to access are designed to encourage more strategic approaches, requiring providers to plan against a five-year timeframe. Encouragingly, the latest guidance reflects much of Wadham's focus in recent years, including: a focus on sustained programmes; collaboration between institutions and charitable organisations; and ensuring that evaluation is at the heart of all activity.

The new guidance also reiterates that school attainment is still the strongest predictor of whether a young person attends university. The socio-economic gap in UK school attainment is larger than the ethnicity gap, and the gender gap. However, attainment is not the whole picture: pupils

from lower socio-economic backgrounds who attain the grades required by the most competitive institutions are still seven percentage points less likely to secure a place, compared to their more affluent peers attaining the same grades.

The great majority of pupils who achieve three A-grades or better at A-Level are educated in state schools; but many of these pupils do not even consider applying to Oxbridge. This is due to a complex range of factors, including discouraging perceptions of Oxford and the application process. A recent survey found that more than four in ten (43%) state secondary school teachers say they would rarely or never advise their bright pupils to apply to Oxbridge.<sup>2</sup>

Getting into university is only part of the student journey. Unequal graduate outcomes by social background are receiving increased focus in debates and national assessments of higher education (for example, the Teaching Excellence Framework).<sup>3</sup> We are therefore actively introducing more support for students as they progress from Wadham and into the workplace.



Wadham hosted in London its annual social mobility summit in 2018 at PwC UK. Melvyn Bragg (History, 1958) chaired a lively discussion; Dr Louise Ashley (Royal Holloway) spoke alongside Warren East CBE, Chief Executive Officer, Rolls-Royce (Engineering, 1980); Amanda Parker, Policy Specialist (English, 1987); and Laura Hinton, Chief People Officer, PwC UK.

<sup>1</sup> [www.officeforstudents.org.uk](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [www.suttontrust.com/newsarchive/over-four-in-ten-state-school-teachers-rarely-or-never-advise-bright-pupils-to-apply-to-oxbridge-new-sutton-trust-polling/](http://www.suttontrust.com/newsarchive/over-four-in-ten-state-school-teachers-rarely-or-never-advise-bright-pupils-to-apply-to-oxbridge-new-sutton-trust-polling/)

<sup>3</sup> [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/what-is-the-tef/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/what-is-the-tef/)

# Access and the University of Oxford

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There are almost 12,000 undergraduates at Oxford. Of the current UK intake, just over 60% went to state funded schools and that proportion has been rising. However, many groups are still deeply underrepresented at Oxford, even when considering only for those who achieve the high entry grades.

There are more than 60 staff who focus on access and outreach across the University. Oxford has a dedicated central Widening Access and Participation team, responsible for coordinating and delivering access and outreach work, collaborating closely with colleges and departments. Over 75% of all UK schools with a sixth form have contact with Oxford annually. Last year, the outreach team across the University reached 3,100 schools in the UK, and more than 2,000 teachers have attended the University's regional teachers' conferences since 2009.

The collegiate system at Oxford ensures that all regions and local authorities have a designated link college for access purposes.

Wadham's outreach work is planned, delivered and evaluated in close partnership with the University. The College assists with several programmes led by the central University (perhaps most notably the University's highly successful UNIQ summer schools), and supports colleagues from across the University by running events that relevant regional link colleges are not able to cover.

***“Wadham’s innovative pilot scheme in Luton is to be commended in supporting students from all backgrounds on their journey into higher education, helping to redress societal inequality. As a driver of social mobility Oxford is working hard to create systemic change in the university sector.”***

**University of Oxford Vice Chancellor,  
Professor Louise Richardson**



***“I enjoyed the day as it was an eye opener. I wasn’t sure about how I felt university would be but it gave me something to aspire to and work towards...”***

**Year 9 Attendee on an Aspiration Day**



# Access to Excellence

At Wadham, we take access seriously because we know the rewards are high. Getting it right means we can genuinely welcome the most talented students to the College, regardless of background.

Our approach is strategic, evidence-informed, and recognises the connected steps that students face on the journey to join our community, and beyond.

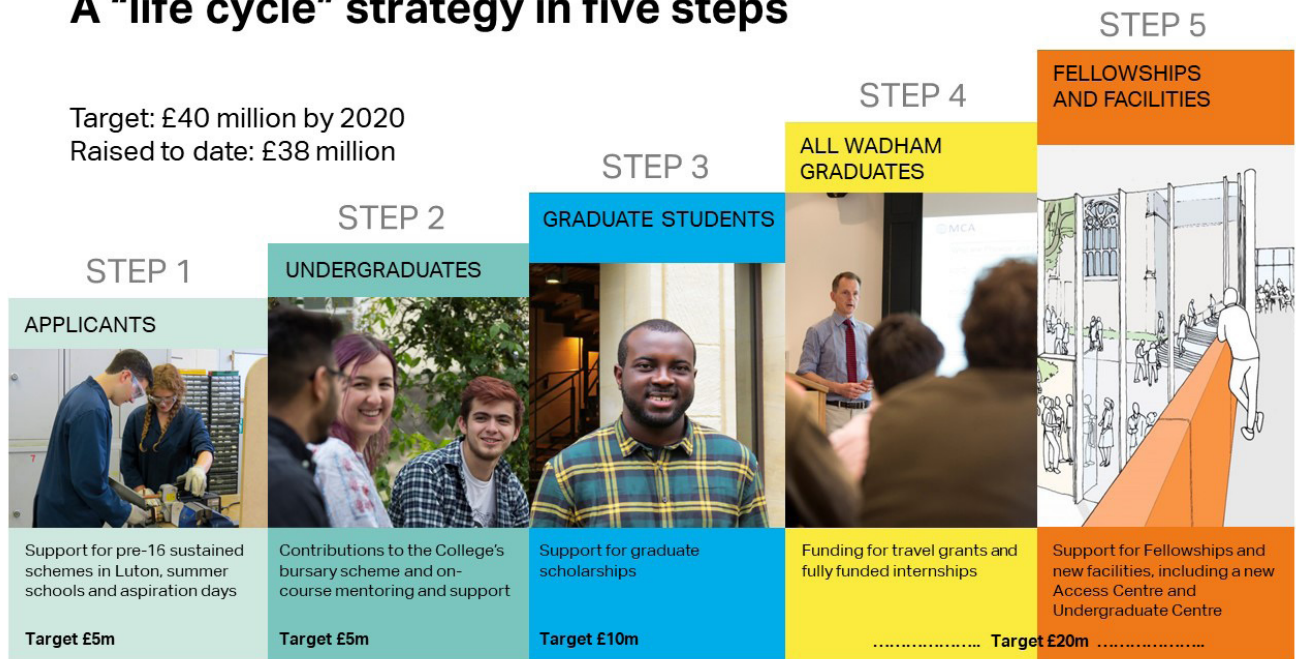
Wadham has long been known as an institution where fair access and academic excellence are mutually reinforcing – we have ambitious plans, built on these founding principles. The leadership of Warden Maurice Bowra (1938-1970) taught us much as the College pioneered equality before the term “access” was invented,

encouraging hundreds of talented students from state schools to sit the entrance exam. This approach paved the way for our strategy to reach out to talented applicants, wherever in the country they are; and the College has now developed one of the most impactful and best resourced access programmes at Oxford.

Our acclaimed Access to Excellence programme, as outlined in the diagram below, is how we are realising our vision to become an international beacon for access.

## A “life cycle” strategy in five steps

Target: £40 million by 2020  
Raised to date: £38 million



This approach has been in place now for five years; and is fuelled by the generous support of our alumni and friends. We are making encouraging progress towards securing funding for every step of the educational journey – from pre-16 outreach to increased support for our students and graduates.

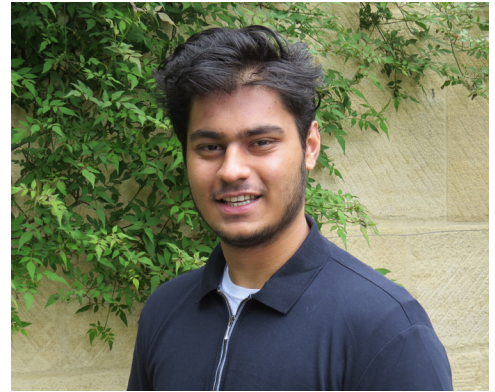
Our strategy recognises that whole student life-cycle approach is needed to achieve impact. Undergraduate

access to the College continues to be the main focus of our efforts, and therefore the primary subject of this report. However, Wadham's commitment to social equality does not stop at access: the tutorial system, our programme of social and cultural activities, and (as we also show in this report), the College's wider pastoral and financial support, all contribute to the College's stimulating and inclusive environment.

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*“Receiving a bursary from Wadham has made so many things possible for me. I’m able to focus more of my attention on studying and extra-curricular events without having to worry so much about budgeting. The financial support has enabled me to make the most of my time here - I can participate in every part of College life, play sports, travel home to see my family occasionally, buy books, pay battels and rent. I know a lot of others have had the same positive experience as me, and I would love to give back and help others in a similar situation in the future.” Shayaan Rehman (Law, 2015)*

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*“Here at Wadham I’ve been able to join in some of the things that my fellow students are doing that I wouldn’t normally be able to afford. I haven’t had to worry about buying textbooks. I came to several outreach events in Oxford, and on one of them I stayed at Wadham. Staying overnight and meeting other people like me was so important. There were no gowns and it felt inclusive. I did have a chip on my shoulder about posh people and what Oxford symbolised. It was only when I came to Wadham that I realised Oxford wasn’t as the media portray it.”*  
*Holly Anderson (Law, 2013)*

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# Summary of Access Activity 2017/18

In 2017/18, the College ran 158 access events both in college and across our link areas, including activities delivered with our partner organisations.

These have engaged over 5,950 pupils across 120 schools (a 25% increase compared to last year) through almost 400 hours of contact time. This expansion of activity has been made possible by alumni and friends who have supported our ambitions.

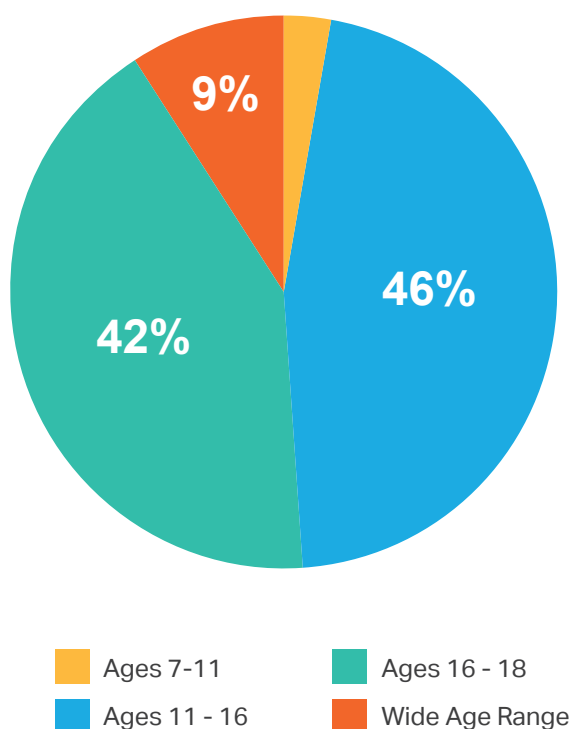
Wadham's access events include day-to-day events; larger, sustained projects; and collaborative activities with the University and other partners. Considering the balance of our activity, most events focus on pupils studying for their GCSEs (or equivalent), as illustrated in the chart below. This balance is an important aspect of the College's work, since we know that it is too late to address many of the challenges associated with access at post-16 (e.g. GCSE results and post-16 subject choices). We have an important role to play in supporting and encouraging young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds to apply to Wadham, and a wider responsibility to promote the general benefits of higher education.

Wadham's designated link regions include large parts of East London and the Essex borders (Islington, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Redbridge, Havering, Barking and Dagenham), as well as Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes. Wadham is the main point of contact for Oxford Access throughout these regions, each of which poses different opportunities and challenges for young people.

We are now very close to engaging with all 203 of the state schools in the College's link regions that offer at least some academic qualifications, i.e. GCSE or A Level (see the map below).

During the period 2015/16 to 2017/18, Wadham engaged 83% of these schools; with our new access team now settled and thriving, and the commencement of the building of the Access Centre, we are planning for continued growth.

## Balance of Wadham's Outreach Activity by Pupil Age Group

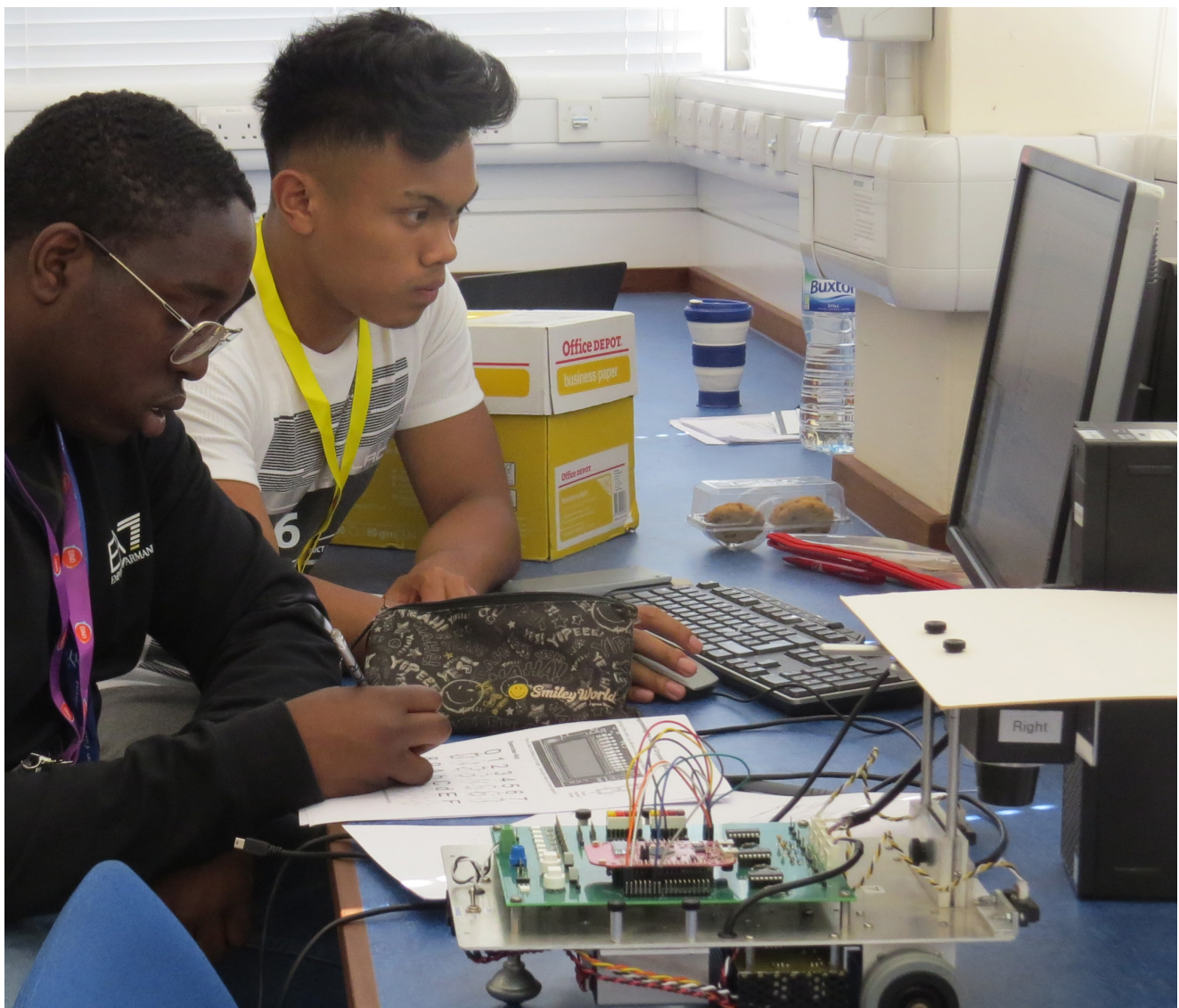


## The number of schools across our link regions that the College has engaged since 2015/16.

Link region schools engaged in the Wadham Access programme 2015-2018

| REGION             | TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS* | NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ENGAGED 2015-18 | % OF LINK REGION SCHOOLS ENGAGED 2015-18 |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| BARKING & DAGENHAM | 12                       | 11                                | 92%                                      |
| BEDFORDSHIRE       | 24                       | 21                                | 88%                                      |
| CAMBRIDGESHIRE     | 36                       | 20                                | 56%                                      |
| HACKNEY            | 17                       | 14                                | 82%                                      |
| HAVERING           | 19                       | 16                                | 84%                                      |
| ISLINGTON          | 11                       | 11                                | 100%                                     |
| LUTON              | 14                       | 13                                | 93%                                      |
| MILTON KEYNES      | 12                       | 12                                | 100%                                     |
| NEWHAM             | 23                       | 18                                | 78%                                      |
| REDBRIDGE          | 18                       | 18                                | 100%                                     |
| TOWER HAMLETS      | 17                       | 16                                | 94%                                      |
| TOTAL LINK REGIONS | 203                      | 169                               | 83%                                      |

\* includes state schools that offer at least some academic qualifications (GCSE or A Level)





# Wadham's Access Programme

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The main aspects of the College's activity are summarised here, and in the section that follows we share highlights from the year in more detail.

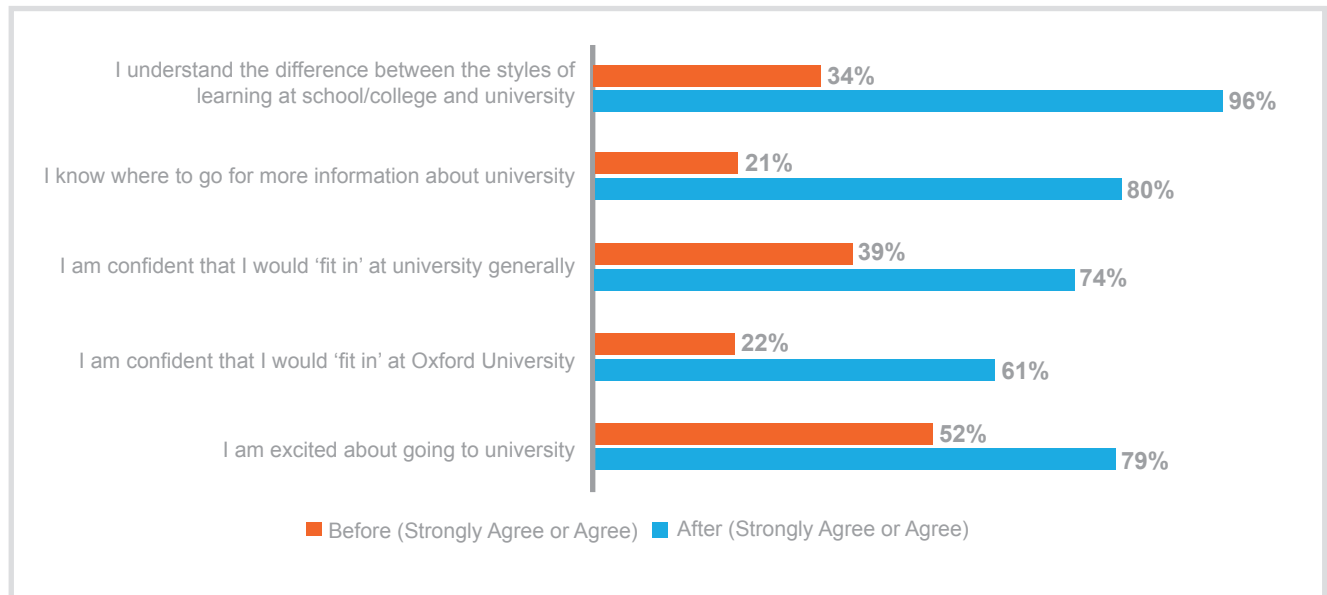


## Year 9/10 Aspiration Days

The College's Aspiration Days give students the opportunity to visit a university, to explore the range of disciplines available, and to consider what they can do to put themselves in the best position for university in the future. Across the day, pupils engage in a university information talk from the Access team, two dynamic academic taster sessions delivered by tutors or postgraduate students, the opportunity to meet students during a College tour and a visit to one of the University's inspiring museums.

More than 1,150 pupils attended an Aspiration Day in 2017/18, and the impact of these events is shared below. Before taking part, a general concern from the students was that the University may not be for people 'like them', with only 22% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would 'fit in' at Oxford. Following the event, 61% now felt they could belong: understanding the perceptions underlying this data will be important for the College in developing activities that break down pupils' misconceptions about the University.

## Year 9/10 Pupils attending an Aspiration Day



### Future developments

We recognise the importance of engaging with younger students, to increase awareness of their post-18 options, and enabling them to explore, develop and pursue their academic passions. As a result we have expanded provision of these programs, offering 26 visits in both 15/16 and 16/17, and 42 in 17/18.

The significance of engaging pupils pre-16 is vital in Wadham's access work as will remain the focus of our inbound work. The format of Aspiration Days has been revised to better suit the needs of these ages. The focus will be on highlighting the benefits of university, the breadth of subjects available and the different approaches to teaching and learning. In practice this means more, and more interactive, academic sessions and how to develop academic curiosity over time.





## Access Roadshow

The annual Access Roadshow engages secondary schools during one week in the link regions. We engage students in considering their options for higher education, provide a student perspective on the undergraduate experience, and aim to raise their aspirations. The roadshow also helps to improve relationships with schools that historically have not engaged with the College.

*"It was interesting as it allowed for conversation between students at school and undergraduates revealing a lot of information about university life at Oxford."*

### Roadshow Pupil

*"It was really good for our students to hear from your students first hand. I thought the current students that you had delivering were excellent – really genuine and articulate with lots of useful tips."*

**Teacher, Bedfordshire**

During this year's Roadshow, we spoke with almost 1,000 pupils (in years 8-10, and 12) at schools in Bedford, Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes. A dynamic aspect of the programme is the involvement of Wadham's undergraduate students, who are key in delivering the week of activities. The Student Ambassadors attend training run by the College's Access and Outreach team; the interactive sessions help inform them about issues relating to access, how to best engage young people, and include a briefing on key university information.

*"We were blown away by the support from Wadham's students interested in helping us with this year's Access Roadshow. They talked truthfully about their own experiences, from how they approached the daunting task of picking courses and universities, to revealing what it was like for them to move away from home for the first time."*

**Catherine Seed, Access Assistant,  
Wadham College**

*"The Roadshow is such a fun opportunity to meet potential applicants and to get them excited about university. Coming from one of the Wadham link areas, I still remember so clearly hearing the talks myself and starting to imagine what being an Oxford student might be like - but one of the most important aspects of the project is that we don't focus on Oxbridge applications alone, but applying to uni in general. We encourage students to aim big, and to really open their minds to the huge variety of courses available, which makes the Roadshow feel so valuable in the scheme of our Access work as a whole, and far more about the ethos of expanding participation on a wider scale. Going back to Bedford last summer, I got to talk to pupils at my brother's school and meet young people that reminded me of my friends at that age - it's such a great experience on both sides, having a proper chat and being able to reassure and empathise with all of their concerns (and to see how motivated and ambitious some of them are!). The wide range of age groups and schools means a real range of interactions, and also a huge range of questions and interests. I loved being able to talk to the students properly, and feel like we could really give them useful, first-hand knowledge - I really think (and hope!) it has an impact on those schools we worked with"*

**Amy Howlett (Law, 2016), former Students' Union Access Officer**

## Future developments

The strength of Wadham's Access Roadshow comes from our student ambassadors who engage openly and honestly with pupils about their journey from further education to higher education. The feedback from the Roadshow highlighted the impact of Wadham undergraduates sharing their personal experiences, particularly when the student came from the same area as the school. As a result, the Access Roadshow now takes the form of the 'Back to School Initiative' which aims to build upon the expertise and passion of Wadham's wider undergraduate body. Undergraduate students are supported to return to their own school to speak to pupils, with training, materials, and support contacting the school. We hope this will enable more pupils from across the UK to see Oxford as a place for them. This also recognises the fact the vast majority of Wadham undergraduates do not come from areas that the College is formally linked with.

## Access Day Events for Sixth Form Pupils

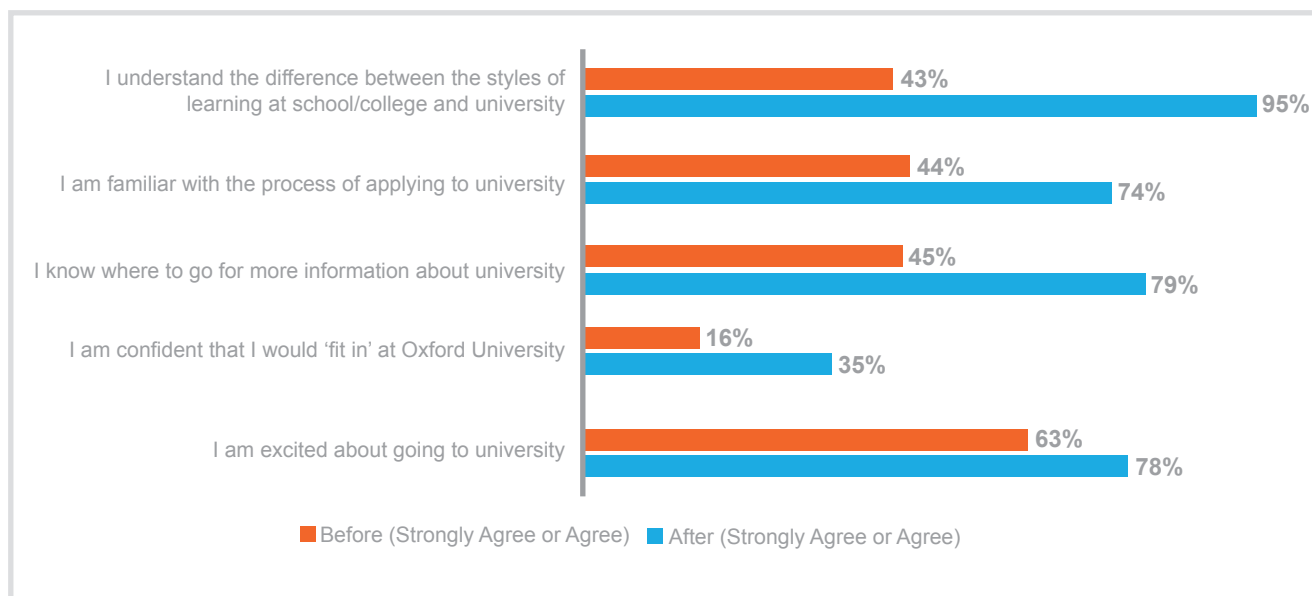
These take place throughout the academic year and are open to all of our link schools. During Access Days, we encourage students who may already be thinking about applying to university to consider Russell Group institutions, along with Oxford University and Wadham.

Year 12 students (aged 16-17) have an Information, Advice, and Guidance talk, and go to an academic taster session run by Wadham tutors and graduate students – titles of these sessions include: 'Would Harry Potter Have Burned?' or 'Basic Brain Surgery: It's Not Rocket Science!'. These sessions offer a valuable insight into the Oxford tutorial environment. The students then have the opportunity to meet current Wadham undergraduates, have a tour of the College, and take part in a workshop that explores the crafting of the Personal Statement.

As illustrated in the chart below, we find that students express significant changes in attitude as a result of engaging with the College. However, while it is encouraging that the percentage of students who feel they will fit in at Oxford doubles as a result of visiting Wadham, it is still concerning that only around a third feel this overall after spending time with us. We continue to explore in more detail the factors that contribute to this.



### Year 12 Pupils attending an Access Day



## Future developments

In response to teacher feedback, these days will be increasingly focused based on the A-levels of their pupils. For example, a STEM Access Day will cater more specifically to the needs of pupils studying science related A-levels and interested in continuing these on to university. The students receive support on selecting the right course based on their interests, an hour long academic taster utilizing their A-level subject knowledge and support in writing a personal statement for a selective institution like Oxford.

## Outbound Year 12 Talks

Throughout the academic year 17/18, the Wadham Access Team also visited schools, delivering a total of 46 talks and workshops. Primarily targeted to Year 12 and 13 students, these sessions provided targeted advice and support throughout the application process, and include:

- Russell Group Information Talks
- Application Talks
- Personal Statement Workshops
- Interview Workshops

These interactive talks form an important component of our access work, enabling engagement with a larger number of students at each school in addition to the potential for sustained interaction with Year 12 and 13 students.

## Future developments

These sessions are hugely popular with teachers and pupils. In light of this, these events will be expanded and focus on specific skills related to the application process. These sessions are offered throughout the year and targeted at specific key times of year such as post-application deadline for interview workshops. Given the popularity of these sessions, we are expanding our capacity, and in Michaelmas Term 2018 alone, we hosted 43 talks at schools around our link areas.

## Third Party Collaborations

Innovations in access are being driven from schools and universities, but also from a range of charities throughout the UK. Wadham benefits greatly from its partnerships with a number of third parties that develop innovative and effective programs to support raising attainment and aspirations of under-represented groups and their path to high-tariff universities. The College's primary partners are Target Oxbridge, IntoUniversity and The Brilliant Club.

**Target Oxbridge:** Wadham funds 4 places and is doubling our support to fund spaces for 8 places in 18-19.

**IntoUniversity:** Wadham has supported 15 visits to the college, with 487 pupils.

**The Brilliant Club:** Wadham welcomed 556 pupils across 7 visits.

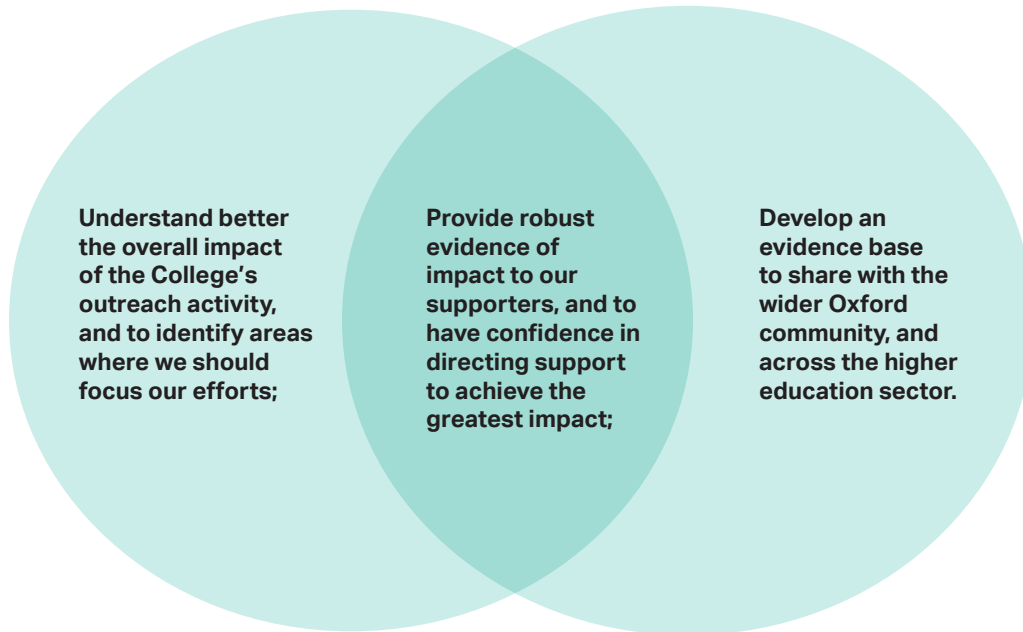
*"My school was pushing me towards Oxbridge but once I was accepted by Target Oxbridge I was invited to an Economics Master Class with an Oxford tutor which was invaluable. We learned new techniques at a pre-interview test workshop and then an interview workshop explained that we didn't need to know all the answers but had to demonstrate the way we thought. My mentor was the best – a previous Target Oxbridge student now studying Economics and Management at St Peter's College. He was able to answer my questions and then gave me a mock interview over Skype."*

**Tariq Hammed (Economics and Management, 2018)**

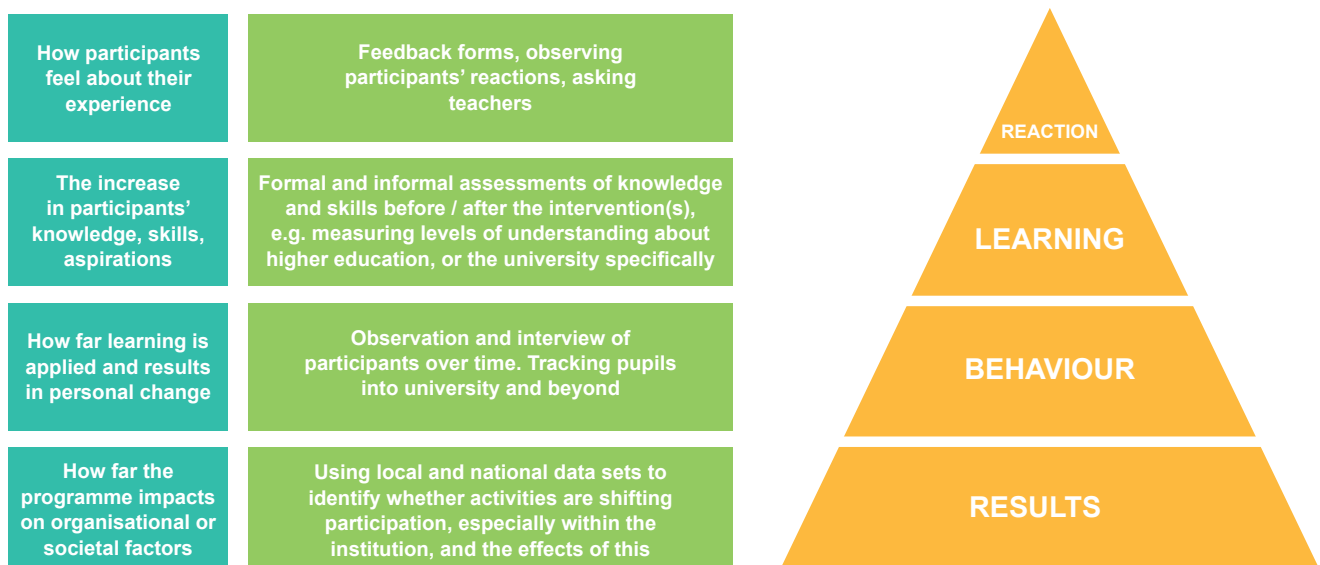


# Targeting and evaluation

We have introduced a rigorous evaluation framework, which includes qualitative and quantitative aspects. This enables us to:



Our approach, developed in partnership with the Bridge Group, is based on the Kirkpatrick model, which measures impact in the four areas outlined below. We do this using a variety of tools, including tracking pupils, feedback surveys and focus groups, and by accessing national benchmarking data.





# Impact highlights

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## Sustained Contact Programmes

### Luton Project (Year 10/11)

The College continues to invest significantly in programmes that engage with school pupils early, and over a sustained period. This is because we know from research evidence that this makes the most difference.

Our work with communities in Luton engages initially with Year 10 pupils (aged 14-15) and encourages them to consider applying to a 'top university' in the future. We provide ongoing support to these students, so they can access the advice and opportunities to put themselves in a strong position once they complete their GCSEs.

We work regionally, but our sustained programmes are recognised nationally – in the media and by ministers and policy-makers; and they would not be possible without the generous support of Wadham alumni. The Luton project is developing, with 27 participants now in the second year of the programme as Year 11s, and a new intake of 50 Year 10s who began in the autumn.

The College is planning a major expansion of the Luton Project, in collaboration with the University. We expect that by 2022-23, once hubs are established in four areas, 3,200 students will engage with the University annually through the initiative.

### Future developments

The Luton Project highlights Wadham's commitment to engaging with under-represented groups at selective universities and the need to start early over sustained interactions. The Luton Project is going to be expanded into Bedford and Bedfordshire and will involve teachers acting as hub co-ordinators interacting with pupils regularly throughout the year alongside the Wadham Access Team. The aim for this will be to harness teacher expertise to boost the academic performance of young people and develop their skills to positively impact their future choices and destinations. This lifecycle approach is crucial in widening access to top institutions like Oxford.



## Wad-HAM Year 12 (Newham and Tower Hamlets)

Our work in Luton has been developed based on a Year 12 scheme that Wadham has been running at Newham Sixth Form College for the past six years – a year-long programme for East London school students, culminating in a two-day residential at Wadham. Throughout the year, participating students attend academic taster sessions at Newham, with speakers delivering sessions across a range of disciplines, united by the project theme 'Civilisation and Barbarism'.

**From the cohort of 20 pupils from 10 schools across the two boroughs, 9 made applications to Oxford and 3 secured offers to the university.**

### Future developments

The Wad-HAM programme has been simplified in the coming year to run fewer, more targeted taster sessions alongside the residential. This reflects the pupil feedback which focussed on the benefits of the residential and application support rather than the breadth of taster sessions.

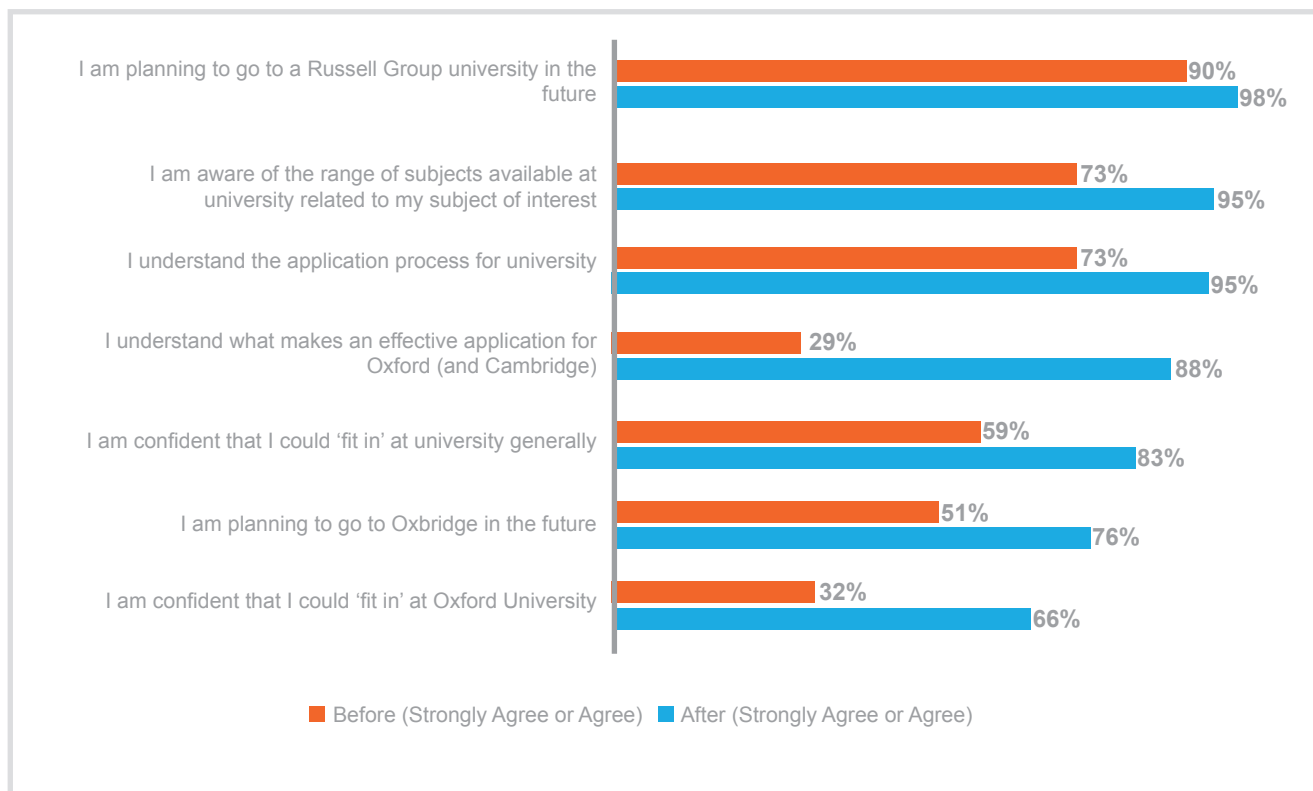
## Summer Schools

The College's commitment to delivering summer schools is based on evidence about the importance of these more intensive opportunities. Our existing academic summer schools, in Classics, Biology, and Engineering, would not have been possible without the invaluable support of our alumni, and the involvement of the College community.

The purpose of the summer schools is to give Year 12 students a realistic experience of university life, to provide intensive academic training in their chosen subject-area (focussed on areas beyond the A-level syllabus), and to provide subject-specific guidance to help prepare students for making strong applications to university. During the Classics and Biology summer schools, for example, the participants attended seminars, workshops (or language classes), and lectures and took part in social activities in the evening with undergraduate mentors. Towards the end of the week, the Classics students were also asked to submit an essay, which was marked by a tutor and was then discussed in a tutorial.

The post-event feedback highlights some encouraging results regarding the effectiveness of these resource-intensive events. Students from both summer schools felt more excited about attending university, and felt that they had a greater understanding of the differences between the styles of learning at school and university. The latter point is a key aim of both subject-specific summer schools.

## Summer School Feedback 2018





*“I thoroughly enjoyed the Biology Summer School. The past five days have made me think more and more about pursuing a career in Biology as I learnt so many interesting things and the passion you and all the ambassadors have for your subject was really refreshing. Before this course I didn’t really consider applying to study at Oxford, but the amazing advice you have given me as well as being exposed to the such incredible expertise has completely changed my mind. Thank you so much once again for an unforgettable week.”*

**Biology Summer School Pupil**

*“The programme as a whole was very useful and relevant however what I most enjoyed was in fact the ‘student experience’, that being meeting new people and spending time together whilst engaging in academic activities”*

**Classics Summer School Pupil**

Both Summer Schools were competitive. We received 52 Applicants for 24 Biology places, and 37 applicants for 24 Classics places. The application processes ensured we could identify students that are from the most disadvantaged backgrounds; 23% of participants were from areas classified as ACORN 4/5, and 26% were eligible for Free School Meals.

## Future developments

The Summer Schools show the strength of sustained contact in pupils applying, and progressing, to Oxford. These will be continued in the future and there is potential to increase the number of summer schools offered to include subjects such as Modern Languages. Given the success of the University’s flagship UNIQ programme, Wadham will offer to host and increased number of UNIQ scholars alongside the engineering places currently supported.

It is also vital that the impact of the summer schools is evaluated so research will be done to examine the impact of the summer schools on student destinations to identify next steps.

# The Undergraduate Centre and Access Centre

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People matter to us. Wadham's success in access is due to our talented access team, the wider college community, the pupils and teachers who engage with us – and the support of our alumni and friends. However, we also need dedicated and innovative spaces where these people can come together to explore and learn – and so that we can realise our ambitions in this area. This is why Wadham is now building a dedicated access centre, enabled by generous support from our alumni, which will be opened in late 2020.



This will provide a dedicated space where prospective school students from Wadham's target areas can participate in outreach programmes. By combining world class facilities with academic mentoring and information about what university has to offer, we will inspire young people to reach their potential and consider applying to Oxford. Wadham students will continue to play a vital role in this access work, meeting and talking to school students about their personal journeys to Oxford from a variety of different backgrounds.

Celebrating inclusivity and scheduled to open in 2020, the new Access Centre, alongside a new Undergraduate Centre, will provide level access to all parts and accessible student accommodation. These new buildings will give students with mobility-related disabilities better access to student facilities and provide all undergraduates with new social and working spaces.

***"The Access Centre sends a powerful sign to students that Wadham is interested in access and that there are structural problems we need to deal with. I am very proud that it is happening at my college"***

**Taiwo Oyebola (Classics, 2016)**



The Dr Lee Shau Kee Building has been designed to house the College's extensive access and outreach programme. This dedicated access facility will offer purpose-built space for welcoming schools and hosting Wadham's innovative access programmes and residential summer schools. The building will also have a dedicated music room, space for public lectures and disability-accessible student accommodation.

The development has been carefully designed and sensitively scaled to the surroundings, including the historic foundation buildings and the Holywell Music Room, as well as the modern entrance building to the Graduate Centre. The materials incorporated in the design provide a transition from the gothic architecture of the Front Quad. The buildings will have more natural light and will improve pedestrian access between the Back Quad and JCR Quad.

Fundraising for the new development is well underway with a very generous £14.5m secured to date of the £18m target. Alumni and friends are supporting the project with donations of all sizes, and helping to create a legacy for the future by making their mark on the new buildings.

***"Wadham gave me so much and my family and I are honoured to give back to the College by naming a tutorial room."***

**Siripattra Kusuwan (Biochemistry, 1998)**



# Our ambitions for the future

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*“Wadham has a proud tradition of being at the forefront of advancing equality. We celebrate debate, independent thought, and academic excellence – and all of these aspects of life benefit from diversity and an inclusive environment in which to work, study, and live. This enriches us all. Educational inequality is profoundly damaging to our society: we simply cannot afford to waste talent. This is what Wadham’s Access to Excellence programme is all about. Faced with the challenges of the present, the Wadham of the future depends on us.”*

Warren East  
Chairman, Wadham College Development Council  
CEO of Rolls Royce

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*“This report highlights the range of impactful work that the College is driving to advance access to Wadham, to Oxford and to higher education. We know there is much more to do, and we must adopt a robust, measured and ambitious approach to growth. Success depends on our engagement with the current College community, our tutors and students, alongside the transformative support of our alumni and wider partners. We must continue to respond thoughtfully to the needs of the young people we engage, and be responsive to advice and feedback from their teachers and parents. It is only through this collaborative approach that our sustained commitment to access can have a meaningful and lasting effect.”*

Dr Hugh Munro, Access and Outreach Officer, Wadham College

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