



Young Strathclyder P6 & P7 Programme Pilot

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Introduction

The Young Strathclyder programme is an institution-wide schools outreach and widening participation strategy offering engagement and reward for pupils throughout the learner journey. Working with pupils from primary school level upwards, the programme will raise awareness of higher education, support attainment, and offer learning opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Coordinated by the University of Strathclyde’s Access, Equality and Inclusion Service, the strategy aims to involve colleagues and students from across the University’s four faculties in delivering engaging learning activities.

The Young Strathclyder (YS) programme has three main points of engagement with pupils during their educational journey: P5-7, S2 and S5-6. The Primary and S2 phases of the programme allow pupils to undertake activities based around the four different faculties at Strathclyde, while the week-long Accelerate programme, for pupils at the start of S5 and S6, allows pupils to focus on one academic subject area that they are interested in going on to study at university.

A pilot of the YS Primary programme ran in 2022-23, with 404 P6 pupils and 417 P7 pupils from 10 Glasgow City Council primary schools taking part in a full day of interactive activities representing the Business, Engineering, HaSS and Science faculties at UoS. P6 pupils visited the UoS campus for their activity day while the P7 day took place in school, with P7 pupils then attending a graduation event on campus upon completion of the programme.

87 current Strathclyde students, representing each of the University’s faculties, were recruited and trained as mentors for the Young Strathclyder pilot in 2022/23. Many of these student mentors came from widening access backgrounds.

This evaluation focussed on the pilot phase of the P6 and P7 elements of the YS programme. Data was collected from the following groups:

- Participating Pupils
- Teachers
- Parents/Guardians
- Student Mentors



The AEI Service carries out pre and post-evaluation of all our outreach programmes but, as 2022/23 was a pilot year for the Young Strathclyde Primary programme, it was particularly important to carry out a robust evaluation. The programme introduced a new structure for the design and delivery of activities, as well as a new recruitment process and pattern of work for student mentors so we anticipated that, as with any pilot, there might be initial issues and lessons learnt for future improvements. While we had worked with Primary pupils previously, as part of the Children's University initiative, this was in a different context and it was important to know that the activities and programme structure were appropriate and effective for the target year groups. Our intention is to engage with pupils throughout their educational journey and it was therefore also important to get baseline data for the 2022/23 cohort which could be used for comparison during future years.

Young Strathclyde/FOCUS West Longitudinal Impact Evaluation

This evaluation is the start of a longitudinal evaluation measuring the impact of two distinct programmes of activity; Young Strathclyde and FOCUS West, which together have the potential to provide sustained multi-point intervention to cohorts of pupils who meet widening access indicators. As 23-24 was a pilot year for YS, and as the reach of FOCUS West may be subject to change, it is difficult at the present time to be absolutely sure that we are evaluating all of the appropriate aspects of the intervention. As such, we have endeavoured to evaluate the key aspects of the YS Primary programme that mirror the Outcomes and Impact goals of FOCUS West and of Young Strathclyde Accelerate. Each intervention must also measure its own success, however the ultimate aim is that participants are encouraged, motivated, inspired and provided the practical tools that will result in an increase in successful applications from the participant group.



<h2>Methodology</h2>
What sort of data did your evaluation involve? <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative <input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mixed methods
Which methods did you use? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Questionnaires <input type="checkbox"/> Validated Scales <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group(s) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Analysis of existing data from your intervention e.g. monitoring data routinely collected <input type="checkbox"/> Analysis of externally sourced data, e.g. bespoke, institutional or publicly available <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other
Which software package(s) if any did you use to assist with your evaluation? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excel <input type="checkbox"/> SPSS <input type="checkbox"/> NVivo <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tableau or PowerBI <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other



Methodology:

Overall, data was collected from a wide range of sources in order to give us as clear a picture as possible of the impact on the programme, both on pupils and on other stakeholders. This was considered especially important for our pilot phase.

P6 & P7 Pupils

We designed pre and post questionnaires P6 and P7 pupils to complete at the beginning, before any other activity (e.g. introductory presentation) had taken place, and end of activity days. It was decided that having the pupils complete hard copies of questionnaires, in person, would be the most effective way of maximising numbers of responses.

The data that we were looking to collect for both P6 and P7 pupils was similar in this pilot year, as this was the first contact with the Young Strathclyder programme that P7 pupils had experienced. In future years, the pre-activity day evaluation of P7 pupils will take into account that there will, hopefully, be some lasting impact from their previous engagement with the programme in P5 and P6.

We were looking to gather information on pupils in terms of knowledge, perceptions, and feelings towards University, as well as academic and career aspiration and to get a sense of whether engagement with the Young Strathclyder programme made any difference to these. Pre and post questions for P6 and P7 pupils addressed these areas:

- Knowledge of Higher Education (HE)
- Aspiration to attend HE
- Confidence in ability to access and complete HE courses
- Perceptions of University

As we were working with primary pupils, consideration was given in the design of questionnaires as to how advanced the language should be or how detailed questions should be, including how much detail was required in responses. Our assumption was that, given the age groups, it was better to have questionnaires which were brief and contained a large percentage of quantitative questions where pupils could circle their preferred response. While there was some discussion around using graphics/emojis to signify agreement/disagreement with statements, as this was deemed to potentially be a useful approach with children, it was felt that P6 and P7 pupils had a level of maturity and a sense of their advanced standing in the school that should allow them to understand the more 'normal' rating system of such questions and might make this approach seem patronising.

It was felt that too many open-ended questions may be tiring or confusing for pupils and that primary pupils may not give particularly rich qualitative answers. Qualitative questions were therefore kept to a minimum and in general did not ask for much information. Having analysed the data gathered in 2022/23, it has become evident that some questions could have been clearer in their language and what was being asked of participants. These questions have been revised for 2023/24.

Pre-questionnaires also asked pupils to identify if anyone in their family had been to University. This was done to ascertain what percentage of pupils would likely be first in family to attend University. In



turn, that could allow us to reflect on how schools were selected to participate in the programme. These questions also helped get a sense of how aware pupils were of University pre-programme.

The post-surveys contained some post-only questions to try to gather more data on how pupils felt about the day, the activities and working with student mentors. There were also some open-ended questions designed to elicit what pupils had learnt about University during the day. As the P6 pupils spent their activity day on the Strathclyde campus, they were also asked post-only questions with regard to their impressions of the campus. Evaluation of responses to these questions gave us a clear action point that the format of the day needed to be adjusted to allow pupils more time to investigate the wider campus.

From the 417 P7 pupils who took part in an activity day, 403 pre-questionnaires and 389 post-questionnaires were completed by pupils. From the 404 P6 pupils who took part in the activity day, 356 pre-questionnaires and 352 post-questionnaires were completed by pupils. The discrepancy between these P6 figures flags up the need for greater rigour in capturing data on all projects.

An additional evaluation was designed for P7 pupils to complete after the graduation ceremony. This will act, in future years, not just as an evaluation of the graduation event but also as the final 'post' evaluation for the whole P5-P7 YS Primary programme. It featured some open-ended questions about their experience of the graduation event and their impressions of the University campus, as well as some of the same quantitative questions with regard to perception, knowledge and aspiration towards HE that featured in the previous two questionnaires they had completed. This was designed to allow us three points of comparison from different stages of the pupils engagement with Young Strathclyder in P7. This final evaluation was carried out online some time after the graduation ceremony to ensure there was no positive bias in results caused by the excitement of the graduation day. 35 P7 pupils from two schools completed this questionnaire. The low numbers of participants completing this final online questionnaire perhaps supports our judgement that paper copies work most effectively.

Teachers

Pre and post questionnaires were designed for teachers to complete at the start and end of P6 and P7 activity days. Again, it was felt that having teachers complete paper copies in-person would maximise the number of responses. It was considered that teachers would be a rich source of qualitative data and also that they would be able to provide a significant amount of background information on the pupils with regard to previous knowledge of and aspiration towards HE and any barriers in progressing to HE that they might face. These open-ended questions were in the pre-questionnaires. At this stage in the pilot, where we were wanting to learn as much as possible from stakeholders, qualitative questions were preferred as it was important not to limit potential responses.

Again, in this pilot year, the P7 and P6 teacher evaluations were very similar, as both P6 and P7 pupils did not have previous experience on the Young Strathclyder programme. In coming years, pre-evaluation of teachers will look to assess any long-term impact or follow up from previous Young Strathclyder engagement.



The same questions were asked on pupil knowledge, pupil aspiration and pupil perceptions with regard to University in both questionnaires in order to give direct pre and post programme comparison. Some post-only quantitative questions that addressed pupils' experience of and engagement with the activity day and a service evaluation on how the day worked from a logistical point of view. 35 P6 and P7 teachers whose pupils participated in the 2022-23 programme completed evaluations.

Parents

It was considered that the best way to gather data from parents/guardians was in-person at the P7 graduation ceremony and the most efficient way to do this was using hard copies of postcard-sized questionnaires, handed out at the beginning of the ceremony and collected at the end. While parents' responses might be affected by the excitement of the day, it is highly unlikely that we would get similar response rates via another method.

This evaluation was an opportunity to gain parental feedback on pupils' experience of the programme and the graduation but also to check family history of University attendance and how well-informed parents had been about Young Strathclyde. Questions were generally open-ended, anticipating a potential wide range of responses, but the wording of questions was relatively simple and did not ask for a great amount of information, partially due to the fact that that parental focus, during and post-graduation, may not be on completing an evaluation and partly because of an awareness that there may be language issues that affect understanding of questions and ability to complete responses. 101 evaluation forms were completed by the parents/guardians of P7 pupils who attended the graduation ceremony, 94 by parents and 7 by other family members.

Student Mentors

In general, we are interested in evaluating how working on widening access programmes has an impact on student wellbeing and development of employability skills. Pre and Post surveys were designed to assess the impact of the programme on students with regard to:

- Development of skills and abilities
- Study and career aspirations
- Wellbeing

Student mentors were also seen as an extra source of data on what impact the programme had on pupils and some post-only questions addressed this. The majority of questions were open-ended, anticipating a wide range of responses.

Student mentors were asked to complete pre- and post-questionnaires at the start and end of the programme.

The pre-evaluation was a word document that was emailed out to mentors and the completion rate for this was low meaning it was not really feasible to do a proper pre and post comparison of data from mentors. Therefore, emphasis was placed on the, mainly qualitative, analysis of post evaluations. 14 student mentors who worked on the 2022-23 pilot completed a post-programme evaluation.



Discussion/ Reflections

Obstacles/Challenges

Completion of Questionnaires

- A significant number of pupils on the programme had English as an Additional Language. While we tried to take this into account in the use of language while designing surveys, there were some pupils who could not read English at all or had issues with both reading and writing, which understandably led to some illegible evaluations. This also meant that teachers, student mentors, parent helpers and sometimes other pupils would be translating for pupils and often acting as a scribe. This perhaps compromised the absolute integrity of the evaluation; potentially at times we were not getting a true reflection of the thoughts of participants or were receiving an edited version by whomever was acting as their scribe. This situation also perhaps extenuated the issue of some pupils copying each other's answers.
- We go to some lengths to try and ensure that the very first thing that happens on a project day is that a pre-evaluation form is completed by pupils, with an absolute minimum of interaction with the project team before this is done. However, it could be argued that the team's very presence in the school, along with the fact that pupils have probably been told about the day in advance, have possibly discussed it with their teacher and know that the day will be different from a normal school day, means that pupils are already more likely to say they want to go to University in this pre-questionnaire or perhaps feel that this is this something that they should say. Ideally, pupils would complete the pre-questionnaire in advance of the day or the team's arrival, but this would be logistically difficult and perhaps mean inconsistent numbers of completed questionnaires across schools.
- The final evaluation for P7 pupils on the programme involved completing an online form post the on-campus P7 graduation event. In future years, this will serve as the final piece of evaluation for the overall P5-P7 Young Strathclyder programme. The final P7 survey, post the on-campus graduation event, was sent out to schools too close to the end of the school summer term and completion rates were low, with responses from only 35 P7 pupils from two schools. For 2023/24, this evaluation will be sent out in good time for schools to complete before the holidays. This highlights the issue of gathering data remotely from pupils, which can be problematic, however, while it may be easier to gather data from pupils on the day of graduation, it is also preferable to give pupils time to reflect on their experience and there are potential issues with the excitement of the event affecting responses.

Successes

In general, we were pleased with the amount of data that we could gather and analyse from quite a wide range of stakeholders. This allowed us to produce a detailed evaluative report. Some of the results of this are detailed in the 'Additional Content' section below.



Limitations

Pupils

P6 and P7 pupils are not necessarily a rich source of qualitative data. Answers tended to be short and not very descriptive; 'It was fun', for example. We also found that they could be unreliable sources of data, with some responses seeming not very relevant to the question or the programme. Teacher questionnaires, understandably, were a much better source of qualitative data though sometimes the member of staff accompanying the pupils was not their regular teacher, i.e. the person with greatest knowledge of the pupils, and this could impact on the depth of responses and understanding of impact on those pupils they did not know well.

Parents

As mentioned above, it was considered that the most effective place to get parents to complete an evaluation was at the P7 Graduation ceremony. A high percentage of parents/guardians who attended completed an evaluation and this produced some beneficial data. There are, however, several potential issues with the data collected from parents/guardians:

- Any positive results could perhaps be caveated with a recognition that these pupils have family members who have demonstrated some commitment to their children's education by their attendance at the graduation ceremony. Are these the parents who have already 'bought in'? Are schools from more disadvantaged areas and parents who suffer from more financial hardship less likely to attend? 101 evaluation forms were completed by the parents/guardians of P7 pupils who attended the graduation ceremony, an impressive percentage of attendees but less than 25% of parents/guardians of P7 participants. It is still an outstanding issue as to how we engage with parents who are perhaps less engaged or from more disadvantaged circumstances.
- We do not have any pre-evaluation for P7 parents for comparative purposes and we do not have any P6 parent evaluations.
- There are potential similar language barrier issues for parents when completing evaluations as we have with pupils.



Lessons Learned/ Future Work

There are several immediate practical changes that we will implement for 2023/24 based on our experience with the 2022/23 evaluation. These include the timing of the final P7 survey and how we engage student mentors with completing questionnaires. We will also look at how we engage parents more widely, both in terms of evaluation and in the running of information sessions/workshops about the programme itself - 56% of parents completing our questionnaire acknowledged that they did not know anything about the programme and 35% said that the first time they had heard about the programme was when they received an invitation to the graduation event.

For evaluation of mentors, for 2023-24, we took steps to make the pre-evaluation questionnaire more 'compulsory' by asking mentors to complete an online version of the form but in-person, at the start of a training session before the programme began. Consideration will be given to how to maximise the numbers of post-programme mentor responses for 2023-24.

Moving forwards, there are standardised questions, that ask for similar information to questions we currently use, which we can hopefully use in order to give more validity and reliability to our data and our research findings.

We were not able to conduct any focus groups or interviews during 2022-23 but will look to do this for the 2023-24 programme, ideally with teachers, parents and student mentors. It may be useful to, though logistically more challenging, to also run focus groups and interviews with pupils. These may be especially useful in ascertaining from pupils who have now taken part in the programme over consecutive years, how much of the impact or knowledge from the programme they retain over a longer period of time. We also did not have a control group for the 2022-23 and will look to develop this for coming years. There are issues to consider here about how schools would be selected for a control group.

Generally, we produce detailed evaluation reports on our widening access programmes for our funders and other stakeholders. These reports, perhaps understandably, tend to focus on the positive impact of programmes. The additional time and resource required of a project like this allows us to do more 'objective' research. While we do make changes, year on year, based on our experience of running programmes, it would be useful to document this process more regularly, both for our benefit and to contribute to our wider WA community of practice.



Additional Content		
Images		
<u>Data Collected/Analysed</u>		
Stakeholder	Timing of Data Gathering	Areas to Evaluate
P6 Pupils	Pre-P6 (then end of P7) Pre-P6 Event Post-P6 Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of HE (Higher Education) • Aspiration to attend HE • Confidence in ability to access and complete HE courses • Perceptions of University
P7 Pupils	Pre-P7 Event Post-P7 Event Post-Graduation event (comparing with Pre-P6 in later years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of HE • Aspiration to attend HE • Confidence in ability to access and complete HE courses • Perceptions of University
Teachers	Pre and Post for P6 and P7 projects	<p>Pre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil knowledge • Pupil aspiration • Pupil perceptions • Pupil background <p>Post:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil knowledge • Pupil aspiration • Pupil perceptions • Engagement with activities • Enjoyment • Skills development • Service Evaluation
Parents	Post-Graduation Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil knowledge • Pupil aspiration • Pupil perceptions • Pupil Engagement with activities • Pupil Enjoyment • Pupil Skills development • Parental awareness of programme • Parental knowledge of HE
Student Mentors	Pre and Post-Programme	<p>Pre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation for participation • Previous Experience • Skills/confidence/leadership/team-working • Study and Career aspirations <p>Post:</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills/confidence/leadership/team-working • Study and Career aspirations • Continued engagement with outreach • Feelings about making impact • Enjoyment • Pupil knowledge/ aspirations/ perceptions of University • Service evaluation • Number of projects worked
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Evaluative Results*

- The programme had a significant positive impact on P6 and P7 pupils with regard to aspiration to attend University and confidence that they could successfully undertake University study.
- Pupils found the Young Strathclyder experience interesting and enjoyable, with many feeling that it stimulated their learning in a range of areas.
- Participants enjoyed working with Strathclyde student mentors, who they considered to be positive role models who are approachable and knowledgeable.
- Pupils felt that, post-programme, they were generally more informed about University, and were aware that University opens up a wide range of study and career opportunities.
- Participants now felt that attending University was a more attainable aspiration and a less daunting prospect with many now feeling that it would be an enjoyable, as well as beneficial, experience.
- A large number of parents/guardians felt that their children would be motivated by the graduation event to attend University in the future, with many suggesting that pupils will now be more informed and inspired, as well as feeling more at home within a University environment.
- Parents felt that pupils had enjoyed the overall Young Strathclyder programme, with many feeling that it had boosted their young person's confidence. Many parents also felt that their children had learnt about Higher Education and were now motivated to progress to University after school.
- While many parents/guardians showed a good awareness of the programme content and aims, 56% of respondents acknowledged that they did not know anything about the programme, with 35% saying that the first time they had heard about the programme was when they received an invitation to the graduation event.
- Student mentors found working on the programme rewarding and enjoyable with many feeling they had developed their confidence, as well as a wide range of employability skills. Working in a mentor team had allowed many to develop social connections with other students that they would not normally have the chance to meet, improving their social engagement, wellbeing and confidence. This latter point was deemed by some to have been especially important and beneficial after two years of a more isolated University experience during Covid.
- Overall, results suggest that measuring the impact of event days showed greater positive results than pre and post comparison of attitudes towards University. This may be explained by the issues discussed above relating to relatively high 'starting points' in pre-evaluation.



URLs

University of Strathclyde – Young Strathclyder Evaluation Report 2022 – 2023

https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/sees/wideningaccess/Young_Strathclyder_Primary_2022-23_Evaluation_Report.pdf