Mansfield College
Access Report 2013
Introduction

This report details Mansfield College’s access and outreach activities in 2013. We are so grateful to all of Mansfield’s friends and alumni who have supported this area of college work. Our access and outreach activities are vital in helping us achieve one of the founding aims of Mansfield: that no individual with the passion and academic potential to study here is put off applying because of their background or their misconceptions about Oxford.

Mansfield leads among Oxford colleges in reaching out to a wide range of potential students, delivering access activities in further education colleges and schools in areas of the country that have historically sent few students to Oxford. Mansfield continues to have an unparalleled record on state sector admissions. Around 80% of Mansfield’s undergraduates are from the maintained sector, almost 20% higher than any other college and over 25% above the Oxford average (Oxford University admissions statistics 2012).

Oxford University now offers the most generous higher education bursary scheme in the UK, helping to ensure that students from poorer backgrounds are not deterred from applying for financial reasons. Our pioneering access and outreach activities give academic support to potential students, debunk myths and ensure that we help the brightest young minds to come to Oxford, regardless of background.

“This has changed my preconceptions of the people who come to Oxford”

One pupil’s feedback following a Mansfield access visit

Donations to widening access contribute to our access work, including helping us cover everything from large scale conferences with several hundred attendees to basic travel costs. Lucinda Rumsey our Admissions Tutor continues to develop our access strategy with the support of Fellows throughout the College delivering activity days at Mansfield and visits to Schools.

Our Access Officer, Jenny Medland delivers the majority of our events and access visits, with the support of a team of Access Ambassadors. Mansfield’s Access Ambassador Scheme was designed to formalise the work of Mansfield’s dedicated team of undergraduate volunteers by providing them with training, support and guidance to aid them in their Access work and in future work experience. The Access Ambassadors also run their own events and develop their own initiatives such as the 100 Schools Project, where undergraduates visit their old schools and discuss their experiences at Oxford.

“I help with access work because I am incredibly grateful for all the fantastic opportunities we get here, and want to make sure nobody misses out on that because of misconceptions or lack of confidence.”

Imogen, Mansfield Access Ambassador

This report demonstrates the significant impact and success of our access activities. Mansfield’s work on access has been delivered through the continued energy and passion of the Fellowship, staff and students, many of whom have volunteered to give their time for free. It is this unwavering commitment to inclusivity that ensures Mansfield continues to have one of the most diverse student populations in the University.
Regionalisation

As part of the University-wide regionalisation scheme each college is linked to a particular Local authority to ensure each school has a named first point of contact – in Mansfield’s case Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Greenwich, East Riding, Hull, York and Doncaster. We work extensively with schools across these regions. We chose Hull and East Riding as a focus of our outreach because it has been an area that is hard to reach and there is a low level of successful applications from schools in this region. We think in part this is because Oxford seems a long way away both for Oxford staff recruiting and for prospective candidates who cannot afford the fares or are daunted by the trip.

Access and Outreach Activities and Events

We carry out extensive work with schools in our regions, visiting them to give talks on a range of topics, attending Careers Fairs and Teachers’ Conferences, giving Admissions Workshops, and running large-scale events and conferences.

"Thank you so much for an excellent day. The students found it really useful and interesting. It was a great way to start the open day process. The teacher session was also excellent as it was relaxed and open."

A school-teacher reflecting on a Mansfield Admissions Workshop

We also invite schools to bring their younger students to Aspiration Days where they have the opportunity to visit Oxford and participate in a range of events—scavenger hunts, academic sessions delivered by Mansfield tutors and graduate students, lunch in Hall,
admissions talks, a Q&A session with current undergraduates and a tour of Mansfield and other Oxford colleges. The intention behind these events is to inform and inspire prospective applicants, to dispel the myths surrounding Oxford, and to encourage talented students to consider applying whatever their background.

The most important additions to the Mansfield Access calendar in the past year were the Regional Conferences and Academic Study Day events, aimed respectively at introducing prospective applicants to the Oxford application process and the academic side of university life. The Regional Conferences were held at hub schools across our regions; Mansfield staff and students volunteered their time and expertise to deliver a programme including mock interviews, taster academic sessions and subject-specific application support.

“It was nice seeing it for real. It made me think I’d fit in.”
One year 10 pupil comments on their visit to Mansfield

We have also had our first Academic Study Day, held at Mansfield in June 2013, which offered prospective applicants academic sessions aimed at developing their current interests and introducing them to subjects they might not have previously considered. Mansfield’s tutors ran academic sessions in English, Politics, Maths, History, Philosophy, Human Sciences, Theology, Engineering and Physics. We had several hundred attendees across these events, and hope to capitalise on their success in future years.

The academic taster sessions help prospective students to choose subjects that suit them. Many candidates who are the first in their family to apply to Oxford choose subjects which sound like jobs, particularly Law and Medicine or Economics and Management. These are the most competitive subjects with the most applicants and might not be the best suited to an individual student. Candidates without much knowledge of University study do not often appreciate that a degree in English, Theology or Human Sciences is just as likely to lead them into a rewarding career. The taster sessions also help potential candidates to see the range of subjects on offer at Oxford, and to see that, for instance if they are good at Maths or Modern Languages these subjects open up a huge variety of other subjects pupils might like to study, if only they knew about them.

Ros Ballaster, our English Fellow who has run several sessions says, “The benefit is mutual. It is really illuminating for us as tutors to talk to potential applicants about their expectations with regard to university. It is a challenge to design a seminar or workshop that gives students at school or college a flavour of the kind of work undertaken at higher education level as well as engaging and interesting them.” For a full list of our visits in 2012/13 please see Appendix A of this report.
Current students welcome prospective students to Mansfield in one of the 2013 Open Days

Our Contribution to the University-Wide Access Programme

Mansfield continues to make a substantial contribution to the access programme of the University as a whole. The Further Education Initiative was set up by Mansfield in 1999 to support students from Further Education institutions who were historically under-represented at Oxford. We have organised Further Education and Sixth Form Open days since 2002 and this year saw our most popular events yet, with around 450 attendees from across the country.

We also host Study Days as part of the University-wide Pathways Taster Programme which are aimed at introducing students from non-traditional backgrounds to degree-level study and the University of Oxford. Mansfield Access Ambassadors have overseen the day-to-day running of these events, taking logistical responsibility for providing College tours, running Q&A sessions, assisting Academic Taster sessions and transporting groups around Oxford. Feedback has been very positive, and the days provide an opportunity to become involved in large-scale Access events, showcase Mansfield to prospective applicants, and allow Access Ambassadors to gain experience in event organisation.

“Access is about making sure everyone has an equal opportunity to realise their potential and are aware of all the important information they need to guide them along the way.”

Shahenda Darwich, Mansfield Access Ambassador and JCR Access Representative
Encouraging Students to Consider Coming to Mansfield

On a practical level, we want to increase applications not just to Oxford but to Mansfield by promoting it to talented undergraduates. Last year the JCR, Mansfield’s Senior Tutor Lucinda Rumsey and our Access Officer Jenny Medland produced an Alternative Prospectus to add a more informal voice to our recruitment materials.

We had 5000 prospectuses printed last year and bought 5000 Mansfield access tote bags to give to prospective applicants when we hold events. By the end of the year all 5,000 prospectuses had been handed out to prospective students, highlighting the incredible number of students we worked with in 2013.

Feedback and Impact

In 2012-13 we ran over 100 events, about 30% more than last year, and we have travelled from Hull to the Isle of Wight, and worked with several thousand prospective applicants.

In the 2012 admissions cycle 30% of Mansfield’s candidates were from schools or colleges we had worked with.

Mansfield continues to be one of the most inclusive colleges in the collegiate University. Around 80% of places at Mansfield College went to applicants from the state sector compared to the University average of 57.5%. In the past four years of admissions the state intake for home UK students has been (for entry year) 2011: 80%, 2012: 82% 2013: 70% 2014: 80%.

Of our current home UK students 53% are from non-selective state schools (comprehensive schools, sixth form colleges etc.) compared with the University figure of 37%. This is particularly encouraging because non-selective state school students are the group that Oxford has for many years had little success recruiting.

Of those students that make Mansfield their first choice, over 80% are from the state sector, again higher than any other Oxford college, and 30% of Mansfield’s applicants were from schools or colleges we had directly worked with. This demonstrates the impact of Mansfield’s access activities. Mansfield has an unrivalled record on helping the brightest young people to reach Oxford regardless of background and providing them with the crucial foundations for success and university and beyond.
We are hoping to build on this success and extend the number of schools we have sustained and repeated contact with so that the access work feeds further into future applications.

**Case Studies**

**Alex, second year PPE student and JCR Access Officer**

“I would never have come to Oxford were it not for Mansfield. I first visited the university on an access open day, and saw a number of colleges. I found them all really intimidating and wasn’t going to apply – most of my friends weren’t at Sixth Form College, let alone thinking about Oxford. Mansfield was the only place that seemed welcoming, and it changed my impression of the whole university. I’m really proud of Mansfield and excited to be here at a time when everything seems to be changing – the college is becoming better known, we’re still pioneering on access, and the Friday lectures attract students from all over Oxford. As Access Officer I now spend lots of time going to schools across the country to try and find other students who might not otherwise apply. My message for them is exactly the same as how I felt – even if you don’t think Oxford’s for you, Mansfield might be.”

**Tom, first year English student**

“I decided to apply to Oxford because one of the Mansfield fellows came to my sixth form college in the West Midlands. It made me feel like the college was really looking for people like me, and now I’m here I’m so happy I decided to apply. The first word that comes to mind when I think of Mansfield is “friendly”. It’s a fantastic mix of the best Oxford traditions but none of the stuffiness that I was worried I’d find. Going to the Principal’s lodgings for brunch made me feel like the college really cares about who I am and what I want to do here – I don’t think it’s the same at all colleges, and I wouldn’t want to swap for anywhere else.”

**Jo, JCR Vice President**

“I attended the UNIQ summer school at Oxford, which was when I first came across Mansfield. It felt like a breath of fresh air, with all the benefits of Oxford but none of the snobbery. I loved the small, tight community feel of the college, and the friendliness of the tutors. Now I’m here I really appreciate the brilliant support we get from both students and fellows – it feels like a family. Having more facilities and accommodation would be brilliant because at times it feels like other colleges are way ahead of us, and I worry that students looking around Oxford won’t consider us because they’ll be worried about the difficulties of organising non-college accommodation and paying higher rent.”
We have featured a selection of quotations within this report from pupils, teachers and our Access Ambassadors, more quotations can be found in Appendix B of this report. The overwhelmingly positive student feedback has one recurring message: that these events make Oxford seem more friendly and accessible, and has inspired prospective applicants to work to get good results so they can apply to Oxford. We want to continue building on our new initiatives. Mansfield students, tutors and staff will continue to work together to ensure the college maintains its reputation for friendliness, inclusivity and diversity.
Appendix A – Visits in 2013

**Spring and summer visits**

- 1\textsuperscript{st} March: Conyers School, Leeds, teacher visit and student tour, inbound
- 4\textsuperscript{th} March: Wyke College, Hull (Learning day for all local schools) on Philosophy English History Medicine (with Cambridge), outbound
- 5\textsuperscript{th} March: Bexley and Greenwich Conference, outbound
- 6\textsuperscript{th} March: Blackfen School for Girls Careers Fair, outbound
- 6\textsuperscript{th} March: Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar School Visit, outbound
- 8\textsuperscript{th} March: The Thomas Adams School, Shropshire, inbound
- 11\textsuperscript{th} March: Croydon and Bromley Conference, outbound
- 13\textsuperscript{th} March: Pathways Study Day, inbound, multi-College
- 18\textsuperscript{th} March: St Olaves and St Saviour’s Grammar School, London, Oxbridge Information Evening, outbound
- 19\textsuperscript{th} March: Thomas Tallis Conference London, outbound
- 19\textsuperscript{th} March: Woodhouse College London, Evening Parents’ talk, outbound
- 20\textsuperscript{th} Farnborough College Moving On Day (year 10 feeder schools), outbound
- 22\textsuperscript{nd} April: Pathways Visit, inbound, Multi-College
- 23\textsuperscript{rd} April: Pathways Visit, inbound, Multi-College
- 25\textsuperscript{th} April: Dixons Allerton Academy, inbound
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} May: Harris Academies with Dill Anstey, outbound
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} May: Geography Open Day, inbound
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} May: Harris Academy: Crystal Palace, inbound
- 8\textsuperscript{th} May: Archbishop LanFranc visit, inbound
- 9\textsuperscript{th} May: Fulford School Visit, York, inbound
- 16\textsuperscript{th} May: Pathways Visit, inbound, Multi-College
- 23\textsuperscript{rd} May: Bohunt School Visit, inbound
- 24\textsuperscript{th} May: Thomas More School Visit, inbound
- 7\textsuperscript{th} June: Thomas Tallis Visit, inbound
- 11\textsuperscript{th} June: Samuel Whitbread Visit, inbound
- 12\textsuperscript{th} June: Huntingdon School Visit, outbound,
- 13\textsuperscript{th} June: Bexley Grammar School Conference, outbound
- 17\textsuperscript{th} June: Solihull College visit outbound

**Trinity 2013**

- 22\textsuperscript{nd} April: York, Doncaster, Hull & Easting Riding Conference, outbound
- 22\textsuperscript{nd} April: Pathways Visit, inbound, Multi-College
- 23\textsuperscript{rd} April: Pathways Visit, inbound, Multi-College
- 25\textsuperscript{th} April: Dixons Allerton Academy, inbound
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} May: Harris Academies with Dill Anstey, outbound
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} May: Geography Open Day, inbound
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} May: Harris Academy: Crystal Palace, inbound
- 8\textsuperscript{th} May: Archbishop LanFranc visit, inbound
- 9\textsuperscript{th} May: Fulford School Visit, York, inbound
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- 11\textsuperscript{th} June: Samuel Whitbread Visit, inbound
- 12\textsuperscript{th} June: Huntingdon School Visit, outbound,
- 13\textsuperscript{th} June: Bexley Grammar School Conference, outbound
- 17\textsuperscript{th} June: Solihull College visit outbound
Long Vacation June-September 2013

- 18th June: Further Education Day inbound
- 19th- 20th June: UCAS Conference, Leeds, 2 days outbound
- 20th June: Cottingham High School, outbound,
- 21st June: Sixth Form College Open Day, inbound
- 25th June: Mansfield Study Day, inbound
- 26th June: College Open Day
- 27th June: College Open Day
- 27th June: Samuel Whitbread Academy evening parent yr 10-12 talk outbound
- 4th July: UCAS Conference, York, outbound
- 4th July: Farnborough College Visit, outbound
- 6th July: Eton Access Summer School, outbound
- 7th-9th July: Geek Camp, two days teaching Stourbridge King Edward VI outbound
- 9th July: Portsmouth College Visit, inbound
- 10th July: John Roan School, outbound
- 12th July: Kemnal Technology College, inbound
- 15th July: hosted Samuel Whitbread teacher workshop on Computer Science teaching, inbound
- 16th July: UNIQ runner–up student conference admissions panel, inbound
- 29th July: Social Mobility Foundation meeting London, outbound
- 23rd September: Isle of Wight College plus local schools student talk, outbound
Appendix B – Feedback and Quotations


- “I do access work because I feel it’s important to get as much (factual) information across to potential candidates as possible, and I enjoy meeting them to tell them all about it!” Ellie Saunders, History and English

- “I help with access work at Mansfield because I am incredibly grateful for all the fantastic opportunities we get here, and want to make sure nobody misses out on that because of misconceptions or lack of confidence.” Imogen Buchan, Engineering Science

- “I have a great time studying in Oxford. It’s therefore completely natural that I want to see more people have similar experiences, and do so according to the academic interest and motivation rather than any other factor. Through access work we can let people know that Oxford is a real option for them!” Charles Roe, English Literature

- “Access is about making sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to realise their potential and are aware of all the important information they need to guide them along the way. Here at Mansfield we try our hardest to attract the best students with the academic ability and potential to flourish by improving transparency, increasing awareness and raising aspirations. Our access events give prospective students the opportunity to gain a greater insight into the admissions and interview process and ask those burning questions to people who have experienced it first-hand (and survived!).” Shahenda Darwich, PPE

Feedback from Teachers and Students on our Access Activities

- “The student feedback was very positive. The lively, interactive morning session certainly helped to raise awareness and debunk a few myths and the year 10 and 11 pupils really enjoyed having the opportunity to talk to some current undergraduates about their experience. The tour of Mansfield College was also fascinating and it was very kind of you to provide us all with a lovely lunch in such impressive surroundings.”

- “I absolutely loved the day at Mansfield – especially because of the two academic sessions. Rather than hearing about the Oxbridge teaching processes, this was as close as I could hope to get to the real thing – and it was great.”

- “Thank you very much for an excellent day. The students found it really useful and interesting. It was a great way to start the open days process. The teacher session was also excellent as it was relaxed and open.”

- “Now I’d really like to study here!”
• “I thought it was really posh but it’s not”

• “This changed my preconceptions of the people of come to Oxford”

• “The students were incredibly friendly and the University is very quirky and attractive’

• “Now I’ve seen the place and walked around I can picture myself here”

• “Hearing from actual students dispelled some of the myths”

• “I really enjoyed the subjects because they made me look at things in a different way”

• “I felt comfortable here and really enjoyed my day”

• “Tutors were friendly and not patronising – great at explaining stuff”

• “I wanted to apply to Cambridge but today has changed my mind – thanks for complicating it 😊”

• “Loved the passion of the lecturers”

• “It was nice seeing it for real. It made me think I’d fit in”

• “Brilliant atmosphere”

• “I have a better understanding and fewer misconceptions”