



Ablaze Report 2016-17

Ablaze exists to raise young people's aspiration, attainment and skill levels for employability and life.

We seek to inspire today's youngsters to empower tomorrow's workforce.

We are strong in our priority – to impact on social mobility by targeting disadvantaged areas and disengaged groups.

Our message is clear – there is no better investment than in the future of our young people.



“The children are more confident at reading aloud but also, more importantly, have had regular practice of answering questions about their reading. It is this focus on questioning which has had a real impact.”

Alex Desmond, Oasis Long Cross Primary School

“I think it is a really good scheme and it makes me happy to know these kinds of schemes exist for children who need that little bit more help.”

Volunteer Reading Buddy from DAS UK Ltd

“It's given me more confidence in general, the interactions with the kids have been sometimes challenging and overall very rewarding.”

Volunteer Number Partner from OVO Energy

“The mentors have catered to our needs and the mentors are approachable and engage the students almost effortlessly. They are always active in developing their knowledge and skills with students and this has led to excellent sessions being run. From a

student perspective, in the past three years all students on the programme have gained good academic grades or have made good or better progress in lessons. They also make more informed and appropriate choice about their future careers and education.”

Bridge Learning Campus

Ablaze Primary Programmes

During 2016-17, Ablaze managed the partnerships of 33 primary schools and 22 businesses in disadvantaged areas across Bristol, as well as 4 primary schools and 4 businesses in South Gloucestershire.

- Reading Buddies – 288 volunteers supported 378 pupils
- Number Partners – 83 volunteers supported 180 pupils

Summary of progress

The focus for Ablaze's primary work over the school year has been continuing to find new businesses to fulfill our remit to support the remaining schools on the BCC Project School list, volunteer recruitment & training and ensuring the relationships between each school & business stays on track and continues to go well, plus managing all the non-BCC Target School interventions our businesses support. Although some schools have pulled out since our need to charge them for the brokering and managing of their business interventions from Sept '17, new schools and additional interventions have been secured.

Woodlands Academy & St Pius X Primary

Ablaze introduced OVO Energy Reading Buddy and Number Partner interventions to Woodlands Academy and St Pius X Primary in September 2016 and the interventions have gone incredibly well, with the pupils engaging wholeheartedly with their business mentors. OVO Energy have continued to engage further with their two schools and this included a creative writing course at St Pius X Primary, "It's Right to Write", delivered by Huw Powell, author of the children's books "Spacejackers".

OVO Energy hope to continue engaging more widely with Ablaze schools by delivering the following over 2017-18:

- Coding Clubs – extending invitations to their schools to join their Coding Clubs which take place at OVO Energy on Saturdays – parents are welcome too
- Supporting pupils' transition into secondary school by asking secondary school pupils to support primary pupils at regular coding clubs held at their secondary school
- Breakfast Clubs – offering funding for breakfast clubs at their two participating schools
- One-off Events – for example, a 'make-over' project, if their schools have any 'paint & fix' requirements etc
- Supporting education programmes through funding: for e.g.
 - Delivering STEM related projects - Practical Action
 - Engineering Challenge for KS2
 - Activities similar to UWE BoxED

Ablaze Poetry Competition

Ablaze ran a second Primary School Poetry & Picture competition in Bristol and South Gloucestershire Primary Schools in 2017 with this year's theme being 'Friendship'. Many schools have asked us to run the competition annually and Intellect Books have kindly agreed to run another competition over 2017/18.

Mayor of Bristol

Ablaze has developed a good working relationship with the Mayor of Bristol, who wholeheartedly supports the work we do. He visited one of our Reading Buddy schools on 7th July 2017 which allowed us to showcase our BBC Bristol Reading Buddy volunteers who have been supporting their pupils through Ablaze since 2010

Highlights from 2016-17 Ablaze primary school evaluations

Reading Buddies

60% of schools completed our 2016-17 annual reading buddy evaluation. From that data we are happy to report that:-

- 91% of children say they will read more now.
- 96% are reading with more confidence
- 5% did not improve their reading level
- 19% improved by 1 reading level
- 26% improved by 2 reading levels
- 18% improved by 3 reading levels
- 7% improved by 4 reading levels
- 26% improved by 5 or more reading levels



Number Partners

26% of schools completed our number partner evaluation. From that data we are happy to report:-

- 100% are more confident
- 100% of children felt they were better at mental maths
- 0% Did not improve
- 0% improved by 1 level
- 76% improved by 2 levels
- 5% improved by 3 levels
- 11% improved by 4 levels
- 8% improved by 5 or more levels



Ablaze Secondary Programme

Summary of Progress

This year Ablaze provided a range of programmes in 5 secondary schools in disadvantaged areas across Bristol. 1,005 young people have participated in programmes supported by approximately 80 volunteers from businesses across Bristol.

During the BCC funded period our Secondary Partnership Manager left Ablaze. Budget constraints meant that rather than replace her Ablaze decided to enter a strategic partnership with 3 other organisations and bid for government funds through the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to provide an extended mentoring programme to Secondary schools. Our bid was successful and a new Project Manager was employed to set up and deliver the business mentoring programme for the Partnership – West of England Mentoring (WEM). The programme model is based on the mentoring programmes running at BLC, Orchard and Bedminster Down this academic year. This mentoring was supported by Irwin Mitchell, TLT and CMS volunteers.

WEM is on course to deliver the business mentoring to 16 schools in the West of England area, 11 of those in Bristol and South Glos.

Our Secondary offer is now focused largely on the WEM mentoring. We are also offering some additional programmes to BLC and Orchard School this coming year and these are being managed by our Administrator.

The five year Quintet Programme was run very successfully at Bridge Learning Campus and Orchard school. In each school a cohort of 15 learners from year 7 participated. At BLC the focus was pupil premium boys, at Orchard it was poor attenders. The programme content for the year comprised of 2 terms of Mindfulness, delivered by an outside agency, two terms of Book Worms and one term of Breaking Limits. We are delivering a similar, slightly reduced version of this in both schools in 2017/18.

Book Worms, a new programme for groups of year 7 and 8 students, targeted those in receipt of pupil premium or who demonstrated a reluctance to attend school. This reading intervention focused on reading for enjoyment and comprehension and encouraged students to discover and develop reading confidence in order to open up the route to greater understanding of educational material. Students are given copies of the books to keep to increase an understanding of the importance of book ownership and to encourage reading in the home environment.

Mock interview sessions, speed interviews and careers fairs were also provided to support CIEAG across Years 8-11.

Ablaze managed a very successful year long programme, The Flying Challenge in Bristol Metropolitan Academy for Airbus. The programme will be run again in 2017/18. A group of 30 students spent 20 weeks at Airbus and UWE on a series of flight related activities which culminated in a flying lesson. 12 mentors from Airbus supported the students on their journey through the theory of flight, aviation and engineering career information and experience and practical skills in designing, building and testing aircraft parts.

Secondary Evaluation Highlights

Group Mentoring

Student statistics:

92% feel more confident of themselves and their abilities

92% think they are better at taking part in discussions and have learned how to make decisions

97% learned about careers

94% learned about the skills needed for work



Mentor statistics:

100% believe the students are more confident and have improved their ability to take part in discussions

94% believe students have learned how to make decisions

"It has been a privilege to take part and I hope the scheme continues."

"I believe it is important to allow all students to opportunity to choose their life aspirations."

Book Worms

Student statistics:

90% feel more confident about themselves and their abilities

80% feel their reading and comprehension skills have improved

Mentor statistics:

100% think students are more confident in themselves and their abilities

100% think students reading and comprehension skills have improved

“In one of the sessions, the entire group were sat around a large table taking it in turns to read. Without exception, every one of them was following the book, totally immersed and you could have heard a pin drop! No one would have ever believed this possible from the group we first met in November.”

“It improved my confidence, it was fun”

Mock Interviews at Orchard School

60% of students found the interviews very useful

83% enjoyed taking part

"It was a really good experience, I really enjoyed it."

"I got to learn my strengths and weaknesses in a 1:1 situation."

Airbus Flying Challenge

Student statistics:

92% of students thought the Flying Challenge was good or great.

83% felt more confident in themselves and their abilities

100% enjoyed working with the mentors



Mentor statistics:

100% of mentors thought the students were more confident in themselves and their abilities

100% of mentors saw a change/improvement in students behaviour over the course of the programme

90% felt students had increased their ability to concentrate and engage with activities

Student attendance increased from 94.65% to 96.31% during the course of the programme

"I feel much more confident in my abilities and in my future now. I'd like to say thanks to everyone. This project has made me realise how important school is and I'm motivated to try harder."

"Confidence in themselves: Yes, they started as quiet shy little things and ended up able to answer 25 quite difficult engineering questions in the quiz at the end!"

Bristol City Council Initiatives Supported by Ablaze 2016-17

Ablaze remains committed to supporting and partnering Bristol City Council initiatives under the banner of Learning City.

We have given our services to various initiatives and played an active role in supporting the development and implementation of these. We have worked closely with education providers, businesses and public sector organisations offering our advice, expertise and experience to the process.

Summary of Activity

- Ablaze continues to work with the Local Authority to support Learning City Initiatives and, in particular, Bristol WORKS.
- The Ablaze CEO provided informal coaching the new Engagement Hub Manager for the first 3 months of her appointment to the role.
- Ablaze is one of the key stakeholders on the Bristol WORKS (what was the Engagement Hub) steering group, attending meetings and offering support, ideas and advice on strategic development plans for the initiative.
- Ablaze supported Boomsatsuma's bid for the delivery contract for WORKS, which they won. No delivery role for Ablaze was negotiated.
- Ablaze are working closely with the Neighbourhood Directorate to deliver the BCC programme aimed at increasing the proportion of BCC employees who undertake volunteer working in the city. The key link for this piece of work is Di Robinson. Ablaze CEO is working in collaboration with Dominic Murphy from BCC and Ronnie Brown from Quartet Foundation on shaping the content for the ESV strategy documents.
- We have been giving advice to the Mayor's City Office on their strategic planning for the new Social Action Plan for Bristol. We have also supported and advised Made Open in the functionality of the new community exchange and volunteer bank, 'CandoBristol' which is being developed and will go live in September 2017.
- Ablaze continues to place a strong focus on employer engagement for Learning City and remains active in introducing networks and contacts to LC partners and leads. We promote the Learning City brand to our business partners and encourage them to badge their activity where appropriate.
- Ablaze collaborates closely with the West of England LEP. We were invited to form a partnership with the LEP, Mentoring Plus and Babassa to submit a bid to CEC to deliver a West of England mentoring programme. Our partnership group, WEM,

won the bid. A project manager was appointed in April and WEM mentoring has been delivered in three schools to date. In the 2017/18 academic year we plan to deliver the programme in 16 schools in the West of England region. Evaluation highlights of this year's activity are in the Secondary activity section of this report.

- We work closely with Business West and are currently in discussion with them on our potential role in their ESF Skills programme.

Primary Case Studies

Ablaze Poetry Competition 2017

Following the huge success of last year's Ablaze Poetry Competition, we were delighted to run another competition this year. The response was again fantastic and the quality of the pupils' poems were just as outstanding. The theme for this year was "Friendship" and the pupils were asked to write about what friendship, in its many forms, means to them.

The overall winner of the Competition was Iris Taylor with her truly heartwarming poem entitled "Friendship is a Miraculous Thing". Iris is in Year 5 at SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School.

Bristol author Huw Powell was on the judging panel and presented the winners with prizes and certificates. He is pictured here with Iris.



Friendship is a Miraculous Thing by Iris Taylor

Friendship never comes to an end,
Well not friendship with a proper friend.
When friendship unfolds and makes a start,
It will forever be inside your heart.

Friends are people whom you love,
Even when life gets really tough.
Inside your heart friendship is stowed,
When you walk along the friendship road.

Friends are people who share with you,
Who care, who love, who get you through
the highs and lows - but no matter what,
A friend is with you and cares a lot.

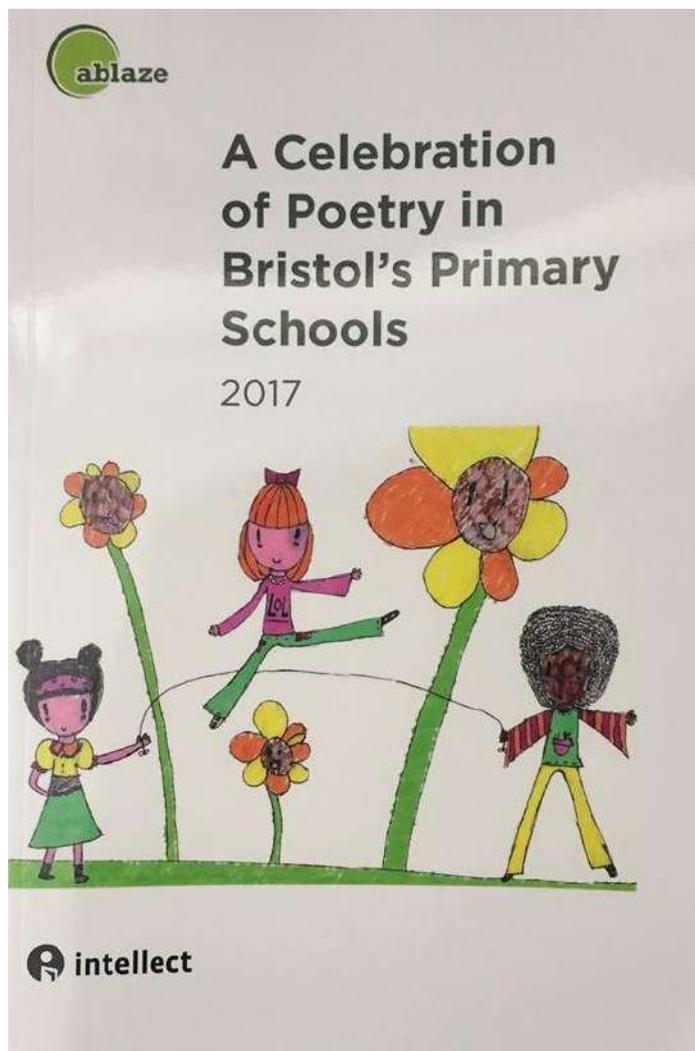
Nobody can ever tear apart,
The friendship that dwells inside your heart.
But please remember one more thing,
Friendship is a miraculous thing.

Primary Case Studies

Ablaze Picture Competition 2017

Alongside our 2017 poetry competition, Ablaze held another picture competition asking pupils to design the image for the front cover of the final poetry book.

The colourful winning picture was designed by Anona Whately, Year 5, Whitehall Primary School.



Primary Case Studies

Mayor Marvin Rees' visit to St Michael's on the Mount Primary School

Ablaze invited Bristol's Mayor, Marvin Rees, to St. Michael's on the Mount Primary School on 7th July '17, to showcase BBC Bristol Reading Buddy volunteers who have been supporting their pupils since 2010. Each pupil confidently read out a short extract to demonstrate how much they've achieved with the help of their BBC Reading Buddy. The Mayor was also treated to a performance from the School Choir, who sang an extract from their contribution in the school's Shakespeare play, as well as a demonstration of the pupils' "Talk for Writing" project. Ablaze invited Ujima Radio along to the event and Miss Devine interviewed the Mayor for her radio show (pictured) which was broadcast later that day.

Marvin Rees commented about his visit:

"Giving children a good start in life is really important and strong reading skills are a big part of this. Being able to read well not only gives pupils an advantage in education, but also opens up a whole world of experiences which wouldn't otherwise be available. The partnership between Ablaze and BBC Bristol is helping these children to lay the future foundations for success, and that is something they should be proud of. As a Learning City, we are working with a wide range of different organisation to promote learning and this is another excellent example."



Stuart McClelland, the School's Executive Head Teacher, said of the Mayor's visit:

"It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the exciting learning which is happening in our school. The relationship with the BBC volunteers, through Ablaze, has such a positive impact on the pupils involved and is a project we really value. They are fantastic people and are so supportive and engaging. It was a pleasure to share this with The Mayor, as we know how much he values education."



Primary Case Studies

“It’s Right to Write” writing course with OVO Energy and St. Pius X Catholic Primary

Ablaze were delighted to deliver an exciting writing course, kindly funded by OVO Energy, to St. Pius X Catholic Primary School in Term 6, July ‘17. We invited Huw Powell, author of the children’s books ‘Spacejackers’ to run a writing course over 5 sessions. The sessions covered the following topics:



Introduction to writing - asking the pupils to identify what they think are the key ingredients which make good story (eg a journey, new worlds, adventure, comedy etc.); looking at ‘genres’ and what genre their favourite books fall into; identifying different types of genres; writing a story in a sentence (trying to capture the key ingredients while still making it interesting for the reader);

Researching your subject - pointing pupils to resources that can help them research their subject area and how to collate the info into an interesting & entertaining format. This lesson helped pupils: understand the importance of research and how writers go about researching information for their stories; how to best carry out their own research; interviewing their OVO volunteer and writing a short story about them;

Narrative - this session explained how stories are structured (e.g. a 3 act structure) and identified ‘story worthy’ problems or challenges. This allowed the pupils to: appreciate different story formats (e.g. a hero’s journey, rags to riches, voyage & return etc.); use tools to come up with their ideas & characters (with support from the OVO Energy volunteers); write notes for their developing story.

Over to you - Huw demonstrated and helped pupils see the best way to start a story (e.g. set the scene) and tips on how to ‘hook’ their readers in; pupils started writing their own stories with support from the OVO volunteers; pupils were given guidance on how to improve their descriptive writing & range of words they could use to embellish their stories.

Publishing - this session let pupils know about the publishing process (eg different stages, cover design, royalties etc.); pupils shared extracts from their own stories and Huw gave them really useful individual feedback on how to take their stories forward.



Secondary Case Studies

TLT mentoring at Bridge Learning Campus



Ablaze provide mentoring to pre-GCSE students as part of the West of England Mentoring partnership. West of England Mentoring (WEM) is a partnership delivering national best practice in business mentoring to students across the region. The partnership benefits from unmatched track records in schools across Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset (BANES), alongside established relationships with local businesses and funders across the west of England. WEM is a partnership between Ablaze, Mentoring Plus, Babassa and BathBridge.

TLT LLP provided mentoring to a number of pre-GCSE students at Bridge Learning Campus, an all-through school located in the Whitchurch Park area of Bristol, England. The sessions gave the students a chance to talk with their business mentors to learn more about careers and how they could achieve their future goals. The scheme aims to boost the students' confidence and raise their aspirations.

Liz Hackling, Assistant Headteacher at Bridge Learning Campus said the programme has shown the students that they are capable of “taking on something more, something higher” than they had previously believed themselves capable of, and commented that “it’s so, so beneficial to watch confidence and aspirations raise”.

Mollie Saunders, a student at the school, said “before I didn’t really know what to do, now I see what I want to do and can go and do it. I’ve learned that the real world isn’t as scary as everyone says it is”. Jericho Vegara commented “the scheme has inspired my future, I kind of know what I want to do now. The mentors inspire you and make you ready for life”.

Rose Farrell, a solicitor at TLT LLP, was incredibly positive about the scheme. A real benefit of the scheme is that “the students have learned confidence and that you don’t have to decide your career at 15, you can try a few things out”.

Danielle Graysson, a Legal Assistant, believes the mentoring scheme is “important because it gives the young people of the local community a chance to raise their aspirations, broaden their horizons and fulfil their potential. It’s given TLT a chance to give something back”.

