a qualitative evaluation of the **Into**University programme

nfer

Kerensa White
Anna Eames
Caroline Sharp

a qualitative evaluation of the **Into**University programme

Kerensa White
Anna Eames
Caroline Sharp

How to cite this publication:
White, K., Eames, A. and Sharp, C. (2007). *A qualitative evaluation of the **Into**University programme*. Slough: NFER.

Published in May 2007 by the
National Foundation for
Educational Research
The Mere, Upton Park
Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ
www.nfer.ac.uk

Registered Charity No. 313392
ISBN 978 1 905314 43 0

Design and page layout by Patricia Lewis
Cover design by Helen Crawley

Contents

Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank:

- The **Into**University staff, young people, teachers and parents who took part in the research, organised interviews and commented on draft reports.
- Maureen Greenaway (Project Administrator, NFER) for her administrative support throughout the evaluation.
- Gill Bielby (Senior Research Officer, NFER) for conducting some fieldwork and commenting on our draft final report.
- The Sutton Trust for funding the study and the members of the project Steering Group for their advice and guidance of the evaluation.

Executive summary

Introduction

IntoUniversity is an educational programme aimed at children and young people who are most at risk of failing to meet their potential to go to university due to economic, social, cultural or linguistic disadvantage. Funded by the Sutton Trust, it began in 2002 and has grown to reach in excess of 1500 children and young people in the local area, on site and through school-based work.

One of the distinctive aspects of the **Into**University programme is that it consists of three strands (FOCUS, Academic Support, Mentoring) that span the age range 8–18 (years 3–13). Elements in these strands include: Primary and secondary Academic Support; half-term FOCUS weeks; Primary FOCUS weeks and days; Extending Horizons weekends; school liaison work; school scholarships; mentoring; Aspire and Achieve days and a Buddy Scheme.

The main aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of **Into**University on individual young people. More specifically, the evaluation aimed to take account of whether there had been a general positive impact on young people and whether their participation in the programme had affected their future educational aspirations. It is important to note that part of the context for commissioning this evaluation was that **Into**University had plans to expand their programme to other sites.

This research project comprised three main strands of data collection: eight case studies, observation of five elements of the programme and an analysis of 278 evaluation forms collected by **Into**University.

Key findings

The evidence in this report supports the conclusion that the **Into**University programme has a positive, transformational impact on children and young

people in terms of their academic success, attitudes to learning and social skills; all of which are key elements of helping children and young people to aspire and achieve. It was clear that **Into**University had played a key role in helping children and young people in clarifying, supporting and strengthening their aspirations and achieving their goals.

Key findings from the case studies and observations

- The data showed evidence of increased motivation, self-esteem and confidence amongst the young people in the case studies.
- Examples of improved learning were evident in the case-study data.
- Examples of independent or self-regulated learning were demonstrated in a number of case studies.
- From both interviews and observations it was evident that a culture of teaching transferable study skills was in place – encouraging independent learning.
- A number of young people demonstrated that they had become self-regulated learners.
- There was evidence that the **Into**University programme provides a platform in which young people can develop their social skills by interacting with people of different ages, backgrounds and ethnicities (many of whom are current university students).
- The young people valued the opportunity to study alongside friends in the Academic Support Scheme and there is evidence that this motivates them and makes learning more enjoyable.
- We observed that **Into**University encouraged children and young people to aspire and progress to university (or another chosen educational ambition).
- We observed that the idea of university is introduced at a young age via explicit and implicit means.
- The programme promotes the acquisition of academic, social and practical skills and knowledge necessary to make university a realistic goal.

Key findings from the analysis of evaluation forms

- Overall, in their completion of evaluation forms, young people were extremely positive about all three strands of the programme.
- The Academic Support Scheme was reported to be an excellent resource for children and young people to complete their homework in a supportive environment.
- The FOCUS weeks provided young people with the opportunity to take part in new and enriching learning experiences and trips (this was also evident in other areas of the evaluation).
- Parents and teachers spoke positively about the primary FOCUS week as a useful and inspirational learning experience.
- The FOCUS activities allowed young people to learn about university and trips to universities were enjoyed by the majority of young people.
- Mentors found their training extremely helpful both in its content and delivery. They appreciated the informality, openness and use of role play.
- Mentors felt that the most beneficial aspect of taking part in the programme was the positive influence on a young person's life.

Key findings in relation to IntoUniversity and the wider literature

Many of the good practice features of the **Into**University programme were consistent with the aspects highlighted in the research literature on study support and mentoring. For example:

- The Academic Support Scheme provided academic *and* pastoral support to young people, both of which are important, especially for young people with limited family experience of academic success.
- The Academic Support Scheme made use of clear target setting as recommended in the literature.
- **Into**University promoted skills for independent and self-regulated learning as recommended in the literature.
- The mentoring strand of the **Into**University programme was successful because it was a part of a broader programme in which young people gain support to inspire them to go to university.

- Mentoring offered young people different types of support such as affective contacts, direction setting and coaching as recommended in the literature.
- The mentoring strand reflected the good practice features set out in the literature such as devoting time to recruitment, screening and matching mentees, as well as providing initial training and on going support.
- There was no comparable literature for the FOCUS strand of the **Into**University programme. This highlights the uniqueness of the multi-stranded approach **Into**University has created.

Recommendations

Given the overall positive impact the programme is having on young people, the research team recommend the further expansion and funding of the programme.

Two sets of more specific recommendations, based on the evidence from this study, are given. The first set relates to the immediate actions that **Into**University staff may wish to consider at the St Clement and St James Community Project. The second set relates to the potential expansion of the scheme at new sites.

In relation to the programme at St Clement and St James Community Project the report recommends that **Into**University:

- Continues to organise the programme using the multi-stranded model and starting at a young age.
- Develops evaluation procedures so that they become more consistent in order to gain a clearer perspective on the impact of the programme on young people over time.
- Ensures that schools and parents are more aware of the entire **Into**University programme.
- Considers developing further opportunities for pupil voice and autonomy through, for example, more active participation in the student council and greater choice in learning tasks/conditions, in order to promote self-regulated learning.

- Develops the mentoring programme further by: encouraging mentors to be more explicit in acting as role models of successful university entrants; helping mentors to set up visits to their university for their mentees; organising regular opportunities for mentors to meet and support each other post-training; and organise regular opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet with one another and programme staff in order to discuss their progress.

In relation to the potential expansion of the **Into**University scheme it is recommended that **Into**University:

- Continues to move forward with the plans to roll out the programme to other sites – this may need to begin small, but should have the potential to expand.
- Uses a similar multi-stranded model, while considering which aspects of the programme are essential and which may be modified in response to local needs.
- Establishes a similar ethos and learning environment as in the current programme.
- Employs and trains staff who display a similar positive outlook and enthusiasm for working with young people as is evident in current members of staff.
- Develops evaluation procedures that have the potential to provide valuable feedback on individual sessions but also provide standardised, ongoing evaluative information across multiple centres.

1 **Into**University: introduction to the programme

IntoUniversity is an educational programme aimed at children and young people[1] who are most at risk of failing to meet their potential to go to university due to economic, social, cultural or linguistic disadvantage. Funded by the Sutton Trust, it began in 2002 and has grown to reach in excess of 1500 children and young people in the local area, on site and through school-based work. The programme aims to provide a unique model of support characterised by:

- a centre that accumulates social capital
- a home-from-home environment dedicated to providing the kind of Academic Support that is taken for granted in many middle class homes
- support based on a pastoral model which values emotional security as an essential part of academic achievement
- a high staff/student ratio
- excellent partnerships with local and national organisations[2] (including a number of London Universities)
- involving young people from age eight (year 3)
- providing a positive and aspirational ethos
- providing a multi-stranded approach.

One of the unique aspects of the **Into**University programme is that it consists of three strands (FOCUS, Academic Support, Mentoring) that span the age range 8–18 (years 3–13). Elements in these strands include: Primary and secondary Academic Support; half-term FOCUS weeks; Primary FOCUS weeks and days; Extending Horizons weekends; school liaison work; school scholarships; mentoring; Aspire and Achieve days and a Buddy Scheme.

1.1 Staffing, physical environment, ethos, programme delivery and organisation

The staff at **Into**University all have experience of working with children and young people in either a paid or voluntary capacity and they also possess awareness of issues around widening participation. All are educated to degree level or higher (this experience is essential because they must share their experience with the young people at the centre on a daily basis). In addition, because of the nature of the work and the ethos of the programme, staff are committed[3] to the pastoral care of young people and members of the community.

IntoUniversity is housed in the St Clement and St James Community Project ('the Centre') in North Kensington, London. The local area it serves can be characterised as a deprived community and many of the young people who use the **Into**University programme do so because they cannot get the same kind of help at home due to parental employment patterns and language barriers. The young people who use the Centre almost exclusively live in social housing.

The venue is a local voluntary organisation and, although **Into**University shares its buildings with the church, it is a non-religious programme. Historically the buildings were used as an adult education centre; **Into-**University see its work as in line with this original philanthropic mission.

In terms of the ethos of the programme, through academic and pastoral support, **Into**University aims to encourage young people to aspire and progress to university or another chosen ambition – it is about encouraging and equipping them to aspire and go further academically, than they would have otherwise. **Into**University aims to do this via a combination of subtle and explicit methods of introducing the idea of university into every strand of the programme. This runs in tandem with instilling self-belief and sound academic skills. As the **Into**University Coordinator said: 'We see what we offer as pastoral support, academic support and a culture of "you can achieve, you can get to university"'.

IntoUniversity targets children and young people in various ways but most of its explicit targeting is done through school liaison work (assemblies and workshops etc.) in schools that serve deprived communities. Young people who have been involved in one strand of the programme are informed about and encouraged to attend other strands.

Notes

1 It is important to note that the word 'children' is used to refer to primary school pupils and the term 'young people' is used to refer to secondary school students. To avoid repetition, the term 'young people' is used throughout the rest of this report to refer to both groups unless it is important to make specific references to younger children (i.e. those of primary age).

2 **Into**University works in partnership with the Sutton Trust, Rugby School, the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth, Aim Higher London, The Country Trust, 15 local primary schools, Brunel University, Westminster University, Imperial College, University College, the L.S.E., the Royal Veterinary College and King's College.

3 In most cases this goes above and beyond the call of duty. For example, one staff member explained she had frequently accompanied families to meetings with police and hospital appointments to help with communication and provide support.

2 Aims and methodology of the evaluation

This section gives a brief account of the aims and methodology adopted in this evaluation. Further details regarding design, methods, sampling and ethical considerations are provided in the appendix.

The main aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of **Into**University on individual young people. More specifically, the evaluation aimed to take account of whether there had been a general positive impact on young people[1] and whether their participation in the programme had affected their future educational aspirations. It is important to note that part of the context for commissioning this evaluation was that **Into**University had plans to expand their programme to other sites.

This research project comprises three main strands of data collection: case studies of individual young people, observation of activities and an analysis of questionnaire data. These are detailed below.

- Eight case studies were conducted, the purpose of which was to illuminate how the programme has affected children and young people and which elements were particularly influential. Data was gathered by means of semi-structured interviews with the children and young people and key individuals associated with them, including Centre staff, mentors, parents and teachers.
- Five observations were conducted: a primary and secondary Academic Support session, a 'Meet your Mentor' evening, a mentor/mentee meeting and a primary FOCUS Week workshop. The purpose of the observations was to gain an understanding of the nature of the programme.
- A sample of approximately 300 evaluation forms completed by young people, teachers, parents and university students who had been involved in the **Into**University scheme were coded and analysed.

In total 19 people were interviewed. This comprised eight young people and their respective associated adults (four parents, three mentors, one headteacher and three Centre staff). The case-study interviewees were not representative of the complete range of children and young people who attend the **Into**University programme. They were selected by **Into**University to represent a range of ages and levels of involvement with the programme. (Table A1 in the appendix gives more information about the selection criteria used in each case.)

Throughout the report pseudonyms are used to refer to the case-study subjects. They are: Nyobi (a year 13 girl), David (a mature student who had recently graduated from university), Ella (a year 6 girl), Ahmed (a year 6 boy), Femi (a year 10 boy), Abdi (a year 12 boy), Yasmin (a year 10 girl) and Sis (a year 10 girl).

Notes

1 Please note, that the term 'young person' is used throughout this report to refer to the case-study participants even though one of them was a mature student.

3 The research context

This section will situate the **Into**University programme within a brief contextual analysis of theory and research which sets out the potential of study support and mentoring programmes to contribute to raising aspirations and building skills of young people, especially those in challenging circumstances.

3.1 Research into study support

Study support is a broad term given to organised learning activities for pupils outside of school hours. The Department for Education and Employment (1998) defined it as follows:

> Study support is a learning activity outside normal lessons which young people take part in voluntarily. Study support is, accordingly, an inclusive term, embracing many activities – with many different names and guises. Its purpose is to improve young people's motivation, build their self-esteem and help them become more effective learners. Above all it aims to raise achievement. (p.1)

The successor to the DfEE (the Department for Education and Skills) commissioned a comprehensive review of opinion and research on study support (Sharp *et al.,* 1999b) to inform decision making. The review identified a wide range of benefits for study support claimed by experts in the field. It concluded that there was research evidence of positive associations between participation in study support and social, personal and academic benefits. The authors of this study pointed out that much of the research evidence from the past ten years was suggestive, rather than conclusive, because it was not always clear to what extent these positive outcomes could be ascribed to the influence of the programmes themselves, rather than 'selection effects' (i.e. that the pupils who accessed study support had higher attainment or more positive attitudes than pupils who did not attend).

However, a subsequent large-scale study of the impact of study support on secondary students was conducted by the Study Support National Evaluation and Development Programme (SSNEDP) (MacBeath *et al.,* 2001a and b). The study tracked 10,000 pupils in 53 inner-city schools over three years and controlled for any differences in the characteristics of the young people who accessed study support. MacBeath *et al.* (2001b) concluded:

> Pupils who participate in study support do better than would have been predicted from baseline measures, in academic attainment, attitudes to schools and attendance at school than students who did not participate. The effects are large, an average of three and half grades or one more A-C pass at GCSE. Study support appears especially effective for students from minority ethnic communities and, to a lesser extent, for students eligible for free school meals. (p.1)

The *Playing for Success* programme established study support centres in professional sports grounds. A series of evaluations has been conducted by the NFER of the programme (Sharp *et al.,* 1999a, 2001, 2002a, 2003). The centres offer excellent ICT facilities and are staffed by trained teachers and mentors. In relation to a matched control group, pupils who attended the initiative made significant gains in attainment during their time at the centres, especially in ICT and numeracy. On average, primary pupils improved their numeracy by about 17 months and secondary pupils by about 24 months. Secondary pupils' reading comprehension scores improved by eight months. Pupils also showed evidence of significant improvements in their attitudes, self-esteem and independent study skills.

A study conducted in the USA (Mahoney *et al.,* 2005) looked at the influence of attending a structured after-school learning programme on a group of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The study focused on 599 pupils aged six to ten years. The researchers controlled for 'selection influences' including differences in poverty and family employment among those who did and did not attend. They found that young people who attended the programme (run by teachers and adult volunteers) achieved statistically significantly higher reading scores after a year. Teachers also rated the pupils who attended the programme as having greater expectations of success in learning. Pupils who attended the programme most were rated more highly by teachers for their intrinsic motivation in learning.

3.1.1 Theoretical developments in an understanding of how study support influences learning

Qualitative research into study support has considered the mechanisms by which it influences learning, especially for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, a qualitative strand of the SSNEDP research focused on secondary students' reasons for attending after-school programmes in 12 schools (Sharp *et al.*, 2002b). Six main reasons were given by students for attending:

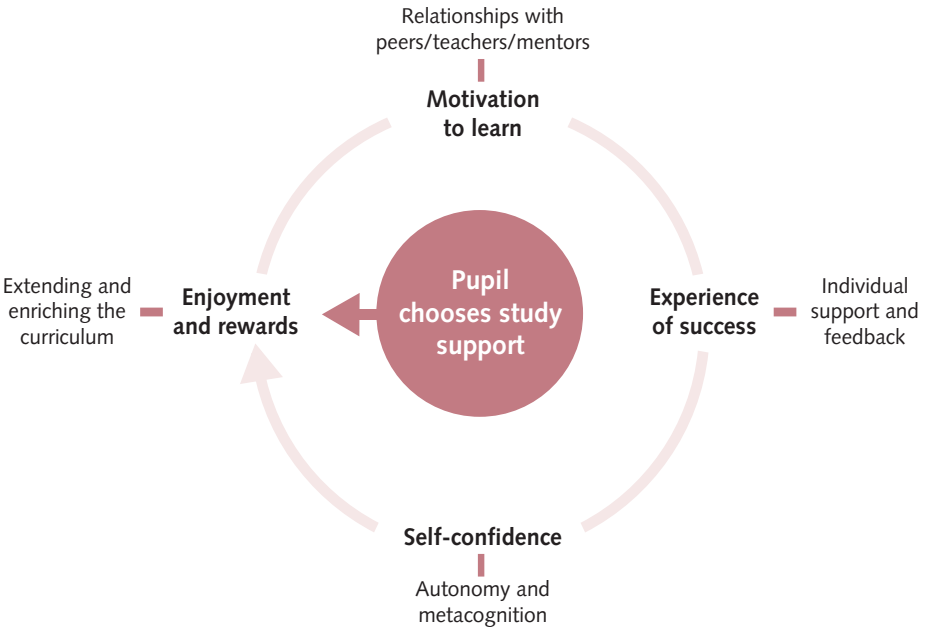
1. I enjoy going to study support
2. I can get help with my learning
3. Disruptive students do not attend
4. There is a more relaxed atmosphere than in lessons
5. I can work with my friends
6. It is better than studying at home.

The researchers developed a model of how study support helps to influence pupils' attitudes, develop skills and promote learning (see Sharp *et al.*, 2002b; Sharp, 2004). This is shown in Figure 1.

The model begins with a pupil's decision to attend study support. This represents a positive choice, for although pupils may be encouraged to attend by their teachers or parents, they decide whether or not they wish to take up the opportunity. Choice in this matter is important because it represents a decision to engage with learning in their own time.

Once at study support, pupils experience the immediate enjoyment of involvement in interesting work in a pleasant venue. A pupil's first experience of a study support activity is crucial. If they do not enjoy it, they will simply 'vote with their feet' and not choose to attend again. Good study support provision encourages an ethos of learning in a friendly and supportive environment. It also enables pupils to work collaboratively with others. As one of the young people interviewed as part of the SSNEDP research said: 'I want people to be here – I don't want to work alone'. These social relationships help to reinforce pupils' initial enjoyment, make them feel welcome and motivate them to learn.

Figure 1 How study support influences pupil learning



Ensuring that study support meets the needs of individuals is important in promoting successful learning. Study support programmes may use a target-setting process, whereby pupils are encouraged to identify aspects of learning they find more difficult or need to work on in order to achieve their longer-term goals. Some study support programmes develop systems for listening to young people's views and acting on their suggestions. Pupils appreciate the support they receive from staff and mentors, especially if these people are friendly, patient and encouraging. As one of the young people in the SSNEDP research explained: 'They don't treat us like pupils and they don't act like teachers'. Another commented: 'You get one-to-one support, which makes you more confident'.

Pupils are further motivated by the fact that they experience success in their learning. This is underpinned by staff checking that pupils are making progress and receiving positive feedback on their achievements. One of the SSNEDP interviewees said: 'If I can answer a question, I feel a bit better about myself.' As pupils appreciate their own progress, they become more self-confident learners with a greater expectation of success. This helps them to be more persistent when faced with a challenging task. As another young

person said: 'It has boosted my marks and my confidence is better because I know I can do well in all my subjects'.

Study support also encourages pupils to become more active, independent (autonomous) learners. They gain 'metacognitive' strategies (mental approaches to help manage and integrate concepts) so that they are more able to monitor and fine tune their own learning. These strategies are important in helping young people to be more effective in the face of new challenges because young people are able to apply their existing knowledge to new circumstances and to use alternative strategies in solving problems.

Greater self-confidence leads to a virtuous cycle whereby pupils experience even greater enjoyment in learning. Study support provides extrinsic rewards (praise from staff, certificates and prizes) as well as intrinsic rewards (such as the pleasure in succeeding at a difficult task). It also encourages persistence and resilience, helping young people to tolerate some short-term discomfort (for example, dislike of revision) in pursuit of longer-term rewards.

3.1.2 Study support and self-regulated learning

The attitudes and skills identified in Figure 1 are key to developing 'self-regulated learning', which can be defined as the extent to which individuals are metacognitively, motivationally and behaviourally active participants in their own learning (see Zimmerman, 1994). Self-regulation is considered to be a key process by which learners are able to achieve academic success (Boekaerts *et al.*, 2000; Deci *et al.*, 1996; Zimmerman, 1994). The hallmarks of academic self-regulation are mastery of learning materials, goal directedness, effective time management, the use of practice and a sense of self-efficacy. Self-regulated learners demonstrate the ability to act on information about their own performance by adjusting their actions and goals to achieve the desired results (Zeidner *et al.*, 2000). Conversely, it is argued that a major cause of under achievement is the inability of students to take responsibility for their own learning.

A defining condition for self-regulation is personal choice and control for the student. Personal volition is not always easy to accommodate within the

constraints of a normal classroom situation, but it is a strong aspect of study support (see Sharp *et al.,* 2002b). Students choose whether to attend study support and can usually exercise a degree of choice about their learning activities. Deci *et al.* (1996) have argued that there is a strong relationship between self-regulation and the satisfaction of psychological needs, especially autonomy, competence and relatedness (i.e. the ability to form satisfactory relationships with others). Study support promotes autonomy through choice and negotiation of the individual's learning needs. It helps students to feel competent through encouraging them to persist at a task and promoting a sense of efficacy in learning. Staff encourage relatedness through the positive relationships formed between pupils and staff/mentors and by encouraging pupils to relate to other young people attending study support activities.

3.1.3 The Quality in Study Support accreditation scheme

The SSNEDP study (MacBeath *et al.,* 2001a) led to the development of a self-evaluation framework for study support activities. This framework and the supporting self-evaluation process has grown into the quality assurance scheme *Quality in Study Support* (QiSS), administered by a team at Canterbury Christ Church University. Study support centres use the code of practice to plan and develop their provision. They produce a portfolio of evidence showing how they meet the standards set for each section of the code of practice and submit this, together with a summary of evidence and a context statement, for peer evaluation. Awards are given at three levels – emerged, established and advanced – representing different stages of development in study support provision.

3.2 Research into pupil mentoring

There is a considerable body of research into pupil mentoring, in relation to both school and out-of-school contexts. The research included here concerns mentoring by adults of young people (as opposed to peer mentoring) and is largely drawn from evaluation studies of mentoring in the UK and the USA.

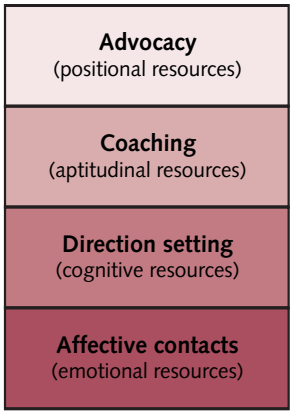
When considering the relevance of this literature to **Into**University, it should be pointed out that several of the mentoring schemes documented in the literature work with 'at risk' and socially excluded groups (for example, those exhibiting patterns of school failure and exclusion, disaffection, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol addiction). Whereas the research literature deals predominantly with hard to reach young people, the students at **Into**University are drawn from a more diverse range of families and social contexts, including many hard to reach children and young people.

3.2.1 Definitions and characteristics of pupil mentoring

The literature offers many different definitions of mentoring. For the purposes of this review, we define pupil mentoring as: 'A supportive relationship between an adult and a school pupil, whereby the adult provides advice, coaching, opportunities for reflection and/or role modelling'.[1]

There is a wide spectrum of different mentoring schemes including community and student mentoring schemes (i.e. those involving students in further or higher education). Nevertheless, as Shiner *et al.* (2004) explain, common processes are involved. Philip *et al.* (2004) suggest that mentoring be viewed as a 'spectrum of intensity' ranging from volunteer 'befrienders' to 'long-term relationships' (p.50).

Pawson (2004) has conducted an explanatory review of mentoring relationships. He provides the following basic typology, which distinguishes between four mechanisms of mentoring.



From Pawson (2004) p.7

The above typology is concerned with the extent to which mentors feel it is their role to offer direction and intervention. Starting with the affective domain, some mentors may see their primary goal as establishing rapport, providing friendship and encouraging mentees to feel more positive about themselves. A second goal is to develop cognitive resources, helping the mentee to make difficult choices. A third goal is to encourage and coax the mentee into achieving practical goals, such as developing skills and obtaining qualifications. A fourth goal is that of advocacy, whereby the mentor acts as a sponsor in providing contacts, introductions and accessing institutional resources.

3.2.2 Are pupil mentoring schemes effective?

Few studies have been able to attribute significant positive impacts solely to pupil mentoring. For example, a review of research evidence from the USA (Sherman *et al.*, 1997) concluded that mentoring programmes could, at best, be described as 'promising'. Hall (2003) reached a more positive conclusion that 'mentoring can have a significant impact on a number of measures'. However, Hall also noted:

> that this impact may not be large … There is a very poor evidence base in the UK. Claims are made for the impact of mentoring but there is as yet little evidence to substantiate them. (p.v)

One influential study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Programme by Tierney *et al*. (2000) reached a more positive conclusion. Using a control group design, the study reported that there were tangible benefits of mentoring on a range of measures, such as the likelihood of using drugs and alcohol, feeling more competent about school work, attending school, getting better grades and having more positive relationships with parents and peers. However, the main limitation of this study, as Pawson (2004) notes, is that it used self-report data (i.e. the researchers asked the students whether they were attending school more or getting better grades, rather than using more objective measures such as using school attendance records or actual grade scores).

In the UK, St James-Roberts and Singh (2001) investigated the possibility of using mentors to change problem behaviour in a small sample of primary school young people. They found that mentored pupils showed improvements, but that equivalent improvements were found in comparison pupils. Tarling *et al.* (2001) also failed to identify statistical significant findings in their study of mentoring with 40 young people in Dalston, London. Where improvements were identified, they were most frequently in the area of 'soft skills' and experiences such as self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation.

A study of the impact of learning mentors within the Excellence in Cities programme by Golden *et al.* (2003), found the main effects of mentoring were on pupils' self-esteem and confidence in their abilities and potential. Specifically, the research identified improvements in mentees' behaviour, attitudes, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-image, knowledge of the future/horizons and absences from school. The authors noted the distinctive contribution of mentors to schools was: 'the time that they could dedicate to identifying and seeking to address barriers to students' learning' (p.6).

The available literature on mentoring provides little specific evidence about mentoring schemes aiming to encourage young people to aspire to university. One exception is the quantitative evaluation of the Aimhigher: Excellence Challenge initiative in England (Morris and Rutt, 2006) which included learning mentors, which concluded:

> Taking part in visits to higher education institutions and discussions with staff and undergraduates were associated with a higher probability of changing a negative decision about higher education into a positive one. (p.vii)

A qualitative study of the National Mentoring Pilot Programme (Huddleston *et al.*, 2005) found evidence of increased aspirations among secondary pupils who had been mentored by university students. For example, pupils reported that mentors had: 'helped overall confidence and belief in my ability to go to university' and 'talked about choice of university and grades; the types of courses and the need to do science to get into a medical career.'

The main conclusion from a review of mentoring evaluations is that mentoring is appreciated by participants and may be viewed as a potentially

helpful aspect of a wider programme aimed at improving young people's life chances (see in particular Pawson, 2004; Philip, Shucksmith and King, 2004). As Philip *et al.* (2004) put it:

> Planned mentoring is not a 'magic bullet' that is capable of solving all the problems facing young people… Structural constraints continue to exert a powerful influence on the trajectories of such vulnerable young people: the influence of poverty, early childhood difficulties and inequalities in heath impacted strongly on the lives of young people in this sample. The development of a mentoring relationship, however, may enhance the capacity to reflect on these issues and to be better able to negotiate services and support in certain circumstances… Such capacity is a characteristic of resilience, a concept that is often drawn on to explain how some young people construct buffers against the ill effects of bad experiences. (p.49)

3.2.3 Good practice features of mentoring programmes

Evaluation studies focusing on process variables have provided a common framework of recommendations about good practice in mentoring programmes. These can be summarised as follows:

- Identify the target group and establish clear aims and objectives (Appiah, 2001; Miller, 1998; McNamara and Rogers, 2000).
- Identify needs, including taking account of young people's views (Hartley, 2004; Jekielek *et al.*, 2002)
- Monitor programme implementation (Hall, 2003; Miller, 1998; Sherman *et al.*, 1997).
- Devote time and attention to recruiting, screening and matching mentors (Appiah, 2001; Sims *et al.*, 2000; Tierney *et al.*, 2000; Hall, 2003; McNamara and Rogers, 2000; Miller, 1998).
- Ensure initial training for mentors and provide on going support (DuBois *et al.*, 2002; Tierney *et al.*, 2000; Hall, 2003; Appiah, 2001; McNamara and Rogers, 2000; Jekielek *et al.*, 2002)
- Promote frequency of contact, emotional closeness and longevity in mentoring relationships (DuBois *et al.*, 2002; Jekielek *et al.*, 2002; Hartley, 2004).

In relation to forming close relationships with mentors, Shiner *et al.* (2004) report six key characteristics identified as important by young people: being able to talk, reciprocity, a relationship based on respect rather than authority, understanding, showing an interest in young people and having fun.

Notes

1 This definition was developed for an unpublished review by Whitby (2006).

4 The three strands focused on in the evaluation

As mentioned in the previous section, this evaluation focused on elements of the three specific strands which make up the **Into**University programme. These are: Academic Support; Mentoring and the FOCUS Programme.

4.1 Academic support

Academic support is made up of four aspects:

- Primary Academic Support Scheme: offering tutored homework support, worksheets, educational software
- Secondary Academic Support Scheme: offering tutored coursework , study skills, use of internet
- Easter revision: offering practice papers, revision sessions, university tutor assistance
- One-to-one walk in: offering coursework advice, revision, help with University and College Admissions Services (UCAS) forms and specialist tutoring.

The young people who attend the Academic Support Scheme, come from fourteen local primary and secondary schools and most live near the Centre. The Academic Support Scheme allows young people to be regularly supported in their learning on a long-term basis (potentially from year 3 to year 13). It is the Centre's policy to turn no-one away and all activities are free.

4.1.1 Primary Academic Support Scheme

The principal aim of the primary Academic Support Scheme is 'to provide a safe and stimulating educational environment in a primary school classroom in which children can do their homework'.[1] The distinctive element of the Academic Support Scheme is that primary-aged students are introduced to

the concept of university, using worksheets and informal discussions. One member of staff made the following remark:

> It's quite easy for outsiders to see just a homework club – probably for a few it is just a homework club, but we have moved on from that. We have subtle ways of doing things, of introducing university, but we also have more strands that lead into this idea.

In line with what the literature sets out as good practice (see page 11), the Centre encourages primary-aged children to work towards termly targets through the completion of worksheets, educational computer games and homework set by their school. These targets are clearly displayed alongside a photograph of each child. During an observation of an Academic Support session, several of the children checked their targets and it was evident that these targets were being used as part of their learning.

The primary Academic Support Scheme operates a 'Put Down Free Zone', emphasising that bad behaviour is not tolerated. This is clearly displayed on posters around the Centre. The staff also use positive behaviour management techniques. To encourage good behaviour there is a merit system, and when a child receives ten merit points he or she can obtain a prize at the end-of-term party. There is a sticker system for children with challenging behaviour who show signs of improvement. Children also receive a merit if they come to three sessions in a week, as the staff feel that this illustrates they have real commitment to learning. One of the staff emphasised that it wasn't a 'play centre'.

a primary Academic Support session

The following vignette seeks to illuminate the principal activities undertaken by young people in the primary Academic Support Scheme. It is taken from the Academic Support observation.

Activities undertaken by primary-aged young people at the Academic Support Scheme

Activity allocated

The young people from a local primary school started to arrive just after 3.35pm. As the young people entered the room they lined up to meet a member of staff in order to sign in for the Academic Support Scheme. The young people were asked whether they had homework and what it was, in order to establish whether they were to sit at a table or whether they needed a worksheet. Those who did not have any homework were asked to check their targets displayed on the walls to see which worksheet would be most helpful to complete or which educational game on the computer would be most beneficial.

Completing homework, worksheets or educational games on the computer

The young people sat on tables with four or five pupils and a tutor, and were mainly completing individual homework. For example, on one table the young people were working on sequencing in maths, comprehension and one of the worksheets the Centre produces. Five minutes into the session, all were settled, working hard, with their pencils raised. Most of them seemed contented to be there and two girls at the back of the room interspersed their work with smiles and giggles. Several young people were reading books from the library. By 3.50pm, all the computers were being used and most of the tables were full.

Scheduled break

At 4.15pm, the Centre staff told the young people to get up and go to break. Those on the computers were more reluctant to get up than those on the tables and it took a couple of minutes for staff to encourage them all to go for a break.

Activities after break

After break, the atmosphere was slightly calmer than before, and this may be because there were slightly fewer children and the younger ones had gone home (seven-year-old children go home after break). One girl who had completed her homework before the break, asked a member of staff if she could paint after break. She was allowed to do so, but was reminded that it had to be something fairly quick as she would have to tidy up. This girl independently and quietly produced a picture. She put it on the top of the radiator to dry and cleared away the glue and the glitter meticulously and without being asked. She was extremely well behaved and seemed proud she had got it done in the time available.

Home time

At 5pm the primary academic session ended, and to indicate this the Mission Impossible soundtrack was played. A member of staff said they had found this method to be very effective, as in the past they had experienced difficulties in getting young people to leave.

4.1.2 Secondary Academic Support Scheme

For secondary-aged students, the Academic Support Scheme aims to 'provide them with the chance to reach their self-evaluated goals through one-on-one help with coursework, help with homework' and to 'provide advice about university course options and help with UCAS personal statements'. It provides 'a fresh start at the end of the school day' and 'a context for teenagers in which it is not uncool to learn'.[2]

Easter revision sessions

During the Easter holidays, the Centre is open for revision sessions between 2–5pm for young people in years 9–13. The benefits that the Centre promotes are:

- a supportive and quiet environment
- resources, such as computers, study guides, practice exam papers

- specialist advice from tutors and university volunteers
- tutorials on specific subjects (for example, Shakespeare set texts).

Although this element was not focused on in the evaluation, Abdi, a year 12 student who was interviewed as part of the case studies, said he appreciated the help he gained from university students in the Easter revision week he had attended. The university students were able to explain things that previously he had not understood. He felt the real benefit in coming to the session was that 'at the end of the day I knew I'd have learnt something'.

One-to-one walk in sessions

On a Wednesday afternoon after school, **Into**University staff are available if young people want to discuss any issues, such as completing their UCAS personal statement or choosing further courses. These sessions reflect the informal, open environment where young people can gain one-to-one support, which the programme promotes. David is a mature student who gained individual support and tutoring when applying for university. He found the help hugely beneficial, as he explained: 'It was knowing I could come here and get some support here, that was invaluable, even when I started university I came back here for a little while'.

The following vignette, taken from an observation of the secondary Academic Support Scheme session, seeks to illuminate the principal activities undertaken by young people.

Activities undertaken by secondary-aged young people at the Academic Support Scheme

Independent learning

All the students came in to the Centre and began to get on with their homework quietly. For example, one boy had brought his art portfolio and wanted to work on his art homework which was to do with geometric shapes, whereas another student was working on completing practice exam questions for GCSE English. Some young people worked on their own, but it was evident that they welcomed the support from staff and tutors.

Coaching: one-to-one support

One member of staff was extremely supportive in coaching a girl on exam techniques. They were looking at one of the girl's practice exam questions and the member of staff was helping her to reword what she had written so far to make improvements. She went through some useful exam tips such as: read the questions, work out how much time you have for each question and structure your answer. This practical advice enabled the young person to work independently for the next 20 minutes. After this time, the member of staff returned and gave lots of praise when she had seen what the girl had achieved. She said: 'That, my darling, is what we're after'.

Use of resources: the internet and other software

All six computers were being used by young people. Some were using a wordprocessing program to type up essays and others were accessing the internet as part of research for coursework and homework. Towards the end of the session, one girl asked a member of staff if she had some spare National Curriculum Assessment papers she could borrow. The member of staff said she was happy for her to keep the papers.

Home time

At the end of the session, the young people reluctantly began to pack up and turn off the computers. As one girl left she thanked the tutor for helping her.

4.1.3 Student councils

Student councils are another aspect of both the primary and secondary Academic Support Schemes. Everyone who joins the Scheme automatically becomes part of the student council. Staff see this as a good method of promoting student voice. Young people are invited to attend four meetings a year and are given the opportunity to speak on behalf of other students about their views on the way the Academic Support Scheme is run. Two of the young people who took part in the case studies were active members of

the student council. (However, they were not asked directly about this and did not volunteer any information about this during the interviews.)

4.1.4 Quality in Study Support

The Academic Support Scheme was awarded 'Quality in Study Support Established' status in March 2007 and staff explained that they intended to apply for Advanced status in 2008.

At the time of writing the figures for the number of schools and centres with QiSS accreditation were:

- 282 Emerged
- 160 Established
- 28 Advanced.

4.2 Mentoring

The mentoring strand first began as a small part of the **Into**University programme in November 2003. It runs alongside the other strands as part of a multi-stranded approach (in line with what was stated in the literature as effective practice, see pages 14–15). This strand allows young people in years 6–13 to be mentored by a trained university student who can:

- provide educational assistance
- act as a role model and provide practical information about university
- raise their aspirations
- help develop their social skills.

The programme has grown, to the extent that in 2007 there were 82 trained mentors, 66 of whom were matched with mentees. The **Into**University Mentoring Programme was awarded 'Working Towards Approved Provider' status after one year and in 2005 was awarded 'Approved Provider' status, a status recognised by the Home Office.

a mentee/mentor meeting

To qualify to have a mentor, a young person has to be able to show that he or she is committed to the **Into**University programme. For the majority of young people, this is through the regular attendance of the Academic Support Scheme. Young people in years 9–13 must conduct their first three meetings on site and are then free to meet wherever they deem most convenient. Young people in years 6–8 must hold all their meetings on site. From an observation of two pairs of mentors and mentees who met on-site, it was evident that the mentees were benefiting from receiving academic support, as well as practical advice about applying to university and future careers. The following vignettes are taken from the observations of mentor/mentee meetings.

A mentor/mentee meeting: learning about work life

At the start of the session a mentor and mentee chatted for a while about life in general. They talked about sports, football and running and caught up on how they had been involved in these sports recently. They talked about the mentor's work at the bank – she explained she worked in 'equity research'. She went on to say she was working towards some exams. This shocked the mentee who thought exams finished after

university. The mentor explained that in fact exams carried on as long as you wanted to keep on learning – these particular exams were work related – and she went on to explain that there were always going to be assessments and evaluations all through life. They chatted about this for a while. This conversation led them into territory where the mentor explained the meaning of a wide variety of business language. For example, they discussed what 'equity' meant. The mentee used her knowledge from a previous economics course which helped her to grasp the idea of what the mentor did and to access some of the language the mentor was using to describe her job.

A mentor/mentee meeting: academic support

Another pair were talking about some work the mentee had been set at school. He had already started doing it and the work was sports related. The mentor was encouraging and inquisitive; everything he said was designed to encourage the mentee to open up. It was clear from their conversation that the mentee had done the work well so the mentor just acknowledged this and guided the mentee on to the next part of the work. They came to a question that the mentee had not yet started. The mentor went on to open the discussion up into a brainstorm to generate ideas for the mentee to take away. The mentor did not give any answers but succeeded in prompting the mentee into generating new ideas. Together they set out a plan for the mentee to finish the work alone.

4.2.1 Recruitment and training of mentors

The **Into**University Mentoring Programme works in partnership with three London University Colleges: UCL, LSE and Imperial College. They are currently trying to expand and form partnerships with Goldsmiths and Queen Mary and Westfield Colleges. The main methods of recruitment are:

- direct mailing to students who sign up for volunteering activities at the university
- through a stall at university volunteer fairs
- staff talks at universities about the mentoring programme.

A recent development is the recruitment of JP Morgan employees to act as mentors. The Mentoring Coordinator explained that the principle behind this pilot partnership is to give young people the opportunity to meet individuals who work in the City and who can help inform them about future career decisions. The programme hopes that as these graduates are working in 'high powered careers, they will act as role models to the mentees'.[3]

The qualities required by mentors include:

- reliability and long-term commitment
- organisation skills
- communication and interpersonal skills
- listening skills
- willingness to offer pastoral support.

Three mentors interviewed were asked why they wanted to become involved with the mentoring programme at **Into**University. All three explained that the main reason was they could have a direct, positive impact on a mentee. As one explained:

> I liked the idea of having a one-on-one relationship with a mentee and imparting some experience to them. I think helping someone move into university when they might not otherwise have the means, was really valuable.

A second reason given was that they felt they could act as role models. One mentor was the first person in her family to go to university, and another was of ethnic minority origin. As one of them said: 'I think I should help them [young people], because I know what they're going through'.

Training for mentors covers issues such as the experience of being a mentor, commitment to the programme and gaining an awareness of different

backgrounds the mentees come from. The staff member in charge of the mentoring strand said that an important element of the training was explaining to the mentors that this programme, unlike some, is not regarded as an 'intervention strategy'. She added that it was the staff's role to clarify to the mentors that they are mentoring intelligent young people who need coaching. Their role is 'to lead by example' and 'help them to see options'.

The three mentors that took part in this evaluation were positive about the training they had received. One mentor commented:

> I remember on the training day that they had very clear information and very good training. Mentors know exactly what is expected of them; mentees are very aware of the nature of the relationship, and that is what really stuck out.

4.2.2 Pairing of mentors and mentees

Mentors and mentees are paired by the **Into**University staff. This is based on personal judgements of characters and consideration of responses from the mentees on their main aim in obtaining a mentor (for example, help with a specific subject). Pairs are matched with someone of the same sex (this approach was adopted after the initial group of mentors and mentees said they would feel uncomfortable being matched with a person from the opposite sex).

Mentors and mentees are first paired with one another during a 'Meet your Mentor' night. One mentor talked about her positive experience from attending one of these occasions: 'It was really good. Usually these things are so nerve-wracking and uncomfortable, but the way it was laid out, you didn't really think about it and it was more like talking to friends'. However, two of the mentors added that although they were aware of the general reasons behind pairing (for example, same-sex pairing) they did not explicitly know the reasons why they had been paired with their mentees.

4.2.3 Buddy Days

The Buddy Day scheme is a pilot programme that is also part of the mentoring strand. The main aims of which are to 'introduce young people to

volunteer undergraduates at the **Into**University Centre who talk to them about their experiences of university' and to 'provide young people with a buddy for the day at Imperial College who helps them to learn about university life'.[4] This was piloted with a year 8 class where the intention was to provide young people with experiences that would raise their aspirations, encourage them to think about their futures as well as to introduce them to the terminology of universities and the experiences of undergraduates. (The Buddy Days were not focused on in the evaluation.)

4.3 FOCUS Programme strand

The FOCUS Programme is a large strand of **Into**University and it aims to provide subject-based, themed activities that 'promote team work, positive behaviour and inter-personal skills' through 'experiential, out-of-classroom learning'.[5] Activities may take place on and off site. The FOCUS elements of the **Into**University programme are:

- Primary FOCUS days
- Primary FOCUS weeks
- Half-term FOCUS Weeks (for ages 10-16)
- Extending Horizons FOCUS Weekends
- After-school FOCUS apprenticeship scheme (pilot)
- Aspire and Achieve FOCUS training
- FOCUS days and weeks for adults (pilot).

4.3.1 Primary FOCUS days and weeks

Primary FOCUS days and weeks are offered to specific year groups at local schools. Teachers attend the day or week with their classes but they are organised and run by **Into**University staff. Topics include WW2, Science, Design and Technology, The Environment and the History of London. They aim to 'enrich the national curriculum'.[6] FOCUS days end with presentations and certificates at the centre; FOCUS weeks provide activities which introduce children to the concept of going to university, as well as providing

them with an engaging experience of university by actually visiting one. The FOCUS activities culminate in a graduation at London University.

primary FOCUS week activity

4.3.2 Half-term FOCUS Weeks

Half-term FOCUS Weeks are for older children and subjects include Media Studies, Performing Arts and Science. They provide 'mixed-age activities' in a 'safe and stimulating environment' and aim to give young people 'an engaging experience of university'.[7] As with the primary weeks, these weeks culminate with a university visit and graduation.

Three of the young people we interviewed explained that they had first heard about the **Into**University programme through attending a FOCUS activity.

A number of young people recounted their experience on FOCUS week activities. For example, Abdi, a year 12 student, commented on his experience: 'The thing that inspired me in the beginning was the Performing Arts FOCUS week'. He explained that a trip to the BBC studios enabled him to direct a programme which he would never be able to do at school. After that he decided he wanted to attend the Academic Support Scheme because he wanted to improve his grades.

Another example came from Femi, a year 10 student. He explained that his experiences on the Performing Arts FOCUS week were some of his most enjoyable experiences of the whole **Into**University programme. He said he enjoyed it 'because I went to the college and learned what to do when you go there'.

4.3.3 Extending Horizons FOCUS weekends

The Extending Horizons weekends allow young people in years 6–13 to take part in organised, educational trips outside London, sometimes abroad. In the past these have focused on World Wars I and II and visits have been to Anne Frank's house, Bergen Belsen and the Ypres/Somme battlefields. As well as an enriching learning experience, these weekends provide an opportunity for everyone to celebrate their achievements and to learn 'that there is a wider world than school and home, with challenges and opportunities to be met and grasped'.[8] The trips are heavily subsidised for the young people. (This element was not included in the evaluation.)

4.3.4 Apprenticeship scheme

The pilot Apprenticeship Scheme aims to provide 10-week courses of extra-curricular activities for year 9 students from a local school, allowing them the opportunity to work with volunteers from different business and vocational careers. This culminates in a public event, which young people have to organise themselves. The intention is for young people to take pride in their achievements and 'to provide them with skills they need to negotiate their education and future lives'[9]. Examples of Apprenticeships include Law (culminating in a mock trial); Journalism (culminating in the production of a magazine) and Finance (culminating in an event at a City bank). (This element was not included in the evaluation.)

4.3.5 Aspire and Achieve FOCUS training

The Aspire and Achieve course, is called 'Go For It!'. Originally devised by the Pacific Institute, **Into**University has adapted the course for its own use. It is used in conjunction with 'University of the First Age' materials. According

to documentation the aims of the programme are to 'teach students (year 8 currently) techniques to raise confidence, self-esteem and motivation'. It aims to help young people 'increase their educational chances' and 'to escape from a negative cycle of underachievement'. (This element was also not included in the evaluation.)

young people during an Aspire and Achieve activity

4.4 Key messages regarding the three strands focused on in this evaluation

4.4.1 Key features of the Academic Support Scheme

- The Academic Support Scheme allows children and young people to be regularly supported in their learning on a long-term basis (potentially the ten years from year 3 to year 13).
- A unique aspect of this programme is that primary-aged children are introduced to the concept of university through the use of worksheets and ad hoc discussions.
- For secondary-aged students, support is provided to help them achieve academically and guide them in making important decisions in the future, whether that be applying to university or completing further qualifications.
- It provides a safe and supportive learning environment, with access to resources.

4.4.2 Key features of the mentoring strand

- Young people in years 6–13 can take part in the mentoring programme and have a mentor who can provide educational assistance, act as a role model and help develop social skills.
- Mentors are recruited from several London universities. A recent pilot programme has involved the recruitment of JP Morgan employees as mentors.
- Pairing of mentors and mentees is pre-planned by **Into**University staff and takes place at an informal 'meet your mentor' evening.

4.4.3 Key features of the FOCUS provision activities

- For many children and young people, attending a FOCUS activity with their school is their first introduction to the **Into**University programme. Participants are told about the other opportunities that the multi-stranded programme can offer them.
- FOCUS activities provide positive and focused out-of-classroom learning opportunities which, for many young people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, are otherwise limited.
- A unique element of the FOCUS activities is that primary-aged children are introduced to the concept of going to university by actually visiting one.
- Other elements such as the Extending Horizons weekends, Apprentice scheme and Go For It! programmes all offer young people learning experiences in which to build their confidence, social skills and understanding of university.

Notes

1 Quote taken from **Into**University materials.

2 Quotes are taken from **Into**University material.

3 Quote taken from interview with Mentoring Coordinator.

4 Quotes are taken from **Into**University material and interviews with staff.

5 Quote taken from **Into**University material.

6 Quote taken from **Into**University material.

7 Quote taken from **Into**University material.

8 Quote taken from **Into**University material.

9 Quote taken from **Into**University material.

5 A thematic analysis of case-study and observation data

This section aims to provide a more detailed thematic analysis of the data from the case-study interviews and observations.

During a preliminary analysis of the data gathered as part of the case studies, it became evident that similar themes recurred throughout the interviews and observations. In order to explore this further, a thematic analysis of interview and observation data was undertaken. From this analysis, four overarching themes emerged. These have been categorised as follows:

- Motivation, self-esteem and confidence
- Learning, Academic Support and independence (self-regulated learning)
- Social interaction and support
- Demystifying and aspiring to university.

5.1 Motivation, self-esteem and confidence

One of the main themes to emerge from the interview data in particular was that interviewees felt that involvement in the **Into**University programme had impacted positively on young people's attitudes, especially their motivation, self-esteem and confidence. The following two examples illustrate different manifestations of this.

Three individuals were interviewed as part of Sis's case study. All three commented about the change in her confidence and self-esteem. Having only arrived in England a few years ago, Sis faced being schooled in English, her third language and one she did not speak at all before arriving. The **Into**University programme has been instrumental in helping her to improve her English and, as a result, to achieve at school. Sis explained:

> I didn't know how to speak English at all. Sometimes when I used to get homework, it used to be difficult for me to understand it. They [Centre staff] helped me a lot with my homework and coursework. When I came here I thought I would never get As or Bs or Cs even, but now I get Bs.

Sis thought that school was getting easier and easier month by month, mostly because her English was improving.

Her mentor also commented on how Sis's improved English skills were impacting on her confidence and self-esteem.

> The whole programme has been really positive for her – she has become so much more confident over the last year. This is probably a combination of the mentoring, the Centre, all the facilities they have there. English is the third language and her increasing confidence and ability in it are also having a huge impact on her academic achievement. This is obviously helped by her contact with English at the Centre and the support she gets there.

Sis's mentor had also noticed that, as her confidence had grown, Sis had become more proactive and confident in her approach to mentoring:

> At first, I had to call her lots; it was more on my side. Now she will call me, she's like 'Hi, it's me…' and what she's asking me to do is a lot more specific as well. She knows what she wants now, she'll say 'Oh, I've got this coursework and I want to talk about this' – that kind of thing.

When asked if she specifically helped Sis with her English, her mentor said:

> We talk about her speech, I give her advice, and she thinks about it a lot. She is very smart and she realises that it is really important for her to speak good English especially if she wants to go to university. I give her advice on books she should read and radio programmes she should listen to.

Another example of how the **Into**University programme impacted on the motivation and confidence of someone was given by David. David was a mature student when he approached **Into**University for support in applying to university. Now in his forties, he left school at 15 and went straight into work. He described the place he grew up in as a 'tough area where education is not valued' and 'kids do not have the confidence to learn'.

In 1999 David decided he wanted to go to university to do a social work course. He approached the **Into**University programme for help as he felt he needed support with the application process. He remained in touch with them until he graduated, with a first class degree. David felt the Centre helped him to gain his degree by identifying his strengths, developing his confidence to learn, and providing practical help with completing UCAS forms and writing personal statements. David appreciated the help he received from **Into**University: 'It was getting the confidence and support, I don't think I could have written my UCAS form without that kind of support'. From his involvement with the Centre, David gained confidence in his ability to learn, the motivation to keep going when things got tough and found a constant source of support and help: 'It was about believing in myself, and believing that I could do it'.

primary children working during an Academic Support session

5.2 Learning, Academic Support and self-regulated learning

When analysing the data it became apparent that some of the most important incidents mentioned by the young people or witnessed by researchers concerned aspects of learning, academic support and independent/self-regulated learning (see section 3.1.2 for a definition of self-regulated learning). The following examples seek to illuminate these three areas.

5.2.1 Learning and Academic Support

Abdi, a year 12 boy, explained that he had become involved with the Academic Support programme because he wanted support to improve his National Curriculum assessment grades. He explained:

> In year 9, I was just expected to get a level 6 in mathematics and science, and level 5 in English. I actually got level 7 for mathematics and science and level 6 for English.

Through using the Academic Support facilities at the community centre Abdi continued to improve his attainment at school. He went on to achieve a B grade in his English GCSE. His family agree that the Centre has helped him to achieve in school: they were supportive of his involvement with the Centre's activities because of the improvements they have seen in his grades.

Another interviewee explained how he felt the Academic Support offered by **Into**University had helped his learning and achievement at school. Ahmed attended Academic Support because he believed it will help him with his year 6 National Curriculum Assessments. He explained that working towards this is built into his own personal targets and that he uses these targets to keep him on track to continue to improve his performance. He said:

> [In Academic Support] you can choose a worksheet and there is a target on the wall – the teachers [at the Centre] tell you to look at your targets and if you want to improve on your maths or something then they see if there is a worksheet and then you do it and improve at it by doing it.

He said he had chosen his targets himself and that the staff at the Centre would tell him when he had achieved his current target and needed to set a new one.

5.2.2 Promoting skills for independent learning: strategies rather than answers

The second area that emerged from the data concerned the promotion of skills for independent learning. In a number of different interviews and observations it was apparent that students were encouraged to develop

strategies for learning rather than being provided with answers to questions. The following vignette serves to illuminate one instance of this.

A group of primary school young people were working together on an activity which formed part of the World War 2 FOCUS week. Their group was named 'Douglas Bader' and their secret mission for the week had been to research and prepare a poster on his life. The group had reached an agreement on the information they wanted to include on their spitfire-shaped poster and had divided the work amongst themselves. One young boy was struggling to find a way of starting to write his section. He asked the **Into**University staff member for some help. The staff member advised him to think of five words that described Douglas Bader – together they chose '*confident, ruthless, determined, competitive and single-minded*'. The staff member then suggested that they took each of these words in turn and extend them into sentences. After being given this strategy, the boy was able to complete his section confidently.

Similar examples were provided in the interviews. In some cases young people were able to demonstrate a level and awareness of the ability to transfer learning from one area to another. When asked whether he used what he learned at the Centre in school, Ahmed replied: 'Yes, they show you tricks how to learn. So if I have a worksheet and I don't know how to learn it then they show me tricks and then if we do that at school, then I know what to do'.

Ella, another year 6 interviewee, spoke about the difficulty she had with reading comprehension exercises and how she was helped to tackle these by the staff at the Academic Support Scheme. She said:

> There were three questions and I didn't really understand any. They [the Centre staff] said: 'Read through it again and then read the question, then read one more time and probably you will get the answer'. I did do that and it really helped and then I answered the questions.

Ella's father was also aware of how his daughter's learning skills and strategies for learning had improved as a result of her attendance at Academic Support. He commented:

> Now she says: 'Look I've done this far – what do you think?'. Before, you had to work with her to start first to identify characters, then select which one to look at. Now she is able to do the first part on her own. She doesn't always have to ask. So she has learnt how to tackle different types of work, and strategies for learning on her own.

5.2.3 Becoming independent: self-regulated learning

Some of the young people, particularly the older age range, described examples of independent learning and the ability to be a self-regulated learner. Nyobi's case study provides a good example. She was talking about some challenges she faced with sociology A level work. As she explained:

> I do sociology and last year I was getting good grades and then I started going down and getting Bs and stuff because I didn't understand it. But because I'm able to work on my own I was able to go back onto my books and write my own notes up to improve. So coming here has helped me become a more independent learner which has paid off in school.

She went on to say that her involvement with **Into**University had given her the confidence to believe in her academic abilities more and be aware of her own areas of strength and difficulty.

> I think I've learnt to believe in myself a bit more because I'm somebody who, well I get really down when I have exams because it's too much for me, and I come here and do activities where you can learn about your faults and the good things about you and that kind of lifts you up. So that's good.

Linking back to section 3.1.2, extracts from the case studies demonstrate elements of self-regulated learning that are also evident in the literature. Femi showed *goal directedness* and *self-efficacy* in that he uses the **Into**University programme to help him achieve academic goals he set himself. Femi uses the Academic Support sessions as a refuge to complete his homework and achieve his targets. He explained that he started going to **Into**University because he thought it would enable him to complete all his work, coursework and help him reach A Level standard in the future. He also demonstrated *mastery of learning materials* when he explained how he used the educational games to help him with his national curriculum achievement tests, and plans to use them to help him with his GCSEs. He is so committed

to studying and keeping his options for a better life open, that he is a regular visitor to the Centre, attending two or three times a week (showing effective time management – another element of being a self-regulated learner). When he is at the Centre he knows he can ask for help but feels that he rarely needs it. He likes the fact that he can work alone using the structured targets to guide his progress. He also likes the academic atmosphere at the Centre: 'At the Centre there is no mucking about whereas at home there is. I'd recommend it … you do get your homework done on time'.

5.3 Social interaction and support

Another two key areas where the programme impacted on young people were in the development of their social skills and in the social dimension of learning that is provided. At **Into**University these two ideas are related as the multi-stranded nature of the programme allows young people to interact socially with other young people from several year groups, as well as with university students and adults. This provides a social context for learning but also serves to develop the social skills and social confidence of young people. It better equips them for future university careers, giving them the confidence in their ability to relate to others (often people with whom they would not normally come into contact).

5.3.1 The social dimension of learning

The young people who took part in this evaluation said they valued the opportunity to study alongside their friends and explained they are more likely to get work done as everybody feels motivated working alongside one another. Nyobi said she found it useful to work with other young people: 'Two brains are better than one, so we are encouraged to speak to other students, so it's really good'. It was apparent from talking with interviewees that the social dimension of the Academic Support Scheme is particularly beneficial for some young people, such as those newly arrived students or those with English as an additional language, those with social needs and young people from families where there are no siblings or other family members to support their learning.

The headteacher who took part in this study said she valued the social input in particular. She explained that her school recommends the Academic Support Scheme, particularly to families of young people who need support with their social needs. For the 30 students from her school who attend the Academic Support Scheme, it is a place where they 'go and see their friends and is part of their social community'. She recommended the Academic Support Scheme to Ella's parents, in part because Ella does not have any similar aged siblings at home to interact with when completing her homework. Indeed, both Ella and her father also talked about the social benefits of learning at the Centre. Ella recognised that **Into**University was different from studying at home or at school because her friends were there. Her father, who is extremely supportive of his daughter's education, made the comment: 'The reason she comes here is when she is with other young people her concentration is on her homework but when she is at home her concentration could be on a game, television or many other things'.

5.3.2 The development of social skills

Alongside the social dimension of learning lies the development of social skills. Various aspects of the **Into**University programme provide the opportunity for young people to meet and mix with people of different ages, backgrounds, ethnicities and interests. This experience was thought to be particularly beneficial for promoting the development of social skills and a sense of self-confidence in those skills, linked to the aim of encouraging aspirations to university. The logic is that a socially skilled and confident young person is more likely to believe they can enter university, as well as being more able to succeed socially in such an environment. (These social skills also helped younger students in other transitions too, such as the move from primary to secondary school.)

Indeed, most of the young people interviewed mentioned that the **Into**University programme had enabled them to make new friends, often from different schools. It was also evident from the observations that positive, affirming social interactions take place between staff and students on a regular basis. Ella explained that attending the Scheme was the element of the programme she enjoyed most. She said:

> It's quite fun, you get to do your homework and talk to [staff and tutors] about your schoolwork. It's like they are your best friends and you get to chat and stuff. They really help you with your homework. They try to work with everybody, not only one person.

In addition, young people are regularly put in contact with other individuals too, all of whom are of have had a university experience (for example, mentors and ambassadors from universities). In many of the instances observed by the research team, interactions were facilitated by staff to limit stress and encourage a positive experience for all. The following vignette from a 'meet your mentor' session is one such social interaction.

Meet your mentor night: an example of a fun event where young people's social skills are stretched

The initial social interaction between a new pairing of mentor and mentee is crucial to the relationship's long-term success and is something that **Into**University has thought carefully about. The purpose of the 'meet your mentor' evening was to introduce the mentors and mentees to one another. During the sessions they played various games designed to break the ice and get participants to get to know each other better. Ultimately, they would be paired and spend the last part of the sessions getting to know their mentor.

To help create a relaxed atmosphere, pizza and pop were shared. The initial conversations and ice-breaker games were crucial as everyone was learning to relax, be honest with one another and were beginning to let their true characters shine through. Towards the end of the session, they seemed to gel as a group, with more laughter and conversation.

The ultimate aim of the mentoring strand is to provide young people with a role model who has already made it into university. In order to do this successfully, relationships have to be built upon trust and confidence. Allowing them this opportunity helped several of our case-study young people to develop positive relationships with new adults. One of the issues

that arose out of several of the interviews, was the extent to which mentors and mentees regarded their relationships as friendships.

Pawson's (2004) typology of mentoring relationships (outlined on page 12), can be referred to when looking closely at the mentor–mentee relationships at the Centre. Several of the young people talked about their mentor as a 'friend' and indeed the mentors saw their role as one of establishing a rapport and providing a friendship (the primary goal in the typology, known as affective contacts). But in all cases, the mentors were also trying to help the mentee make difficult choices about the future (goal two: direction setting), as well as helping them achieve practical goals, such as obtaining qualifications (goal three: coaching). The fourth goal of advocacy, outlined in the typology, whereby the mentor acts as a sponsor in providing contacts, introductions and accessing institutional resources, was less evident amongst our mentor–mentee relationships. Nevertheless it is a mechanism available to those attending **Into**University, especially if mentors accompany their mentees on visits to university.

Examples of affective contacts between mentors and mentees

Abdi meets with his mentor about twice a month to discuss school work and other issues. His mentor is a medical student, so is able to help Abdi with his biology A level work, particularly as he received an A grade in this subject. Abdi respects his mentor and feels that he can talk to him about anything. He said that having a mentor, 'is like an older friend'. One of the staff explained that Abdi was fairly reluctant about having a mentor at first, because he was fairly shy and reserved, but having a mentor has allowed him to become more confident when talking to adults.

Yasmin had been meeting with her mentor for a year when we interviewed her. This relationship had certainly grown into a friendship and was regarded as this by the mentor, mentee and the mentee's mother. The pair meet approximately twice a month, to complete school work but also to share social experiences such as going to the cinema. Yasmin's mother was extremely pleased with the impact the mentoring scheme is having on her daughter, 'It looks like they've become friends… so that's a

good impact on her as well. She's seeing someone who already goes to university and that's helping her keep up to date with what's expected in the future… it's brilliant'.

5.4 Demystifying and aspiring to university

One of the questions posed during the evaluation concerned the extent to which the **Into**University programme aims to get young people to enter university. The three staff members who were interviewed all said that the programme intends to make children and young people think about their future after school: for many young people, that could mean aspiring and progressing to university; but for others it may mean they take that one extra step in their education, whether it be going to sixth form or taking a vocational qualification.

With this in mind, it is the practice of **Into**University to introduce the idea of university at a young age. As explained in the introduction to this report, this is done throughout all the strands in both implicit and explicit ways. The programme helps children and young people to achieve the necessary skills and qualifications needed to do well at school and gain entry to university. Staff also help to make these aspirations become a reality by informing young people about practical aspects of getting into higher education (for example GCSE/A level choices, UCAS forms, interview technique and the financial side of attending university).

5.4.1 Introducing the concept of going to university at a very young age

A key aspect of the **Into**University programme is its practice of introducing the concept of attending university to primary-aged pupils. Children and young people from year 3 upwards take part in the various strands. Many of these individuals will not naturally have considered university as the majority come from families where their parents have not attended university.

The headteacher from a local primary school was pleased that **Into**University was targeting young people at such an early age, particularly as very little is done in school to introduce university. Nothing specific is planned in the curriculum and going to university may only be mentioned at leavers' time, in year 6. She made this remark: 'It's fantastic, especially for young people here, in a different setting, where families don't talk about university… and [going to university] is certainly not expected'.

It was evident from comments made by the children and young people we spoke with, and indeed the staff, that some primary-aged children are beginning to think about their futures and one of the key roles of **Into**University is to be there as a support mechanism to aid them in their decisions. Indeed, Ella's father stressed the importance of introducing the idea of university to young people at a very early age. He used the following saying to underline the importance of early learning: 'You can straighten a tree as it is growing but when it is already grown it is impossible'. He felt that the Academic Support Scheme had offered him another prop to encourage his daughter to achieve her potential. As he explained: 'This collaboration has to be there, the commitment has to come from the child, the teachers, the parents and the Academic Support Club. Together they can achieve a better product'.

Through talking to the young people and their parents and observing an Academic Support and a FOCUS week session, it was apparent that the subtle ways of introducing the idea of university to young people were being recognised, as the following vignettes illustrate.

Introducing the concept of university to primary-aged students

Ella who has been attending the Academic Support Scheme since she was in year 3, identified a defining moment when she realised for herself that she wanted to go to university. In an Academic Support Scheme session, she completed a wordsearch that included several words connected to university such as 'degree' and 'lecture'. She said that this changed the way that she thought about university:

I used to think that university was just like in school but then I asked homework club and my dad and they said it was different, it was like 100 people in a lecture kind of thing with one teacher, standing there with a big whiteboard and just talking to you and telling you stuff. And you had one of these [sound recorder] and you would hold it and you would put it next to the teacher and then listen to it.

The FOCUS activity strand explicitly introduces the idea of university to primary-aged students. This was clearly evident through a number of activities witnessed in part of the World War II week, involving a year 6 class from a local primary school.

a group graduation ceremony

FOCUS week: the university tree

The year 6 students were in their teams and in each team there was an **Into**University staff member, teacher or teaching assistant, and an 'ambassador' (university student).

Set up at the front of the seated area was the 'university tree'. This was a large, wooden flat tree propped up on a small frame. It stood about five feet high and had a number of branches.

Initially each ambassador was asked to introduce themselves to the group. The children seemed genuinely interested in the ambassadors and warmed to them very quickly. They asked lots of questions about the academic and social side to university. It was apparent that this exercise had the potential to change young people's perceptions of who goes to university, what students are like and help them to realise that they too could be students.

After this activity, the children were asked to make one or two leaves to attach to the university tree. Each leaf was to represent what they learned about university from this session. Whilst making their leaves, an interesting conversation took place between an ambassador and two year six students about entry requirements. The first girl asked about the length of courses and the ambassador explained about BA and BSc degrees and how long it took to study these. The second girl was interested in studying music at university. The ambassador did not know much about this but helped the girl go through the prospectuses on the table and find out about the entry requirements and course content. The ambassador had to explain the language of the prospectus to the student (for example, 'intake', 'admissions', 'required subjects', 'desirable subjects'). It was quite clear it was a totally new discourse for the girl, and it really helped to have someone there who could translate the information into something meaningful to her. The discussion moved on to planning where to apply, based on expected grades, the percentage of successful applicants and the UCAS system.

In fact, most of the young people completed leaves about what they intended to study at university, a clear indication that this session had inspired these young people to think about what university is in concrete terms.

At the end of the workshop the children presented their leaves and pinned them to the university tree.

students in front of the 'University Tree'

5.4.2 Acquiring the necessary skills or grades to be able to aspire to university

As explained in sections 5.1 and 5.2, the programme gives young people the opportunity to enjoy learning, feel motivated and confident in their own abilities and to succeed academically. All of these are key to reaching university in the future. This section highlights some of the specific interventions used by **Into**University that have a 'university' element to them:

- Using university students as tutors in specific specialist subjects in the Academic Support Scheme as well as tutors for revision sessions.
- Informing the young people that the **Into**University staff themselves went to university. (For example, Nyobi said that she knew one of the staff taught English at university and she always felt she could get help with her English or proof reading documents.)
- Using mentors who are role models of university students.

The following examples seek to explain the way university students are used as role models to the mentees. Yasmin has had a mentor from UCL for a year. According to her mother, before attending the Academic Support Scheme Yasmin was not doing very well at school. Her parents were seriously considering paying for her to have a personal tutor in order to help her with

her academic studies. But as Yasmin herself explained this was not necessary because: 'I just take more interest in school work since I came to the Centre'. She added that although she already knew she wanted to go to university 'it's just encouraged me more'.

Yasmin's mentor talked about how she was able to act as a role model to Yasmin: 'I come from an environment where my parents didn't go to university, and it was hard for me to be... "Ok I'm going to go to university and I'll be the first person to do it", so I can definitely relate to her'. When asked whether she had had access to a similar programme before she went to university, she replied: 'I wish there was, that's what I really like about the [mentoring scheme]. If I'd had something like that when I was Yasmin's age, it probably would have helped a lot'.

According to one of the **Into**University staff, Yasmin's mentor had 'helped her think more clearly about the future and going to university and what university to go for… I think she's become more focused on what she wants to do'. The staff member went on to say: 'It's helped because [Yasmin's mentor] has showed such a commitment and support for her, so she looks up to her, especially in terms of her sciences, she would call her before she came here, as we don't have that expertise'.

Another example of how a positive role model has helped one young person to aspire to university is evident in the following example. Sis has been attending the Academic Support Scheme for two years and has a mentor who is a recent law graduate. Sis's mentor was particularly attracted to the **Into**University programme because she felt 'it aims to bring minority ethnic kids into university and I'm from an ethnic minority group myself and want to encourage kids like me to go into the academic world more'.

5.4.3 The practical aspect of university education

IntoUniversity also attempts to make young people's aspirations to attend university more realistic by helping them with:

- GCSE and A level choices, completing UCAS statements, practice interviews for university and applying for part-time jobs to help fund studies.

- 'demystifying' particular issues such as the financial costs of attending university, the college system at some universities as well as the social life at university and exploring the world of work post-university.

The following examples seek to illustrate the points made above. Abdi, a first year A level student, asked for advice on whether he should continue to aspire to do medicine at university, even though he had not obtained the GCSE grades he needed. His mentor, a medic student himself, sensitively prepared him for the fact that medicine may no longer be an option, but talked through other possibilities.

Nyobi in her final year of sixth form, appreciated the advice she gained from her mentor on completing her UCAS statement. She commented, 'I was doing my UCAS form the other day to get into uni and [my mentor] helped me to proofread my personal statement and gave me advice on where I could put extra things'. Nyobi felt that the Centre has changed the way she thinks about her future, as before her AS results she was going to apply to 'places which are low ranked. Coming here they motivated me to apply to the better ones and go to a good university. I think they helped me to broaden my perspectives of my future'.

5.5 Key findings from the thematic analysis of interview and observation data

5.5.1 Motivation, self-esteem and confidence

- The data analysed showed evidence of increased motivation, self-esteem and confidence amongst the case-study young people. Sis's case study provided an example of increased confidence and academic success due to improvements in English language. David's interview provided an example of increased motivation and self-belief following the support he received from **Into**University staff.

5.5.2 Learning, academic support and independent self-regulated learning

- Examples of improved learning and academic support were evident in the case-study data. For example Abdi and Ahmed described improvements in their school work and test results as a consequence of attending the Academic Support Scheme.
- Examples of independent or self-regulated learning were demonstrated in a number of case studies. For example, Ahmed showed a level of autonomy in his use of target setting.
- From both interviews and observations it was evident that a culture of teaching transferable study skills was in place – encouraging independent learning.
- A number of young people demonstrated that they had become self-regulated learners. For example Nyobi showed she had the self-belief and skills necessary to take control of her own learning and Femi showed he had the efficacy to take control of his.

5.5.3 Social interaction

- There is evidence that the **Into**University programme provides a platform in which young people can develop their social skills by interacting with people of different ages, backgrounds and ethnicities (many of whom are current university students).
- The young people value the opportunity to study alongside friends in the Academic Support Scheme and there is evidence that this motivates them and makes learning more fun.

5.5.4 Demystifying and aspiring to university

- We observed that **Into**University encourages children and young people to aspire and progress to university (or another chosen educational ambition).
- In particular we observed that the idea of university is introduced at a young age via explicit and implicit means.

- The programme promotes the acquisition of academic, social and practical skills and knowledge necessary to make university a realistic goal.

6 Findings from IntoUniversity's own evaluation material

IntoUniversity uses in-house evaluation forms to appraise every strand of the programme. It should be noted that each strand is evaluated separately and therefore we are unable to comment on young people's perceptions of the programme overall. This section describes the main findings from a sample of 278 evaluation forms (selected from over 600) completed by children, young people, teachers, parents and mentors who have been involved in the three strands of the **Into**University programme considered in detail in this report. The evaluation forms mainly used open-ended questions; however, a few closed questions were included on some of the forms (this is explicitly stated when relevant in the following section). Further details about the sample of forms analysed, selection methods and coding are provided in the extended methodology section in the appendix (A1).

This section discusses the four main themes (motivation, self-esteem and confidence; learning, Academic Support and independence; social interaction and support; and demystifying and aspiring to university). Participants' views of the mentoring programme are reported separately because the questions posed were too different to be analysed and reported along with those for the Academic Support and FOCUS strands.

6.1 Motivation, self-esteem and confidence

Overall, the young people commented positively about their learning experiences. The children and young people were not asked directly about their motivation, self-esteem and confidence in the evaluation forms so it is not possible to draw any conclusions about these aspects; however, a few students did make some comments about increased motivation, self-esteem and confidence.

6.2 Learning, Academic Support and independence or self-regulated learning

Primary and secondary students thought the Academic Support Scheme enabled them 'to do their homework in a quiet place' and 'get help from tutors' (options chosen from a list provided in the questionnaire). Approximately half the students felt that the best or most useful thing about Academic Support was obtaining help with a specific subject, piece of homework, coursework or exam. As one primary-aged student explained: 'It [Academic Support Scheme] stops me from getting homework detention because you get help from a tutor'.

The majority of primary-aged respondents felt they had been able to reach their target for that term. The most common method reported for achieving this was through obtaining help from tutors and through worksheets. (This links back to the research literature outlined in section 3.1 and specifically to the points made on page 11 regarding target setting).

Approximately three-quarters of secondary students felt they had managed to improve their weaknesses by completing work at the Academic Support Scheme. Nearly half of these students felt that they had made an improvement in a specific subject or in completing their homework more quickly. A small minority of students reported that they had become more independent in their learning and the majority of secondary pupils felt that they had developed strengths to help them complete their work. When invited to comment about any new strengths they had developed when completing work, the most popular responses, each reported by approximately a quarter of secondary students, were that they had developed a strength in:

- a subject/homework (including completing it more quickly)
- coursework/exam revision
- a specific skill, for example, communication skills.

6.2.1 FOCUS weeks

Primary students (who attended a World War II FOCUS week) and secondary students (who attended either a Media and the Arts FOCUS week

or a Sport Science FOCUS week) were extremely positive about their learning experiences. Interestingly both primary and secondary-aged students held very similar views, despite the age difference and the differing subject matter of the FOCUS activity weeks. Nearly all the students said that they enjoyed the visits included in the programme. For primary students these included visits to HMS Belfast and the Cabinet War Rooms and for secondary students trips included kayaking (Sports Science week) and visiting studios at the BBC (Media and the Arts week).

A large majority of primary students also said that they enjoyed the activities undertaken at the Centre – their favourite activities were baking a ration cake and making a poster. One primary student explained his best part of the activities on site: 'making the ration cake because they used unusual ingredients and I learnt how to make it'. Secondary students did not refer to activities on site when they were asked what they enjoyed about the week overall. However, when they were asked what their best part of the on-site activities at the Centre were, the most common responses were:

- learning a new skill for example, team work, organisational skills (approximately a third)
- activities and games (approximately a third)
- learning about university/university tree workshop (approximately a fifth).

6.2.2 Parents' views on their child's learning experience at a FOCUS week

All parents of primary students who attended the World War II FOCUS week felt that their child had responded positively and enthusiastically. Several of them explained they had talked about their experiences at home. Parents felt that they were given enough information about the activities their child was participating in. A third of parents commented that they were particularly impressed with the organised trips. The following quotes illustrate parents' views:

> She has been so enthusiastic about everything, and has thoroughly enjoyed the week and learnt loads too!

> She was engaged and interested in the trips and excited to go to school in the morning.

6.2.3 Teachers' views on their students' learning experience at a FOCUS week

Teachers who attended the World War II FOCUS activity with their year 6 classes were also extremely positive about the week. They felt that prior communication was excellent and relevant. One teacher made this comment: 'This information was well presented in spreadsheet format and was easy to read. Events and timings were clearly shown'. Another teacher commented:

> The staff team at St Clement's are outstanding. They are a model example of what can be achieved through team work and creativity. Standards and expectations are always of a very high level which enables the children to succeed and grow as individuals and learners.

Teachers felt that the activities offered were in line with National Curriculum areas such as history, speaking and listening, writing, team work and respecting others and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). Teachers said that their students had enjoyed the visit to a university, and had been particularly interested in meeting students and seeing the campus buildings. One teacher remarked:

> Visit to Imperial was excellent. So valuable to meet real students and learn about choices that will be open to them when they are older. Also to experience being in a real university and to 'graduate'. A real celebration of their achievements throughout the week.

The teachers felt that involvement in the FOCUS activity had had a long-term impact on their students because their students were working more cooperatively with one another. Two of the teachers commented that they felt their students had grown in confidence. Teachers also expressed the view that they would be interested in working alongside the St Clement and St James Community Project on similar programmes in the future.

students completing evaluation forms at the end of an activity

6.3 Social interaction and support

Social interaction, as well as the learning experience, appears to be an important element of the FOCUS weeks as approximately a third of secondary students mentioned that making new friends and meeting new people were some of the things they enjoyed most about the week. On the primary and secondary Academic Support Scheme evaluation forms, when children and young people were asked why they came to study support, the main responses to this closed question were 'to do homework in a quiet place' and 'to get help from tutors/adults' as opposed to responding 'because my friends go'. This implies that the social element of learning was not the strongest motivating factor for many of them attending, but rather the attraction lay in the learning support itself.

6.4 Demystifying and aspiring to university

Approximately a fifth of primary students taking part in the World War II FOCUS week stated that one of the three things they had particularly enjoyed most about the week was visiting a university or taking part in the

graduation ceremony. This indicates that primarily the young people enjoyed the learning activities, both off and on site, and for a minority, introducing them to a university was also their favourite activity. For secondary students, a larger proportion (approximately two-thirds) reported that learning about university, visiting a university or taking part in a graduation ceremony was one of the three things they enjoyed most about the week.

The majority of primary and secondary students responded in a positive way when asked how they found the visit to a university. Students commonly used words such as 'fun', 'exciting' 'excellent' or 'good' to describe their experiences. Just under a third of secondary students and a fifth of primary students explained they found the visit to a university 'interesting'. Approximately a fifth of secondary students also felt that the trip had encouraged them to aspire to university or that it had been informative and educational. Some of the comments included:

> A first [I was] really excited and then it was like I got used to it… (primary student)

> I loved it [visit to the university] and I definitely want to go to one when I'm older. It looks and seems really fun. (secondary student)

When primary students were asked what new things they had learnt about university from the World War II FOCUS week, the four most popular responses were:

- you can choose which subject to study (just under half of all students)
- that university is a large place (a sixth of all students)
- various social activities and a social life are available at university (a small minority)
- you need to work hard (a small minority).

Responses from secondary students were slightly more varied. The most popular response was that they had learnt they could choose which subject/course to study at university (approximately a third of students). Other aspects secondary students had learnt about included:

- facilities (for example, sports centres and music studios) (approximately a fifth)
- the fact you live in halls of residence (a small minority)
- various social activities and a social life are available at university (a small minority)
- financial costs of going to university (a small minority)
- can be great fun (a small minority).

6.5 Mentoring strand

The evaluation forms for the mentoring strand were quite different from those for the other two strands. Due to the differences, it was not possible to tie the mentoring evaluation forms back to the overarching themes identified in this report. Therefore, this section discusses mentors' views on the initial training course and their overall views of the programme as well as mentees' views on their experiences and involvement with the strand.

6.5.1 Mentor training

Mentors found the initial training course extremely helpful both in its content and delivery. All mentors felt that they were able to put their own point of view across, were listened to and that the whole group felt included in the training.

Overall, just under half of all mentors felt the most useful aspect of the course was the delivery of the session. Learning about the characteristics of the mentees and understanding their role as a mentor were quoted as the most useful aspects by a quarter of mentors. The use of group discussions, brainstorming exercises and open communication were aspects that helped the majority of mentors to learn more about their role. Comments included:

> The role-play session towards the end which placed me in various plausible scenarios that I might face with my mentee was extremely enlightening. It has helped me prepare for the possibility of these scenarios occurring, and in the event that they do, I will be better equipped to deal with them.

> Interaction among trainers and trainees which allowed us to work out our own ideas about the objectives of a mentor.

Mentors had mixed opinions as to how confident they felt in taking on the role of mentor following the training session. Approximately half rated themselves as either confident or very confident.

6.5.2 Mentoring strand: mentors' views

Mentors reported that taking part in the programme had been extremely enjoyable and beneficial. The majority reported that being able to have a positive influence on a young person's life had been the most enjoyable aspect of the programme. A third said that social interactions with other people from different backgrounds and ages had been the most enjoyable aspect. The mentors felt that they had gained some important skills including:

- communicating with different people (approximately half)
- listening skills (approximately a quarter)
- organisational skills (approximately a fifth).

Mentors' comments included:

> [I've enjoyed] being able to help someone who is in need. Being able to offer advice due to own experiences.

> It was really different to talk to someone younger than me about their dreams and aspirations and interests. I think the few meetings we had really tested my listening skills.

The majority of mentors felt that the 'Meet your Mentor' night had helped them to get to know their mentee. Generally, they all found it easy to get to know their mentee and several commented that this is because they had been matched well. The majority felt that their mentee had progressed well since their pairing and the most common improvements were in:

- their motivation, self-esteem or confidence
- a skill, such as their organisational or time-keeping skills
- social skills and communication with mentor.

The biggest challenges that mentors felt they faced in their experience were related to organisation and time. Challenges included: finding a convenient time for both parties, ensuring regular meetings or regular communication (each were identified as challenges by approximately a fifth of students).

6.5.3 Mentoring strand: mentees' views

The majority of mentees enjoyed taking part in the programme because it allowed them to meet and communicate with their mentor about their academic studies and other issues. A small minority also explained that they had enjoyed receiving help from the mentor, learning from them and taking part in activities. Mentees made the following comments about what they had enjoyed:

> Having the opportunity to discuss issues relating to school and general life with someone who has already experienced what I am going through now.

> Getting to know, 'hanging out' and just being cool friends with my mentor.

When asked specifically about whether they felt the programme had helped their 'academics', a third thought it had. Approximately a fifth of mentees reported they had discussed their future aspirations with their mentor such as their choice of A levels or about going to college or university. A small minority reported that the mentor programme had helped them to achieve good exam grades. One mentee summed up the benefits by saying: 'I found it has helped me excel in all my subjects that I study'.

6.6 Key messages from an analysis of evaluation forms

The main findings and issues from the analysis of a sample of evaluation forms reflect the majority of our findings arising in the interviews and observations undertaken. These were that:

- The Academic Support Scheme was reported to be an excellent resource for children and young people to complete their homework in a supportive environment. There was little evidence that the Academic Support Scheme

was helping to demystify university (though this did come through in other areas of the evaluation). This is probably due to the fact that no direct questions were asked in relation to this topic on the evaluation forms.

- The FOCUS weeks provided young people with the opportunity to take part in new and enriching learning experiences and trips (this was also evident in other areas of the evaluation).
- Parents and teachers spoke positively about the primary FOCUS activity week as a useful and inspirational learning experience.
- The FOCUS activities allowed young people to learn about university and the trip to the university was enjoyed by the majority of young people. As observed in a primary FOCUS week, some young people said this had actually encouraged them to aspire to university.
- Mentors found their training extremely helpful both in its content and delivery. They appreciated the informality, openness and use of role play (this mirrored the comments made by mentors in the interviews).
- Mentors felt that the most beneficial aspect of taking part in the programme was the positive influence on a young person's life and that the only real challenges were organisational and time-related issues (similar comments were made by the mentors who took part in the case-study interviews).

Overall, in their completion of evaluation forms, young people were extremely positive about all three strands of the multi-faceted programme.

7 What participants consider important about **Into**University

This section will consider what the participants thought important about the **Into**University programme and how transferable they felt the programme would be to other settings.

During the interviews, all participants were given the opportunity to talk about the parts of the programme they liked most and felt were most important in terms of transferring the **Into**University model to another site. Interviewees were also invited to identify any aspects that could be improved. The comments of interviewees related to four areas mentioned in the introduction: staffing; physical environment; ethos and organisational structures. Interestingly, not all these themes featured equally in the different groups of respondents. Details of which groups identified each theme are given below.

7.1 Staffing

Both the young people and mentors made frequent mention of the importance of **Into**University staff. Their comments described the characteristics that were most valuable in the staff at **Into**University, including: being understanding, clever, funny and skilled appropriately to help with work, offering support (both academic and social), understanding young people's attitudes to learning and being able to relate to young people (including understanding slang). Mentors thought it was important that staff were helpful, friendly, open, kind, approachable, supportive, organised and dedicated to their work.

The other respondents did not make comments related to this theme. This is, perhaps, not surprising as parents and teachers would not have the same relationship with the Centre staff as the young people and mentors.

7.2 Physical environment

Again, only the young people and mentors talked about the importance of the physical environment. This is not surprising given that the other groups (parents and teachers) would not have access to these on a daily/weekly basis. Most of the comments referred to space (for example, classrooms) and the resources (for example, computers, books) provided. The mentors were impressed by the resources on offer to them and their mentees. They did, however, make a number of suggestions about additional resources that they would find useful. These included more and newer computers and board games. The young people also rated the physical environment as important (though did not specify which aspects were important). They suggested a few improvements, including having more space/bigger classrooms, more up-to-date revision books, newer computers and better and more up-to-date computer software. (A new classroom was due to open in April 2007 which should address the first point.)

7.3 Ethos

Comments regarding the ethos of **Into**University came from all respondent groups (although not all respondents). The ethos was described as 'not school but school-like' (headteacher), conducive to learning (mentor), one that married pastoral care with Academic Support (young people), a 'safe' environment where a balance between strictness and informality was reached (parent). Both a mentor and a young person commented that retaining the social and academic partnership was of paramount importance. The young person felt that learning was a social experience and when this social element was retained it had a very positive and motivating effect on the participants.

A headteacher commented that it was important to get the environment, people and accessibility right. She said: 'It's not school, but it's not youth work either. You don't want it to be school because it has to be different, yet it has to be the right atmosphere and give the right challenge to the young

people'. She added that she did not know much about how **Into**University creates its positive ethos, but she had the overall impression that it did.

7.4 Organisational structures

A rigorous organisational structure was identified as crucial in creating the right physical environment and ethos. One mentor said: 'Somehow they manage to combine remarkable organisation with a kind of fluffy and friendly exterior'.

Generally speaking, the mentors commented on the organisational structure that directly affected them via the mentoring strand rather than commenting more widely on the programme as a whole. They felt that the ongoing availability of funding was important; a couple also added that more funding for the mentoring strand in particular would be useful. This would allow them to meet their mentee in a social context more easily. They mentioned that they thought there were good organisational structures in place to support the mentor/mentee pairs. However, some suggestions were made to improve this, for example ongoing social activities to allow pairs to meet other pairs more often after the 'meet your mentor' evening.

One parent commented that he particularly liked the way the organisational structure made it possible for him, the school and **Into**University to work together to support his daughter.

The other interviewees did not comment on the organisational structures.

7.5 Other comments and suggestions

A number of respondents mentioned other factors that were considered to be of importance to the success of the **Into**University programme. These included:

- **Into**University offers more stability than schools (for example, lower staff turnover, more one-to-one help) (mentor)

- it is important that **Into**University be close to where young people live (mentor)
- it is a great resource for families where the parent(s) do not speak English and are unable to support their children's education as a result (parent)
- the variety of activities on offer was popular (these comments related to different strands of the programme and different activities within strands) (young people).

A number of respondents took the opportunity to offer suggestions as to how the **Into**University programme could be improved. Their advice included:

- improving awareness and offering more information about the **Into**University programme to schools and headteachers (headteacher)
- needing more advertising and information aimed at parents (parent)
- opening at weekends and later in evenings (parent)
- offering secondary to primary (peer) mentoring (parent)
- offering advice on sixth forms (parent)
- locating new **Into**University centres near schools they want to target to allow collaboration between school, child, parent and centre (parent).

8 Discussion, conclusions and recommendations

As stated in the introduction, the overarching aim of the study was to provide an evaluation of the impact of the **Into**University programme on children and young people. More specifically, the evaluation aimed to provide an account of the impact of the programme on individual young people and to situate it within a context of theory and research concerning the potential of study support and mentoring programmes to help young people.

The research team set out to achieve these aims by conducting case studies of eight young people, triangulating the views of young people themselves with those of their parents, mentors and teachers. When considering the evidence from these case studies, it must be noted that the case-study individuals were not necessarily typical of all young people attending the programme and were small in number. The case-study participants were initially selected by **Into**University staff to provide a sample of young people from a range of backgrounds and to show how young people used the **Into**University programme in different ways. In order to gain a wider perspective of the overall programme, two other methods were used: observations of programme activities and an analysis of **Into**University 's evaluation forms.

It is important to note that there are inherent difficulties associated with evaluating the success of out-of-hours learning programmes because it is not easy to ascertain what would have happened to the young people had they not participated. This evaluation has used a primarily qualitative methodology to investigate perceptions of impact. It did not seek to provide 'hard' evidence of improvement in attainment, skills or of young people's success in obtaining a university place.

It is clear that **Into**University has played a key role in helping these children and young people in clarifying, supporting and strengthening their aspirations and achieving their goals.

Figure 2 Model to show how IntoUniversity helps young people to aspire to university

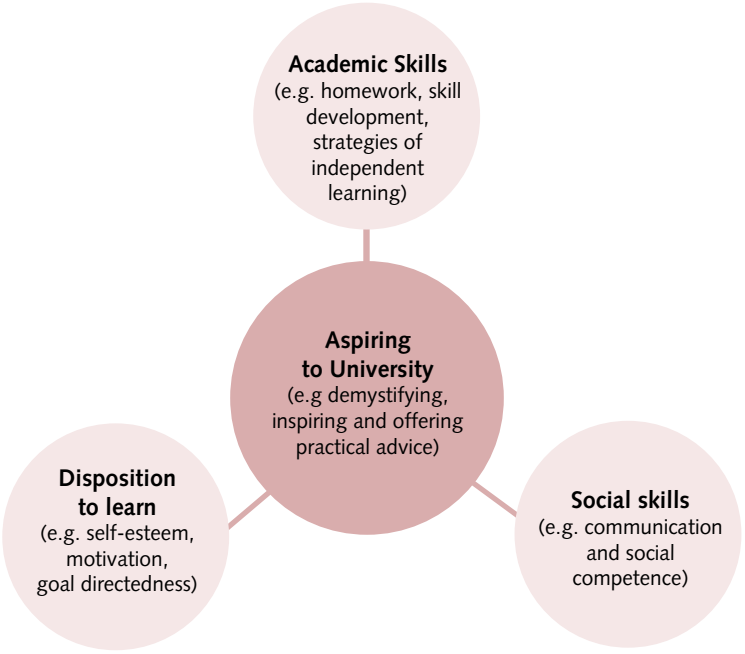


Figure 2 shows how **Into**University can have a positive impact on:

- academic learning (i.e. young people are given support to help them achieve the grades needed for university)
- disposition (i.e. young people develop positive attitudes to learning through staff encouragement and experience of success)
- social skills (i.e. young people gain experience of positive interactions with other young people and adults from various backgrounds).

IntoUniversity is successfully achieving this through a multi-stranded model which introduces young people to the concept of university from an early age. The fact that **Into**University targets primary-age pupils is important in helping recognise potential and provide support to enable young people to attain the grades they will need for entry into university. The programme also helps young people during the period of transition between primary

and secondary education. Young people feel more confident in going to secondary school if they have already made successful relationships with young people and adults from outside their school. **Into**University provides a consistent learning environment, which is particularly important for young people making the transition to secondary education.

Other key elements which add to the programme's success included: the committed staff, the positive ethos, the resources available to the young people and the efficient organisation of the various programme strands.

8.1 Key findings in relation to the research literature

Many of the good practice features of the **Into**University programme are consistent with the aspects highlighted in the research literature on study support and mentoring. For example, the Academic Support Scheme provides academic and pastoral support to young people, both of which are important, especially for young people with limited family experience of academic success. A model developed by researchers for a previous study (Sharp, 2004) (see Figure 1) showing how study support can have a positive influence on students' attitudes, skills and learning, is also clearly demonstrated within the Academic Support Scheme. Through the case-study interviews, children and young people have described a supportive and friendly environment that provides a social setting for learning, the use of clear target setting, and in some cases have demonstrated their capability for independent and self-regulated learning. All of these findings link directly to points made in section 3 in relation to good practice in study support.

The literature suggests that a mentoring scheme can have a positive impact on young people's attitudes and aspirations, especially when it is part of a wider programme. The mentoring strand of the **Into**University programme is successful because it is a part of a broader programme in which young people gain support to inspire them to go to university. Mentoring offers young people different types of support, as outlined in Pawson's (2004) typology. Mentees attending **Into**University benefited from affective contacts, direction setting and coaching. The mentoring strand also reflects the good practice features identified in the research literature, such as

devoting time to recruitment, screening and matching mentees, as well as providing initial training and ongoing support.

There is no comparable literature for the FOCUS strand of the **Into**University programme. This further highlights the uniqueness of the multi-stranded approach they have created.

The evidence in this report supports the conclusion that the **Into**University programme is having a positive, transformational impact on children and young people in terms of their academic learning and success, their attitudes to learning and their social skills; all of which are key elements that help children and young people to aspire and achieve.

8.2 Recommendations

Given the overall positive impact the programme is having on young people, we recommend the further expansion and funding of the programme.

The NFER team has devised two sets of more specific recommendations, based on the evidence from this study. The first set of recommendations relate to the immediate actions that **Into**University staff may wish to consider at the St Clement and St James Community Project. Secondly, the team has identified a number of recommendations that **Into**University may wish to consider when planning the potential expansion of the scheme at new sites.

8.2.1 Recommendations in relation to the IntoUniversity programme at St Clement and St James Community Project

It is recommended that **Into**University:

- Continues to organise the programme using the multi-stranded model and starting at a young age.
- Develops evaluation procedures so that they become more consistent in order to gain a clearer perspective on the impact of the programme on young people over time. This could usefully include the collection of data on the post-school destinations of attendees.

- Ensures that schools and parents are more aware of the entire **Into**University programme.
- Considers developing further opportunities for pupil voice and autonomy through, for example, more active participation in the student council and greater choice in learning tasks/conditions, in order to promote self-regulated learning.
- Develops the mentoring programme still further by: encouraging mentors to be more explicit in acting as role models of successful university entrants; helping mentors to set up visits to their university for their mentees; organising regular opportunities for mentors to meet and support each other post-training; and organising regular opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet with one another and programme staff in order to discuss their progress.

8.2.2 Recommendations in relation to the potential expansion of the IntoUniversity scheme

It is recommended that **Into**University:

- Continues to move forward with the plans to roll out the programme to other sites – this may need to begin small, but should have the potential to expand.
- Uses a similar multi-stranded model, while considering which aspects of the programme are essential and which may be modified in response to local needs.
- Establishes a similar ethos and learning environment as in the current programme.
- Employs and trains staff who display a similar positive outlook and enthusiasm for working with young people as is evident in current members of staff.
- Develops evaluation procedures that have the potential to provide valuable feedback on individual sessions but also provide standardised, ongoing evaluative information across multiple centres.

References

Appiah, L. (2001). *Mentoring: School-Business Links*. London: The Runnymede Trust.

Boekaerts, M., Pintrich, P.R. and Zeidner, M. (Eds) (2000). *Handbook of Self-Regulation*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Deci, E.L., Ryan, R.M. and Williams, G.C. (1996). 'Need satisfaction and the self-regulation of learning', *Learning and Individual Differences*, 8, 3, 165–183.

Department for Education and Employment (1998). *Extending Opportunity: a National Framework for Study Support*. London: DfEE.

DuBois, D.L., Holloway, B.E., Valentine, J.C. and Cooper, H. (2002). 'Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: a meta-analytical review', *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30, 2, 157–197.

Golden, S., Knight, S., O'Donnell, L., Smith, P. and Sims, D. (2003). *Learning Mentor Strand Study* (Executive Summary) (Report 01/2003) [online]. Available: http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/other-publications/downloadable-reports/pdf_docs/01-2003.PDF [17 March, 2006].

Hall, J.C. (2003). *Mentoring and Young People: a Literature Review* (SCRE Research Report 114). Glasgow: Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Huddleston, P., Abbott, I., Foweather, R., Hirst, C., Horleston, S. and Leisten, R. (2005). *National Mentoring Pilot Programme* (NMPP) Evaluation. Coventry: Centre for Education and Industry, University of Warwick.

Jekielek, S.M., Kristin, A., Moore, A., Hair, E.C. and Scarupa, H.J. (2002). *Mentoring: a Promising Strategy for Youth Development*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

MacBeath, J., Kirwan, T., Myers, K., McCall, J., Smith, I., McKay, E. with Sharp, C., Bhabra, S., Weindling, D. and Pocklington, K. (2001a). *The Impact of Study Support: a Report of a Longitudinal Study into the Impact of Participation in Out-of-school Learning on the Academic Attainment, Attitudes and School Attendance of Secondary School Students* (DfES Research Report 273) [online]. Available: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR273.PDF [27 March, 2007].

MacBeath, J., Kirwan, T., Myers, K., McCall, J., Smith, I. and McKay, E. with Sharp, C., Bhabra, S., Weindling, D. and Pocklington, K. (2001b). T*he Impact of Study Support: a Report of a Longitudinal Study into the Impact of Participation in Out-of-school Hours Learning on the Academic Attainment, Attitudes and School Attendance of Secondary School Students.* (DfES Research Brief 273) [online]. Available: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RB273.PDF [27 March, 2007].

McNamara, O. and Rogers, B. (2000). 'The roots of personal worth and the wings of self-responsibility: a research based enquiry into a business education mentoring programme', *Mentoring and Tutoring*, **8**, 2, 85–97.

Mahoney, J.L., Lord, H. and Carryl, E. (2005). 'An ecological analysis of after-school participation and the development of academic performance and motivational attributes for disadvantaged children', *Child Development*, **76**, 4, 811–825.

Miller, A. (1998). B*usiness and Community Mentoring in Schools* (DfEE Research Brief 43). London: DfEE.

Morris, M. and Rutt, S. (2006). *Evaluation of Aimhigher: Excellence Challenge Longitudinal Pupil Analysis Report* (DfES Research Report RR814). London: DfES.

Pawson, R. (2004). *Mentoring Relationships: an Explanatory Review* (ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice: Working Paper 21). London: ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice.

Philip, K., Shucksmith, J. and King, C. (2004). *Sharing a Laugh? A Qualitative Study of Mentoring Interventions with Young People*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Sharp, C. (2004). 'Evaluating the impact of Playing for Success.' Paper presented at the Department for Education and Skills Research Conference 2004 'Research in Education: What Works?', The QEII Conference Centre, Broad Sanctuary, Westminster, 19 November [online]. Available: http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/other-publications/conference-papers/pdf_docs/PfSforDfES.PDF [26 March, 2007].

Sharp, C., Blackmore, J., Kendall, L., Greene, K., Keys, W., Macauley, A., Schagen, I. and Yeshanew, T. (2003). *Playing for Success: an Evaluation of the Fourth Year* (DfES Research Report 402). London: DfES.

Sharp, C., Blackmore, J., Kendall, L., Schagen, I., Mason, K. and O'Connor, K. (2002a). *Playing for Success: an Evaluation of the Third Year* (DfES Research Report 337). London: DfES.

Sharp, C., Pocklington, K. and Weindling, D. (2002b). 'Study support and the development of the self-regulated learner', E*ducational Research*, **44**, 1, 29–41.

Sharp, C., Mawson, C., Pocklington, K., Kendall, L. and Morrison, J. (1999a). *Playing for Success: an Evaluation of the First Year* (DfEE Research Report 167). London: DfEE.

Sharp, C., Osgood, J. and Flanagan, N. (1999b). *The Benefits of Study Support: a Review of Opinion and Research* (DfES Research Report 110). London: DfES.

Sherman, L.W., Gottfredson, D., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P. and Bushway, S. (1997). *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*. Maryland, MD: University of Maryland.

Shiner, M., Young, T., Newburn, T. and Groben, S. (2004). *Mentoring Disaffected Young People: an Evaluation of 'Mentoring Plus'*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Sims, D., Jamison, J., Golden, S. and Lines, A. (2000). *Running a Mentoring Programme: Key Considerations*. Manchester: National Mentoring Network.

St James-Roberts, I. and Singh, C.S. (2001). *Can Mentors Help Primary School Children with Behaviour Problems? Final Report of the Three-year Evaluation of Project CHANCE Carried Out by the Thomas Coram Research Unit Between March 1997 and 2000*. London: Home Office.

Tarling, R., Burrows, J. and Clarke, A. (2001). *Dalston Youth Project Part II (11 - 14): an Evaluation* (Home Office Research Study 232). London: Home Office.

Tierney, P. and Grossman, J.B. with Resch, N.L. (2000). *Making a Difference: an Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Whitby, K. (2006). Desk Study of Pupil Mentoring Schemes for Business in the Community, Northern Ireland. Unpublished report.

Zeidner, M., Boekarets, M. and Pintrich, P.R. (2000). 'Self-regulation: directions and challenges for future research.' In: Boekarets, M., Pintrich, P.R. and Zeidner, M. (Eds) *Self-Regulation of Learning and Performance: Issues and Educational Applications*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.

Zimmerman, B.J. (1994). 'Dimensions of academic self-regulation: a conceptual framework for education.' In: Schunk, D.H. and Zimmerman, B.J. (Eds) *Self-Regulation of Learning and Performance: Issues and Educational Applications*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.

Appendix

A1 Design, methods, sampling and ethical considerations

The evaluation design comprised three complementary elements:

- eight case studies based on young people who were or had been involved with the **Into**University programme
- five observations, of elements of each of the three strands of the programme the evaluation looked at
- an analysis of existing evaluation information collected by **Into**University.

A1.1 The case studies

The main method for illuminating the impact of the programme was to compile individual case studies. Initially, it was proposed that six young people would be selected for detailed study. These young people and a selection of key adults associated with them (mentors, parents, teachers and Centre staff) would be interviewed and form the basis of the case studies.

It was proposed to interview approximately 20 people in total. Once planning for the interviews had begun it became apparent that there were in fact very few school teachers who were familiar enough with both the centre and the young people to provide meaningful information. Following discussions between the evaluation team and Centre staff, it was decided to increase the number of case studies. An additional benefit of this change was that it allowed the inclusion of a wider variety of case-study examples, including one person who used to attend the Centre and has gone on to graduate from university with a first class degree.

Sampling

The following table (Table A1) shows the details of respondents taking part in the case studies. The selected case-study children and young people were

not typical of all those attending the programme. Rather, they were selected to provide information about students from a range of backgrounds and to show how children and young people use (or have used) the **Into**University programme in different ways.

Table A1 Details of respondents taking part in the case studies

Case study ID	Year group	Male/ Female	Length of involvement with IntoUniversity	Strands taken part in	Additional reasons for selection	Key associated adults also interviewed
Nyobi	Year 13 student	Female	6 years	Academic Support, Mentoring, Easter revision and FOCUS weekend	Older age range	Parent, mentor and staff member
David	Mature student	Male	No longer involved	One-to-one support from tutors and staff	Recently graduated from university	None
Ella	Year 6 student	Female	3 years	Academic Support	Attends local school	Parent, headteacher and staff member
Ahmed	Year 6 student	Male	4 years	Academic Support	Attends local school	Parent, headteacher and staff member
Femi	Year 10 student	Male	3 years	FOCUS week and Academic Support	Middle age range	Staff member
Abdi	Year 12 student	Male	4 years	FOCUS week/ weekends, Academic Support, Mentoring and Easter revision	Lives a long way from IntoUniversity	Staff member
Yasmin	Year 10 student	Female	2 years	FOCUS week, Academic Support, Mentoring and Easter revision	Middle age range	Parent, mentor and staff member
Sis	Year 10 student	Female	2 years	Academic Support, Mentoring	Siblings who also attend IntoUniversity	Sibling, mentor and staff member

Please note that some of the associated adults were able to speak about more than one case-study young person, so the total number of interviews conducted did not exceed 20.

The purpose of the case studies was to illuminate how the programme affected these young people. All eight case-study young people were interviewed face-to-face by the research team. The interviews with the children and young people included an element of 'critical incident' methodology, whereby they were asked to relate incidents that had a strong influence on their experience of the **Into**University programme and/or when participation in the programme helped to influence their decision to apply for a university place.

The issues addressed in the interviews with young people included:

- background and personal characteristics
- how they heard about **Into**University. How and why they became involved with the programme
- when they began attending, for how long and which elements of the programme they attended
- how the programme complemented/contrasted with study support provision available at home, school (or elsewhere)
- what was important to them about the programme organisation, content, delivery, staff/mentors, timing/duration, venue and any other salient characteristics
- whether there were any improvements they would suggest
- how the programme influenced their achievement, skills, attitudes (especially motivation, self-confidence, independent learning) and their decision to apply for university
- what they think was likely to have happened to them on leaving school if they had not attended the programme
- whether and how their involvement in the programme has had any influence on others (for example, on peers and family members).

The issues addressed in the interviews with others (school staff, mentors, parents and Centre staff) included:

- how attending the **Into**University programme has affected the young person
- how staff, mentor or parents have supported the young person

- their opinion of the programme (including which features they consider to be most important/influential)
- whether there were any improvements they would suggest
- their opinion of the importance of the decision to target young people of primary school age
- how the programme complemented/contrasted with study support provision available at home, school (or elsewhere)
- how the programme has impacted on the young person
- how the programme has affected the young person's relationships with the interviewee and others (including family members and peers).
- what they think was likely to have happened to the young person on leaving school if they had not attended the programme.

A1.2 The observations

In order to gain an understanding of the nature of the programme elements, the researchers observed sessions (up to three hours) for elements of each of the three strands (Academic Support, Mentoring and FOCUS provision). The observations focused on collecting the following information:

- the elements of the session (what happened when)
- the participants (including whether this was a mixed-age session)
- the nature of the interaction between staff/mentors and students
- the venue, layout and equipment available
- salient features of the session in relation to the programme's intended aims and purposes
- 'critical events' that relate to various aspects of study support more widely.

A1.3 The evaluation materials

IntoUniversity collected a considerable number of evaluation forms from young people taking part in **Into**University activities, from their teachers and parents/carers, and from mentors. To date, these have been analysed informally. Of a total of over 600 forms, 278 were selected for analysis. These

were selected, in conjunction with **Into**University, to represent the elements of the three strands focused on in this evaluation and, where possible, to allow the triangulation of views from different stakeholders. Table A2 below shows the number of forms for each strand and group.

Table A2 Summary of evaluation form sampling

Instrument	Type of respondent	Sample size	Year(s) completed
Academic Support evaluation (primary)	Young person	35	2006
Academic Support evaluation (secondary)	Young person	20	2006
FOCUS activity: World War II week (primary)	Young person	53	2006/2007
FOCUS activity: World War II week (primary)	Parent/guardian	15	2006/2007
FOCUS activity: World War II week	Teacher/ teaching assistant	7	2006/2007
FOCUS activities: Sports Science week and Arts and the Media week (secondary)	Young person	40	2006
Mentor training evaluation	Mentor (university student)	39	2006
Mentor end of year evaluation	Mentor (university student)	35	2006
Mentee end of year evaluation	Mentee (young person)	34	2005/2006

Responses were coded by one of NFER's experienced coders, working closely with the project team, and entered into a database. This allowed the information to be summarised in order to identify patterns of response and key messages. The majority of responses were to open-ended questions, however there were a few closed questions (where respondents were asked to choose from a list of options) on some of the evaluation forms.

A1.4 Ethical considerations

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the NFER's Code of Practice (available at http://www.nfer.ac.uk/about-nfer/NFERcop.pdf). The particular issues that were addressed in this study included:

- negotiation of informed consent to participate from the young people, family members and other interviewees

- informing/negotiating with participants about observation of sessions
- consideration of issues concerning the venue and timing of interviews
- consideration of child protection issues (and not exposing NFER employees to undue risk)
- consideration of issues concerning data protection and identifying individuals in the final report (it is important to note that all individuals were informed that due to the small scale of the study it may be possible for people who knew them to identify who said what in the final report)
- ensuring fair treatment and balanced reporting (for example, addressing potential sources of bias).

National Foundation for
Educational Research
The Mere Upton Park
Slough Berkshire SL1 2DQ

Tel: +44 (0) 1753 574123
Tel: +44 (0) 1753 691632

www.nfer.ac.uk

ISBN 978 1 905314 43 0