Measuring the Impact of a District-wide Partnership with Schools

Final Report to the Higher Education Funding Council for England

University of Bradford, June 2010

Contents

List of figures

Executive summary

The University of Bradford (UoB) has long been committed to engaging with schools and colleges and to date has worked closely with over 158 primary and 29 secondary schools across the Bradford and Keighley district. It has always striven for good relationships in which outcomes and impacts are clearly evidenced. To that end, the UoB was awarded a HEFCE research grant which has enabled it to (a) capture the impact of district-wide partnership work with schools via a diverse case study of seven schools and (b) further develop its Schools Links Evaluation Framework (SLEF).

This final report outlines the findings that begin to measure the effectiveness of our district-wide partnership with schools. A structured evaluation model of HE-school links has been developed within this research project and its effectiveness has been tested with a range of case study school partnerships. The rationales of why we evaluate, how we evaluate and what good evaluative practice tells us are integrated in this study. The results demonstrate that, at the level of case study research, the model has a sound, transferable methodology.

The timescale for the fieldwork underpinning this project was April 2009 to July 2009 and the process of exploring, researching and refining our evaluative approach comprised four consecutive stages: consultation with UoB staff; data capture with school staff; data capture with school pupils and finally using the results to populate a summative matrix to further monitor and develop relationships.

Findings from the consultation with UoB staff indicate that the partnership performs a wide spectrum of work across the district under the two broad headings of 'recruitment' and 'outreach'.   Furthermore, the findings show that staff have a shared, strong commitment to widening participation and the UoB does excellent work with schools through various projects and initiatives designed to raise aspirations towards higher education. Most staff felt that widening participation work needed to be more mainstream and embedded within UoB activities, rather than being categorised under an 'access and widening participation' umbrella.   Staff also identified many challenges for the future.

School staff explored the school's relationship and involvement with the UoB with respect to: raising awareness, raising aspiration and attainment, progression and transition, planning, governance, capacity building and the overall strength of the relationship. Feedback was positive, and useful recommendations for improvement were also shared.

One hundred and fifty nine school pupils completed a questionnaire. Most questionnaires were completed by Year 13 pupils, followed by Years 12, 9 and 10 respectively. Ninety five percent of respondents stated that they found the UoB and its activities '*easy*' or '*very easy*' to access, with ninety percent completing the activities in question. In the main, benefits were seen as exposure to higher education, and gaining new experiences.

The above data streams inform how we reach overall conclusions as to the state of health of the UoB's relationships with schools. The quality of these relationships can then be recorded in the summative overview matrix, thus informing the next iteration of enquiry-based development of evaluative activity.

Chapter 1: Introduction

For at least the last decade, it has been common practice for higher education institutions (HEIs) to develop direct partnership links with schools and colleges. As part of this collaborative work, there has been an extensive range of programmes to raise achievement and aspiration as well as to facilitate the transition to higher education. These partnerships have been further supported by government initiatives such as the Excellence Challenge, Partnerships for Progression and Aimhigher as well as via HEFCE strategies and allocations.

The UoB has long been committed to engaging with schools and colleges and to date has worked closely with over 158 primary and 29 secondary schools across the Bradford and Keighley district. It has always striven for good relationships in which outcomes and impacts are clearly evidenced. This evidence tells us that we have made a very positive contribution to widening participation in the last decade, having a beneficial impact on achievement, aspiration and progression.

The experience of UoB staff of facilitating partnerships over the years reveals that a 'one size fits all' approach to relationship building is no more appropriate than an apparently chaotic, entirely reactive approach. We have recognised the need to be flexible and responsive in our engagement (enjoying particular success where our partners have been encouraged to take joint ownership and thus shared the responsibility for pursuing agendas) but we also recognise the need to place all the activity within a strategic and thoughtful whole. This means developing and refining an engagement model which has enough flexibility to take account of, and respond to, individual and emerging needs and contexts, but within a secure, strategic framework that ensures the work is effective, progressive and evidence-based. Part of this strategic approach is the further development of how we evaluate and understand our relationships with schools. Understanding the quality and impact of the relationships is crucial to supporting and informing evidence-based best practice.

To that end, the UoB was awarded a HEFCE research grant which has enabled it to (a) capture the impact of district-wide partnership work with schools via a diverse case study of seven schools and (b) further develop its Schools Links Evaluation Framework (SLEF).

In particular, the research has focused on the effectiveness and impact of the:

- Framework for delivery;

- Extent and depth of engagement;

- Partnership work and shared foci that drive its development

- Role of the UoB in raising attainment and aspiration, planning, capacity building, governance, transition and progression.

This report proposes that our SLEF model is improved as a result of this research activity and is now at a stage where the UoB needs to extend the approach to all of

the schools and colleges with which it is linked, as well as to plan for how it can be rolled out to support good practice throughout the sector.

Chapter 2: Background context

Bradford is located in West Yorkshire in the North of England. It has a population approaching half a million of which 28% are young people under 20 years of age.[1] Thirty four percent of 0 to 19 year olds are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds, the largest groups being of Pakistani and Indian heritage. The district is the 32nd most deprived local authority area in England and forty two percent of the city's neighbourhoods are amongst the twenty percent most deprived in the country. At the time of the most recent Joint Area Review (Ofsted, 2008)[2] there was an upward trend in the incidence of learning difficulties and/or disabilities and complex health needs amongst children and young people.

In 2001, Bradford Metropolitan District Council (BMDC) outsourced its education services to an international service company (Serco) trading as Education Bradford. Education Bradford has been delivering the contract to lead professional development in school improvement since its inception (current contractual arrangements between Bradford Council and Serco expire in July 2011). Within BMDC there are seven nursery schools, 158 primary schools, 29 secondary schools including two academies, 11 special schools and five pupil referral units. All secondary schools have sixth forms. There are three colleges of further education and twelve work-based training providers. This research project has focussed on seven case study secondary schools.

For a detailed account of how the UoB has developed its approach to working with schools, please see Appendix 1. In short, our current model of engagement follows a holistic approach which builds on existing relationships. Within this, strategic and mutually beneficial partnerships with schools are encouraged, whereby the needs and aspirations of young people, school and communities are included as drivers that help shape provision. In addition, Trusts and Academy arrangements are inclusive of the UoB and these relationships are supported by BMDC. Furthermore, young people, schools and communities have access to personal and professional development in addition to academic provision.

In practice our work has been, at times, needs-led and/or demand-led and this can lead to disparate, multiple and reactive ways of working. Therefore, there is a need to develop a more cohesive, joined-up approach to capturing impact and this can only be achieved by further developing our partnerships with schools. The model depicted in Figure 1 below shows the UoB at the core, surrounded by its key partners. This illustrates our aspiring to a holistic, consultative and inclusive approach and shows relationships between the UoB and its partners as mutually beneficial.

---

[1] Bradford District Young People Needs Analysis, June 2008

[2] Ofsted (2008), Joint Area Review: Bradford Children's Services Authority Area, Review of services for children and young people.

Fig 1: Holistic and inclusive approach
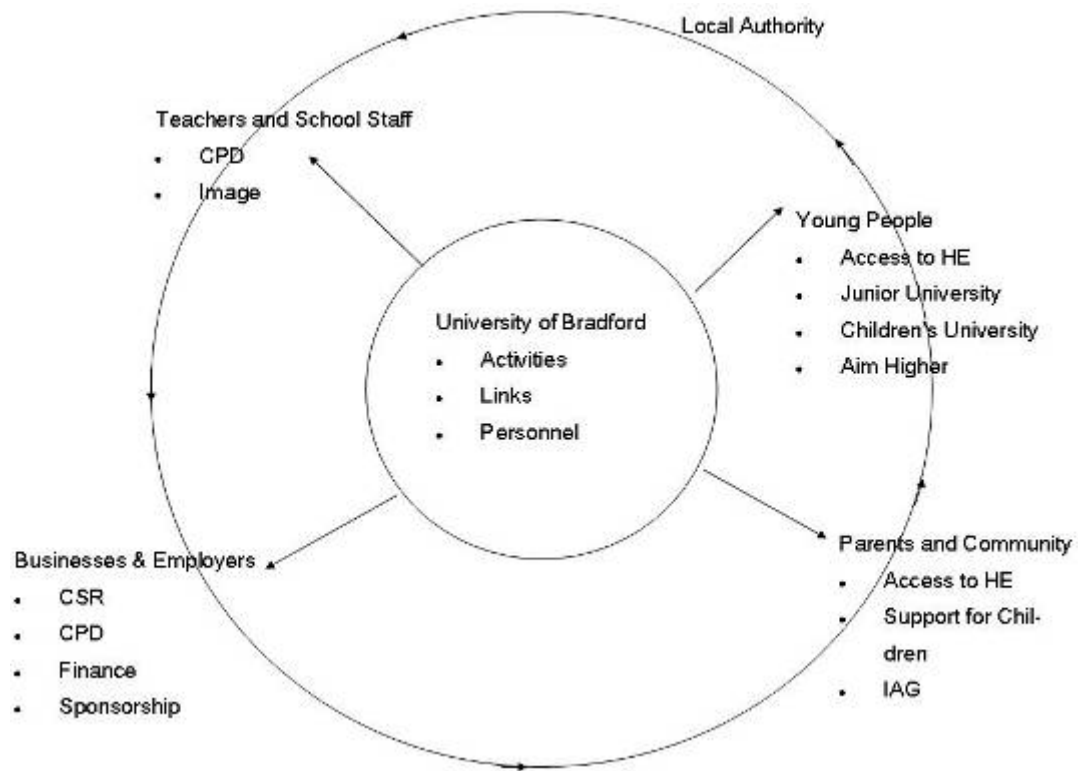
Chapter 3: Project remit

This final report outlines the findings from a HEFCE-commissioned research project that begins to measure the effectiveness of our district-wide partnership with schools. Funding for the project of £51k ran from April 2009 to August 2009. Specifically, the research was commissioned as part of HEFCE's desire to find and support the wider sharing and dissemination of good practice in the field of promoting learner progression via strategic working with schools, colleges and BMDC.

A structured evaluation model of HE-school links has been developed within this project and this model has been tested for its effectiveness with a range of case study school partnerships. Thus the rationales for why we evaluate, how we evaluate and what good evaluative practice tells us are woven together in this study. The results of this project demonstrate that, at the level of case study research, the model has a sound, transferable methodology.

In particular, the model demonstrates where there is a good framework for delivery and partnership working in place, especially in relation to:

- *extent and depth* of HE ↔ school partnership: both partners working to co-drive agreed foci for development;

- *shared governance* in relation to school improvement, raising attainment, continued professional development and relationship to UoB corporate plans;

- *cooperation on curriculum development*: it identifies where partnership work supports both school and the University;

- *support for learners*, including enhanced arrangements for information, advice and guidance for Key Stages 3 and 4 to ensure good levels of awareness about, and preparedness for, HE destinations.

Furthermore, this research project has focussed on developing the UoB's approach to evidencing the quality and value of its relationships and links with schools in such a way that is sustainable, systematic and properly formative of ongoing work. In terms of evaluative activity, because historically our practice has been based on differential engagement, evaluation of impact beyond the level of individual activity or partnership has been difficult. This research project has allowed us a space in which to conduct a systematic review of how we evaluate and review our engagement and partnership work with schools, and the impacts that are attributable to this work.

Within this research project we have reviewed our existing practices, consulted with seven case study schools, tested new templates and developed a Schools Links Evaluation Framework. This Framework is proposed as an accessible, transferable model that can be used to promote good practice elsewhere.

The Framework comprises:

- a systematic and ongoing consultative ethos

- coherent data capture templates

- a 'data type' x 'stakeholder type' profile

- a summative overview matrix

It offers a way of capturing relationships with schools and subsequent impacts in order that these relationships can be 'seen' and reviewed at any given point, and therefore progressed. For the first time our partner schools have access to an informed understanding of evidence-based impacts that arise from partnerships, activities, programmes and initiatives. In this way, the good practice that secures long-term, productive working at a local, district and sub-regional level can be made evident for the mutual benefit of partners.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

The timescale for the fieldwork underpinning this research was April 2009 to August 2009. A research steering group was established and convened at regular intervals throughout the life of the project. This process of exploring, researching and refining our evaluative approach has comprised 4 consecutive stages.

4.1   Stage 1: consultative scoping study with UoB staff

It was first necessary to ascertain the existing understandings and experiences of partnership arrangements that UoB staff had, as well as the effectiveness of relations and the positive impacts that could be attributed to these. This stage was a consultative scoping with key members of the UoB which asked them to reflect on the status quo. This scoping activity was not only a starting point to rationalising and improving our approach by trying to identify an accurate overview of what impacts were being realised, but was also a means of drawing participants into a meaningful dialogue around how to capture the impact of link and partnership activities.

Fourteen key staff members from across the UoB were interviewed (see Appendix 2). Interviewees represented a number of departments from across the UoB and ranged from senior management to UoB practitioners who worked directly with schools. People were selected on the basis of the number of years they had worked within access and widening participation as well as those who worked with Bradford schools. The interviews with UoB staff covered their perceptions and beliefs around the approaches adopted by the University and the success of its engagement with the schools sector, including specific activities that were being provided and engaged with as well as the positive impacts that were attributable to these. There was also feedback on what UoB staff felt the major challenges for the future were, and what key questions should be put to schools when they came to be involved in the research.

Two distinct aspects of HE-schools link work were explored. Firstly:

- what sorts of impacts were attributable to our links with schools from the (sometimes anecdotally informed) perspectives of the UoB and schools and the various instruments in use; in other words, what was the known effect of our activities?

- which aspects of the University's links with schools were the key focus, e.g. raising attainment at school level.

Secondly, to gauge the state and status of existing evaluative mechanisms:

- what evaluative activity is done well, and therefore needs to be retained in the proposed new framework;

- areas for improvement, especially in terms of whether the various evaluative tools and approaches used are compatible with each other and contribute something useful to an overarching, summative view;

- whether a clear, robust and evidence-based summative overview exists.

A rich variety of perspectives and experiences was gathered, as well as an informed overview of some of the difficulties, barriers and constraints commonly associated with working in, and with, a large and multifaceted institution.

Section 5.1 of Chapter 5 sets out the findings from this stage in detail.

4.2   Stage 2: Data capture with Bradford schools

Clearly the restricted timescale of this pilot research project was not going to permit a full and thorough cycle of ongoing evaluative activity with all schools across the district, but a more thorough and better informed sense of the quality and impact of HE-schools links, from both the University's and case study schools' perspectives, was planned for.

In terms of the schools that participated in Stage 2 of the research, several options for a sampling frame were explored.   Of the 29 secondary schools in Bradford, 12 schools were identified by UoB staff members as being potential candidates for inclusion in the research sample.   Six case study schools were then chosen from amongst these on the basis of their level of engagement with the University, particularly in terms of their involvement with UoB activities over the last year, as well as their willingness and availability to take part in the research.

Having recruited a case study sample of seven schools, the original intention had been to support and mentor them to conduct small, school staff-led research projects around HE-school links for themselves. However, this was not an achievable goal for a number of reasons: shortness of lead time, the time of year in terms of the school calendar and the limited availability of staff being the main reasons.

At this point the project steering group decided that what was possible was a three-aspected approach to collecting data from schools. Firstly, to use the data capture template below (Fig 2) to guide some of the research so that schools were able to start articulating:

- what their current key issues are;
- what activities are already in place to help address these;
- ideas about and opportunities for new activities to happen;
- what outputs were desirable;
- desired outcomes and impacts.

Fig 2: Template for systematic data collection

Issue	Activities	Output	Outcome	How measured
-…………….. -…………….. -……………..	-…………….. -…………….. -……………..	-…………….. -…………….. -……………..	-…………….. -…………….. -……………..	-…………….. -…………….. -……………..

In addition to this, key school staff were interviewed using the schedule of questions outlined in Appendix 3 (the focus of these interviews being informed by the scoping study outlined in Stage 1).

In total, 13 interviews were conducted with the following people:

Position/Role	Number Interviewed
Head teacher	1
Assistant head teacher	3
Head of sixth form	6
Classroom teacher	0
Aimhigher organiser	2
Connexions staff	1

Detailed findings emerging from interviews with schools staff can be found in Section 5.2 in Chapter 5.

4.3   Stage 3: Data capture with pupils

A pupil questionnaire was devised in order to capture impacts attributable to HE schools partnership activities. Questionnaire items were devised in consultation with both access and widening participation staff at the UoB and some of the schools staff taking part in the research.   Questionnaire activity was then carried out in participating schools as well as during the Compact summer schools that took place at the UoB in July 2009. A total of 19 schools took part in this aspect of the research and 159 questionnaires were completed and analysed. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4.   A full account of findings can be found in Section 5.3 of Chapter 5.

Had time allowed, semi-structured interviews with pupils from the schools would have yielded useful data, as well as identifying and working with a key stakeholder group of young people, possibly comprising those who had progressed through the Children's University, the Junior University, the Compact scheme, gone on to study at UoB level and subsequently graduated.

4.4   Stage 4: Building and populating the summative overview matrix

The scoping exercise with UoB staff yielded a clearer understanding of what precisely these impacts attributable to HE-schools links were from the perspective of the University, as well as how they could be classified. Likewise, a review of what

evaluative data capture mechanisms and practices existed was also achieved as part of the data collection from schools' staff. Both of these understandings then fed directly into the framework's summative matrix discussed below.

It is this additional aspect i.e. taking an evaluative look at capture mechanisms, including if (and how) we engage schools in the process of researching and understanding the quality of relationships, that is embodied in the model in Fig3, below. This is how we sum up the desired ethos and our existing best practice.

The advantages of this approach include its responsiveness to the emerging needs of schools by putting them in the driving seat, as well as this being an evidence-based way of working: impacts are measured on completion. Its cyclical nature ensures that evaluative activity is ongoing: for example measuring the impact of activity A provides the partnership with new knowledge, and this new knowledge may generate issue B, and so on.

Fig 3:   Model for consulting with schools
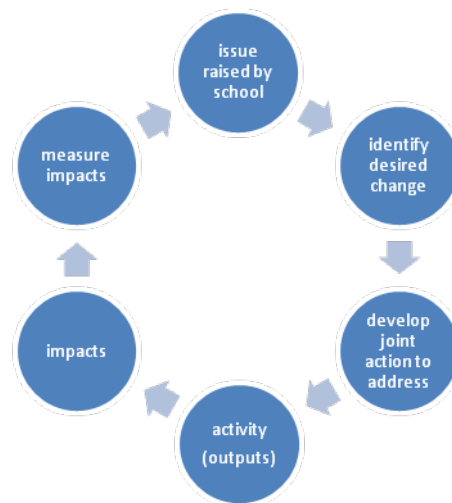
However, in order for a model or approach to have good fieldwork applicability, clear templates need to exist that guide the collection of data. Fig. 2, above, displays the above ethos in a format that greatly assists in the collection of data. This emerging evaluative framework was then tested with Bradford schools as far as was possible within the timescale of this research project and findings are presented in Chapter 5. Populating the summative matrix aspect of our approach with the research intelligences that the fieldwork provided is related in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter sets out three discrete sets of findings: firstly, results from research activity with UoB staff, secondly, from data collection with school staff and lastly from conducting a questionnaire based survey with school pupils.

5.1 Findings from scoping study with UoB staff

Detailed interview notes were analysed for evidence of:

- perceptions and beliefs about of the UoB's approach and the success of its engagement;
- activities that were being provided and engaged in;
- major challenges for the future;
- key questions that should be put to schools.

The interview respondents were divided into sub-groups, based on criteria such as seniority within the University, time spent in widening participation work and current level of engagement with schools. This was to identify differences, where any exist, as well as any variation between UoB schools and departments.

5.1.1 UoB activities: recruitment, outreach and widening participation

It was felt that the UoB performed a wide spectrum of work across the district under the two broad headings of recruitment and outreach. Findings from these interviews indicate a shared, strong commitment to widening participation and that the UoB was doing excellent work with schools. This was realised through the various projects and initiatives designed to raise aspirations towards higher education that are delivered across the district. Most staff felt that widening participation work needed to be more mainstream and embedded within UoB activities, rather than being categorised under an 'access and widening participation' umbrella.

When asked about the nature of the work the UoB did with schools, the majority view was that work was principally around raising aspiration and levels of attainment. This involves providing experiences which are life-changing, exposing young people to new ideas and new people and making opportunities available that broaden young people's horizons and give them a feeling of "*Yes I can.*"

"The core theme is raising aspirations, saying to young people that they can come here – that it's not beyond their reach coming here." (UoB member of staff)

"We've worked successfully with parents; at one time we had 300 parent learners." (UoB member of staff*)*

Likewise, all interviewed staff agreed that there is strong commitment from the University's leadership team. Overall, the sense was that HE-schools links originate organically in response to the needs expressed by schools, young people and the district community, and continue to evolve in this way. This has meant that innovative activities have come about in direct response to expressed need, for example the Progression into Level 4 scheme (P2L4), which the UoB receives

repeated requests to disseminate and demonstrate nationally. The P2L4 scheme is a 'national first' which complements students' AS studies, giving students an insight into university life. Within the initiative, students have the opportunity to study modules in law, psychology or science which can give them an advantage when applying for places at UoB and enhance their CV. The modules are also designed to develop their study skills, as well as communication and presentation skills.

The majority of staff believed that the University's engagement has been extremely successful. Examples of comments from UoB staff are:

"The Summer University is not just a play scheme. It broadens their outlook on life – in the past four years we have worked with nearly every primary school in the district…events are well attended…the kids get hooked and then their parents get hooked."

"Our reputation does precede us…we get more people in than we can accommodate. For example, we have had to create reserve lists for our summer schools and there is now a waiting list for our looked-after children provision and for the STEM activities". (STEM = science, technology, engineering and maths).

Some of the success was attributed to the Associate Schools initiative and the work delivered in the community. Indeed, in some schools the UoB is seen as working at the heart of the school's development plans by helping to develop individual School Improvement Plans.

The UoB has strong links with Aimhigher and this was seen as providing a real progression route from its early interventions, e.g. Children's University, within which seven to 14-year-olds are provided with exciting and innovative learning activities and experiences outside normal school hours, through to the Junior University where young people over the age of fourteen are provided with facilities to assist them in GCSE and Advanced GCSE level examinations, particularly English, mathematics, science and information technology. From here, pupils can progress onto the Compact Scheme which provides post-16 students with a programme of activities, including support for their current programmes of study, the opportunity to sample future degree options and provides them with help in the UoB application processes.

5.1.2 Multifaceted, non-centralised approach

The findings also reveal that, even though there may be an overall shared ethos, no centralised method or process was followed and the work was not co-ordinated at an institutional level: a consistent and managed approach to engagement with schools was lacking. Rather, each department had its own historically developed and preferred way of working in partnership, using contacts and relationships they had developed as individuals and teams rather than as a university. Example comments were:

"Everybody is committed to the aims and we do some excellent work but the delivery is not joined up."

"We have ad-hoc arrangements with schools, there is a long string of arrangements not for recruitment, but ones we fulfil because of our relationships."

This is part of the University's diversity of approach, but this can also lead to complexities in terms of grasping the overall picture. Delivery was not seen as joined up in terms of communication which meant that in practice, processes, procedures, information and knowledge were not being shared. For some this was a capacity and resources issue – they felt that a more strategic focus would help them to:

- establish a clear line of communication internally and externally;

- manage UoB and school activities centrally;

- create a planned and timetabled list of activities agreed with schools;

- develop an IT system to link the UoB with schools and shared data (in line with data protection legislation).

The majority view was that lack of strategy and co-ordination meant that they were not in a position to be able to measure the success of the engagement with each school across the University. One member of staff commented:

"*Uptake on year is a measure but otherwise there is lack of evidence.*"

Interviewees felt that more communication and co-ordination would assist in the setting up of a coherent measurement system and also enable the UoB to plan activities and services on the basis of evidence capture and thus develop much-needed internal and external linkages to ensure as much strategic engagement and delivery as possible. This is one such comment from a member of UoB staff:

"…*An overall plan has to be implemented to get these resources in place from other Schools within the UoB who have a role to play in schools. Peace Studies, School of Informatics and the School of Management do work with schools but we are not sure what they really do and to what extent they do it.*"

Some staff felt that access to more resources and funding would help them to:

- Develop partnerships with the Voluntary Sector to reach those young people who they cannot engage through the traditional school routes, especially targeted support to groups such as white working class boys, young mothers, and Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) groups;

- Improve marketing to raise awareness of UoB activities with more schools thus increasing uptake by young people;

- Develop partnerships and roll out joint initiatives to be even more successful as well as plan effectively for future events;

- Centrally record its activities and further develop strategic linkages.

5.1.3 Evidence capture

In terms of being able to evidence the impact and importance of the work being done, the staff response in the main was that they could provide countless examples of the difference that the work done by the UoB had made. However, other than information such as participation numbers and registers of attendance, there was no formalised evaluation methodology being used to track this on a quantitative basis. Example comments from staff were:

"*Records are not kept in terms of impact.*"

"*We continue to get professional body funding and schools continue to take up our services, so it is demand led…but the importance of what we do is anecdotal.*"

Suggestions as to what could be tracked included the following:

- Destinations achieved including 1st Year undergraduate registrations;
- Attainment and achievement, including whether exam results improve and the number of qualifications gained;
- Impact the activities have had, e.g. children begin working with the Children's University and stay with it
- What feedback is given/received at every stage of working with the UoB;
- Amaze Yourself programme results

The majority view was that it was difficult to measure aspirations from one point to another.

Other suggestions included monitoring:

- The number of school-focussed activities that take place and the number of schools and pupils that engage to ascertain whether this follows an increasing or decreasing trajectory;
- In particular, attendance figures for the Junior University and the Children's University;
- Number of children indicating they want to go to university;
- Number of children with Aimhigher background/activities;
- Conversion rate of children who have engaged with an activity and then progressed to becoming a student ambassador;
- Pattern of attendance of parent and child events in the community.

All staff agreed that a tracking system was needed to monitor and evaluate the work and most felt that the best way to achieve this would be through a longitudinal study beginning at age seven years and continuing through to higher education.

Staff felt that it was important to:

- Develop a new model to demonstrate the importance of as well as understand the impact of the work;

- Develop a tracking system to monitor and track progress from school through to higher education;

- Develop activities which relate to the curriculum so that intervention can be measured;

- Create a measurable feedback mechanism.

5.1.4 Challenges

Staff identified many challenges for the future. These were principally on the basis of the wider challenges experienced within the district. GCSE results in the district are in the lower quartile of the school league tables so local educational attainment is a huge issue. The majority view was that as the UoB was a key stakeholder in the district, and because of this the demands placed upon it would increase; this could present it with increasing resourcing issues. One member of staff said:

"*We're a key player with some schools and we'll have to take on more responsibilities for levels of attainment through implementation of HE-type initiatives as schools become Trusts and Academies.*"

It was felt that there would be a significant impact on the UoB due to the economic downturn, and a minority of interviewees also felt that lack of training to create and establish high level skills and the political nature of some partnerships require further clarity and district-level understanding of the university's role with schools and communities.

Funding was cited by the majority of staff as the biggest challenge for the UoB as it would affect the capacity of the UoB to work with individual schools. Aimhigher funding will come to an end and this would have implications on resources.

5.1.5 Advising as to data capture with schools

When asked what questions should be put to schools, UoB staff interviewees were in overall agreement that the questions should ascertain the school's awareness in terms of the opportunities available at the University, their perceptions of the services provided, the effectiveness of the school-UoB relationship, effectiveness and impact of the activities provided and how they used the University's facilities.

The list of questions finalised by the research steering group can be found in Appendix 3.

5.2 Findings from data capture with school staff

School staff explored the school's relationship and involvement with the UoB with respect to: raising awareness, raising aspiration and attainment, progression and transition, planning, governance, capacity building and the overall strength of the relationship. Feedback was positive, and useful recommendations for improvement were also shared.

5.2.1   Raising Awareness

The majority view was that UoB activities were effective in raising awareness of higher education. All the schools that participated in the research were able to list numerous UoB activities in which they were involved, all stating that their pupils had been, and continued to be, involved in Children's UoB activities and that most then progressed onto to Junior UoB and Compact activities.

Interview data suggested a relationship between the quality of the relationship the school felt it had with the UoB and the frequency of school participation as well as the increasing numbers of pupils who regularly attended UoB activities.

5.2.2   Raising aspiration and attainment

All schools were certain that UoB activities did have an impact on attainment and believed there to be a definite benefit for all pupils who participated. However, all were in agreement that this was difficult to map on a quantitative basis. Many described ways in which the impact could be demonstrated in an indirect way, from using pass/fail criteria and feedback forms to comparing the predicted grades with actual grades achieved. With the exception of one school, schools reported '*quite good*' to '*excellent*' feedback from pupils. One head teacher commented:

"*In summer schools, particularly with Year 11s, the feedback has been quite good even at its worst! It's quite striking how much the experience opened their eyes.*"

The summer schools were described as particularly successful. One school reported that feedback from pupils who had attended had caused an increase in demand; the school became inundated with applications to attend the summer school from other pupils. Other feedback from schools included:

"*In some years we've had the highest application rates to summer school and continued rates for success are very good.*"

"*Our students really welcome the opportunity to be linked with the University…the kids talk about the Compact scheme and see Bradford as a place that they will go to study.*"

"*What is really positive is the feedback from the medical summer school – the kids being able to make contact with the lecturers. We had two borderline students who went (to University) and came back knowing exactly what they wanted to achieve and what they had to do to achieve it.*"

Suggestions for development were as follows:

- Expansion of revision classes

- More pre- and post-16 STEM-based subjects

- Increase in variety of subjects (not just STEM) to include: psychology, humanities, history, sociology etc.

- More study support provision

- UoB students to run homework clubs in schools with school pupils

- Universities need to adapt their teaching styles and methods of delivery to meet the needs of the current student profile

- It is not just about raising aspirations anymore, it's more about preparedness for study and so the UoB needs to broaden aspirations to look at areas and subjects beyond the pupils' geographical and cultural boundaries: this will impact on attainment.

5.2.3   Progression and transition

All the schools were in agreement that the activities and programmes at the UoB made a difference in terms of the pupils' progression to higher education by raising aspirations and broadening horizons. One school observed that applications to UoB could be a product of many things but added "*Our kids come back reaffirmed or transformed in their opinion as to what higher education is.*"

The majority view was that this was a difficult thing to measure but that the work definitely supported aspirations. One school asserted that from the moment they opened their sixth form (seven years ago) pupils from Year 11 onwards have perceived the UoB as the "*definite route forward*".

One head teacher stated: "*They want to stay on at sixth form because they know there's a definite route to university.*"

A head of sixth form explained: "*If we didn't have the partnership we have with the UoB then progression to higher education would be at least one quarter less.*"

Some schools described how progression was further supported through their less formalised relationships with the University, in this case, an informal relationship which spanned more than a decade.

Another head of sixth form commented: "*We have had a boy in school who is very needy for support. Because of contacts in the UoB-the deputy vice chancellor-there is now a scholarship scheme that he can apply for.*"

Other comments from school staff included:

"*It is because University of Bradford responds to need – I don't quite know how. Kids are accessing higher education in a way they could never have done before.*"

"*Make the call and stuff will get done. They are very contactable.*"

Another head teacher said: "*I think the UoB will cater for our local students even if they don't come through a traditional route. There's a broad understanding that there's not just a straight path through which young people come; there are kids who've had a much slower route that have got through.*"

Another school described how the UoB had supported the progression of one of its pupils. The head teacher explained: "*I have a young lad who has special educational needs. He's doing a Business Degree at the School of Management. He is cognitively able but because of a brain injury has some socialisation needs. We worked hard with the parents about where he can go. His success is down to the UoB being able to deal with his socialisation needs. It's fantastic.*"

Suggestions for development were as follows:

- Pupils need to develop their independent study skills before they get to university (or even before they engage with the Compact scheme);

- There should be sessions for students following vocational courses who may struggle with writing discursive essays and academic writing;

- Study workshops in research study skills should be open to ALL students, not just those that are on the Compact Scheme;

- Taster days should be linked with school and UoB staff skills 'swap shops';

- It would be good if the UoB could offer a Progression to UoB module, in the words of one teacher: "*Most schools in Bradford are signed up to one at* (X) *University and the students love it*";

- Given that by 2011, all young people should have access to 1 of 14 specialist subjects, the suggestion was made that Bradford College and Shipley College be involved so that subjects can be offered at Levels 1, 2 & 3. The UoB could be involved at Level 4;

- The www.bradford4learning.com website contains a menu of courses from across the district. Bradford College is linked in to this but the UoB is yet to join: schools express a desire for the UoB to be linked in;

- Include more active learning like the Hovercraft Day, one teacher said "*This was a huge success*";

- Earlier intervention through work with Year 7s to address the '*Year 8 dip*' which is nationally recognised as the stage when disaffection begins.

5.2.4 Planning

Many of the schools gave feedback that suggested the UoB maintains a distinct focus on the local community, and, in terms of transition and progression, the impact its efforts has is very good. Consultation and planning was believed to be central to this.

One head teacher commented: "*I have not experienced this with any other university apart from Bradford, and as the leader of a school you feel that you are at least being consulted in the strategic planning of a university.*"

When asked whether the school community had internal discussions about its relationship with the UoB and the activities/programmes that are on offer, the responses were consistent in that all schools had such conversations, albeit informal ones. There were a few individual staff members from one school who stated that they were not personally involved in discussions relating to the school's relationship with the University, but others in the same school did. All schools confirmed they had some level of discussion about the activities on offer. Some discussions were informal and simply to evaluate particular activities so decisions could be made as to whether they should be repeated in the next year or not. Other schools held more detailed discussions both within the school and with the UoB. Comments along these lines included:

"*Yes we do. The team is involved with University. Our Post-16 team will talk to the UoB about how they use UoB with the kids – we engender that discussion within our team about our aspirations for the pupils and get them through and linked in. The year teams discuss and then, in terms of evaluation, we get the kids involved.*"

In another school:

"*Information is given to our Senior Leadership team, discussions are held and staff get involved e.g. for the Junior UoB revision classes both Maths and English departments were involved. Pupils are only involved at an Aimhigher level and only if they've been on Compact.*"

Most schools could not identify precisely who had these discussions but a focus group was suggested as a helpful way forward.

"*Not sure how widely they take place at leadership level, although there is an increasing awareness of the benefits. We need to talk at staff and student level but its growing.*"

Again, the strength of relationships between schools and the UoB was a recurring theme when people talked about planning issues, with most of the suggestions for development relating to the request for more personalised relationships.

Suggestions for development were as follows:

- Activities must be more relevant to the school's curriculum (e.g. STEM) so more communication is needed and relationships need to be further developed;

- UoB should become part of the Bradford school Confederations to be more effective and equitable;

- If UoB initiatives are not pushed centrally by school staff then the uptake is minimal, therefore support is needed;

- Schools want to forge relationships with the UoB by involving their Year 8s in STEM initiatives. This will help them in their plans and curriculum initiatives with Year 7s, "*building towards better placements for kids at university.*";

- The curriculum sub-committees need to be aware of the overall vision: "*Not everybody can have their own* (UoB dean)." Serving 26 upper schools in Bradford will create resourcing implications;

- Schools want universities to have a broader perspective and look at other routes into HE, like Diplomas and Foundation Degrees;

- Schools want the UoB to help to sell other routes as an alternative for those pupils who don't suit the traditional three A-Level route; this is not the only route into Level 4. The UoB should know about specialised diplomas and ready itself for Level 4 provision.

5.2.5 Capacity building

In terms of staff progression, none of the schools knew for certain whether any or which staff members were accessing higher education for their own personal development.

The interviews revealed that very few conversations took place in schools about workforce development. None of the staff interviewed were engaged in any course of study with the UoB. However, one school believed that many of their members of staff were doing an accredited mentoring course at the university and explained that the leadership training was sourced externally but could not say where from. The remainder of the schools could not say for sure if any of their colleagues were engaged with UoB in terms of their accredited course development.

> **Suggestions for development were as follows:**
>
> - Support from the School of Management to help school staff with the management of their school;
>
> - Regular training sessions led by UoB staff but taking place on school premises;
>
> - Schools want support with their Academies; one school specifically requested support with their Citizenship Academy.

5.2.6   Governance

When asked what role governors from the UoB played in school governance, the majority view was that all schools would benefit from a higher education perspective and voice on the board, but there was a worry that capacity might be an issue for the University.

One staff member said that they didn't feel the need to have a UoB member of staff on their governing board as they felt school staff themselves "*should operate at that level.*" They felt that the higher education institutions should provide information and support, but not be on the board.

"*As a Vice-chair in another school, I'd expect school staff to inform me, not higher education to do it….it's all about trust and understanding and then the proof is in the results so everyone knows what's going on.*"

However, the majority view was that it would be very useful to have a UoB member of staff on their board within the broad spectrum of governance as such would provide the body with clearer insights into progression routes into higher education.

One school explained that it did have a UoB member of staff who helped the school but they were not sure whether this was in a UoB staff capacity.   Even so, this member of staff provided a much valued higher education perspective.

"*Having access to people and knowledge is better and it's useful to hear what the UoB is expecting and their perspective on how we need to prepare kids better.*"

One of the Associate Schools described the value added to their school from having a member of staff on their board:

"*One of our governors works at the University of Bradford, another is a retired UoB Professor at the School of Management. I think they bring their intellectual capacity and ability to our school.   When we discuss anything relating to Post-16, they scrutinise our strategies to make sure progression routes are there because they have a better understanding about how universities work. They advise us on where to go to make sure that we have the kind of support we need and help us to determine whether someone can manage at UoB or not….they're our first port of call for stuff like this.*"

Suggestions for development were as follows:

Most schools would like a member of staff on their governing body to:

- Share good practice;

- Provide support;

- Make the governing body work better ('how to do this' not specified);

- Provide an independent voice;

- Bring their intellectual capacity and ability;

- Scrutinise their strategies to make sure progression routes are there;

- Provide better understanding about how universities work;

- Advise on where to go to for the support school needs and help school to determine whether any young person in question can manage at UoB or not;

- Provide a broader perspective and also look at other routes into HE, like Diplomas and Foundation Degrees. To sell other routes as an alternative for those young people who the three A-levels route does not suit;

- Schools want the UoB to help schools to identify potential governors;

- Partners want the UoB to help them to find trustees for the Trust.

5.2.7 Relationship

All the school staff interviewed said that their school had participated in the following initiatives, in addition to other activities provided by other UoB departments:

- Children's University
- Junior University - revision and departmental workshops
- Compact scheme and sixth form Induction

It was felt by all that partnership working was valuable. Schools were able to list a number of activities that they had found useful and that their pupils had benefited from. Comments from schools included:

"*There's the piece of work taking students at an early stage e.g. Year 9 higher education days. It helps them to get used to university – it's not a big scary place and then they carry on; it does provide a progression route*"

"*Summer schools – a day can have an impact and can be life changing.*"

"*The Junior UoB has worked with quite disadvantaged kids and helped bring them on against the odds.*"

The Junior Windsor Fellowship, P2L4 and events accessed via Aimhigher were all highlighted as key activities which worked well.   An Aimhigher organiser observed:

"*The P2L4 is life changing. It tells them that they are capable of working at UoB level…tells them 'you're good at university' so P2L4 is superb.*"

In particular, it was felt that the work done through the Compact scheme was especially useful.

The same school observed:

"*The Compact scheme is fabulous and the best is yet to come.*"

In relation to Compact, one pupil described what they got out of attending the Compact Summer School in July 2009:

"*The Compact scheme was really interesting as it helped introduce me to UoB work by using software such as Pebble Pad and Blackboard, also, attending helped me use the library and explained about Harvard referencing. I had to complete two modules; one was in ICT and the other was comparing two different essays, researching information and using the Harvard referencing system. All of this was very useful and I really enjoyed my time at the university, the staff were so nice. I am looking forward to starting my course next year.*"

Another school said:

"*The inductions are great. I feel I have a range of contacts at the university who will support me when I need it, an example was (X) coming into school for our evening Aimhigher launch.*"

One school said that the key benefit of their relationship with the university was having a member of UoB staff on their board of governors.

A key theme recurring in the interviews was the issue of pupil readiness for higher education.   A few interesting suggestions were made which school staff felt would be helpful in assisting with pupil progression. A popular suggestion was the creation of a skills 'swap-shop' which would enable lecturers from the UoB to visit schools to see how young people were being taught in schools, and for teaching staff from school to visit UoB to see how teaching took place in higher education. It was felt that this would enable both schools and the UoB to understand better how best to facilitate pupils' progression and transition to higher education.

5.2.7.1   Schools describing their relationship as "*Excellent*" and "*Good*"

These schools described how their relationship with the UoB had evolved over a number of years. They were fully conversant with the menu of activities available and understood the process by which to access these services; namely, via Aimhigher handbooks about activities or by directly contacting the Education Liaison Team for Compact or Post-16 Induction activities. To access additional activities to

this, the schools had built their own network of contacts within the various UoB schools, e.g. School of History and the School of Manufacturing.

A few schools pointed out that the relationship they had with the UoB pre-dated Aimhigher. The reasons for such high levels of participation were due to the fact that the schools pushed this centrally. As one assistant head teacher commented: "*One year we promoted it as something they should do, the response overwhelmed the UoB as 200 children applied.*"

Many schools said they used the UoB campus for Post-16 Inductions and said that their students were very keen on using the UoB because it made it easier for them to visualise where they were aiming for. Some schools used the UoB as a meeting place for staff activities, e.g. the School of Management.

Many schools became aware of the range of opportunities on offer through publicity received either in the form of flyers or email. However, with the exception of one school, all explained that they were inundated with publicity from many universities and that this method was ineffective. Some felt that they were not informed directly by the UoB about its activities and others relied on their Aimhigher organiser to inform them. Interestingly, none of the members of staff stated that they became aware of the range of activities available through the use of the Aimhigher handbook which is issued to all of the schools that took part in the research. The Aimhigher handbook is the recommended resource to use in the first instance for any school wishing to access activities at university.

The assistant head of one school explained that sometimes it was the informal relationships or chance meetings which kept them informed:

"(X) *connects us. There are occasional meetings between our head teacher and the deputy-vice-chancellor, and there are similar links with* (X) *in Enterprise Science in the University. The reputation of our school helps us because we know that you know we are receptive and respond. Knowing people and relationships between people makes a difference, it means that if you get an email from that person its worthwhile reading it and because you know them you respond.*"

Schools reported that they had participated in many, or at the very least, some of the following:

- P2L4 (Progression to Level 4)
- Junior Windsor Fellowship (some had been involved for the last three years)
- STEM
- Summer University
- Higher education summer school
- Easter revision and exam preparation
- Motivational speakers
- Ecoversity
- Focus Days at the School of Management

- Some school pupils had joined the UoB to assist with the delivery of summer schools

---

Suggestions from school staff as to what might be developed include:

- Publicity needs to be easy, accessible, attractive and visual and targeted at the pupils and not the teachers. "*We need dead visual publicity so staff don't have to do anything and we can just stick the posters on the wall, e.g. get your 20 UCAS points.*"

- Schools would like a named contact person

- Would like to develop personal relationships and to hear about opportunities through this channel

- Need a clear feedback mechanism in the University

The majority view was that Aimhigher had an important role to play in the school's relationship with the University. How this was practised varied from school to school. Those schools reporting a strong relationship with the UoB relied on Aimhigher to fund activities and transport the pupils onto the UoB campus. According to one staff member:

"*Aimhigher is often the vehicle to fund activities we do and has broader links and communication.*"

These schools then made their own arrangements when it came to organising additional, more bespoke, activities.

One head of sixth form said:

"*We have relationships with Leeds Metropolitan UoB and Huddersfield UoB through Aimhigher, but with Bradford our relationship is direct. The relationships we have with Bradford have predated Aimhigher so we've always worked in partnership right the way through. What it means is 'whizz-bang' and it gets done. For example, for history, we needed a speaker to talk about the Nazis, and we got one. In years gone by we've received menus of stuff that we could have; for example an A4 leaflet telling us which speakers we could have throughout the year ….these are the people that can come and speak at your school…do you want them…etc?*"

Other schools' staff commented:

"*Before there even were UoB student ambassadors the UoB used to say 'we've got some students…do you want them?*'"

"*It's been 'Do you want this? Do you want that?' ....and we'd say 'Yes please'!*"

One school stated that the strength of its relationship with the UoB did not depend on Aimhigher. Aimhigher was used to broaden the pupils' horizons and the funding was used to take the pupils further afield e.g. visiting universities in Manchester. They were already involved with a number of UoB activities and reported a large number of their pupils being involved in the Junior University. One assistant head teacher observed: *"There are probably too many of our pupils involved…all we have to say is we'll meet you in the atrium and they're there! We opened up the Junior UoB to our Year 11s and we had a 75% uptake."*

The schools were all in agreement that they gained a lot from their relationship with the University. Many explained that the localised nature of the UoB enabled them to build a close relationship such that they felt able to access its services in many different ways. One described how their gaining Trust status would help them to develop their relationship further and give them added benefits:

"*We're really excited about our Trust status. We are already an Associate School and have applied for Aimhigher Associate status. We're waiting to hear back and are hoping to develop students in leadership within the school: they could go on to UoB and then come back and work with our students here. Things like leadership and management, public speaking and accountability. We could feed students into the UBSA scheme and the UoB could accredit the training… We'd like to work with* (X) *and* (X) *to get UBSA into Belle View Boys*"

A few schools explained that they could no doubt gain more if they were able to develop the relationship further. A head teacher observed that there would definitely be a piece missing if the relationship did not exist:

"Yes, we do benefit…it's a progression gap if it's not there. The local UoB is at the heart of how you encourage children to progress."

Although the overall experience of the relationship with the UoB was a positive one, the majority felt that there were still room for improvements especially in the realm of "*more personal communication*". Having face-to-face and individualised contact was valued highly by the majority of schools' staff, as one commented:

"*We'd like better communication, like we used to have before when* (X) *was in charge.*"

Many felt that they would benefit from direct regular updates from the UoB as to what was available. One school explained that as its relationship with the UoB was so strong it felt that to counterbalance this it needed to look further afield and "*extend the field of opportunities to other universities*". This school went on to describe how it could take its relationship with Bradford to another level by proposing that engineering students from the UoB go into their school to deliver training to pupils and for A-level students to conduct joint projects with UoB students.

One school described how it would like to develop its relationship further by brokering a relationship whereby UoB staff could deliver lessons to the students in their school over the summer. The purpose of this would be to deliver teaching which would

broaden pupils' horizons in non-traditional subjects and to expose the pupils to broader experiences than the traditional professions. In the schools' words:

"*Master classes to stretch students, not just the gifted and talented but broader, and not just have the classes related to what they know or are studying. E.g. get Level 8 kids at 13 years being able to look at astrophysics – something that they have no idea about but will open their minds….subjects that will excite them.*"

One school suggested that it would like the UoB to develop some provision for teaching staff new to Post-16, for example, a Post-16 Induction course for new heads of sixth form.

In addition to the request for more personalised relationships which would further facilitate and support partnership schools, the schools came up with a number of innovative suggestions to facilitate a different partnership. These ranged from more talks on careers, higher education and finance within schools, additional master classes, more work with Ecoversity, increased access to student ambassadors and, importantly, provision around training specifically for teaching staff and developing a relationship whereby the continuing professional development of teaching staff could be tied in with the University.

Of particular interest was an issue highlighted by one school which observed that it found there was little input in terms of higher education awareness-raising as early as Years 7 and 8. They explained that disaffection began at Year 8 and that this was a nationally recognised fact. It said:

"……*but outside of Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 there are no conversations about higher education. KS3 conversations would be really good to address the Year 8 dip before disaffection begins.*"

When asked if there was anything about the UoB that made it different to other universities, the majority of responses were very positive. Only one school felt that, because it didn't engage with other universities, it could not draw comparisons and therefore could not answer the question. The majority view was that it was its localised nature that made the UoB "*unique*". However, in addition to its location, the specialness of their partnerships with the UoB was identified by the majority as the University's approachability, accessibility, availability and the close nature of the relationship, for example:

"*I always feel that there is a positive response when I ring up.*"

One head of sixth form said: "*The difference is that the relationship is usually through Aimhigher, but ours is a closer relationship to the UoB and we work in lots of different ways. We know we can develop things with Bradford, especially things which might not be part of a formalised activity. It's not just about kids going to UoB but the UoB supporting our curriculum by adding to our skills base.*"

The same school commented on the diversity within the UoB being a key feature:

 "*It's our UoB even though it's got a much higher mix of cultures than the school ever has. It's good for them to see multi-cultural places.*"

One staff member attributed the UoB's "*uniqueness*" to it being an inclusive institution.

Another school explained that the UoB provided many subjects relevant to its pupils and that ex-pupils, who were now UoB students, helped to raise aspirations:

"*The subjects are relevant to the professions like medicine, business, engineering and informatics…. It is important to our kids that they have people they know who've gone there.*"

When asked if the UoB should offer the same relationship to all schools, with the exception of one school and a staff team in one other school, the majority view was in the negative. This was because it was strongly felt that not only would this be impossible, but that it would compromise the quality of the work and existing relationships between schools and the University. It was felt by the majority that one size did not fit all; the UoB needed to be equally open to all schools but each school would have its own set of needs. For example:

"*No, the UoB shouldn't offer the same relationship to all schools. It needs to offer individualised programmes. The vast majority of schools fit the widening participation criteria. Even Aimhigher doesn't have the same relationship with all schools.*"

Another school observed that it did lots of work through Aimhigher, but that even this work was not equitable. One head teacher observed:

"*The Aimhigher cohort here at* (X) *is higher than it would be at say* (Y), *so relationships can't be equitable.*"

A few of the schools highlighted that any attempt to provide the same relationship would provide a significant challenge to the UoB. One school said:

"*I don't think you can…that's why Trusts are such a great idea. We want a personal relationship – so if it's personal, how would it work with every school? You'd have to cherry-pick and resources would be an issue.*"

The school that described its relationship with the UoB as "*close*" said:

"*Ideally yes, as long as it doesn't dilute what we're getting. We should look at how the UoB works with confederations. It would be better if it mixed with other sixth-formers.*"

One school explained that it was informed through its relationships with the UoB which had been developed over time; however, this awareness could be raised more effectively if the UoB attended its head of sixth form meetings. It said:

"*We have head of sixth form meetings – once someone from the Business School came. I think this should happen more frequently, we have 18 heads of sixth form*

here. If you contact me I could organise a 20 minute slot and the UoB could come and tell us what you are doing at the moment. You know, this is what we are doing, please contact this person."

Only one school said that they thought that discussions were not held within the school. It said:

"*No probably not. It's hard for someone to take responsibility here. It could happen. The Aimhigher organiser could lead on it. We've never had a formal conversation about relationships with any university. It would be a good idea to sit down with* (UoB dean) *and our Aimhigher organiser next year to get the school more involved*".

5.3 Findings from pupil questionnaire

In summary, 95% of respondents stated that they found the UoB and its activities "easy" or "very easy" to access, with 90% completing the activities in question. In the main, benefits were seen as "exposure to higher education", and "gaining new experiences".

5.3.1 Year groups

The majority of questionnaires were completed by Year 13 pupils, followed by Years 12, 9 and 10 respectively. There was no representation from Year 11 pupils.

5.3.2 Awareness

Out of 159 respondents, over half said that they found out about the opportunity to access activities at UoB through teaching staff at school. Just under a quarter had heard through their Aimhigher organiser. Nine percent found out through their friends, 7% found out through the UoB prospectus, 5% were signposted by family members and 1% through the media.

5.3.3 Scheme attended

There were three options to choose from in this category; the Children's University, the Junior University and the Compact scheme. Only 2% of respondents selected the Children's University (this may be because they were not able to remember or associate the name of the activity they attended with the Children's University). However, the majority were able to name the scheme(s) they had participated in; 74 out of 159 (44%) respondents stated they had joined the Junior UoB and a further 93 (54%) stated they had participated in the Compact scheme.

5.3.4 Transition

Of the 74 respondents who stated they had participated in a Junior UoB activity, 38 went onto participate in a Compact activity as can be seen in the table below:

Table 1: Activities participated in

No	Name of School	Completed Questionnaire	Junior University	Compact	Number Progressed
1	Beckfoot School	3	3	3	3
2	Belle Vue Boys' School	4	2	4	2
3	Belle View Girls' School	10	5	10	5
4	Buttershaw Business and Enterprise College	9	6	3	1
5	Calder High School, A Specialist Technology College	1	0	1	0
6	Carlton Bolling College	7	5	7	5
7	The Challenge College	12	4	9	1
8	Dixons City Academy	2	1	2	1
9	Feversham College	6	4	6	3
10	Grange Technology College	16	10	11	6
11	Greenhead College	9	5	9	0
12	Hanson School	3	1	3	3
13	Heckmondwike Grammar School	2	0	2	0
14	Laisterdyke Business and Enterprise College	1	0	1	0

No	Name of School	Completed Questionnaire	Junior University	Compact	Number Progressed
15	**Nab Wood School**	13	11	8	6
16	**Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College**	2	1	2	1
17	**Oakbank School**	2	1	2	1
18	**St Bede's Catholic Grammar School**	48	15	1	0
19	**Other**	9	0	9	0
	Total Completed	159	74	93	38

5.3.5 Accessibility

Of the 159 respondents, the majority (95%) stated that they found the UoB and its activities between "easy" and "very easy" to access. Only seven (5%) stated that it was not easy to access the UoB activities.

5.3.6 Completers

Ninety percent of respondents stated they completed the activity they had enrolled on, while 10% stated that they did not complete it. Of the options available, the main reason given for non-completion was not enjoying the activity, followed by travel and "other" reasons. One stated that they did not complete the activity because they did not need any more help. In the space provided for additional comments, among reasons given were the following:

"*Study skills sessions boring, more practical experiments and work needed.*"

"*Too much time spent on study skills but not enough time spent on assignment content and expectations.*"

"*Lecturers too much talking, study skills didn't learn anything.*"

5.3.7 Benefits gained

The chart below shows the benefits which respondents believe that they received as a result of attending the UoB activity.

Benefits gained
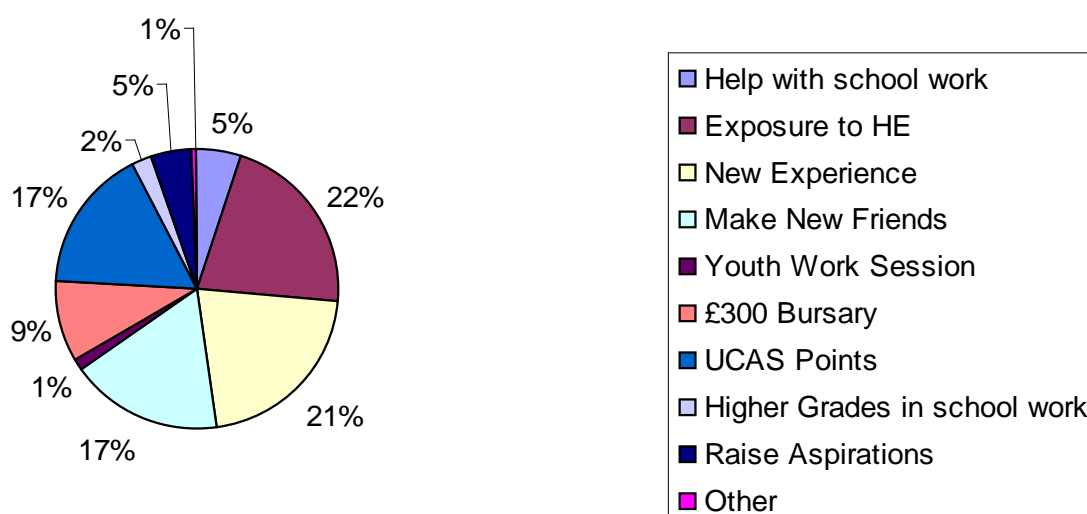
When asked what they got out of the UoB activity, many respondents selected three or more from the list of options. Twenty-two percent of respondents stated that they gained from the exposure to higher education. Some example comments were:

"*Made me more confident in preparation for September.*"

"*I was already thinking about higher education but now I'm sure.*"

This was closely followed by 21% of respondents who stated that they had benefited from the exposure to new experiences. Examples include:

"*This has been like a taster for what to expect - it was an enjoyable experience.*"

"*I feel more motivated to go to uni after the medical summer school and P2L4 and the study skills sessions.*"

"*Looking at Manchester but Bradford is a lot friendlier.*"

"*Experiments were enjoyable.*"

Seventeen percent of respondents said that they made new friends and 17% of respondents gained UCAS points. Example comments were:

"*This Compact has been a great experience and very helpful for me. I made new friends and got some positive support - excellent organisation.*"

5.3.8   UoB teaching staff and teaching style

Sixty percent of respondents felt that the UoB teaching staff were helpful and 40% felt that they were approachable.

The majority of respondents stated that the UoB teaching style was easy to understand (78%) while 22% said that it was not easy to understand, for example:

"*Specific subject strand ICT very useful, tutor explained things in a way that I understood – helped me in an area I was struggling with in school.*"

5.3.9   Aspirations towards higher education

When asked whether they had considered going to university before attending a UoB activity, 86% (115) said that they had already considered going to university. Eight percent (10) stated that they had not considered going to UoB and 6% (eight) said that they had changed their mind after participating in a UoB activity and was now considering going onto university.

Had you thought about going to University before participating in a University activity? If No, have you changed your mind?

This would indicate that pupils were already aspiring towards higher education before coming to a UoB activity.

Comparing these findings with the feedback from school staff, it would be reasonable to conclude that the main issue is not just raising aspirations to enable young people to consider higher education, but teaching them the skills so as to be ready for higher education such that when they do progress to university, they can succeed.

The procedures necessary to get to the point of interviewing a teacher or supporting them to conduct questionnaire work with pupils are complex and often protracted. Within this project, some assistance was given by Aimhigher. Clearly a longer timeframe and more substantial research project would be needed to follow through a full evaluative cycle with all our schools. We envisage the next stage to be inclusive of non-case study schools and to achieve:

- actual measurement of the outputs, outcomes and impacts identified in the above;
- the folding back in of this new knowledge in the ways that relationships with schools where taken forward.

Fig 4 provides an illustrative example of an issue coming to light in the ongoing consultative relationship with the school, the school and the UoB agreeing joint action, enacting it and then measuring the impact of that intervention on the student:

Fig 4: Example of identifying, addressing and measuring an agreed issue

Issue	Activities	Output	Outcome	How Measured
"*UoB an unwelcoming place*"	Sixth form induction held at University Campus Visits ACE days	Number of inductions	Better preparedness for starting UoB	Student self review statements on entry to UoB after week three as part of SAPRA

Chapter 6: Populating the summative overview matrix

This research project has progressed the development of an evidence-based approach to assessing our relationships with schools. The evaluation framework developed here allows for the ongoing and systematic capture of data against key indicators of successful partnerships, including:

- Impact of raising awareness in terms of the higher education opportunities on offer

- Where and how activities help to raise attainment

- Effectiveness of the UoB sixth form inductions

- Contribution of UoB staff and students to school curricula

- Impact of HE-school activity/partnership on recruitment patterns in schools

- Comprehensiveness of CPD programmes available to schools' workforce

- Engagement of the UoB in the school and district-level education planning

- Scale and role of the UoB in the governance arrangements of schools

- Contribution of school staff and students to UoB course planning

One of the issues is the extent to which we have a robust overview at any point in time, hence the need for the summative overview matrix. Completing the matrix as far as we are able is the third and final stage of this research project: existing and new data gathered during Stages 1 and 2, especially in relation to evidence of impact, begins to inform and support its coherent population.

In the matrix (Fig 5, below), the formal relationship between the school and the UoB is first stated, followed by the seven key areas (1-7) that emerged as the indicators of 'relationship' within this research activity. Populating the matrix with the 1-5 √ scores (where √ = low, √√√√ = high) was achieved by pulling together quantitative and qualitative data sources from the evaluation stages outlined above, in order to arrive at an evidence-based and informed judgement for each key area.

The final row states the strength of the relationship overall, this assessment being informed by '√' scores for key areas 1-7 as well as the underpinning data.

Fig 5: Populated matrix for case study schools

	Key area	Belle View Boys	Buttershaw B.E.C	Challenge	Grange	Laisterdyke B.E.C	Nab Wood	St Bede's
	Status of relationship with the UoB	No formal relationship	National Challenge Trust School & Associate School	Associate School	Associate School	Associate School	Trust School & Associate School	No formal relationship
	Key area:							
1	*Raising aspiration*	√√√	√√√√	√√√	√√√	√√	√√	√√
2	*Raising attainment*	√√√	√√√√	√√√	√√√	√√	√√	√√
3	*Planning*	√	√√√	√	√√	√	√√	√
4	*Capacity building*	√	√√√	√	√√	√	√√	-
5	*Governance*	√	√√√√	√√	√√√	√	√√√	√
6	*Transition*	√√√	√√√	√	√√√	√√	√√	√
7	*Progression**	√√	√√	√√	√√√	√	√√	√
	Assessed strength of relationship:	√√	√√√√√	√√	√√√√√	√√	√√√	√

*based on the proportion of leavers going into HE from that school

Fig 6, below, sets out the data sources used to arrive at√' rating, according to data type and stakeholder type:

Fig 6: Data sources used to inform '√' ratings

	School	UoB
Qualitative	• Interviews with school staff • Focus groups with pupils • Qualitative intelligence arising from ongoing evaluative cycles (Fig 1)	• Interviews with school staff • Qualitative intelligence arising from ongoing evaluative cycles (Fig 1)
Quantitative	• Post-activity questionnaires and evaluation proformas • Records of raised attainment etc. • Other quantitative intelligence arising from ongoing evaluative cycles (see Fig 1)	• Ongoing quantitative monitoring of progression etc. • Other quantitative intelligence arising from ongoing evaluative cycles (see Fig 1)

Chapter 7: Implications and next steps

There are some interesting patterns to the data. For example, "raising aspiration" and "raising attainment" receive the highest rating overall. This is not surprising given the remit, reach and resource of the national Aimhigher initiative, or, more succinctly, there is an expectation on all schools and they receive specific funding for such activity.

Interestingly, two of the three schools with the highest ratings overall are both Trust *and* Associate Schools. This suggests a relationship between formal status being very established and higher levels of engagement/activity.

Where the matrix can be populated within the key areas of "planning", "capacity building" and "governance" this demonstrates a strong relationship between the UoB and the school, and indicates where, as well as how, our partnership work succeeds. These are strengths that have been achieved over and above a national initiative framework and it is this added value that determines real partnership as it is more likely that such a relationship will be at least maintained in the light of any funding reductions.

The present research activity has allowed us to (a) assess fully our relationship with the seven case study schools and (b) pilot our evaluation framework. Clearly a longer timeframe and more substantial research project would be needed to follow through a full evaluative cycle using the framework with all our schools.

The next stage will be to formally evaluate our relationships with all our partner schools in this way, to share this review with them and Education Bradford and then to review the analysis annually. Moreover, the next stage will be to look at how the model, once it been fully operational in this way, can be rolled out across the sector into both rural and urban areas.

Appendix 1:

Overview of the UoB's work with the schools sector

1. Introduction

The UoB has long been committed to engaging with schools and colleges in the district. It has established strong and enduring partnerships and has played a central role in the drive to widen participation over the last 10 years. This has involved working closely with over 158 primary and 29 secondary schools across the Bradford and Keighley district to identify the potential in students and improve attainment in schools as well as raise awareness of and aspiration to higher education. It's experience of partnership over the years has proven that a 'one-size- fits-all' approach does not work and therefore we have worked meticulously with our school partners to ensure that a strategic approach to widening participation is employed as much as is practicably possible. Thus we have employed a variety of approaches and models of engagement with different schools.

Our work with schools has significant resource implications for the UoB and our strategy has been to ensure that all resources are allocated appropriately in order to ensure success and mutual benefit to our partners. We have enjoyed particular success where our partners have taken joint ownership and have shared the responsibility for pursuing the widening participation agenda. Our strategy to proactively create and develop links with schools is also partly due to a lack of one of the traditional conduits for education strategy and planning: the period to which this research refers is one in which the UoB does not offer initial teacher training.

2. Widening participation

Our outreach activities have evolved organically over the last decade. We have maintained flexibility of approach from a 1990s starting point and we have tended to be demand-led. We have adapted our services and opportunities to ensure we meet the specific needs of our individual partners, but we have enjoyed particular success where our partners have taken joint ownership and have shared the responsibility for pursuing the widening participation agenda. The advent of our Associate Schools initiative lent a degree of structure to our approach, although we recognised the importance of maintaining a diverse and multifaceted approach. The Associate Schools programme cemented existing links with a number of schools in the area and led to more proactive take-up of the activities and events on offer, such as summer schools, revision classes and student mentors. By formalising and annually reviewing this programme of activities the UoB has been able to develop existing links to bring about an increase in benefits for pupils and staff within these schools.

Both challenges and opportunities are created by external factors beyond the University's control: changes in the regional demographic; global recession; changing demands of partner stakeholders in education such as the government, public sector bodies, businesses, students and wider society. We have tried to be strategic in terms of delivering our work. However, policy changes and funding interventions can pose the threat of disrupting planning and interrupting coherent trajectories of intention. For example, Aimhigher policy changes have impacted on our involvement with schools at the deeper level of governance as well as impacting on our work with

Trust and Academy schools. At times, it is inevitable that the overall picture becomes a little disjointed.

One of the ways in which we have responded to these complex challenges is through our widening participation initiatives which are vital to ensuring social justice and maintaining economic competitiveness. Under-representation in HE is inextricably linked with social exclusion and an inequality of opportunity and there are significant discrepancies in the take-up of HE opportunities between different social groups. Through our WP activities and initiatives we have tried to redress the imbalance of opportunity for under-represented groups such as disabled students, looked-after children, mature students and minority ethnic groups.

The UoB works with schools to raise aspirations and educational attainment among people from under-represented groups to prepare them for higher education, support them in being successful on their chosen programmes of study, improve their employment prospects, open up possibilities for postgraduate study and to provide opportunities for them to return to learning throughout different stages of their lives. Intervention can start very early in the life of the young person: the Junior University initiative began in the late 1990s as a response to Bradford's ranking within the education landscape at the time: low aspirations, low attainment, disordered structures and a UoB that was mainly absent from the discussions. The Learning and Skills Council was established in 2001 (merger between the Further Education Funding Council and the Training and Enterprise Council) and the UoB argued for the need to work with young people, teachers and parents to develop a "passport to achievement" (now known more commonly called entitlement) which ideally commenced at birth and continued lifelong.

In addition, the UoB works with partners such as the council, Education Bradford, Aimhigher, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Learning and Skills Council to achieve HEFCE's strategic priorities and targets in widening participation by focusing on three main strands of activity:

- Increasing the demand for higher education and opportunities to access it;

- Offering new opportunities for progression on vocational courses and for lifelong learning;

- Embedding widening participation in our policies and practice.

Through this work, the UoB is able to stimulate demand among under-represented groups, raise aspirations and increase the number of people qualified for entry into higher education. The UoB works with professional bodies to encourage demand for the four strategically important but vulnerable subjects of science, engineering, technology and mathematics and works meticulously to promote an increase in demand from groups who are under-represented in these subjects. The UoB also works hard, in collaboration with its partners and with learning and teaching staff, to providing student-centred provision, specifically through supporting initiatives that encourage more flexible and innovative delivery, in order to make learning opportunities in HE more accessible and attractive to people least likely to participate. Widening participation initiatives are embedded within our corporate plan and every endeavour is made to ensure that this is translated into our practices and in the way we engage with learners and the community.

3.   Beyond widening participation: specialist subject development

The UoB's work with schools is not limited to widening participation. For example, UoB schools and departments work with our Associate Schools to take forward specific subject based initiatives, as in the table below:

School of Health	School of Health in partnership with its NHS Trust partners has set up an education and health link group which has met every quarter for the last six years. Within this, all teachers of health education-related courses in schools and colleges in the Bradford and Airedale areas are invited to the forum. The forum assists with curriculum development, provides work experience opportunities (including the 'interview guarantee' scheme) and a careers event was held last year.
School of Management	The School of Management provided facilities for the Young Enterprise Area Finals in which approximately 40 students took part. One hundred and fifty students and 25 staff attended a Higher Education Day held in the School of Management. The Student Voice Conference on the subject of "Respect" was attended by 80 students and 20 staff including attendees from Associate Schools. Twenty students from Challenge College took part in the Area Finals for Ogden Trust National Business competition which was judged by a staff member from School of Management.
The School of Engineering, Design and Technology	In conjunction with SETPOINT West Yorkshire the school ran an Introduction to Medical Technology course for Hanson School at UoB.

4.   Learner attainment and progression

The UoB has become increasingly involved with schools in the development of their learner progression frameworks. We have developed a menu of activities to engage with schools to widen participation, raise aspirations and attainment and increase awareness of higher education. These include:

- Campus visits and taster days
- Mentoring and e-mentoring
- Student ambassadors
- Master classes
- Summer school and related higher education residential experiences
- Activity in schools and colleges: conferences, study days, presentations, workshops,
- revision days
- Student progression and transition to higher education
- Special entry pathways

- Progression to Level 4 (P2L4)
- Information, advice and guidance and facilitating transfer to higher education
- Curriculum and staff development
- Curriculum enrichment and support
- Contributing to the 14–19 agenda
- Partnerships; engagement with networks and specific groups
- Membership of school governing bodies and relationships with Academies and Trusts.

Through our provision of support to our schools we are able to make a substantial contribution to curriculum enrichment in a variety of subject areas. We open up our specialist facilities, enable access to our library, contribute to the development of modules delivered in schools and have sent our own UoB students into schools to provide subject-specific support within the classroom.

In terms of governance we have been working with other education providers, particularly from the voluntary sector, for example, the Bradford Achievement Forum. The UoB is a member of the Local Strategic Partnership, the Children's Trust and the Interim Executive Boards and has accredited a School Governor's course.

The UoB works with a range of local partners, including schools, further education colleges, local authorities, children's services, public, private and voluntary sector organisations and other higher education institutions in order to coordinate activities, encourage engagement and maximise the benefits. We are all too aware of school staff workloads and how this impacts the amount of time available for link activities. Due to these resource issues, much of our work with school students is facilitated through our Aimhigher partnerships. Aimhigher organisers provide invaluable support in terms of helping us to target our resources and co-ordinate our work with schools to ensure effective learner progression. These partnerships enable us to deliver a more co-ordinated, planned and integrated approach to our widening participation activities.

5. Formal partnerships

It is crucial to the development of the district that the attainment levels and participation rates in education are increased, and the UoB needs to play a strategic role in helping to achieve this aspiration. This aspiration can be well supported within a formally defined relationship, as described below. It does need to be said that the formal relationships outlined below do not adversely affect the University's commitment to working with other schools and we continue to strive for a strong relationship with all our partners regardless of a formally stated partnership.

Associate schools

The UoB has developed an extensive Associate School Network over the last five years as it seeks to support the raising of participation and attainment levels in

schools in partnership with other educational providers. The Associate School programme was developed to raise the aspirations and achievement of young people and encourage progression into higher education, particularly where young people may not have considered UoB as an option. The UoB works with secondary schools to encourage both academic and vocational routes into HE as appropriate. Being an Associate School is a formal agreement between the UoB and the school. An action plan is drawn up for each school which includes activities such as: progression modules, taster classes, master classes, visits and activity days. Some of this activity is hosted through the Compact scheme.

Trusts schools and governance

Increasingly schools have asked the UoB to nominate governors, either directly or through Education Bradford. The UoB is a trustee in three recently approved Trust schools. These Trusts are all supported by the local councils and the schools are part of the state school sector. Further trusts are in the process of being developed within two further schools whereby the UoB again acts as proposed trustee. All these relationships are founded on an understanding that the UoB is able to add value to the development of the school as an integral partner. By 2014, we aim to increase the number of schools with which we have this formal relationship to 15.

Academy schools

In partnership with co-sponsors Bradford Metropolitan District Council, the UoB is currently the lead sponsor for the development of an Academy school in Keighley. A new building will be opened in 2011 and the UoB will become responsible for the leadership of the school from September 2010.

National Challenge Trust Schools

The UoB has agreed to become the lead partner of three National Challenge Trust Schools. They will remain state sector schools but in 2009/10 the Trust will take responsibility for the appointment of a new governing body, led by the University. The trust will develop a plan to secure the raising of attainment levels in the school to increase the percentage of five GCSE at A* to C to above 30%.

Appendix 2:

Questions asked of 14 key members of UoB staff

1. What do you believe the University's approach is?

2. How successful do you think the University's engagement has been?

3. What age groups do we work with?

4. What work do we do with these people?

5. How would we demonstrate the importance of the work we have done?

6. What do you think are the key questions to ask schools?

7. What do you think are the key challenges for the future?

Key staff targeted for interview

1. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
2. Dean School of Lifelong Education and Development
3. Head of Access and Widening Participation
4. Junior University/Summer School Co-ordinator
5. Associate Dean
6. Head of Career Development Services
7. Associate Dean
8. Head of Admissions
9. Education Liaison Manager
10. Student Bursaries Officer
11. Vocational Progression Co-ordinator
12. Summer Schools Project Officer
13. Co-ordinator, Children's University
14. Access Widening Participation Administrator

Appendix 3:

Research questions for schools staff

Current work/arrangements and impacts

1. Could you describe any work that school is currently doing with the university?
2. Do the activities/programmes contribute anything in terms of curriculum support and pupil attainment?
3. Is there any feedback from the pupils themselves?
4. Does it make a difference in terms of pupil progression into higher education?
5. Does Aimhigher play a role in the relationship that you have with the university?
6. Does Aimhigher or any other activity raise awareness of higher education, both school staff and pupils?
7. Has school ever used the university's campus facilities?
8. Do school staff engage with the UoB in terms of their own accredited learning (etc)?

Relationship and role

9. Do you feel that you gain from your relationship with the university?
10. Which aspects of the school-UoB partnership work particularly well for you?
11. What could we do differently to improve the relationship?
12. In particular, are there any aspects of school where you think a new or different partnership would be a helpful?
13. Is there anything about UoB that makes us different to other universities?
14. Is there a role for the partnership in making sure that widening participation is achieved? How can we do this as effectively as possible?
15. Should the UoB offer the same relationship to all schools?
16. What role do governors from the UoB play in school governance? What role should they play?

Awarenesses

17. How did school become aware of the range of opportunities on offer?
18. Does the school community have internal discussions about its relationship with the UoB and the activities/programmes that are on offer?
19. Who has these discussions? Are pupils involved?
20. Do we need to raise awareness differently?

Appendix 4:

Pupil questionnaire

1.   **Name of school:** _____

2.   **What is your HOME Post Code:** _____

3.   **What Year group are you in? (Please Tick)**

Year 9		Year 10		Year 11		Year 12		Year 13	

4.   **How did you find out about the activities at the UoB? (Please Tick)**

School teachers		Aim Higher Organiser		Family		Friends		Media		Prospectus	

5.   **Which of the following UoB scheme(s) have you taken part in? (Please tick)**

Children's UoB Activity		Junior UoB Activity		Compact Scheme (16 years+)	

6.   **Specifically, which of the following UoB activities have you taken part in? (Please tick)**

ACE Day		Higher Education Day		Primary Fun Day		Primary ACE Day		Primary Spring Lecture	

Disability Spring School		Citizenship Day		Junior University		Easter Revision Class (AS/A2)	

LAC Summer School		Higher Education Summer School		Medical Summer School		Peer Mentoring	

Progression into		Learning Disability Spring		Reach Higher Vocationally		Compact	

Level 4 (P2L4)		School					

7.   How easy was it to get involved? (Please tick/add comment)

Not Easy		Easy		Very Easy	

Comments:

8.   How long did you stay involved? (Please tick/add comment)

Some of it		Most of it		All of it	

Comments:

9.   Did you complete the activity / number of sessions?

YES		NO	

10.   If your answer was NO, how long did you participate for? (Please tick/add comment)

Some of it		Half of it		Most of it	

Comments:

11. Why did you drop out? (Please Tick)

Difficult to Travel here		Didn't need more help		Didn't enjoy the activities		Other (please state)	

12. What could we have done to keep you interested? (Please state)

Comments:

13. What did you enjoy the most? (Please state)

Comments:

14.   What did you enjoy the least? (Please state)

Comments:

15.   What did you get out of it? (Please tick or please state)

Help with school work		Found out about University		New Experiences		Making New Friends		Taking part in the Youth work session	

£300 Bursary		UCAS points		Achieve a higher grade in school work		Raised Aspirations	

Other (please state)	

16.   Did you find the tutors……… (Please tick/add comments)

Helpful		Approachable		Did their teaching style make it easier for you to learn?	Yes		No	

Comments:

17.   Had you thought about going to UoB before attending an activity at the University?

YES		NO	

Comments:

18.   If your answer was NO, would you consider going to UoB now?

YES		NO	

Comments:

19.   If your answer was YES, do you still want to go to University? (Please tick/add comment)

YES		NO	

Comments:

☺ **Thank you for completing this questionnaire – your feedback is really important to us.**

Glossary of acronyms

BME: Black and Minority Ethnic

HEFCE: Higher Education Funding Council For England

HEI: Higher Education Institution

OFSTED   Office for Standards in Education

SERCO: The company to which Bradford Local Authority outsources its   education services. SERCO operates as 'Education Bradford'.

SLEF: (University of Bradford's) Schools Links Evaluation Framework