

Year 10 Reading Scholars

Evaluation Report 2023/24

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Executive Summary

The activity

The Year 10 Reading Scholars Programme is an intensive and longitudinal outreach programme that aims to raise the Key Stage 4 attainment of disadvantaged students, enabling target groups identified in the University of Reading Access and Participation Plan (APP) to access Higher Education. In 2023/24, the programme was delivered across five months to six local schools and three regional schools.

The evaluation

The evaluation methodology was Type 2 according to the Office for Students (OfS) standards of evidence, as there was a comparison of pre-post scores, using Paired t-tests. The 24 quantitative questions were grouped into the following concepts:

- Perceptions of Higher Education
- Self-reported metacognition/independent learning
- Self-reported self-efficacy/confidence
- Self-reported resilience
- Study Skills

Main findings

Despite positive informal qualitative data from school staff and students, the quantitative data analysis did not show significant results or a large effect size. This is likely due to the lack of attainment raising focus in the structure and content of the programme in its current form, which was initially provided by The Brilliant Club around 2017 and modified each year.

Conclusions/recommendations

The Year 10 Reading Scholars Programme should be continued with significant content and delivery changes, that better contributes towards aims of intervention strategy 1 set out in the APP. Furthermore, the results are not causal due to the numerous extraneous variables that could have influenced participants, so these results should be viewed as indicative rather than certain.

Introduction

Caveats to the report

This report is part of the first cycle of more robust evaluation in line with our new Access and Participation Plan. Therefore, we acknowledge that the evaluation still has limitations and we do not intend to over-claim the strength of any conclusions. In particular, it is noted that this evaluation is based primarily on self-reported data, which can be impacted by many factors. There were practical challenges to data collection, and it is acknowledged that the limited sample size of pre- and post-intervention data reduces the robustness of claims about the programme's effectiveness beyond immediate reactions. Nevertheless, the data here still provide valuable insights into engagement and the immediate perceived benefits of the programme. Future evaluations will aim to strengthen data collection, ensuring a more robust set of pre- and post-intervention measures, and include comparison groups where possible. Long-term data will also become available.

Rationale

The University of Reading has an important commitment to access and participation, in line with the Widening Participation Agenda. Although the student population has diversified in recent years, there is still disproportionate representation of certain groups within the university population. Therefore, the Year 10 Reading Scholars Programme aims to raise Key Stage 4 (KS4) attainment and widen access to higher education (HE) for young people in receipt of free school meals (FSM), living in Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1 (Q1) postcodes and Black students. The best predictor of success in HE for post-18 entry remains KS4 attainment for applying to university and KS5 attainment for meeting an offer (Gorard et al 2017).

Intervention

The Year 10 Reading Scholars Programme is one of two programmes that form Reading Scholars: the flagship widening participation programme delivered by the Outreach Team at the University of Reading. The programme is offered to up to 10 local schools in Berkshire and the surrounding areas. A further four schools from the University of Reading target regions also join the programme, with sessions being delivered by Regional Student Recruitment and Access Officers. These regions include London, West Midlands, South Coast and South Wales.

School staff must select 15-20 eligible students from their current Year 10 cohort to participate. Students are eligible for the programme if they fall within one or more of our priority groups below:

- Eligible to receive free school meals
- Lives in a low participation in HE neighbourhood
- Has a disability
- Home postcode is in IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) quintile 1 or 2
- Is, or has previously been, in local authority care
- Is currently a young carer
- Has one of more parent serving in the military (including reserves)

From the above, two of our main priority groups will be Black students (in line with

the national data which shows that these students are underperforming academically within universities, which may stem from lower attainment at KS4) and IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 (as set out within our APP as key targets).

The key programme objectives are as follows:

1. To increase attainment via metacognition and specific study skills
2. To raise self-efficacy and confidence
3. To improve understanding of HE

This is achieved through 5 study skills sessions:

| SESSION | TOPIC |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Study Skills Session 1 | Creating a Research Question |
| Study Skills Session 2 | Conducting Effective Research |
| Study Skills Session 3 | Synthesising Information and Developing an Argument |
| Study Skills Session 4 | Referencing and How to Avoid Plagiarism |
| Study Skills Session 5 | Feedback and Aspirations |

Table 1: Study Skills Sessions Year 10 Reading Scholars 2023/24.

Students use their learning to independently create an academic poster after session 4. Through engaging with these sessions and their independent projects, the aim is for students to develop skills associated with academic attainment and boost their aspirations surrounding attending Higher Education (HE). Additional information, advice and guidance (IAG) sessions are also offered as part of on campus visits. This year, the following sessions were offered:

- Introduction to Higher Education
- Introduction to the University of Reading
- Managing money and budgeting
- Time management
- Aspirations and Goal Setting

Throughout the programme the students are supported by Scholars Ambassadors in sessions and during visits to campus. The Scholars Ambassadors provide an additional layer of support and act as positive role models, by sharing their experiences of HE and the barriers they overcame on their own academic journey.

Some Ambassadors also hold the role of Academic Mentors, who delivered study skills sessions 1 and 2 on the launch event of the programme.

Context

This evaluation report covers the Year 10 Reading Scholars Programme in the academic year 2023/24. The participants in the programme consisted of Year 10 students from six local schools¹. In addition to these, three schools participated from our target regions.

The schools were targeted for this programme because they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- They are a partner school with the outreach team.
- They are a target school for regional activity.
- The school has a significant history of participation in the Year 10 Reading Scholars Programme.

All activity was delivered in-person, either in schools or on campus. Local schools received study skills content at on-campus events as one large cohort of around 100 students, whereas the regional schools had study skills sessions delivered in-school (except for the launch in February and graduation in June). It should be noted that the current post-holder assumed position after event 1, meaning very minimal changes could be made to the study skills content of the programme.

Link to Access & Participation Plan (APP)

This activity falls under intervention strategy 1 in the Access and Participation Plan (APP), meaning the programme is a targeted attainment-raising initiative that prioritises partner schools. Its aim is to support the removal of attainment-gaps at Key Stage 4 for students eligible for Free School Meals, those in IMD Q1, and those of Black ethnicity.

By 2034, it is hoped that targeted attainment raising work will result in students from these groups progressing equally into Key Stage 5 as their peers. By 2028, the University of Reading hopes to improve the percentage of Key Stage 4 target students who see increases of 10 percentage points (pp) or more in metacognition, confidence and resilience skills, as a result of our interventions, from 49% to 60%. Students who are Care Experienced, Young Carers or from Gypsy-Roma Traveller families will also be given priority onto the programme(s) if they do not also meet other target demographics.

¹ One school withdrew from the programme in May, after study skills session 4. Pre-programme data had been collected from this school, but as no students completed a project or attended the graduation they are not included in the quantitative data analysis.

This intervention strategy also speaks to the following risks from the OfS Risks to Equality of Opportunity Register:

- **Risk 1. Knowledge and Skills** – students are not equipped to progress to KS5 qualifications to enable entry to HE and University of Reading courses.
- **Risk 2. Information and Guidance** – students are not able to make informed choices about appropriate KS4 and 5 qualifications to achieve their longer term educational and career goals.

As stated in the APP:

“Students in IMD Q1 and Black students are not achieving at KS3 and 4 to enable progression and success in KS5 qualifications needed to access HE, and specifically courses at the University of Reading.”

“Evidence suggests that students in the above categories possess less Social and Academic capital (awareness of HE), Habitus (Familiarity with HE and ‘fitting in’), Skills capital (problem-solving/decision-making/planning/communication) and Intellectual capital (academic skills – raising attainment and subject/HE knowledge) essential for progression to HE.”

Previous evaluation

Evaluation reports are on file for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, but there are no complete evaluation reports for the programme from 2021/22 or 2022/23.

Furthermore, the previous reports used different reporting structures, analyses and survey questions. This is due to a new APP beginning in 2024/25 at the University of Reading, the new OfS Equality of Risk Register, and a new reporting template for outreach activity in line with other Recruitment, Access and Outreach work.

This year is the first year of this new evaluation style and we hope to be able to compare future evaluations to this year’s report.

Methodology

Research questions

1. Does participation in Year 10 Scholars improve self-reported metacognition (independent learning)?
2. Does participation in Year 10 Scholars improve self-reported confidence?
3. Does participation in Year 10 Scholars improve self-reported resilience?
4. Does participation in Year 10 Scholars improve students’ specific study skills (research, referencing and communication of ideas)

5. Does participation in Year 10 Scholars lead to subsequent progression to HE? (note, this cannot be answered in the current report)

Participants

Schools are selected to participate based on the overall WP Profile of the school, to ensure that the schools have enough eligible students in their cohort to participate in the programme. These schools have also shown a commitment to engaging with University of Reading outreach activity. All schools were required to provide information about which eligibility criteria their students met and the contact details for a member of their staff who would liaise with the outreach team. School staff were sent guidance prior to event 1 in February on selection of Year 10 students and were asked to select a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 20 eligible students to participate in the programme.

Schools also needed to provide enough students so that the programme would serve a minimum of 120 students, as stated in the APP. Unfortunately, some schools were not consistent with the number of students they brought to each visit or session, either bringing increasingly larger or increasingly smaller groups; with some groups being as small as 8 and as large as 30 students.

| DATA | NUMBER |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Pre-Programme Surveys | 145 |
| Post-Programme Surveys | 111 |
| Matched Pre and Post Surveys | 101 |
| Poster Projects Marked | 113 |

Table 2: Participation Numbers for the Year 10 Reading Scholars Programme 2023/24.

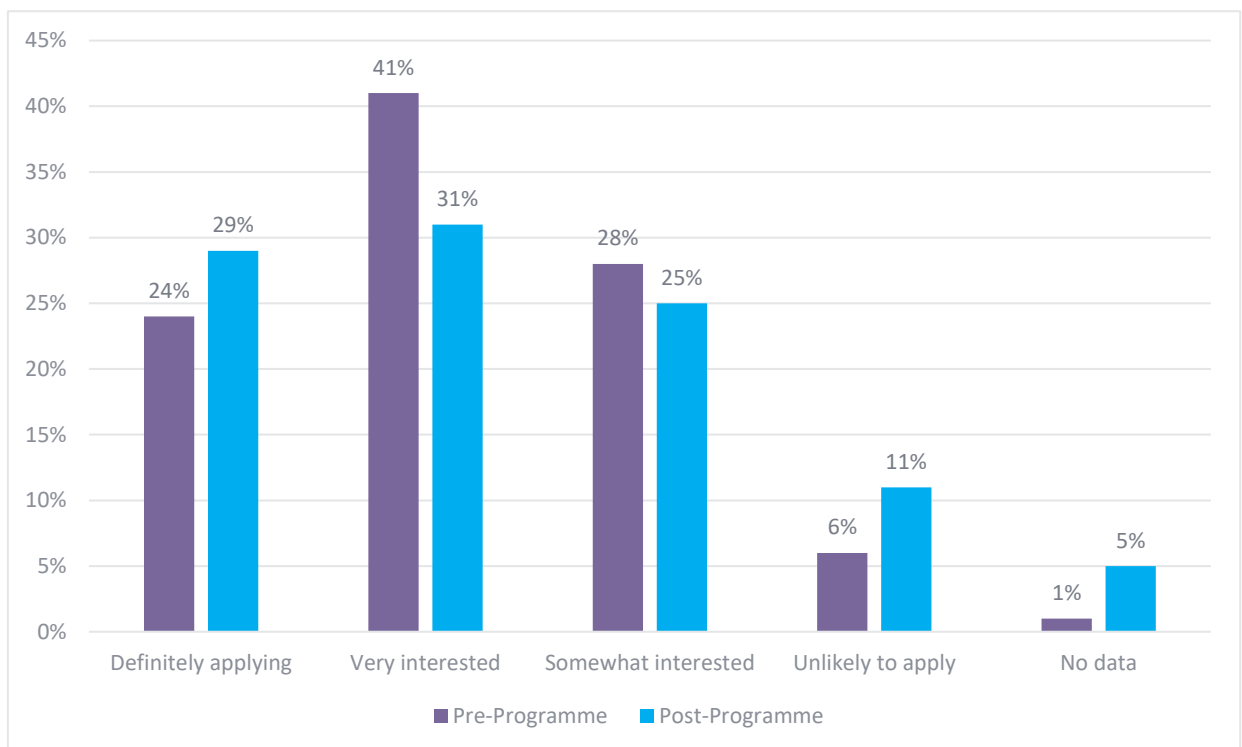
Survey Data on Participants

Below is an illustration of the key demographic data collected from participating students on the Year 10 Reading Scholars Programme. At the first event in February, pre-programme data was collected for the following:

- Interest in attending university
- Gender
- Postcode
- Ethnicity
- Disability

- Eligibility for Free School Meals
- Care Experienced
- Young Carers
- Service Children

Ethnicity is further broken down into students with black heritage, given that the latter is an attainment raising target in the APP. 'No data' responses denote where a student has completed the evaluation form, but left a question blank. The gender of the participants in the programme was 57% female, 41% male and 2% non binary or other.

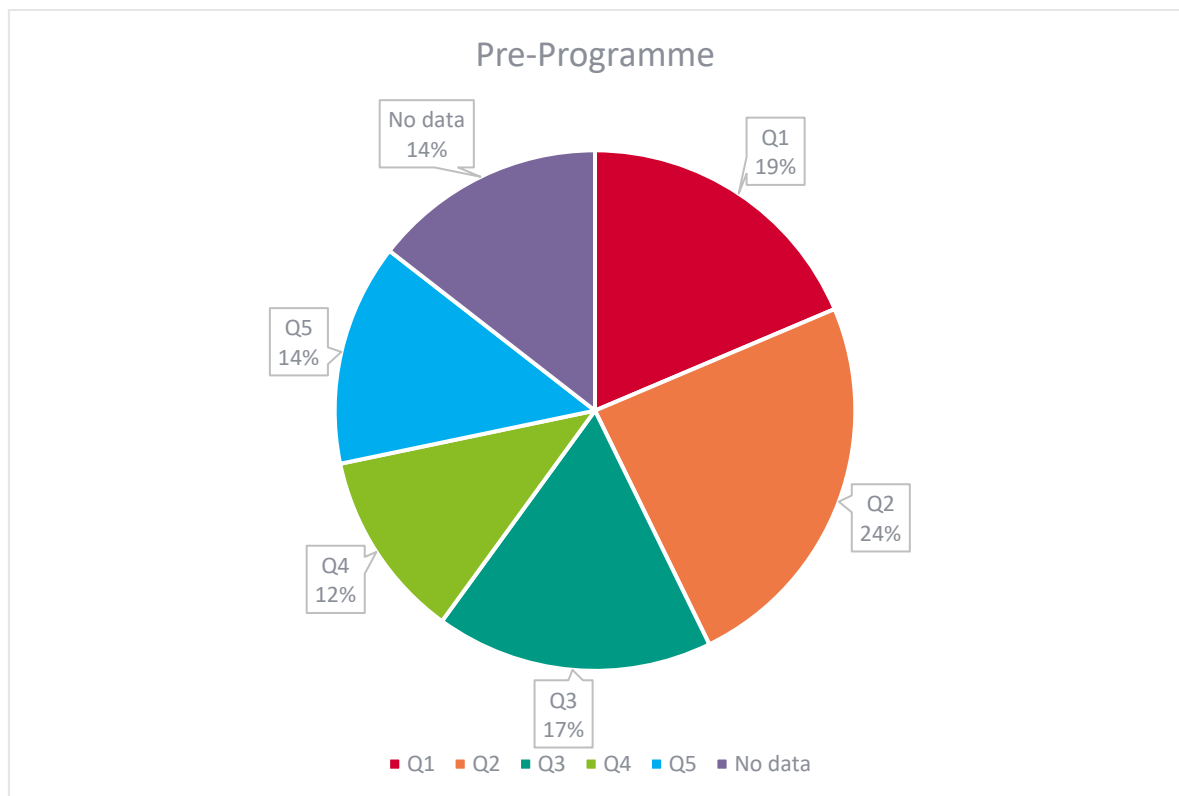


Graph 1: Interested in University, pre and post-programme survey data.

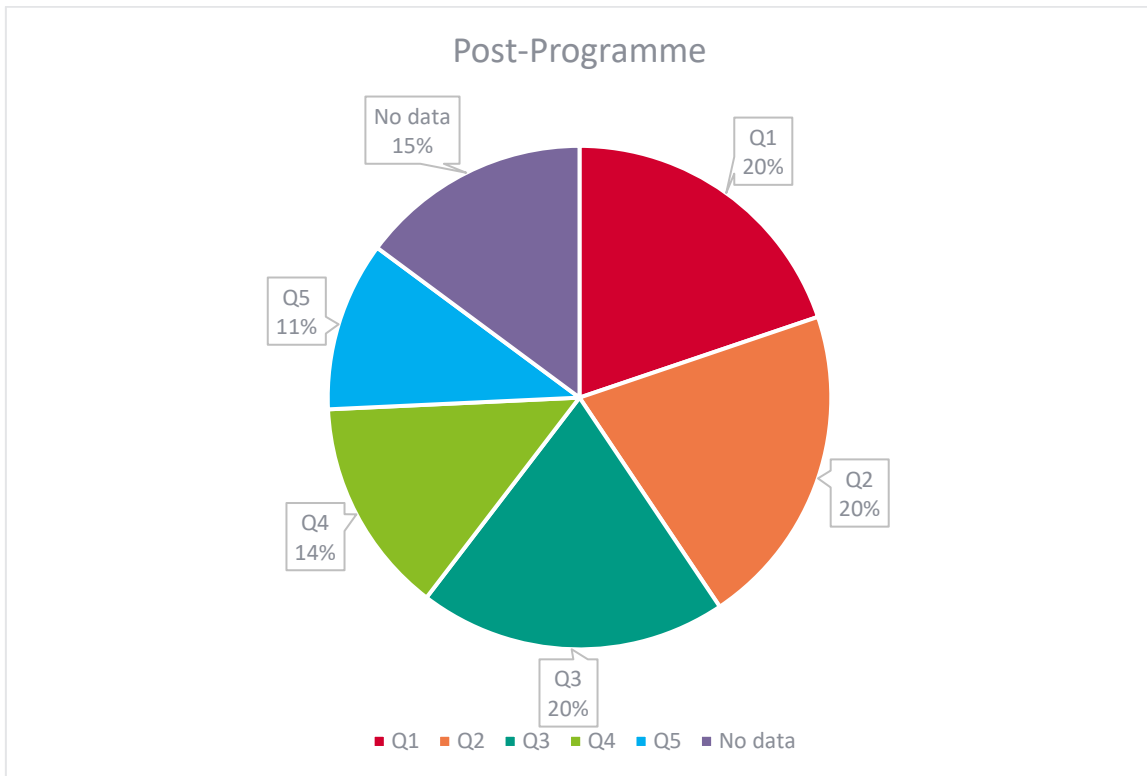
There is an increase in those 'definitely applying' to university, whereas 'very interested' and 'somewhat interested' have decreased. 'Unlikely to apply' has increased slightly. The difference in numbers of pre (n = 146) and post (n = 111) survey completions may have impacted this data. Previous evaluation reports have yielded similar results for this question.

| IMD QUINTILE | TOTAL | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|-------|------------|
| Q1 | 27 | 19% |
| Q2 | 35 | 24% |
| Q3 | 25 | 17% |
| Q4 | 17 | 12% |
| Q5 | 20 | 14% |
| No data | 21 | 14% |
| Total | 145 | 100% |

Table 3: IMD Quintiles pre-programme survey data.



Graph 2: Postcode IMD Quintiles, pre-programme survey data (n=145)



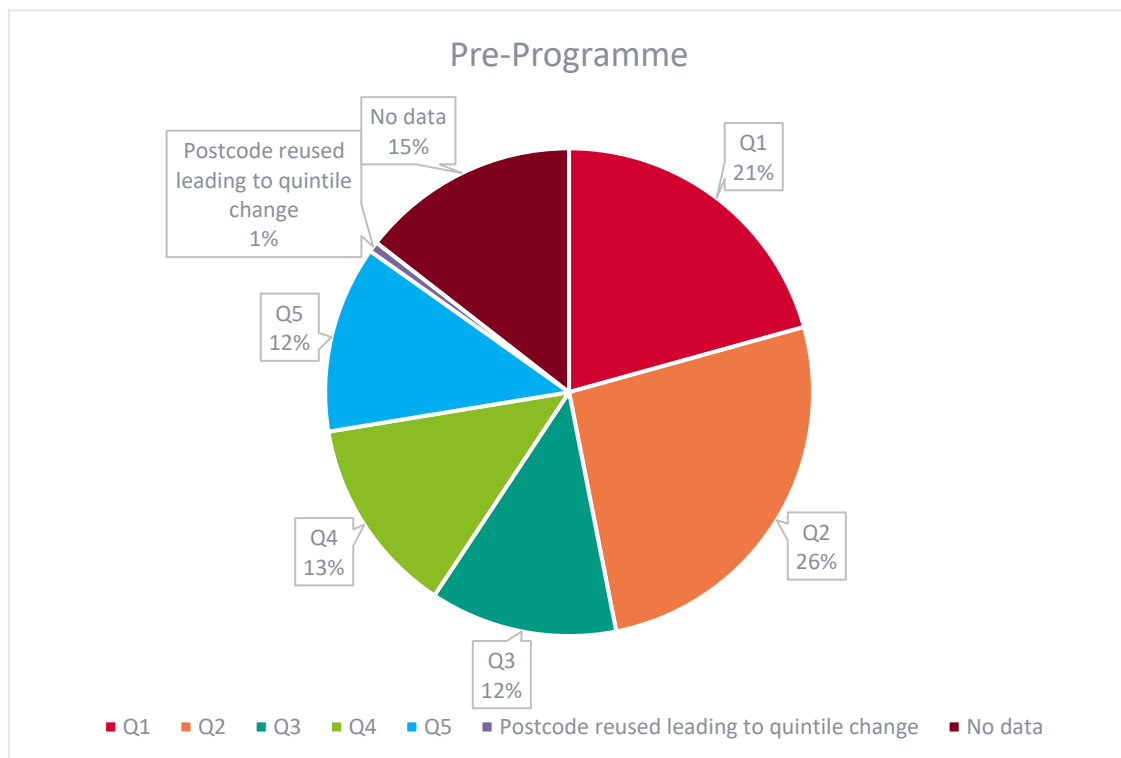
Graph 3: Postcode IMD Quintiles, post-programme survey data (n=101)

Given that IMD Q1 is a priority attainment raising group in the APP, 19% Q1 participants is lower than desired for this programme; though this year’s eligibility criteria listed both IMD Q1 and Q2 which totals 43%. Schools may need more guidance on how to check postcodes to target these students better. POLAR4 is not listed in the APP under intervention strategy 1 as a target group, but it was included in the eligibility criteria document sent to school staff this year. Nearly half of the students who disclosed reside in areas of low HE participation.

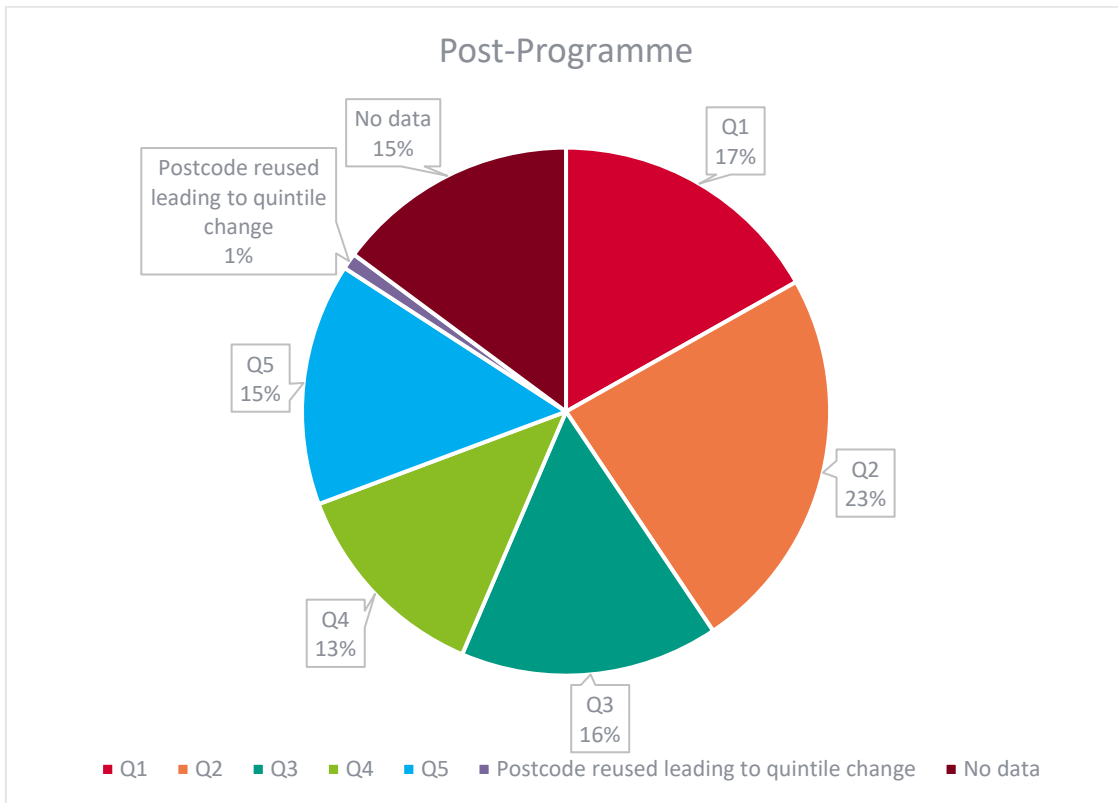
The graph above shows that the demographic make-up of those who also completed ‘post’ surveys did not differ largely from the ‘pre’ surveys, meaning the data analysed was largely representative of the participant group.

| POLAR4 QUINTILE | TOTAL | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Q1 | 30 | 21% |
| Q2 | 38 | 26% |
| Q3 | 18 | 12% |
| Q4 | 19 | 13% |
| Q5 | 18 | 12% |
| Postcode reused leading to quintile change | 1 | 1% |
| No data | 21 | 14% |
| Total | 145 | 100% |

Table 4: POLAR4 Quintiles pre-programme survey data.



Graph 4: Postcode POLAR4 Quintiles, pre-programme survey data (n=145)

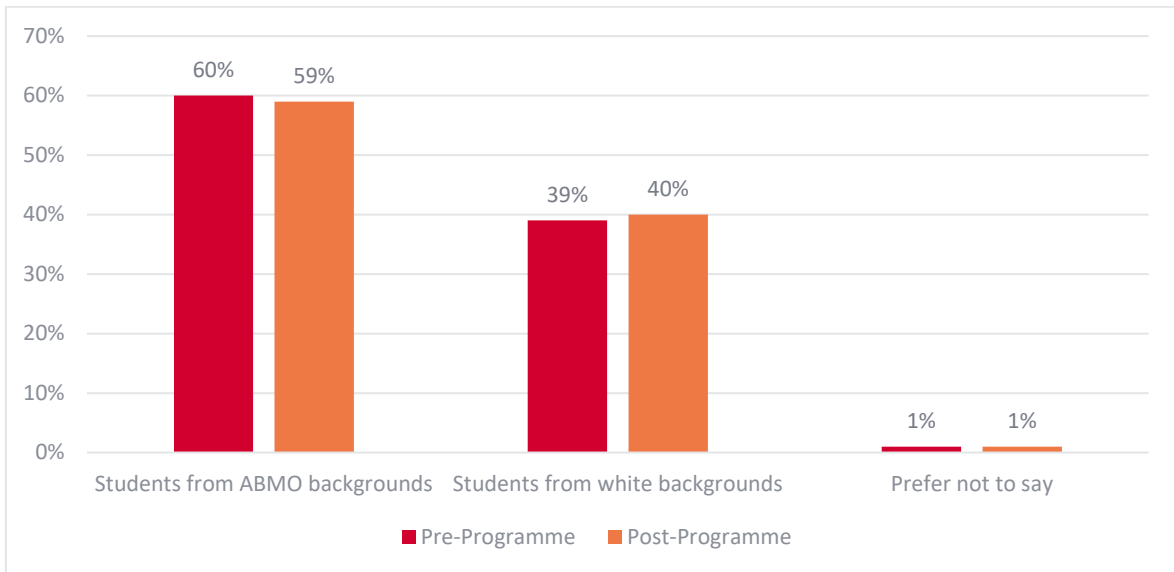


Graph 5: Postcode POLAR4 Quintiles, post-programme survey data (n=101)

| ETHNICITY | TOTAL | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Students from ABMO ² backgrounds | 87 | 60% |
| Students from white backgrounds | 56 | 39% |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 1% |
| Total | 145 | 100% |

Table 5: Ethnicity pre-programme survey data, ABMO and white backgrounds.

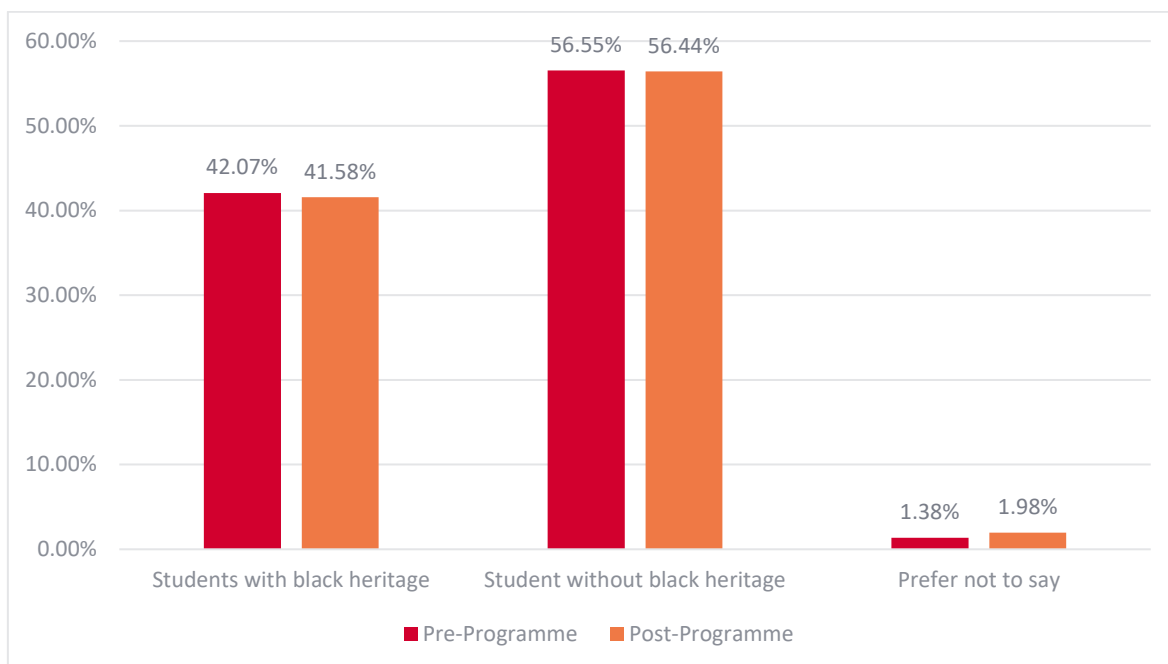
² Asian, Black, Mixed and Other.



Graph 6: Ethnicity ABMO and white backgrounds, pre and post-programme survey data.

| ETHNICITY | TOTAL | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Students with black heritage | 61 | 42.07% |
| Students without black heritage | 84 | 56.55% |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 1.38% |
| Total | 145 | 100% |

Table 6: Ethnicity pre-programme survey data, students with black heritage.



Graph 7: Ethnicity students with black heritage, pre and post-programme survey data.

Students with black heritage includes: ‘Black or Black British/African’, ‘Black or Black British/Caribbean’, ‘Other Black Background’, ‘Mixed White and Black African’ or ‘Mixed White and Black Caribbean’.

Students from white backgrounds includes: ‘White British’, ‘White Irish’ and ‘Other White Backgrounds’. All other categories outside of these are included in ABMO backgrounds.

The largest ethnicity group was ‘White British’ (37%), but it is pleasing to see a majority of ABMO students and such a large cohort of students with black heritage given that the latter is an attainment raising target group in the APP.

| ARE YOU ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FREE SCHOOL MEALS? | TOTAL | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Yes | 73 | 50% |
| No | 70 | 48% |
| No data | 2 | 2% |
| Total | 145 | 100% |

Table 7: Eligible for free school meals pre-programme survey data.

This data is very pleasing given this is a key target for the programme.

Data collection

Students completed pre-programme surveys at the launch February and those who completed the programme in full (i.e. submitted a project and attended the graduation event in June) completed a post-programme survey.

The 24 quantitative questions used were a mixture of CoachBright evaluation questions and bespoke questions for the programme. Students were asked to rate each question on a scale of 1-7. The following concepts were measured:

- Concept 1: Perceptions of Higher Education (bespoke questions)
- Concept 2: Self-report metacognition (CoachBright questions; not full scale)
- Concept 3: Self-report efficacy (CoachBright questions; not full scale)
- Concept 4: Self-reported resilience (CoachBright questions; not full scale)
- Concept 5: Study Skills (bespoke questions).

We also collected qualitative data for the post-programme surveys, questions for which can be seen in the post-programme survey copy in the appendix. In addition to this, Year 10 students completed an informal mid-programme evaluation consisting of two qualitative questions and school staff completed a feedback form.

Ethics and Data Security

All students on the programme were under the age of 18 at the time of participation and gave consent to sharing their data by completing the pre and post surveys. Participant data will also be uploaded to HEAT to track the Year 10s future attainment and progression to HE. All data has been anonymised for this report.

Data analysis

The data analysed in this report has been cleaned to only include those that successfully completed the programme and completed both pre and post surveys in full. Survey results were analysed using Paired t-tests to ascertain whether average pre-intervention scores differed significantly from post-intervention scores. This was conducted for each concept in the survey. Effect sizes were also calculated. The informal qualitative feedback has not been analysed formally, but means are presented.

Type of evaluation

The programme was evaluated using the Type 2 evaluation (as stated in the OfS Standards of Evidence Classification), consisting of pre and post-programme surveys to track the intermediate outcomes of the effect of the programme on the students. In the long-term, outcomes will be measured by tracking all students who completed a survey in HEAT to measure their KS4 attainment and subsequent progression to HE. This data will be available up to eight years after the intervention.

Limitations

The biggest limitation in evaluating this year's programme is the inconsistency with the number of students brought by each school between the start and end of the programme. While we received a pleasing number of poster projects this year (113), not all students on the programme attended every study skills session and completed a project, which is vital to assimilating and demonstrating their understanding of the study skills. Although some unattendance is to be expected, the variation in cohort numbers means that some students completing a project did not receive the full complement of study skills sessions to aid with their project. This may have impacted their responses to the post-programme survey.

The nature of the type 2 evaluation means that causal inferences cannot be made from any results. Some of these students may have attended more than one attainment raising outreach programme that may have influenced their responses and there may have been a range of factors influencing the students' attainment and attitudes towards HE (such as school provision, study support, parent/carer support, home learning environment, family influence, culture etc.). Due to the self-reported quantitative data, it is challenging to link the programme directly to causes. Students may report what they think the outreach team want to know, rather than how they really feel. As stated previously, some students also struggled to complete all aspects of the form comprehensively which affected the size of the dataset. Finally, the scales for each concept were not used in full, rather a sub-selection of questions was asked for the purpose of brevity; however, this impacts the robustness of the data collected and the validity of the results.

Results

Surveys

The sample size for the results below is $n = 101$, based on paired pre and post surveys. The mean scores, statistical significance test and effect sizes are shown below.

| CONCEPT | 'PRE' MEAN (SD) | 'POST' MEAN (SD) | STATISTICAL TEST | EFFECT SIZE |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Perceptions of HE | 5.61 (1.16) | 5.27 (1.48) | $t(100) = 2.67, p = .01^*$ | $d = -0.29$ |
| Metacognition | 5.23 (1.14) | 4.91 (1.30) | $t(100) = 2.86, p = .01^*$ | $d = -0.28$ |
| Self-reported self-efficacy/confidence | 5.26 (0.97) | 4.95 (1.24) | $t(100) = 2.65, p = .01^*$ | $d = -0.31$ |
| Self-reported resilience | 5.38 (0.93) | 5.07 (1.28) | $t(100) = 2.81, p = .01^*$ | $d = -0.33$ |
| Study Skills | 5.00 (0.99) | 4.87 (1.18) | $t(100) = 1.09, p = .28$ | $d = -0.13$ |

Table 8: Results from Paired t-tests for each concept.

* = significant at the 5% level.

The table shows that the mean responses were slightly lower for each concept in the 'After' survey than the 'Before' survey. All concepts except 'Study Skills' are statistically significant at the 5% level. The effect sizes are negative, which suggests that Year 10 Reading Scholars (in its current form) is having a small but statistically significant negative impact on four out of five of these concepts.

Qualitative and Informal Feedback

Qualitative and informal feedback was collected from Year 10 students and school staff. This was created internally as an informal measure and has not been analysed using statistical methods. Feedback from school staff was provided by

six people and was overwhelmingly positive. When asked to rate the programme overall regarding student experience, 50% of staff rated (3 out of 6) it as 'Excellent' and 50% rated it as 'Good'. 100% of school staff expressed that they are interested in participating in Year 10 Reading Scholars again next academic year.

School staff provided number of the positive comments about the programme:

"It gave students an experience of University, to answer questions from students, understand how to research and create a piece of work."

"Showing [the Year 10 students] that they can get there has helped encourage them to commit to their GCSE studies, and their confidence, teamwork and communication skills improve. Being chosen for the scheme shows that the school values them and believes in their abilities so helps their confidence."

"[Outreach staff were] very helpful and supported the pupils to have the confidence in their work."

"I thought the students completing a poster was really good! It was good they had freedom to do it on their choice of topic."

School staff also cited some areas that could be improved:

"There were a couple of sessions [delivered by academic mentors] where students felt they were mainly being talked to, but the majority of the sessions have been excellent"

"My suggestion would be to use the planning/budgeting in university session, as an opportunity to incorporate the challenges that most of our students face in school, with planning their revision timetables [...] to plan revision for GCSE, and Scholars Ambassadors could also share their experiences on how they found this skill vital."

School staff were required to respond to a statement on a 4-point scale from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree'. All staff responded 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' to every question and all mean scores are above 3.5, which indicates an overall positive perception of the programme. That said, these results are informal and should be treated with caution. Mean scores were calculated by assigning numerical values to the four-point scale (Strongly agree 4, Agree 3, Disagree 2, Strongly disagree 1). This will allow for comparisons to school staff feedback in future evaluation reports.

| STATEMENT | MEAN SCORE |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| The programme was well organised. | 3.5 |
| Most students were engaged with the study skills session content. | 3.67 |
| The length of the study skills sessions were right for the majority of students. | 3.83 |
| There was the right amount of interactivity embedded in the study skills sessions. | 3.5 |
| The study skills content was helpful and informative for nearly all students. | 3.67 |
| It is useful for students to visit our campuses. | 4 |
| Almost all students seemed to enjoy the chance to explore and experience our campuses. | 4 |
| Almost all students were equipped by sessions to create a poster project. | 3.83 |
| Creating a poster project was helpful and informative for nearly all students. | 3.67 |

Table 9: School Staff Feedback Responses. Quantitative Questions.

In study skills session 3, 122 Year 10 students provided qualitative feedback mid-programme on how they were finding the programme so far. To direct their answers, Year 10s were provided with sentence starters, to which they were required to respond. There were also two qualitative questions on the post-programme survey that also used sentence starters. Although Year 10 students could write answers of any length, many chose to respond with short answers, which have been grouped into themes below.

| SENTENCE STARTER | COMMON THEMES |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| One thing I have enjoyed about Year 10 Scholars so far is... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study skills activities, such as debates • Campus tours and visiting university spaces • Working with Scholars Ambassadors • Food and refreshments • Freedom to choose any topic for the poster |
| One thing that could be better about Year 10 Scholars is... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food • More interactive sessions and study skills activities • Campus tours • More instruction on poster projects • Length and number of sessions |
| The thing I enjoyed the most about Year 10 Reading Scholars is... | <p>Campus Visits</p> <p>University Life</p> <p><i>“learning new skills, experiencing what university is like”</i></p> <p><i>“I really liked how diverse it was”</i></p> <p>Working with Scholars Ambassadors</p> <p>Study Skills Sessions</p> <p><i>“the experience of creating a piece of work as an example of real university work”</i></p> |
| Something I have learnt that will help me in school is... | <p>Referencing and Plagiarism</p> <p><i>“how to properly find and cite sources for academic writing”</i></p> <p>Writing</p> <p><i>“how to better structure my paragraphs”</i></p> <p>Research</p> <p><i>“how to synthesise large pieces of information and identify a biased piece or not”</i></p> |

Table 10: Qualitative Informal Year 10 Students Feedback, mid and post-programme.

Conclusions & recommendations

Conclusions

Despite the negative statistical analysis results, the overall running of the programme, qualitative feedback and quality of the prize winning poster projects suggests that the programme was somewhat successful this year. Although many Year 10s and teachers reported a positive experience of the programme in the qualitative feedback, the data shows there needs to be a significant improvement in the attainment raising focus of the programme. As noted above in limitations, the scales were not used in full which may have impacted the validity of the results, which may have also contributed to the negative impact detected. It may also be that participants were overconfident in the skills at the start of the programme, and by the end of the programme had realised they had some room for improvement, so it may not be the case that the programme objectively worsened these skills in the students.

Recommendations

1. The study skills content of this programme will be completely overhauled for 2024/25, drawing on current research to ensure that the programme's focus is purely more focused on attainment raising and better aligned with the concepts being measured.
2. Additional IAG will be removed and replaced with activities that are focused on study skills, to ensure greater focus on attainment raising.
3. The programme will span across 6 months instead of 5, with most activity delivered in schools in small groups rather than large cohorts of around 100 students; which has been the delivery method of the study skills sessions for the local schools this year and in previous years.
4. Participating schools will be reviewed according to their attainment data, to ensure the programme is being offered to schools with ample numbers of eligible Year 10 students. The programme will also be offered to a South Coast school and two target schools in the local area, totalling 7 local schools and 4 regional schools for the 2024/25 programme.
5. More robust guidance will be provided to schools on selecting eligible students that highlights FSM, IMD Q1 and black ethnicity as essential criteria, in line with the APP. Assistance will be offered to all schools on identifying IMD Q1 students. Essential criteria will also include selecting eligible students who will best engage with the programme.
6. Where possible, key data will no longer be self-reported and instead provided by the school pre-programme to ensure accuracy (name, postcode, date of birth).

7. The pre and post survey questions will be reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate for the concepts of the programme being measured. This will include ensuring that full validated scales are used wherever possible to gain a more robust insight into the concepts.
8. The collection of data from the young people pre and post programme will be more robust, with guidance on completing surveys and assistance from the Scholars Ambassadors.
9. All study skills sessions will be delivered by University of Reading outreach and regional staff only and not Academic Mentors or Scholars Ambassadors. Regional staff will receive comprehensive training for each session.
10. Scholars Ambassadors assisting with sessions will receive training on working with disadvantaged students in small group settings, to increase the attainment raising focus of their input.

References

Gorard, S., Boliver, V., Siddiqui, N., & Banerjee, P. (2017). Which are the most suitable contextual indicators for use in widening participation to HE? *Research Papers in Education*, 34(1), 99–129.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2017.1402083>

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, thank you to all the students who completed the programme and provided their feedback via pre and post surveys. The work of teachers and support staff who liaised with the University of Reading throughout the programme has to be commended, particularly given the change in postholder mid-programme. None of this would be possible without the continued hard work of these individuals, despite the increasing challenges secondary schools face in the current educational climate of the UK.

This programme could not have been run without extensive support from Kizzi Keast, the outreach sub-team, the regional sub-team and other colleagues across UK Student Recruitment and Outreach. Their assistance with event management and delivering small group content vastly improved the experiences for the students this year.

We also could not have delivered our on-campus events and in-school sessions without the assistance of a pool of Scholars Ambassadors, who act as role models to the young people and are always mentioned positively in feedback from stakeholders for the impact they have on events.

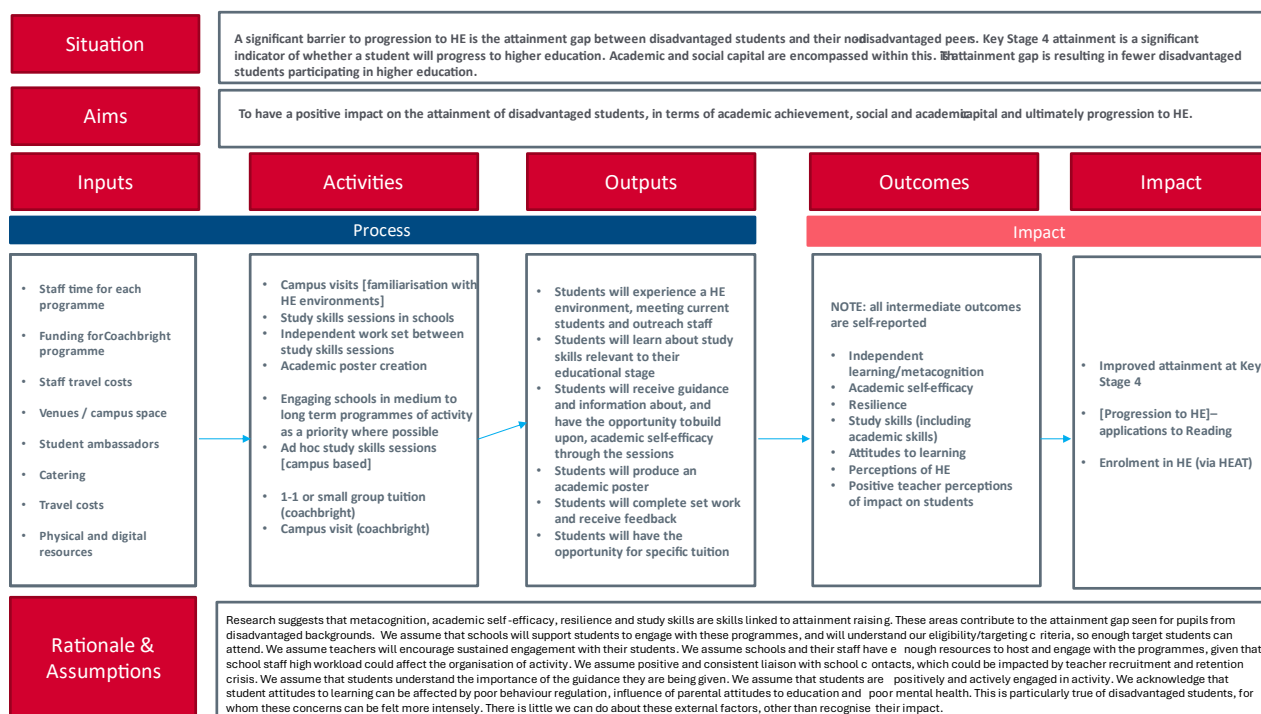
Finally, thank you to Lydia Fletcher for providing such a wide range of support and resources to ensure this programme is robustly evaluated. This work safeguards the continued improvement of the programme for young people, through empowering practitioners to undertake detailed data analysis and research.

Notes

This report has been reviewed by members of the Access and Participation Evaluation Subcommittee (APES), with particular support from Lydia Fletcher on data analysis in an earlier version.

Appendix A – Theory of Change

Note: this Theory of Change is for attainment raising, including programmes, of which Year 10 Scholars is one.



Appendix B - Surveys

PRE-PROGRAMME SURVEY- 2023/24

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| FIRST NAME | | HOME POSTCODE | |
| LAST NAME | | GENDER | |
| SCHOOL | | D.O.B | |

What is your ethnicity? (Please tick below)

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Black or Black British/African | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other Mixed Background | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Black or Black British/Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Black Background | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gypsy/Roma/Traveller | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asian or Asian British/Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> | White British | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asian or Asian British/Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> | White Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asian or Asian British/Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other White Background | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Asian Background | <input type="checkbox"/> | Prefer not to say | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mixed White and Black African | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please state below) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mixed White and Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

APP Evaluation Y10 Scholars – 2023/24

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Do you have a learning difficulty or disability? (Please circle) | Yes/No Details: |
| Are you eligible to receive free school meals? (Please circle) | Yes/No |
| Are you, or have you previously been, in Local Authority Care? (Please circle) | Yes/No |
| Are you currently a Young Carer? (Please circle) | Yes/No |
| Do one or both of your parent/ guardians serve in the military (including reserves)? (Please circle) | Yes/No |

| How interested are you in going to university? | Please tick |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Definitely applying | |
| Very interested | |
| Somewhat interested | |
| Unlikely to apply | |

PLEASE TURN THIS PAGE OVER AND COMPLETE THE OTHER SIDE, THANK YOU.

We are interested in how Reading Scholars helps you develop ideas about University and also the study skills we will be using throughout the programme. As such, please can you score the following statements, thinking about how they apply to you right now from 1 to 7, with 1 being 'not at all', and 7 being 'definitely'

APP Evaluation Y10 Scholars – 2023/24

The personal information you supply on this form will be used to help us deliver our outreach programme, to reply to any future enquiries, and for quality assurance and data analytics purposes. The contact information you supply is confidential and will be treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2016), the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and all applicable Data Protection laws. Please refer to the University of

| Question | Score |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| I want to go to university | |
| I can go to University if I choose to | |
| I think going to university will help me in my future career | |
| I believe I would have the opportunity to further my hobbies and interests at university through other opportunities such as clubs and societies | |
| When I am done with my work, I ask myself if I learned what I wanted to learn. | |
| I think about what I need to learn before I start working. | |
| I ask myself how well I am doing while I am learning something new. | |
| I really pay attention to important information. | |
| I learn more when I am interested in the topic. | |
| Compared with other students in my year I expect to do well. | |
| I'm certain I can understand the ideas taught in my lessons. | |
| I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned in my lessons. | |
| My study skills are excellent compared with others | |
| I know that I will be able to learn new study skills and material in the future | |
| I can bounce back if something goes wrong. | |
| I am happy to ask for help with learning when I need it and know who to ask. | |
| I carry on trying when things are hard. | |
| I am a hard worker | |
| I know what a good research question is | |
| When working on a project, I know how to undertake research to help me complete my work | |
| I know how to reference properly when I use different sources of information in my work and avoid plagiarism | |
| I am confident at asking for help and sharing my ideas with others in a group | |
| I am good at gathering information from multiple sources and bringing this together to develop an argument | |
| I am good at receiving feedback and acting on this | |

Reading Privacy Policy for more information. The data collected will be used to evaluate the impact of the activity in widening participation to Higher Education. Only organisations that require the information for the funding, delivery, evaluation and tracking of these outreach activities, including the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT), and the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA), will be given access to the data. This data will be anonymised for reporting purposes. Your data will be stored on a secure database for future tracking and correspondence.

I agree to the University of Reading using my data in this way.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Post-programme survey- 2023/24

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------------|--|
| FIRST NAME | | LAST NAME | |
| SCHOOL | | GENDER | |

Complete the sentences below:

The thing I enjoyed the most about Year 10 Reading Scholars is...

Something I have learnt that will help me in school is...

| How interested are you in going to university? | Please tick |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Definitely applying | |
| Very interested | |
| Somewhat interested | |
| Unlikely to apply | |

PLEASE TURN THIS PAGE OVER AND COMPLETE THE OTHER SIDE, THANK YOU.

We are interested in how Reading Scholars helps you develop ideas about University and also the study skills we will be using throughout the programme. As such, please can you score the following statements, thinking about how they apply to you right now from 1 to 7, with 1 being ‘not at all’, and 7 being ‘definitely’.

| Question | Score |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| I want to go to university | |
| I can go to University if I choose to | |
| I think going to university will help me in my future career | |
| I believe I would have the opportunity to further my hobbies and interests at university through other opportunities such as clubs and societies | |
| When I am done with my work, I ask myself if I learned what I wanted to learn. | |
| I think about what I need to learn before I start working. | |
| I ask myself how well I am doing while I am learning something new. | |
| I really pay attention to important information. | |
| I learn more when I am interested in the topic. | |
| Compared with other students in my year I expect to do well. | |
| I’m certain I can understand the ideas taught in my lessons. | |
| I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned in my lessons. | |
| My study skills are excellent compared with others | |
| I know that I will be able to learn new study skills and material in the future | |
| I can bounce back if something goes wrong. | |
| I am happy to ask for help with learning when I need it and know who to ask. | |
| I carry on trying when things are hard. | |
| I am a hard worker | |
| I know what a good research question is | |
| When working on a project, I know how to undertake research to help me complete my work | |
| I know how to reference properly when I use different sources of information in my work and avoid plagiarism | |
| I am confident at asking for help and sharing my ideas with others in a group | |
| I am good at gathering information from multiple sources and bringing this together to develop an argument | |
| I am good at receiving feedback and acting on this | |

The personal information you supply on this form will be used to help us deliver our outreach programme, to reply to any future enquiries, and for quality assurance and data analytics purposes. The contact information you supply is confidential and will be treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2016), the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and all applicable Data Protection laws. Please refer to the University of Reading Privacy Policy for more information. The data collected will be used to evaluate the impact of the activity in widening participation to Higher Education. Only organisations that require the information for the funding, delivery, evaluation and tracking of these outreach activities, including the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT), and the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA), will be given access to the data. This data will be anonymised for reporting purposes. Your data will be stored on a secure database for future tracking and correspondence.

I agree to the University of Reading using my data in this way.

Signed: _____ Date: _____