

NEON Awards 2024 Nominations

Category

NEON Widening Access Initiative (Outreach) Award

Name of project and institution

Be the Change, Lancaster University

Brief Description

Be the Change is an early intervention and outreach project aimed at KS2 pupils through a series of 5 themed campus visit days. These include: BtC: Democracy and British Values, Leadership and Teamwork, Wellbeing, Go Green and Digital Data Science. We engage with pupils, teachers, and student ambassadors to explore and develop knowledge on these topics, while linking them directly to the National Curriculum and future careers and educational options. By bringing pupils on to campus, BtC allows pupils to familiarise themselves with and discover HE whilst at the same time enabling children to visualise themselves positively in this setting.

Why has this project been nominated

We believe it is never too soon for young people to start thinking about their future and our BtC programme empowers KS2 pupils to have a meaningful engagement with Higher Education whilst supporting schools to achieve Gatsby Benchmarks 2,4 and 7. Lancaster University offers the Be Change (BtC) project days in Democracy/British Values, Leadership & Teamwork, Go Green (environmental), Wellbeing, and piloted this year Data Sciences. BtC is an innovative programme for KS2 children, which combines subject-led academic knowledge and skills development (aligned with the OfS attainment-raising), authentic student-life insight through student ambassadors, which helps us to support young people in talking openly about transitioning into Secondary Education, job aspirations and areas about education they don't like! BtC works with primary schools in North Lancashire and South Cumbria, in particular schools with high Free School Meal percentages, high numbers of pupils who would be 'first in family', and geographical areas of deprivation. The programme delivers an inspirational experience for pupils and student ambassadors alike, having demonstrable successes in changing attitude and opinions not only towards Higher Education, but also to careers options linked to Higher Education. The project sees us working closely with student staff from all areas of the university, something that allows pupils to gauge university life and the steps that are taken to go to university. This is incredibly positive for everyone involved, leading to a more impact project day for pupils, and is a great experience for our student staff.

How long has the project been running

In the current format Be the Change has been operating for 5 years. However, BtC has been delivering in schools for a over a decade.

Number of participants for each year of the project's operation

Participants 2021/22 – 1800 (delivered over only terms 2 & 3 due to return to campus protocols.) – 35 campus visits 2022/23 – 2100 – 38 campus visits 2023/24 – 2500* (based on projected numbers) Teachers & support staff 2021/22 – 140 2022/23 – 190 2023/24 – to date this academic year 105 Student ambassadors 2021/22 – 63 2022/23 – 79 2023/24 – 87. As well as the ambassadors we have also had in excess over 300 support volunteers over the past 3 years. of

More details

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/languages-and-cultures/outreach-and-engagement/>

