



Villiers Park
Educational Trust



We Are Villiers Park

IMPACT REPORT 2022



Welcome



Gaby Sumner
Interim Chief Executive

WELCOME TO WE ARE VILLIERS, THE FIRST OF OUR NEW-LOOK ANNUAL IMPACT REPORTS.

If my background as a fundraiser has taught me anything, it's the power of human stories. That's why, this year, we are focusing on our stories of impact.

In this year's Report, you'll hear from some inspirational people. Robin, one of our Future Leaders from the Swindon programme, discusses the challenges young LGBTQ+ people face and how Villiers Park has helped them find their voice.

I'm always blown away by the infectious enthusiasm of Benita, our alumni trustee who challenges us to think about how language and labels can help and hinder people trying to carve their own path.

Abigail, Lewis and Mustafa tell us about how Villiers Park has supported them in developing the confidence, tenacity and creativity

to think big about what they want to do. Abigail shares how a residential programme helped her plan her route into higher education. Lewis discusses the stress of the pandemic and how coaching gave him the space to question what he really wanted to do after college. And Mustafa shares a motivational story of leaving Afghanistan and being inspired to further his interest in history and politics.

On the subject of politics, my hope that we will one day have a Villiers Park alumni in Number 10 came a step closer this year when a group of Future Leaders spent a week on work experience in the House of Commons. You can read how they got on on page 25.

On page 13, we outline how our Future Leaders Programme works and we profile some of our

key supporters, such as Sopra Steria. We showcase our new programme, Sustainable Futures, run in partnership with WWF UK and Founders4Schools, and funded by the Evolution Education Trust on page 17, and on page 22 you can read about our Specialist Pathway Support programmes, which enable Future Leaders to prepare for the most competitive university courses and apprenticeship programmes.

We couldn't do what we do without the generosity and dedication of our staff, volunteers, partners and supporters. If you'd like to find out more about how you can help, I'd love to hear from you. Email me at vp@villierspark.org.uk.



This year is about
the power of
human stories.





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THANK YOU

Page 33: Working together with partners and supporters, we're changing lives. This is our thank you.



About Villiers Park Educational Trust

Villiers Park is a national social justice charity. We deliver evidence-informed programmes that develop personal and employability skills and raise academic outcomes for under-represented young people aged 14-19.

We support organisations to develop their own approaches to inclusive learning and working cultures and we work to influence policy at the highest level to ensure all young people have opportunities to succeed.

Our vision is a world in which everyone can realise and fulfil their potential and lead society into an equitable, healthy future.

GET IN TOUCH:



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A Foundation for my Future

TO SAY THAT MY TIME WITH VILLIERS PARK HAS BEEN A JOURNEY WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT.

Since joining the programme in Year 12, I've changed and grown in so many ways – academically, personally, and socially. Throughout this period, I've been supported by Villiers Park in ways I couldn't imagine. It's given me amazing opportunities to learn and develop interests and curiosity, and ultimately helped me to become who I am.

The Future Leaders Programme has given me a great foundation for my future; it's allowed me to talk to people in ways I had never been able to do so before. Without Villiers Park I would not have the skills to talk publicly without fear. But I think the biggest thing Villiers Park has given me is the confidence to be myself and the support to follow my dreams.

I have been writing and illustrating since my early teens and have self-published a number of books. I think I always knew I wanted to follow one of these paths academically, and Villiers Park has been nothing but supportive. I was thrilled to get offers from four Russell Group universities, and I started my degree in English literature at Edinburgh in October 2022.





Robin created this poster to help signpost others to diverse and under-represented identities in literature and film.



Villiers Park has given me the confidence to be myself and the support to follow my dreams.

Being a young trans person can add an extra layer of complexity to growing up. It entails a lot of big choices and can often feel very isolating. Because of Villiers Park's support, I felt empowered to create a Leadership Challenge project which brings my experiences as a trans person together with my love of books. My poster helps signpost others to diverse and under-represented identities in literature and film. It's so important for young LGBTQ+ people to see themselves represented.

Our lives and stories are important and deserve to be told. I've also written a book about gender identity which answers some of the questions others may have about what it means to be non-binary, gender-queer or trans.

I'll definitely keep in touch with Villiers Park. I hope I can use my experiences as a Future Leader to help others in some way.

Robin Kinge is a Future Leader from Swindon.

Giving Something Back

BENITA UDEGBE ON BEING VILLIERS PARK'S FIRST ALUMNI TRUSTEE.

I'm proud to be the very first alumni trustee at Villiers Park, having joined the board in September 2021. The Programme and people here had a big impact on me so I'm happy to be able to give something back. This is a great opportunity for me to see things from the other side of the table and, hopefully, represent current Future Leaders' voices at board level. It's fantastic to work with trustees from a wide range of backgrounds - I'm learning a lot!

I knew before I started the Villiers Park Programme that I wanted to be a lawyer, and that university was the way to achieve that, but I knew little about the steps I'd need to take to get there.

What Villiers Park really did for me was put opportunities for personal development within my grasp - things that I simply wouldn't have known about without being on the Programme. The subject-specific residential course on law really opened my eyes: we talked about human rights and criminal law and were able to visit a prison. The internship at Freshfields gave me a feel for what it is really like to work for a multinational law firm. Prior to this, law was just this abstract idea for a good career, but, through Villiers Park, it became something I really wanted to do for the right reasons; it cemented it for me.



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Benita



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Benita on her placement with Freshfields.

1/3

OF PARTNERS

in law firms are women

22%

OF UK LAWYERS ATTEND A FEE- PAYING SCHOOL

compared with just 7% of
the population

92%

OF TRUSTEES ARE WHITE

2/3 are male and the
average age is 55-64

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT THE NEXT GENERATION OF FUTURE LEADERS ACHIEVES.

Growing up in Eastbourne and going to Hastings College, it never even occurred to me that I was from a "disadvantaged" background, and I certainly never felt that word applied to me or my peers. I must admit it jarred me to hear it being used in the context of our young people when I became a trustee.

Through this appointment, I've come to understand that Villiers Park works in areas with lower progression rates to higher and further education - something which is a common indicator of economic disadvantage. I've since learned that several areas within Eastbourne - and many more within Hastings - are in the most economically deprived 10% in all of England. While I might not consider myself disadvantaged, it's clear there are big gaps in opportunity and outcomes across the UK.

"Under-represented" is a term that sits better with me, and that's true in my chosen field of law: the percentage of female lawyers

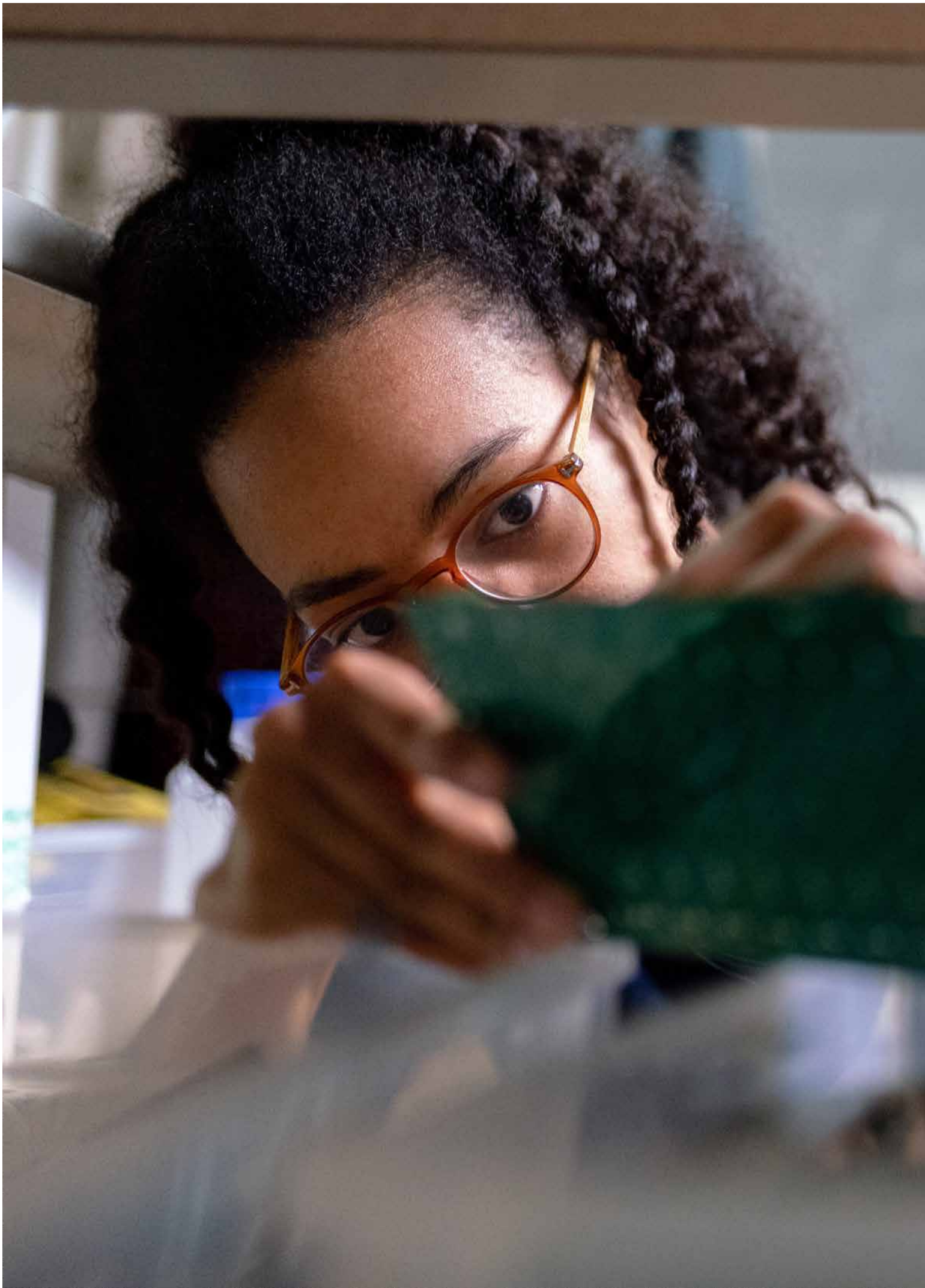
roughly mirrors the population average, but we make up only 1/3 of partners - the most senior position in a law firm. 22% of UK lawyers attended a fee-paying school compared with just 7% of the population - so maybe we should be talking about the problem of "over-representation"! A few years ago, just 2% of UK lawyers were black compared to 3% of the UK workforce - fully a third fewer¹. It's now 3%, so some things are moving in the right direction!

Speaking of representation, the Charity Commission² reported in 2017 that 92% of trustees are white, two-thirds are male and the average age is between 55-64 years old, so I'm very pleased to be moving the needle on that.

I can't wait to see what the next generation of Future Leaders achieves.

Benita Udegbe is a Villiers Park alumnus, lawyer and a member of our board of trustees.

1. <https://tinyurl.com/diverse-legal>
2. <https://tinyurl.com/diverse-law>



Feature

The Reece Foundation

Our six-year, STEM-focussed partnership with the Reece Foundation is absolutely critical to our Future Leaders' success. Over that time, it has enabled our Tyneside team to mentor and coach over 500 students, helping them to realise their academic and career potential.

The Programme began as the STEM Scholars Programme, aimed at maximising the potential of disadvantaged young people with a high aptitude in STEM subjects from Years 10 to 13, living in Newcastle and North Tyneside. It then evolved to become the Future Leaders Programme, a coaching-led approach that gives young people more agency over the education and career choices they make.

The Reece Foundation's support has enabled young people under-represented in STEM sectors to pursue

their aspirations and goals. Anne Reece, chair of trustees at the Reece Foundation, said:

"The Reece Foundation is delighted to be sponsoring this innovative project which is helping these talented youngsters to both enjoy and make the most of the opportunities that are open to them. Tyneside, and the country as a whole, is very short of technical and engineering skills and these pupils will be helping fill that gap when they complete their education. We wish them all the very best in the future."



We Are Villiers

What We Do

Villiers Park is committed to discovering untapped potential and nurturing curiosity, tenacity and creativity. We empower young people to succeed and have confident futures by discovering the skills and knowledge they need to become the leaders of tomorrow.



A VALUES-LED ORGANISATION

Our values guide everything we do as an organisation:



FAIRNESS

We strive for justice and argue unwaveringly for fairness in a world of compromise, prejudice, inequality and deeply entrenched disadvantage.



ASPIRATION

We set high expectations for our whole community. We continually seek ways to improve what we do, how we do it, and the impact we have on the world around us, particularly by working in partnership with others where this helps us make a bigger difference.



COURAGE

We create an environment where we can be courageous by speaking and listening openly and honestly. We know that courage means taking risks and support each other to learn.

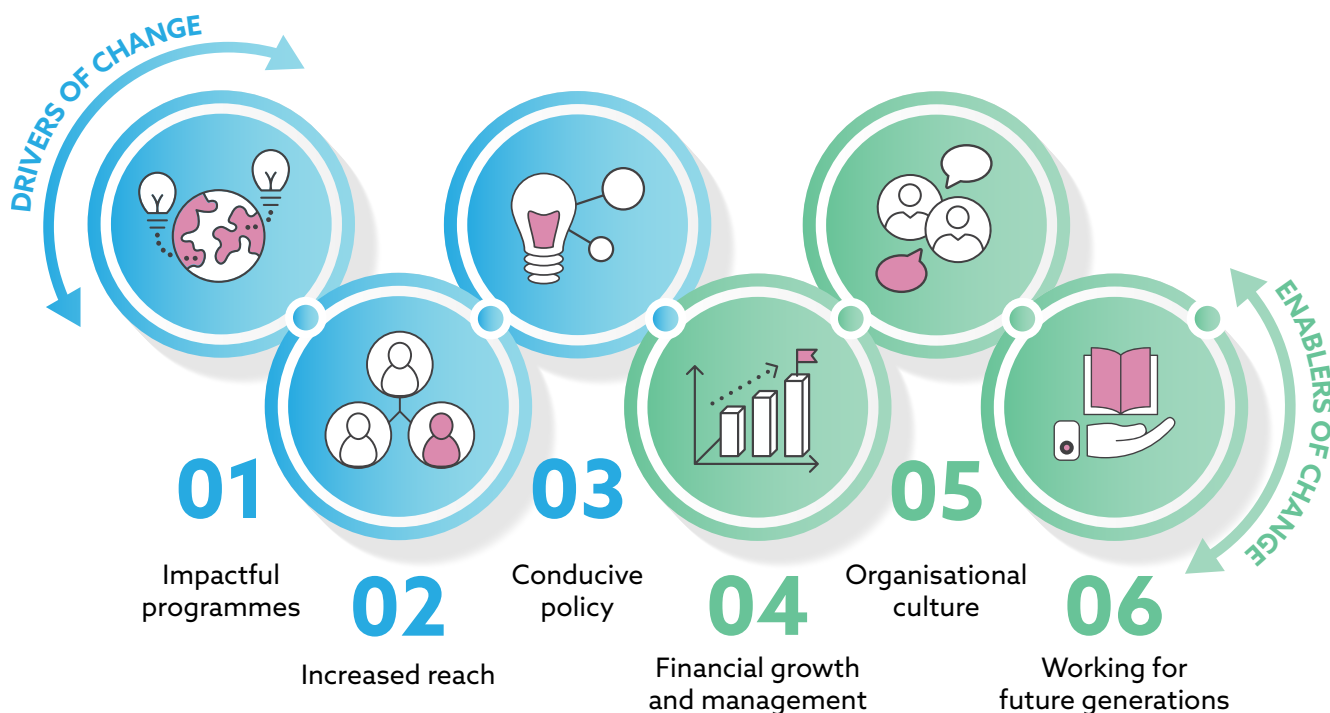


EMPOWERMENT

We are passionate about working with individuals to enable them to find the skills and resources within themselves to flourish and have healthy futures.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

For the period 2020-2025 we have six strategic priorities, with three focused on driving transformational change and a further three focused on our organisational health and resilience.



We Are Villiers

The Two-way Value of True Partnerships

ADRIAN FIELDHOUSE TALKS ABOUT SOPRA STERIA'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING PEOPLE FROM UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS AND WORKING WITH VILLIERS PARK.

"Pay it forward" is a hackneyed phrase, but nonetheless sums up how I feel about supporting young people from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds. I myself came from a family where money was tight and opportunities to expand my horizons were limited. I knew I was just as capable as people from more privileged backgrounds, but I had to work harder to make my own opportunities than those with the networks and confidence that privilege brings. It felt unfair and wrong.

In Sopra Steria I have found a company that shares my ambition to support bright, determined young people who simply need some extra help and support to thrive in this industry. We have long recognised that diversity of thought and experience is vital to a healthy, effective company - and to a society facing some of its greatest challenges to date. Widening participation is not just a tick-box exercise for us. We believe not just in equality, but in equity: fairness in outcomes through targeted, personalised support.

This is a goal we share with Villiers Park, an organisation with more than a century of experience in what has become known as social mobility: enabling people to see beyond the limits of what they thought they could achieve and giving them the tools to reach their potential. In our first year of working together, we've not only achieved some great outcomes for the young people we serve but understood how we can go further in our shared aims. Being able to present Future Leaders with various awards at their end-of year Celebration Events was the greatest moment of the partnership so far. It was inspiring to hear first-hand from the young people about their

progress on the Future Leaders Programme, and their plans for the future.

I'm really excited to see what Future Leaders choose to do with the Sopra Steria Opportunities Fund now available to them. This will enable them to gain experience of the courses or careers they might want to follow, helping them to make informed choices. Visiting multiple universities or buying clothes for an interview is something many people take for granted. For others, it's simply unaffordable. The fund gives every Future Leader - and their parents or carers, if they need to accompany them - the opportunity to have enriching experiences that will guide their next steps.

There's more we can do as a company to create a nurturing environment for people from under-represented backgrounds. Most importantly, we need to listen to them and learn from their experiences, which is why I'm excited about the prospect of Future Leaders doing some "reverse mentoring" with us as the partnership develops. Here's to an impactful year ahead!



Adrian Fieldhouse is the Managing Director for Government Sector at Sopra Steria.

sopra  steria



“ Widening participation is not just a tick-box exercise for us. We believe not just in equality, but in equity: fairness in outcomes through targeted, personalised support.

Where We Work, and Why

We work in areas with historically low participation in higher education and persistently high levels of deprivation, ensuring that young people aren't disadvantaged by the postcode lottery.



TYNESIDE

Across Tyneside, there remains a persistent gap in educational attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers. In 2021, the north east region had the lowest higher education entry rate for 18-year-olds (32%) in England. The 2022 exam results reflect a widening gap between the north and the south of the country¹.



SWINDON

Swindon has low levels of residents with level 4 or higher qualification — 34.4% compared to a national rate of 40.3% — so it is common for families to have little or no experience of higher education. Participation in some wards in the town is less than 20%². Swindon's relative deprivation is most severe in the education, skills and training domain, and nearly 10% of neighbourhoods in Swindon are among the most deprived in England. In 2016-17, just 34 per cent of pupils went to higher education, placing Swindon 147th out of 152 local authorities³.

1. <https://tinyurl.com/vpwork1>
2. <https://tinyurl.com/vpwork2>
3. <https://tinyurl.com/vpwork3>



TYNESIDE

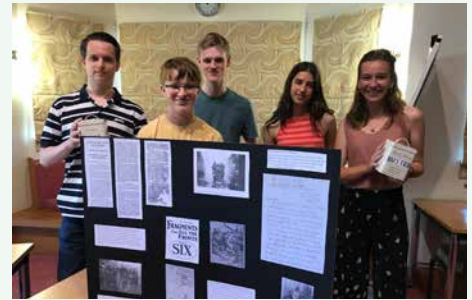
- 63 Future Leaders
- 192 Coaching sessions
- 94 Leadership Challenge sessions
- 24 Leadership Challenges completed
- 3 Residentials
- 22 University intro days
- 11 Sustainable Futures workshops
- 24 Year 10 information days

NORWICH

- 26 Future Leaders
- 28 Coaching sessions
- 6 Leadership Challenge sessions
- 3 Leadership Challenges completed

HASTINGS & BEXHILL

- 109 Future Leaders
- 307 Coaching sessions
- 94 Leadership Challenge sessions
- 21 Leadership Challenges completed
- 6 Residentials
- 39 University intro days
- 29 Sustainable Futures workshops
- 48 Year 10 information days
- 2 House of Commons work experience



HASTINGS & BEXHILL

Hastings is the most deprived local authority in south east England. Almost 40% of young people are living in poverty compared with 29% for the whole of England. Recent government research shows that just 10% of young people in East Sussex eligible for free school meals progress to higher education⁴.



NORWICH

Eight LSOAs in Norwich are in the top 10% most deprived nationally. That's approximately 10% of the population – roughly 13,000 people. Norwich is in the bottom five out of 317 local authorities in England for educational attainment, skills and training, and has seen a dramatic rise in benefit claimants since the start of the pandemic⁵.

4. <https://tinyurl.com/vpwork4>

5. <https://tinyurl.com/vpwork5>



Future Leaders Programme

Future Leaders Programme

Despite increasing numbers of students from low-income families going to university, their life outcomes remain poorer than those of their peers.

Disadvantaged young people are among the most vulnerable to the longer-term social and economic impacts of the pandemic. Nationally, the Education Endowment Foundation has projected that a decade's progress to close the attainment gap between less advantaged young people and their peers was completely wiped out during lockdown. Young people will live with the repercussions of this disruption to their education for decades to come.

That's why our flagship Future Leaders Programme is so important. Future Leaders builds on the success of our long-running Scholars and Inspiring Excellence programmes and is rooted in the

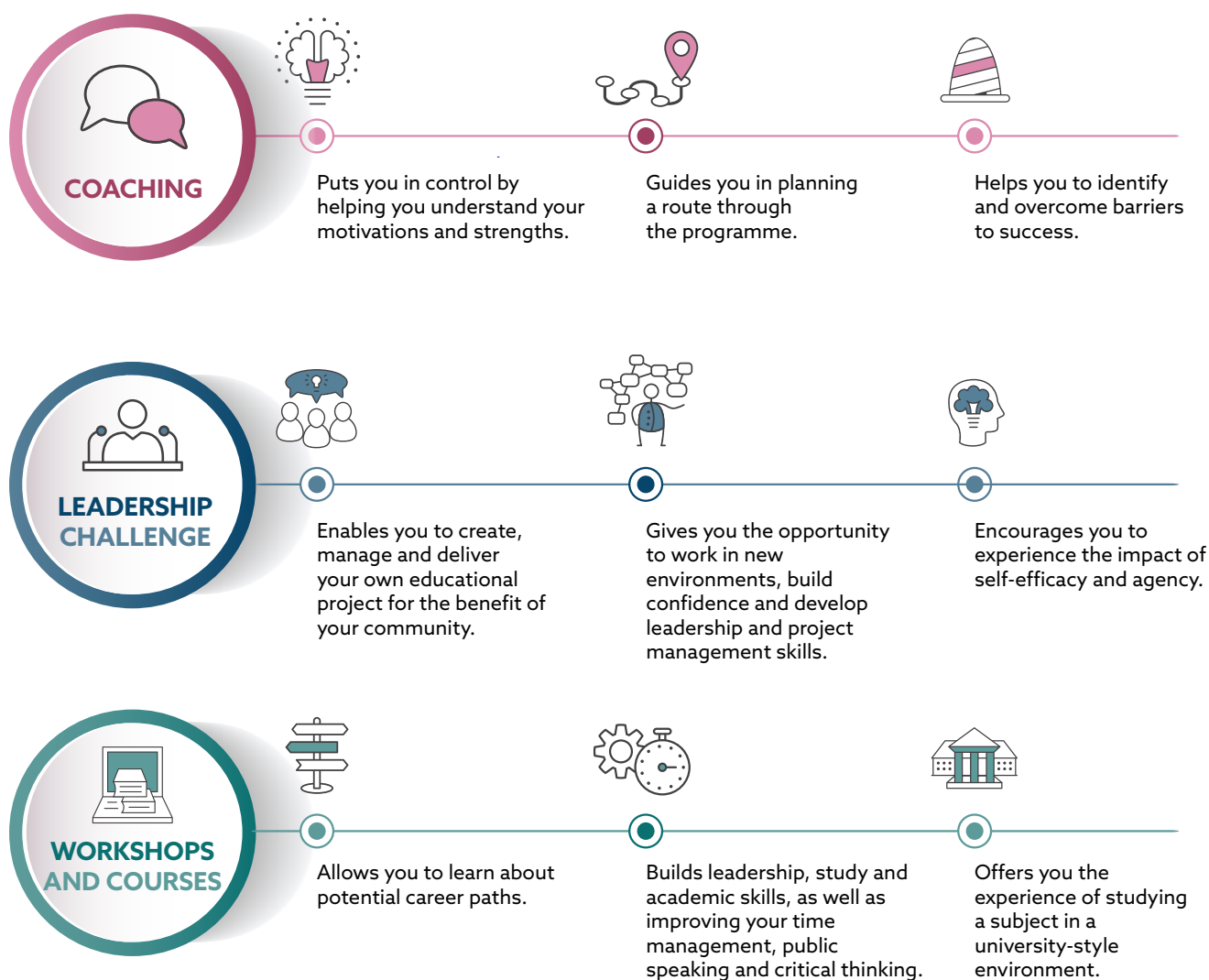
'possible selves' approach, a psychological theory that the more realistic a future seems to an individual, the more likely they are to find different pathways to achieve that future.

The Future Leaders Programme is structured around three core elements. Partner schools and colleges have the option of working with us to deliver all three elements or chose one or two individual elements. Young people are equipped with tools to develop the self-efficacy, agency, skills and motivations they need to become leaders in their chosen field.

Our **coaching model** is delivered by our experienced coaches and mentors. We use a non-directive supportive framework that encourages young people to clarify their purpose and values and gives them the agency to translate these into their desired future through encouraging curiosity, tenacity and creativity.

The **Leadership Challenge** is a project that students can undertake individually or in a group. It will encourage them to make a positive difference to their peers (either in school, college or the wider community) and society as a whole.

Future Leaders also take part in a wide range of **courses, workshops and group projects**. These activities support individuals to further develop the skills, behaviours and attributes they need to succeed in the future.





Future Leaders Programme

Rising to the Challenge

With the climate and nature emergencies already changing the jobs market, we're working to widen opportunities for young people to thrive in the future green economy.

Over the past few years, we have been scaling up our work on sustainability. Generous support from Anne Hyde Villiers enabled us to establish a Climate Change & Biodiversity Loss course, and this year we launched our new landmark green careers programme, Sustainable Futures, developed in partnership with WWF UK and Founders4Schools.



Climate change is here and there are things we can do about it. The nature crisis and biodiversity loss are hardly talked about in schools; we need to move faster to embed these topics in the curriculum. I'm happy that, through Villiers Park, I can help give young people opportunities to start thinking more deeply about these issues.

- Anne Hyde Villiers

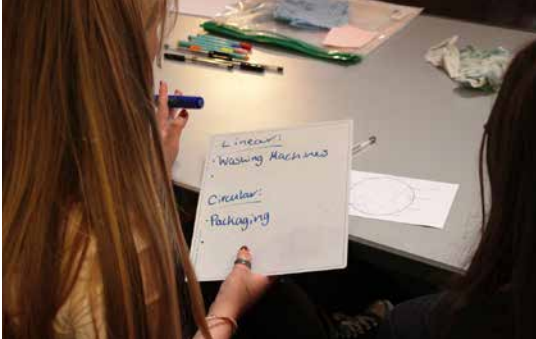


We cannot let young people grow up unaware of climate change, and yet we must find ways to teach this most serious of subjects without engendering fear.





We want every pupil aged 14-18 in the UK to take the course, so they have the tools to make planet-friendly career choices.



I've always wanted to go further into sustainability so it's only fuelled my enthusiasm.

- Sustainable Futures participant



I have learned all about sustainability, something I walked in knowing nothing about. We covered all corners of the subject and I walked out heavily informed on how to sustain the world for future generations.

- Sustainable Futures participant

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES: A LANDMARK GREEN CAREERS PROGRAMME

Sustainable Futures is a new green careers programme for secondary schools and colleges developed in partnership with WWF UK and Founders4Schools (F4S) with the support of the Evolution Education Trust.

It equips young people with the knowledge and skills to help them thrive in a future green economy, no matter what career path they choose.

We want every pupil aged 14-18 in the UK to take the course, so they have the tools to make planet-friendly career choices. It's an ambitious target, but big problems need bold solutions. To enable this, every school can get free certified CPD training to deliver the programme from November 2022.

Sustainable Futures responds to these pressing needs:

- A swift and effective transition to a green economy, necessitated by the climate crisis and biodiversity loss.
- The creation of a groundswell of future prospects for young people emerging from education at a time of environmental crisis and economic upheaval.
- The need to ensure that all new green jobs are filled by people from all corners of our society.



FIND OUT MORE

www.sustainable-futures.co.uk

Feature

Mathworks

MATHWORKS IS THE LEADING DEVELOPER OF MATHEMATICAL COMPUTING SOFTWARE FOR ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS.

The company has supported our courses and workshops in STEM subjects for the last 4 years. One of their major products is MATLAB and they first began sponsoring our applied mathematics residential course to introduce A level students to the application and use of MATLAB as a digital tool for collating and analysing data. So far, 81 students have completed the two residentials and one online course, with 90% rating the course as either good or excellent, and 84% agreeing that the course had increased their passion for the subject.

81

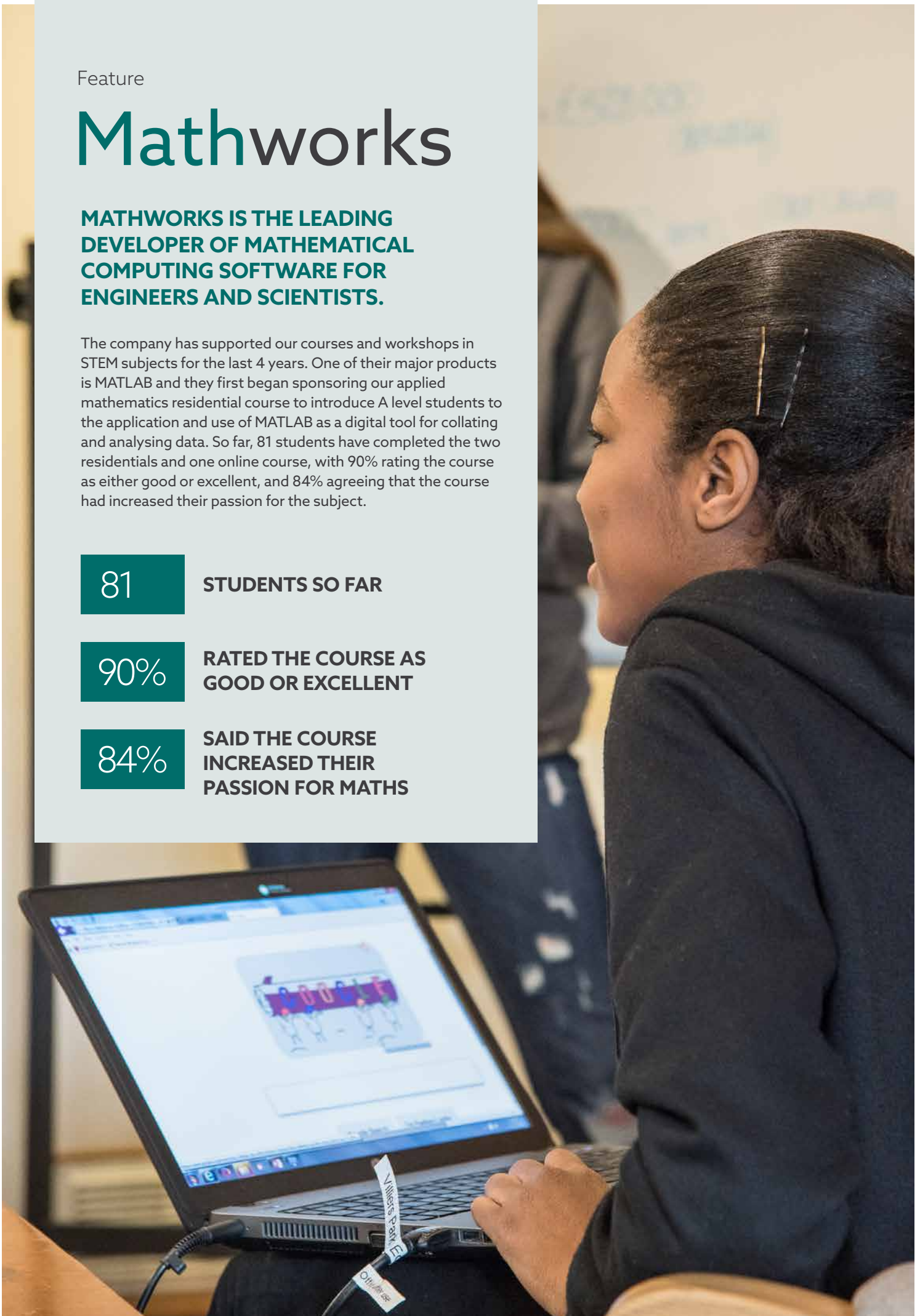
STUDENTS SO FAR

90%

RATED THE COURSE AS GOOD OR EXCELLENT

84%

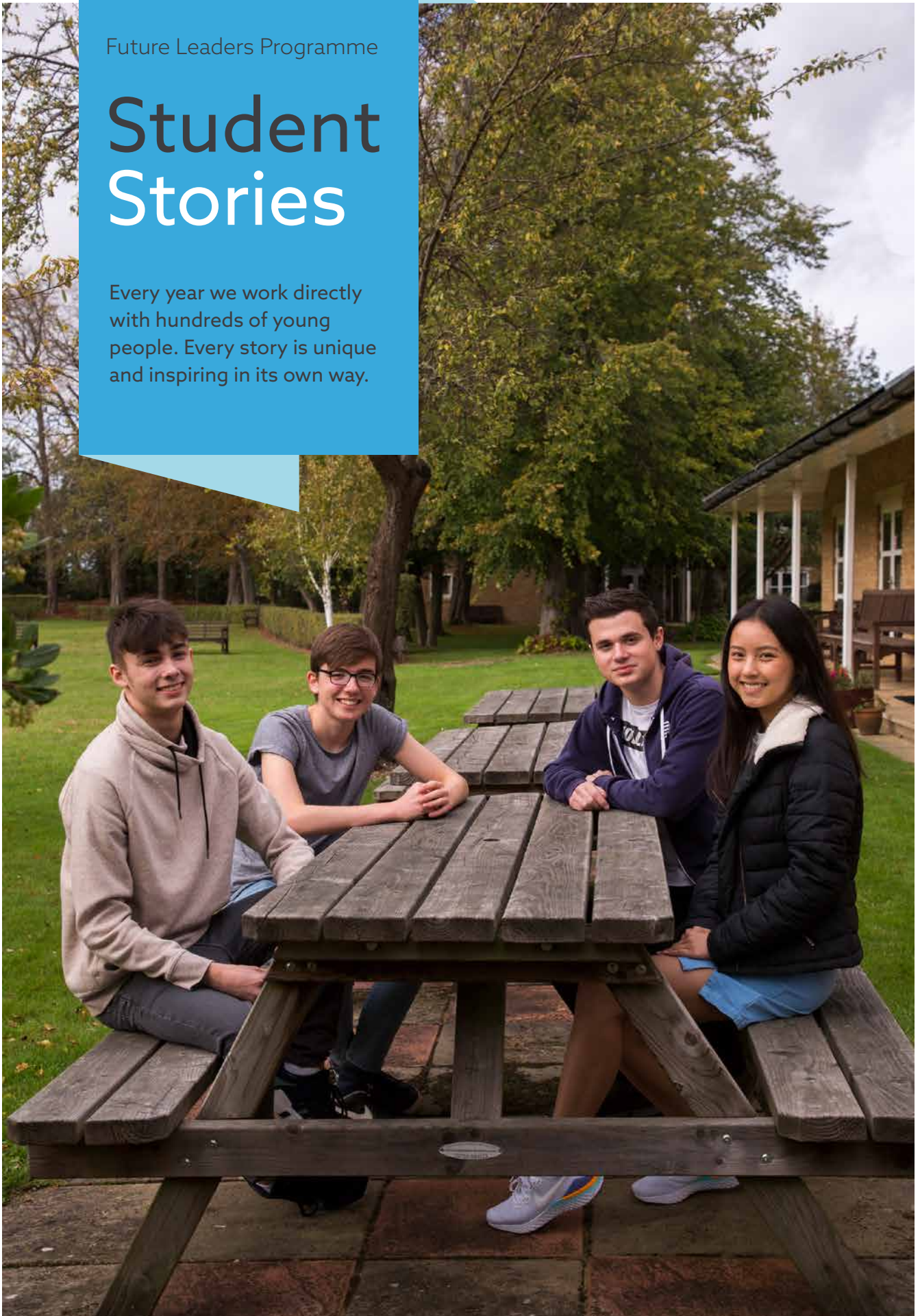
SAID THE COURSE INCREASED THEIR PASSION FOR MATHS



Future Leaders Programme

Student Stories

Every year we work directly with hundreds of young people. Every story is unique and inspiring in its own way.



MUSTAFA'S MILESTONES

Originally from Afghanistan, Mustafa moved to the UK with his family when he was three years old.

Despite having a keen interest in politics and global affairs from a young age, he didn't get the GCSE grades he'd hoped for and started Year 12 at Ark Alexandra Academy without a clear academic pathway. Then he was introduced to Alex, a Villiers Park Progression Coach, who helped him to clarify his values and ambitions.

Seeing his potential, Alex suggested that Mustafa work towards the Cambridge Foundation Year, where he could experience a mix of subjects including classics, history and politics. This would give Mustafa an introduction to life at Cambridge and the option to progress to an undergraduate degree course if he achieved 65%+ in his end of year exams:

"When I found out about the Cambridge Foundation Year, I was really excited; it looked like an amazing opportunity. Alex suggesting it gave me the confidence and motivation to push myself harder academically."

Once the school was aware of the Cambridge Foundation Year and Mustafa's new-found drive, they helped him identify other opportunities that could support him on his journey, such as the Cambridge summer school he attended in 2021:

"Before I started working with Villiers Park, I guess I wasn't really the sort of student that would have been an obvious choice, but once they knew I was capable and committed I got lots of other opportunities such as help with my personal statement, interview practice and so on."

Mustafa applied for a variety of leading universities including Cambridge, ultimately accepting a place to study politics and international relations at University College London (UCL):

"I'm super-happy to have achieved a place at UCL. Being on the Future Leaders Programme has boosted my confidence massively and challenged me in helpful ways – by not making things easy, testing my limits. The practice interviews in particular made me realise I have to prepare more; but rather than being scary, it's productive. It reduced the anxiety because I knew what to expect."

"Villiers has a strong emphasis on helping educationally, but Alex always checked in with me on a personal level at the start of every session. It's nice to have someone impartial – not your parents or school – who you can talk openly to. That's something I really value."



It's nice to have someone impartial – not your parents or school – who you can talk openly to.

LEWIS'S LEADERSHIP

Lewis has recently taken up a place at Newcastle University to study engineering. He joined the Villiers Park Future Leaders Programme at Churchill Community College in October 2020, as a Year 12, at the height of the coronavirus pandemic.

Despite the Programme being delivered online, Lewis worked hard with his Progression Coach to create a clearer vision and plan for his future. One of his main challenges was time-management and balancing multiple commitments like his leadership role in the Army Cadets, something coaching helped him tackle. Working with his Villiers Park coach Alex, engineering became Lewis' subject focus.

"Before I started on the Future Leaders Programme, I didn't see myself going to uni. I was planning to join the RAF after sixth form, but through my conversations with Alex I realised that might limit my options later on. I still don't think I'd have done it without help choosing a uni or with my personal statement – things like that. My parents didn't go to uni so they couldn't really

help with the process or informing me about what it would be like, and they were really worried about the financial impact."

Through coaching conversations, Lewis decided that he wanted to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering near his home in the north east and chose Newcastle University.

"I did consider going further afield, but most of my mates are doing apprenticeships locally. Leaving the area would have meant leaving everything behind, so living at home during my first year was a compromise but I'm planning on moving out next year. Alex also helped me to apply for a bursary. I couldn't believe it when I got it. That's going to help a lot with costs which is massively reassuring for my parents, and for me."



Now in his first term, Lewis is still getting his head around another big step up in academic workload, plus everything else that comes with entering higher education. He's busy, but coping well – something he credits the Future Leaders Programme with:

"Villiers helped prepare me for what uni would be like. I'm following the same scheduling process that Alex helped me establish last year. I'm happy now and feel prepared for what's coming in the future."

ABIGAIL'S AMBITION

Abigail is a Year 12 Future Leader at Churchill Community College in Tyneside. Having started on the Future Leaders Programme in Year 10, she achieved outstanding GCSE results.

Villiers Park encouraged and supported Abigail to apply for the Cambridge LPN Summer School, an immersive residential experience for students who've recently completed their GCSEs, show high potential, and live in areas of low progression to higher education.

The summer school, which is organised by Christ's, Sidney Sussex and Murray Edwards colleges, includes a variety of masterclasses given by university

researchers, information about making an application to Cambridge, the opportunity to meet current Cambridge students and staff, and the change to get to know both the city and university. Abigail is now considering a law degree.

Abigail's journey is an illustration of why our student-focused approach is so important. And why specialist pathway support, like help with early entry, is vital.

Specialist Pathway Support

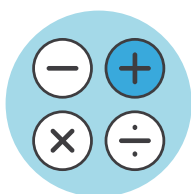
Specialist Pathway Support is an important part of the Future Leaders Programme. Whatever a Future Leader's possible selves are, including applying for the most competitive apprenticeship places or university courses, we are there to support them on their path to success.

EARLY ENTRY

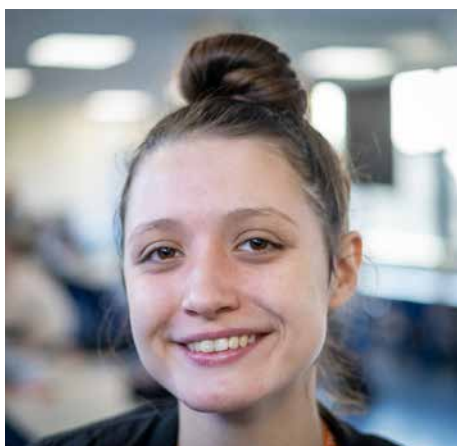
Due to the more involved nature of the Oxbridge application process (and courses in medicine, veterinary science, and dentistry elsewhere), applicants follow an "early entry" system. That means applications have to be submitted three months before standard applications. We support Future Leaders with pre-admissions tests, personal statement work and interview preparation – things that state schools often cannot resource themselves.

The early deadline isn't the only pressure: places at Oxbridge and other high-ranking universities are extremely competitive and applicants undergo an intensive interview process. Whilst the annual Oxbridge intake is now around 70% state school pupils, this includes students from selective sixth-forms and grammar schools. Students from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged groups are still hugely under-represented.

Our partnerships with higher education institutions such as Trinity College, Cambridge are critical to raising our students' aspirations and self-confidence:



IN ORDER TO ASPIRE TO SOMETHING, YOU FIRST HAVE TO EXPERIENCE IT.



HANNAH

Hastings

"My residential at Villiers Park in Year 10 - going to see Trinity College, doing the Women in Maths programme - made Cambridge feel a lot more tangible than it did before. The staff are amazing, and I love how they teach maths there. I remember sitting in the canteen [at Trinity] and looking at the pictures of famous mathematicians who've studied there - it's mind-blowing. I felt like I wouldn't fit in before, but saw such a diverse range of people there. Villiers helped me look at myself in a different way."

LIVED EXPERIENCE: THE VALUE OF ALUMNI SUPPORT

Our early entry support benefits hugely from the input of volunteer alumni, who themselves have been through the early entry process.

Russell, an Oxford physics graduate from Hastings, has been helping to demystify the application process for current Villiers Park students, and helping them to prepare for the interviews and standardised tests:

"When I was applying, I had so much support from my teachers and Villiers Park that I wanted to give something back. I always wished that there was someone with first-hand experience I could ask about the Oxbridge application process, so it's great to be able to add value to the programme this way. I can most help STEM subject applicants, so it would be great if we were able to support any student through this process regardless of subject."

With a few years' experience under his belt, how does Russell feel the early entry support been received by Future Leaders?

"The feedback's been really good. I've witnessed some beautiful moments where it suddenly clicks for students. That helps us to know we're on the right track. You shouldn't be disadvantaged just because of the school you've been to or where you're from. The early entry work helps to level the playing field for state school students who could thrive at Oxbridge but just need that bit of extra help to get there."

Maya Little is also a Villiers Park alumnus and volunteers on the early entry support Programme. Her motivation was also to give something back: "The support I received from Villers Park was holistic; the residential and regular mentoring sessions helped me improve as a learner throughout school and sixth form. One of the most impactful aspects of being on the programme, though, was the highly-targeted support I received when applying to Oxford.

"Having support from people who not only believed I could get in, but who understood the systems I was navigating, made the whole process feel more manageable.

Now she's graduated, Maya is helping a younger generation get to grips with early entry.

"I hope that I was able to give some of the same reassurance I received as a Villiers Park student, and that it will make the admissions process a little less intimidating and a little more fun for others."



RUSSELL REID

VP alumnus



MAYA LITTLE

VP alumnus

I had so much support from my teachers and Villiers Park that I wanted to give something back.

APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT

Higher level and degree apprenticeships are rightly being promoted as an equal – if different – option to the traditional taught degree course. But with fewer disadvantaged young people starting apprenticeships than their non-disadvantaged counterparts at all levels, there is very much a need for Villiers Park's expertise in this area.

While our former flagship Scholars Programme focused on the traditional higher education route, the Future Leaders Programme broadened our focus. There was a growing appetite for apprenticeships among our students, with around half of all Year 10 Future Leaders choosing to research this pathway during a recent course about further and higher education. Acting on this demand, we formalised the delivery model and our Apprenticeship Support Programme launched in 2021. It came at the perfect time for Molly, then a Year 12 at Cirencester College:

"I'd always been set on applying for apprenticeships; traditional university courses never appealed to me. Nonetheless, visits to Merton College, Oxford, and Cambridge University as part of my Villiers residential really opened my eyes to the possibilities. I loved being able to meet new people from across the country – it really expanded my horizons. I completed two Leadership Challenge projects on environmental issues, something that's close to my heart.

"My coaches helped me to explore what I was interested in, and what options there were available to me beyond college. My A levels were in accounting, business and psychology, so I wanted to pursue something that would build on those areas."

It's hard to overstate the competitiveness of apprenticeships, particularly at degree level. Places are hotly contested as they are part of the real-world job market, with places on some programmes having a lower application-to-success ratio than Oxbridge colleges. We offer individual research, application and interview support, just as we do with university applications, to ensure that young people from under-represented backgrounds can compete fairly in a highly competitive market.

Of the 40 Future Leaders on our Apprenticeship Support Programme in 2021-22 across Years 10-13, two Year 13s shone. Collecting an astonishing six degree apprenticeship offers in total, both Teigen and Molly chose to work with

a valued contributor to the Villiers Park apprenticeship programme, St James's Place. Molly said:

"My coaches helped me to identify some apprenticeships in accounting and finance. I applied to Grant Thornton, Nationwide and St. James's Place – a FTSE100 company. I was very lucky to be successful in all three! Making a decision was really tough, but I finally settled on a place at SJP within the Treasury Team, where I will gain an AAT qualification with the aim of becoming a chartered accountant.

"I'm grateful to Villiers Park for the opportunities and support that helped me to become the person I am today. It's so important to realise that university is not the only route after college."



MOLLY

Swindon

"I'm grateful to Villiers Park for the opportunities and support that helped me to become the person I am today. It's so important to realise that university is not the only route after college."

Future Leaders: Future Parliamentarians?

Last summer, three of our Future Leaders participated in the Social Mobility Work Experience Scheme organised by the Chamber & Committees Team in the House of Commons.

I might not end up working in parliament, but I appreciate all the transferable skills I was able to gain through this once-in-a-lifetime experience, including independent research, collective and engaging teamwork, expressive public speaking, and time management.

- Fatema, Future Leader, Swindon

The Scheme provides an opportunity for young people from under-represented backgrounds to develop their understanding of how parliament works and the variety of careers available there, with an aim of inspiring them to apply in the future.

Fatema, Emily and Joshua are all interested in politics and were successful in their applications to the Scheme. The Future Leaders headed to Westminster for a packed week that included a tour of parliament, an afternoon watching a debate in the House of Commons, attending select committee meetings, and a talk with the Commons' speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle.

Each young person was assigned to a department for the duration of the week, giving them the opportunity to develop a thorough understanding of how parliament works as well as testing out some of the career options in Westminster. The experience had a big impact on Emily, a Future Leader from Hastings, who is studying A level politics and considering a degree in the subject:

"I feel very inspired and like the whole world of politics is actually accessible; you don't have to go to Eton or

Oxbridge to work there at any level. Seeing that all sorts of people work there really broke down barriers for me. It's not just the MPs and senior civil servants that you see on TV. It's definitely changed my view on how it works and the opportunities beyond being an MP.

"Meeting the Speaker was really inspiring! I must admit I was surprised at how down-to-earth he was, not at all formal like he is in the chamber. It made me realise that the people making the important decisions and keeping Parliament moving are just everyday people. He progressed from being a local councillor and MP so he's someone with a lifelong passion for politics.

Fatema, from Swindon, was placed with the Communications & Engagement Team:

"I found out about the range of different positions and working environment, which is completely different than what I'd been exposed to in the news. I learnt that each role in parliament helps it move as one body to effectively deal with complex, formal processes as well as day-to-day issues.



FATEMA, JOSHUA AND EMILY WERE EACH ASSIGNED TO A DEPARTMENT FOR THE DURATION OF THE WEEK, GIVING THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF HOW PARLIAMENT WORKS.



A School's Perspective

Our work with young people is firmly embedded in the community; that's why our partnership with schools is so important. Dave Brown talks about his experience of working with Villiers Park to make a difference to the lives of young people.

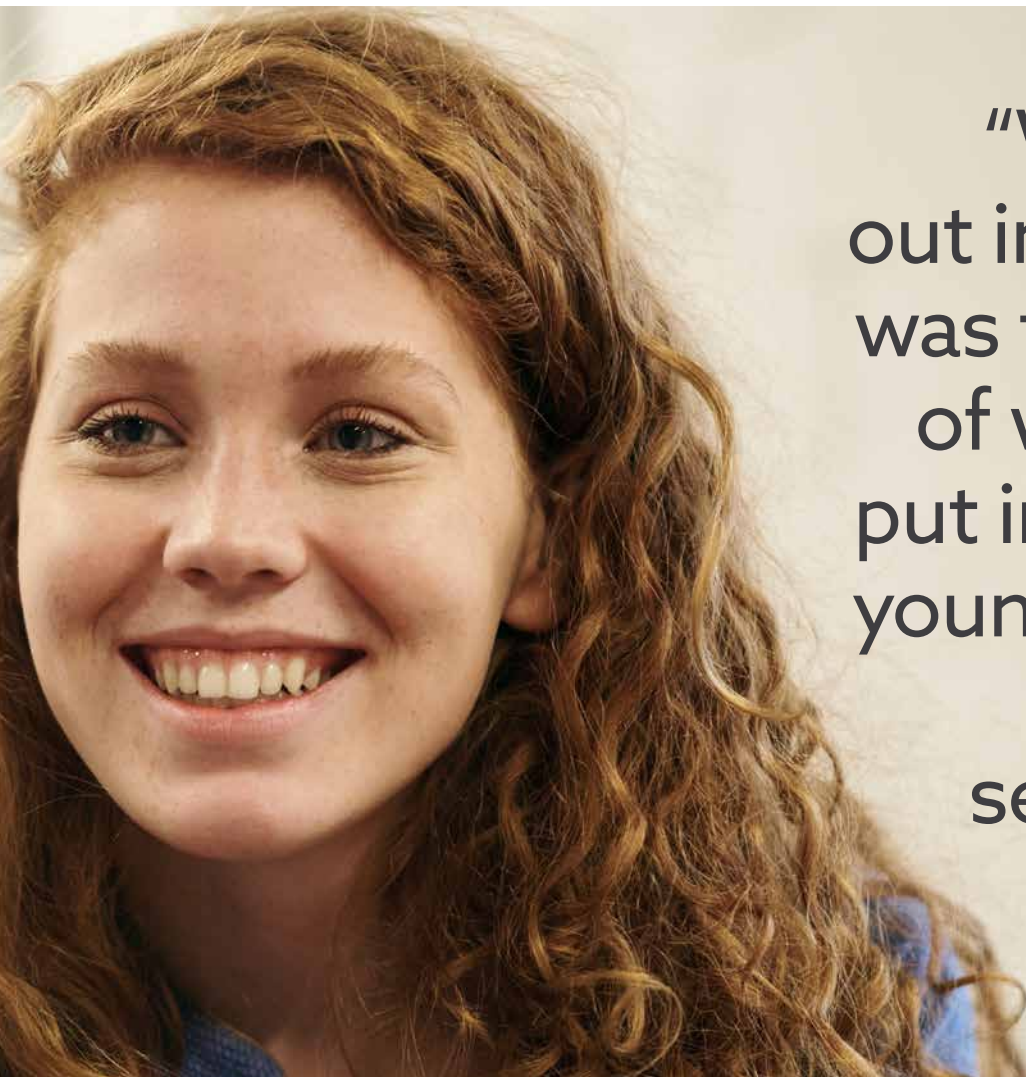


"I first became involved with Villiers Park in 2008. I was Head of Sport and was given my first cross-college responsibility, working on our 'gifted and talented' programme. Villiers' Scholars Programme fitted with the college ethos of providing outstanding opportunities for all students and resonated with me as someone who gained the most satisfaction working with those students whose potential hadn't

been fully realised for a variety of reasons: no family history of post-compulsory education, not yet discovering what they really wanted to do, a lack of confidence or the self-discipline required to fully achieve one's potential.

"What stood out immediately was the amount of work Villiers Park put in to helping young people to develop self-efficacy. Students were

encouraged to reflect on their own progress and targets instead of comparing themselves to others. Rather than being told what to do, Villiers Park supported them to identify pathways that were right for them, and to develop the skills to proceed along them confidently. The Programme required the student to push themselves into new and sometimes uncomfortable situations. It made them focus on



"What stood out immediately was the amount of work Villiers put in to helping young people to develop self-efficacy."

their areas for development whilst celebrating their strengths. It provided an opportunity to meet students in similar situations from similar backgrounds, and the fantastic subject-based courses frequently provided the spark that ignited their passion for a specific area of work.

"Over the past 14 years, Villiers Park has modelled the habits it instils in the young people it serves: being reflective, listening to and acting on feedback, having confidence in its skills and abilities, and being resilient to change – of which there's been a lot, particularly in the past two years. The Future Leaders Programme builds on Scholars in subtle but important ways, ensuring that an even wider range of young people in danger of being overlooked can access and benefit from it. The Programme has become more personalised as it has progressed. The move to a more student-led coaching model in particular has been a key development.

Partnerships with universities, employers and funders have grown and deepened, bringing huge value to a single point of contact in the school.

"The impact of being involved with the Future Leaders Programme is evident in our students. Some realise the impact immediately, whilst many more get in touch with us and Villiers Park years later to say thank you, or to offer help and support as volunteers, mentors, and donors. The Programme is about empowerment and aspiration. Sometimes the hardest thing to try and convince someone of is that they have potential, and they can – and deserve to – achieve success. Villiers Park shows them how it is possible, and that other students just like them have done it, and that the power to do this is in their hands."

Dave Brown is Vice Principal of Bexhill College.



TO FIND OUT HOW VILLIERS PARK CAN WORK WITH YOUR SCHOOL OR COLLEGE TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS, CONTACT THE PROGRAMMES TEAM:

programmes@villierspark.org.uk

Changing Lives for the Long-term

Ian Fowkes on the difference the charity made to his life.

Ian came from a family which didn't have much money and didn't value education. There were few books at home; reading for pleasure was anathema to his parents.

School was an escape for Ian. He went to a large comprehensive and by his own admission was no angel; but education struck a chord with him. His teachers were a heady mix of stern, old-school masters and newly-qualified left-wing radicals. Together, they fostered his sense of curiosity whilst instilling a work ethic in him.

Ian particularly loved English and the arts. He started to dream of going to Oxford to read English and was on course for the grades. Encouraged by his teacher, Brian, he attended a Villiers Park study course in his O level year:

"It was a great experience. I remember feeling like I was being treated as an adult for the first time in my life. It was a very different experience to learning at a big comprehensive school: a small, caring environment. At home, I was made to feel like I had ideas above my station. At Villiers Park, being curious and asking questions was encouraged. It was more about learning for enjoyment than educational outcomes, and that's stuck with me."

Ian was able to attend another Villiers Park course during his A levels and was set to apply to university. But a change in his family's circumstances put pressure on him to take a different path. He spent the next 20 years as a successful City trader, returning to learning in his mid-30s:

"I went back to first-principles: education unlocked opportunities for me; I want to others to have those opportunities; I should become a teacher. I did a part-time Open University degree whilst still working as a trader. I did it in five years instead of the usual six as I was so passionate about it."

Ian started teaching in 2001, later becoming a personal tutor, which is what he does to this day.

"Looking back, I realise how good my teachers were, both at school and Villiers Park. It sounds corny, but they made it seem cool to be curious and to want to learn - and to keep learning throughout life, whether formally or informally. I'll be forever grateful for that."



“

Even at 60, I still
often think of
Villiers Park.



So far, 60 students have registered for the Women in Medicine programme.

Feature

AM

AM PARTNERS WITH LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS TO DIGITISE THE WORLD'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE.

Our partnership with AM was established two years ago, and with their support, we delivered a series of online workshops focused on employability skills. The workshops were a chance for Future Leaders to hear from AM staff who discussed their own career pathways and their current roles at AM. Future Leaders also received advice on preparing CVs and navigating job interviews.

The partnership has continued to grow in strength and this year we have embarked on a new Women in Medicine programme. So far 60 students have registered for the programme which is a mix of online sessions focused on the careers and achievements of individual women working in the field, followed by a research project.

Looking to the Future

AS VILLIERS PARK LOOKS TO THE FUTURE, THERE WILL BE NO LET-UP IN OUR CURIOSITY, CREATIVITY AND TENACITY, AND OUR DETERMINATION TO MAKE THE BIGGEST POSSIBLE DIFFERENCE WE CAN.

We are able to make a difference because our programmes are firmly rooted in communities and centred on the lives of the young people we work with. But we know that to maximise our impact, we need to evolve our approach.

Over the coming months we'll be making important changes to how we run our residential programmes. Earlier in 2022 we announced the sale of our former residential centre in Cambridge. The decision to sell the centre was a significant milestone and part of a wider strategic review focused on how we can increase our impact.

By freeing up resources, we can operate with greater agility, extending our reach and influence, and work more directly with young people where they are. In short, we are better able to respond to the needs of young people whilst still giving them a taste of what life at university or a degree apprenticeship involves.

Residential remains a core part of what Villiers Park does. I am delighted that the University of Bath has agreed to host a residential for all Year 10 Future Leaders in June 2023. This significant support from a valued partner will enable us to deliver a residential experience on a scale beyond that possible at

our former centre in Cambridge. We are also in conversation with a number of other colleges and university partners about future collaborations including residential places – so watch this space!

Our future plans include further developing our Future Leaders Programme and expanding our hub in Norwich. We will be enhancing our green careers offer and convening a Climate Action Panel for Future Leaders, as well as renewing our approach to evaluating impact – ensure everything we do delivers the best outcomes for our young people.

And as the sector evolves its approach to education equality and social mobility, we'll continue to help inform policy and practice through our work within the Fair Access Coalition and our engagement with the Office for Students.

I'm proud of the path we've travelled as a charity, and excited about our journey ahead.

Gaby Sumner is Interim Chief Executive of Villiers Park.



Thank you

By working together we are changing lives. We do this because of the generosity and dedication of our staff, volunteers, trustees, partners and supporters. We are extremely grateful to everyone who supports us, including those who have chosen to remain anonymous.

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