



Keble
College

Keble Access and Admissions Report

May 2019

This is a report to fellows, college staff, students and alumni on our access and outreach activity 2017-18 as well as undergraduate admissions in the last round, December 2018.

Highlights

Partnership with The Access Project and Colmers School, Birmingham

Appointment of first Outreach and Career Development Fellow, Dr Foteini Dimirouli

Our access and outreach team engaged with 570 different schools at 92 events across the year

Over 1700 students visited us with their schools (40 different schools) – not including Open Days – in 2017/18

The number of applicants topped 1100 for the first time in 2018

For 2017-18 we matched or exceeded the targets set by the Office for Students for offers to students from under-represented areas and backgrounds

In 2017 and 2018 we made the highest proportion of offers to BME students of any college

In 2018 over two-thirds of offers to UK candidates were made to applicants from state schools, above the University average

Access and Outreach

The mainstay of our activity is talking to students in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 about Universities in general and Oxford in particular; we encourage them to aim high and, where we can, advise and support them in meeting their aspirations.

Our engagement with schools at access and outreach events has grown considerably over the years. In 2014-15 we interacted with 77 schools at 46 events. In 2017-18 we engaged with 570 schools at 92 outreach events, mainly in our link local authorities in the West Midlands. This is largely because we now take part in more large-scale partnered events, attended by many schools at once. But also, our capacity to run individual school events has increased since the appointment of the Career Development and Access Fellow – Dr Foteini Dimirouli - in August 2017.

In total, around 1750 students came to Keble outside our three Open Days in 2017-18, including:

- c.40 inbound school visits with an average of 27 pupils per visit: 1080
- 4 Brilliant Club visits with 75 pupils per visit: 300
- 5 Year 10 Pathways events hosted at Keble with 75 pupils per visit: 375

The aim of **school visits** varies depending on the specific characteristics of the group in question. Broadly speaking, with the younger groups our primary objective is to increase knowledge of the benefits of higher education in general whereas with KS4 groups we focus more on the distinctive features of studying at Oxford and promoting an accurate picture of student life here. With post-16 students we concentrate on explaining the application process and supporting their development of practical skills that may improve individual performance in the various admissions stages (i.e. personal statements, admissions tests, interviews). In addition to any workshops that we run, all visiting groups also get the chance to meet current students, have lunch in Hall, go on a guided tour of the college and explore Oxford city centre, another college or one of the University's museums.

The **Brilliant Club** is a charity whose mission is to increase the number of pupils from under-represented backgrounds that progress to highly selective universities. For their flagship Scholars Programme PhD students are trained and placed in schools where they deliver tutorials to small groups. We host those schools involved for The Scholars Programme launch and graduation events.

The **Pathways Programme** is coordinated by the colleges. It provides information, advice and guidance on higher education and Oxford to academically able students in years 10 and 11, and staff members, in non-selective state schools with little history of student progression to Oxford. All events involve small groups of selected pupils from multiple schools, are run across different colleges and departments in Oxford, and are free to attend. The events are full day events that include subject taster sessions delivered by graduate students.

In order to simplify communication between the University and all schools in the United Kingdom, each Oxford college is linked to a Local Authority to ensure that all schools have a first point of contact within the University. Keble College is linked with Birmingham, Sandwell, Solihull, Coventry, and Warwickshire.

Visits from and to schools, mostly hosted by our Access Officer – Nicole Boothman – but greatly aided by students from Keble at Large, carry on throughout the school year, September–June. In 2017-18 there were other highlights too:

September Engineering Taster Days, Birmingham

November Archaeology & Anthropology Taster day, Keble: aimed at encouraging applications to one of Oxford's 'under-subscribed' or over-looked degree subjects

January Coach Bright Graduation Day - to acknowledge the hard work of those involved in this peer-to-peer programme, in which Year 12 pupils coach Years 8-10 through subject-specific support and confidence building.

May Keble at Large Application Information Day - a one-day event for year 12 students at non-selective state schools and colleges in our linked region. Teachers are asked to invite those who have the academic potential to make a competitive application to Oxford to attend. Each attendee participates in interview and admissions test workshops with at least one current Keble at Large undergraduate who is studying the course(s) that they are considering applying for. It involved over 40 year 12 students and over 30 Keble at students. Several participants went on to receive offers at Oxford, including one here at Keble.

June London Academy of Excellence Year 12 assembly

Keble and The Access Project in Partnership

In September 2018 Keble launched a new partnership with The Access Project (TAP) – an innovative education charity that helps bright young people from disadvantaged backgrounds gain places at top universities – and Colmers School in Rednal, Birmingham. The initiative will see the selected students offered free weekly tuition in the subjects they need most help with, along with expert and tailored guidance through the university application process.

Because it's designed to provide close, in-school support to students from Year 10 onwards, it allows us to target promising young people over more than just a one-off workshop or school visit. This initiative also enables us to establish more of a presence in our target region – in this case one of the parts of suburban Birmingham most afflicted by economic decline in recent decades.

To qualify for the programme, a young person must qualify for Free School Meals, be designated for Pupil Premium, or live in one of the postcodes where fewest people go to university. The scheme focuses on small groups of students in years 10-13 with the aim to support them for up to four years. This is an intensive intervention, but it has been shown to work. A young person who has participated in The Access Project's programme is more than twice as likely to go to a top university than another student with the same academic track record and background – this is set against a backdrop in which only 2.5 per cent of young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds get a place at a top university.

Colmers School joins five other West Midlands schools (and twenty-six in London) that already partner with The Access Project to get their students into top universities. TAP supports Oxbridge applicants from all of these schools through visits, workshops and contact with Oxford academics, preparing students to make strong applications, give effective interviews and prepare for Oxbridge admissions tests.

TAP trains volunteers to become exceptional tutors who work with students for an hour a week to raise their grades. One of the things that attracted us about this scheme was that Keble alumni, as well as current staff and students, were able to get directly involved as mentors. In addition, a dedicated school-based staff member mentors the students so they have the knowledge and support to make strong university applications. Participants will visit Keble twice during the programme, and we'll give them some insight into what it would be like to come to Oxford.

Our participation in the partnership was made possible by a very generous donation from an alumnus, Mike Thomas (History 1965-68).

The launch event at Colmers was attended by the Warden, Senior Tutor, Outreach and Career Development Fellow, Access Officer, Luke Moss (second-year Medic) and – by video link – Andy Street, Mayor of Birmingham and Keble alumnus.

NEWS from 2019

- Colmers School topped the list of TAP partner schools in London and the West Midlands for attendance of one-to-one tutoring at 91%!
- We are in negotiation with The Access Project to partner with a second school in the region of Birmingham. The new partnership is to be confirmed by September 2019
- 12 Keble alumni and one current student have volunteered to be mentors on the scheme

**We engaged with the following schools through access and outreach events 2017-18
(excluding Open Days and UCAS fairs)**

<p>Alcester Grammar School Aldebrook School & Sixth Form Ark John Keats Academy Bartley Green Bordesley Green Girls' School Cardinal Wiseman Kingstanding Christ's College Finchley Cockshut Hill School CTC Kingshurst Academy Erdington Academy Grey Coat Hospital School Grace Academy Solihull Handsworth School for Girls John Henry Newman Catholic School King Edward VI School Stratford Upon Avon King Edward VI Five Ways King's High Warwick Kings Norton Girls' School</p>	<p>Launceston College Lyndon School Ninestiles Academy Nishkam High School North Birmingham Academy North Leamington School Notting Hill & Ealing High School Ormiston Forge Academy Ormiston Sandwell Academy Plantsbrook School St Mary's Catholic High School St Peter's Catholic School Sidney Stringer Academy Smith's Wood Academy Solihull School Southam College Stratford Girls' Grammar School Sutton Coldfield Grammar Schools for Girls Wood Green Academy</p>
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Thanks

When it comes to organising outreach and access activities, we are fortunate in at least two ways. First, we have a student community that is actively engaged in helping reach young people from under-represented backgrounds, channelled through Keble At Large. They help at Open Days, with school visits and with tours to schools in our target region. Second, we're very lucky to have a number of donors (including alumni) who have enabled us to resource these activities. Some of the activities they support, such as UNIQ and Target Oxbridge, have a more immediate and obvious effect on our applications and offers. Others, such as our partnerships with the Access Project or the Brilliant Club, are aimed at supporting students earlier in their schooling and at encouraging applications to top universities and not just Oxford. We believe that this access work, although it may not always directly benefit Keble, is absolutely essential and worthwhile.

Looking ahead

We plan to step up our access and outreach effort in 2018-19;

- We will be hosting 50 participants in the UNIQ summer school this year (and plan to do so every year from now on).
- We are holding a two-day residential visit and dinner for 50 students taking part in Target Oxbridge, aimed at applicants from African-Caribbean backgrounds.

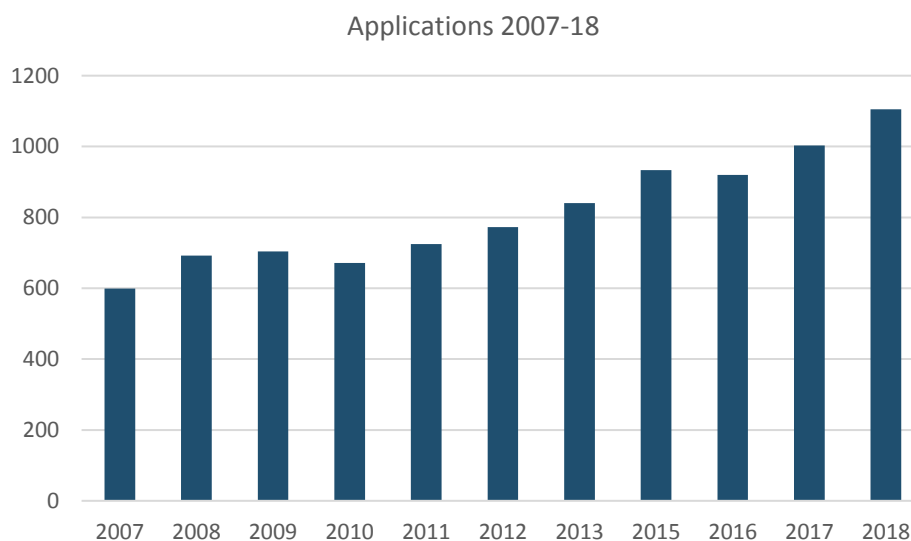
- Funding has been secured to support attendance at Open Days and for admissions interviews for potential applicants who could not otherwise attend.
- In May 2019, our student access group, Keble At Large, are hosting an Application Information Day for students from non-selective state schools.
- Also in May, we're organising another Taster Day, this time for state school students interested in applying for Geography - to encourage more applications to otherwise under-subscribed subjects.
- In June, we're hosting our first Teacher Evening in central Birmingham, to provide information to teachers about Oxbridge and how to best support their students to apply
- Also in June, we are launching a partnership with the Access Platform, which will enable current undergraduates to interact with perspective applicants online about University-related matters through a monitored platform for a trial period of 6 months

Major initiatives

The University has just announced two major access initiatives - Opportunity Oxford and Foundation Oxford. We're currently in discussions about taking part in these new programmes and intend to make an announcement before the end of Trinity term.

Applications

A record number of applications – 1105 – were made to Keble in 2018 (including 44 open applications allocated to us). That's an increase of 10.5% from last year. The level of applications to Keble has risen from just under 600 in 2007 – in line with the University as a whole though at a higher rate of growth. But the number of undergraduate places on offer has remained fairly constant during the same period – between 126 and 130. A decade ago, there were around 4.6 applicants per place at Keble; now there are nearer 8.5 per place, although this varies a lot between subjects.



We have just under 5% of all applications to Oxford, but in some subjects we account for more than 10%: Archaeology and Anthropology, Biomedical Sciences, Human Sciences, Geography, Philosophy & Theology and Theology and Religion. The largest absolute number of applicants this year were in Physics (123), Economics & Management (90), Engineering Science (88) and Medicine (87).

It's important to appreciate that shortlisting decisions are made according to agreed criteria and standards shared across all the colleges. Not all applicants are shortlisted; we don't have the capacity to interview everyone who applies. Across the whole University, under half (44%) of applicants are shortlisted; in Keble the proportion was 41%. That is to say, 651 applicants were not summoned for interview, roughly equivalent to the total number of applications a decade ago. As a result, very many potentially good applicants are understandably disappointed; we do provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

There is significant variation between subjects in the shortlisting rate because some courses receive many more applicants per place than others. Across the University for example, fewer than one in four applicants were shortlisted for Computer Science, Economics & Management and Medicine. In other, often smaller, subjects, almost all applicants are shortlisted. We're trying to encourage potential applicants to consider courses which, though really good in terms of educational development and career destination, don't attract so much interest. This lies behind our thinking for subject taster days.

Admissions

The University will release its second annual Admissions Statistical Report some time in May. The report, which will be accessible from the University's website¹, contains statistics under four broad headings: school type; socio-economic disadvantage; gender; and ethnicity. It provides figures, and therefore rankings, for colleges and departments. To some extent, college figures are misleading. Colleges and departments cooperate under a single Common Framework, which, for example, lays down shortlisting criteria and mechanisms for reallocating applicants between colleges to even out their chances of being made an offer. In our case, of the 1105 applicants (44 of which did not apply to Keble directly), 177 were made offers either at Keble (129) or at another college (48). In turn, 26 applicants to other colleges were made offers by Keble, bringing the total number of offers at Keble to 155. Across all the colleges, around a third of offers are made to individuals by a college that they didn't apply to.

Nonetheless, because there might be public interest in Keble's figures this section of our report provides a brief commentary on each of the main areas in the University's Admissions Statistical report.

1. State school admissions

As a proportion of admissions from UK schools 2016-18, Keble (50.2%) had the third lowest percentage of state school admissions. We were below the University average, although the difference is smaller when considering all students – including international applicants – rather than just those from the UK. This is because we have fewer applications from, and make fewer offers to,

¹ <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/admissions-statistics/undergraduate-students>

international students than average. The University's admissions report focuses on UK students, but we think it's important to also consider all applications and offers to get the full picture

Some of this difference is explained by the fact that we receive well above-average levels of applications from UK independent schools. Given that the admissions procedure does not differentiate between school types, it is therefore not surprising that the proportion of offers is also above average. We've found that there is little significant difference between the relative success rates of the two kinds of schools.

That being said, the situation varies from year to year. In both 2012 and 2018 the proportion of offers to UK state schools was above University average. In fact, in the most recent admissions round (which is not reflected in the current Admissions Statistical report) over two-thirds of offers to UK students were to applicants from state schools (above the University figure of 62.6%). As a proportion of all offers, 57%, of all offers were made to UK state school applicants compared with just 49% for the University. These figures will be reflected in next year's report.

It should be noted that, although much public attention fixes on the balance between state and independent school applicants at Oxford, it does not form part of the University's access agreement with the Office for Students. There are no targets or quotas for applicants of different school types. School type is often treated as a surrogate for social inequality, something that the University and colleges address more directly through measures of socio-economic disadvantage.

2. Socio-economic disadvantage

For admissions from POLAR quintiles² 1 and 2 2016-18, Keble (13%) ranks 13th out of 29 in relative terms, i.e. just above the University average (12.4%) and fifth in absolute numbers, i.e. in those three years only four colleges admitted more students from areas of low progression to higher education.

For admissions from ACORN³ categories 4 and 5, Keble ranked 23rd out of 29 colleges; 7.8% 2016-18 compared with a University average of 10%. In absolute terms however, Keble is average – ranking 13th out of 29.

ACORN and POLAR are two different ways of measuring socio-economic disadvantage, although both are limited in the sense that they are measures based on geographical areas rather than individuals or households. Nonetheless, they are included in the University's current access targets. (The University is talking to UCAS about having access to potentially more useful measures, such as entitlement to free school meals.) On these counts, we have recently performed averagely at best. Because the numbers involved are so small, there is marked annual fluctuation. In the last admissions round but one, Keble matched the University's access targets for socio-economic disadvantage. Full figures are not yet available for the most recent admissions round, but preliminary analysis of offers suggest that we will do so again.

Although we now routinely match the University's targets on access for socio-economic disadvantage, in keeping with our ethos and history, our aspiration is to perform well-above average. That's why we've stepped up our commitment to work with partners – The Access Project,

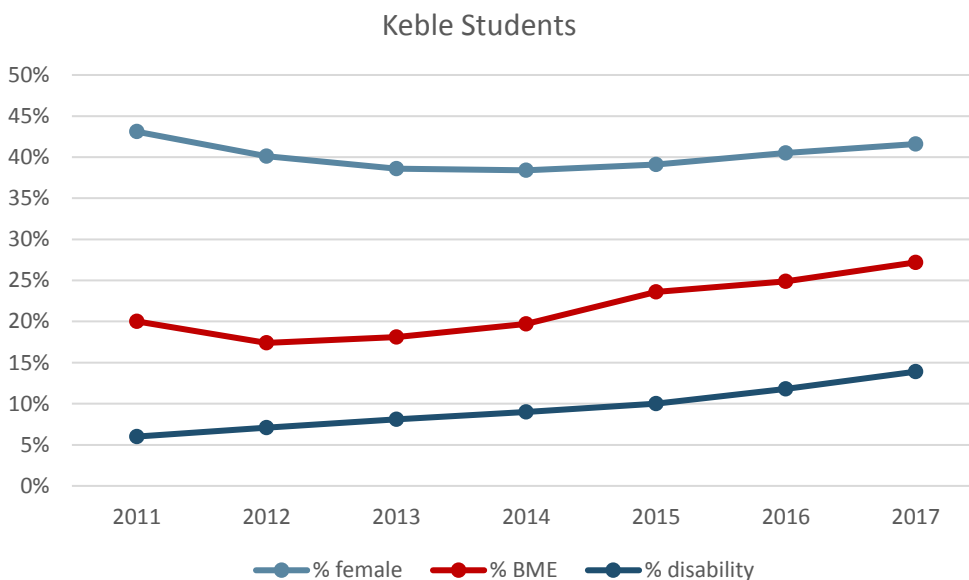
² POLAR is a measure of the level of participation in higher education by geographical area; quintiles 1 and 2 include the 40% of areas with the lowest levels of progression to higher education.

³ ACORN is a classification of socio-economic disadvantage by geographical area.

the Brilliant Club, Pathways, and Target Oxbridge among them – all of whom focus on encouraging successful applications from under-represented schools and geographical areas.

3. Ethnicity

In the three years under review, no college admitted more BME students than Keble (67). This was the third highest by percentage (21.3%). We also admitted more Asian students than any other college (35, 11.1%) in both absolute and relative terms. But, only six Black students were admitted in those three years. Although this is in line with the University’s average (1.9%), we don’t think it’s good enough. Engaging with Target Oxbridge is one of the ways we’re trying to increase successful application from this particularly under-represented group.



4. Gender

Between 2016-18 females made up 46.6% of admissions to Keble, below the average of 50% for the University. This is something we monitor annually and it’s a function of the mix of subjects – we take relatively more students in science subjects. The current success rate of female applicants to Keble (16%) is higher than that for male applicants (14.6%).

Our annual Equality Report (available from the college website) provides more detail on admissions and on-course students by protected characteristics. This graph is a summary of how things have changed over the past seven years.

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