



Unlocking Opportunity

Celebrating Impact in
Access and Outreach 2026



Keble's enduring mission

Since 1870, Keble College has been challenging the way things are done to ensure that learning and ambition always thrive in our College community. At the heart of our mission is our belief that our academic success and student diversity are closely linked: access to higher education has long been regarded as a pathway to economic mobility, personal development, and societal progress.

Whole communities remain under-represented in higher education due to structural barriers, geographic disparities, and limited access to opportunity. At Keble, we have made it our priority to create opportunities for talented individuals, regardless of their background. Over many years, Keble has established and strengthened its position as a leader in outreach and access. This report highlights the tangible impact of our programmes, using evaluation tools developed with the Bridge Group.

From 2021 to 2024, The School Group Visits programme, which serves over 200 West Midlands schools, doubled the number of applications to, and offers from, Keble and Oxford, especially from non-selective state schools.

Strategic partnerships amplify the scale and impact of our work. Collaborations with external organisations (such as The Brilliant Club and The Access Project) and with the University of Oxford enable us to reach many thousands of students, empowering students from less advantaged backgrounds to make competitive applications to Oxford and other highly selective universities. For example, Keble supports the University of Oxford's UNIQ Summer School: between 2018 and 2024, 200 UNIQ participants applied to Keble, of whom 46 (23%) were offered a place and 39 subsequently enrolled.

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Nearly half the participants in 2022 Taster Days subsequently applied to Oxford. From 2019 to 2023, the proportion of UK undergraduates from less advantaged backgrounds studying at Keble grew by 8%, outpacing the University average at 5%. Our intake of students from minority ethnic backgrounds has also risen significantly, from 24% in 2020 to 40% in 2023.

I share this report with my heartfelt thanks to the Access and Outreach Team for their tireless dedication, to our Fellows and student volunteers for their invaluable contributions, and to our generous benefactors for their steadfast support. Together, we have crafted a strategy for success that not only builds opportunities for individuals but also enriches our College and society more widely. Our commitment to expand the impact of our outreach and access programmes remains unwavering: we will continuously improve our approaches based on evidence and sustain a close alliance with the University of Oxford.

This report is more than a record of progress. It is a testament to our shared mission to make access to opportunities more widespread and to unlock potential. With your continued support, Keble College will endure as an institution where talent thrives and aspirations soar.

With appreciation,



**Professor Dame Sarah Whatmore,
Warden, Keble College**

Our strategic approach

Through collaboration with schools, teachers, families, and charities, Keble College's Access and Outreach Programme creates pathways for students to thrive, regardless of their circumstances. Responding to the latest research evidence, our initiatives span three core areas:

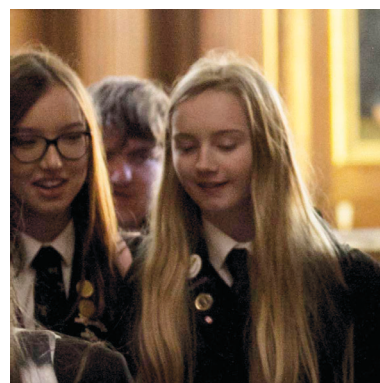
- School Group Visits programme for schools in our West Midlands link region;
- targeted support for prospective applicants to selective universities (ABB or higher at A-level); and
- bespoke activities for those on their journey to Oxford — and into our College community.

More than 7,000 students, teachers, and supporters engaged with Keble Access and Outreach activity during the 2023-24 academic year. Activities included Oxford's in-person University Open Days, a busy School Visits calendar, and several large-scale virtual events.

Each Oxford college is linked to a Local Authority to ensure that all schools have a first point of contact within the University. Our work is focused on the West Midlands, where the College maintains strong ties with Birmingham, Sandwell, Solihull, Coventry, and Warwickshire. Over 200 schools participate in our School Group Visits programme, including interactive visits, webinars, and tailored support for students, parents, and teachers.

Our partnerships with organisations such as The Access Project, The Brilliant Club, Target Oxbridge, and Oxford's UNIQ Summer School enhance our reach and impact. Our Subject Taster Days have led to increased applications, while programmes like Target Oxbridge and UNIQ have enhanced the representation of students from less advantaged backgrounds at Keble and across the University. We are also deeply committed to supporting students from diverse environments once they enrol, offering academic and financial assistance to help them thrive.

In collaboration with the Bridge Group, Keble has developed a comprehensive evaluation toolkit to measure the impact of its access and outreach work. This provides a structure for assessing our initiatives and refining them for the future.



School group visits programme in our link region

Keble's outreach with link schools in the West Midlands is highly popular with state schools and colleges. The programme, which includes approximately three visits every week during term-time, is consistently oversubscribed. Designed for secondary school and sixth-form pupils, each visit includes an age-appropriate programme with an Oxford information session, a College tour and Q&A with student ambassadors from the Junior Common Room (JCR), and lunch in the dining hall. Optional activities may include sessions on admissions and interview skills, and academic taster sessions led by Keble graduate students through the Middle Common Room (MCR) who volunteer their time and expertise to support activities.

A survey of teachers accompanying school visits shows Keble Outreach effectively engages students, informs them about applying to top universities such as Oxford, and boosts their confidence. The survey also shows that as a result of the visit, teachers felt better able to support students wanting to apply to Oxbridge and Keble, as illustrated below.

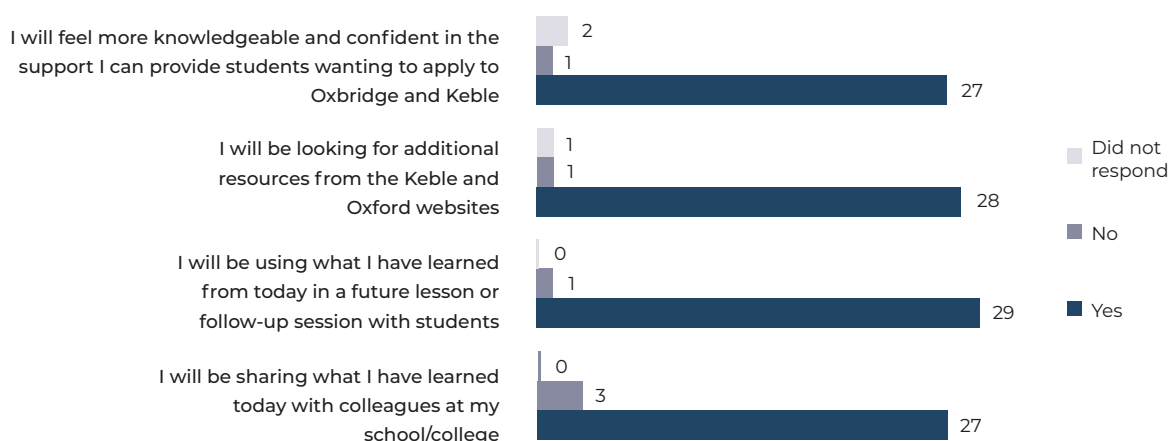


Figure 1. Impact of school group visits on teachers and their intended follow-up actions



Bridge Group analysis shows that, for entry from 2021 to 2024, the number of applications from, and offers to, students in Keble's link schools in the West Midlands to Keble has risen from 26 to 52 (applications) and from 4 to 7 (offers).¹ The number for Oxford University have also risen from 376 to 448 (applications) and from 46 to 75 (offers). This is shown in the figures below.

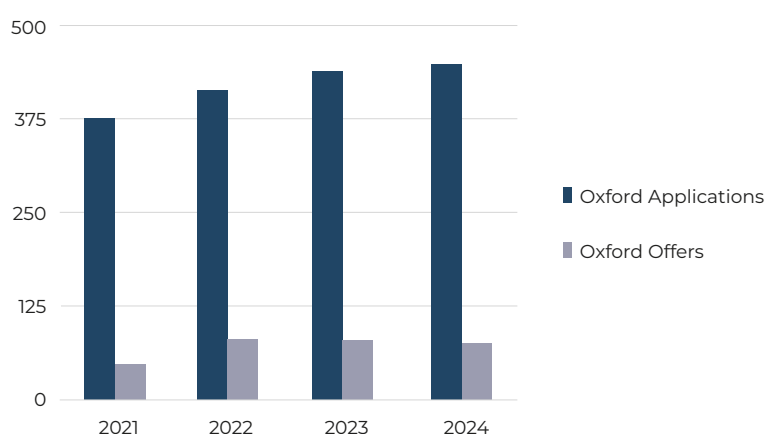


Figure 2: Keble link school applications and offers, University of Oxford, 2021-24 entry

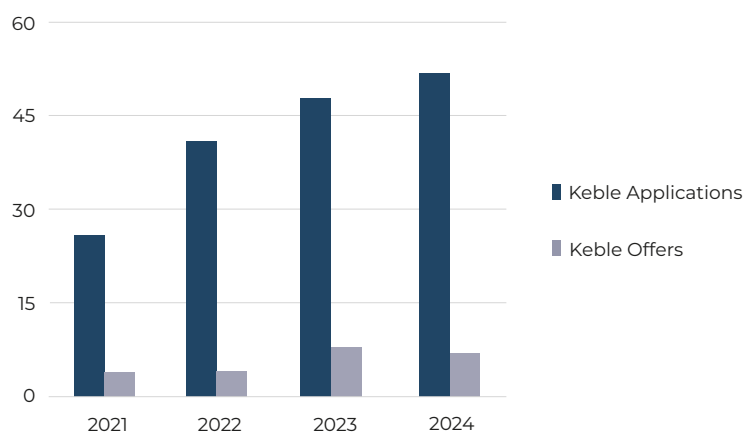


Figure 3: Keble link school applications and offers, Keble College, 2021-24 entry

¹ This analysis used the available data on offers as a proxy for acceptances. For 2024 entry, admissions data from 178 Keble link schools located in the West Midlands was received. Of these schools, 92% were non-selective (n=164), 7% were selective (n=13) and one school was private. This profile has been constant since 2021.

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The biggest growth in terms of applications and offers for Oxford, and applications for Keble, was with students in non-selective schools. Applications to Oxford increased from 181 to 240 and so did offers, from 16 to 38. Applications to Keble more than doubled, from 13 to 30, and offers doubled from 2 to 4. Students in non-selective state schools are generally less likely to apply to Oxford. However, for 2024, the application to offer rate for Keble's link schools was the same for students from non-selective and selective schools (1 offer to 6 applications for both), which is a promising outcome.



Dr Foteini Dimirouli
Access Fellow, Keble College

“ There are many great things about the school visits programme, and one of them is that it engages our undergraduate community. Feedback shows that there is an ever-growing appetite among school students for contact with people their age, already studying at Oxford.



Partnerships to extend our impact

Keble's strategic partnerships demonstrate significant success in supporting students from less advantaged backgrounds to access selective universities, including Oxford. These initiatives are designed to increase the likelihood of participants applying to and securing places at competitive institutions, with evidence showing a clear and measurable impact.

The Brilliant Club mobilises the PhD community to share its expertise with state schools that most need help. Data in the 2024 evaluation report highlights the effectiveness of its Scholars Programme. Among Year 12 participants, 83% applied to competitive universities compared to 68% of a control group, while 49% successfully progressed to these institutions, compared to 40% of non-participants. Furthermore, younger participants (Years 8–10) achieved higher GCSE grades than those who did not take part, emphasising the long-term academic benefits of the programme. Indicatively, in 2022–23, 261 Scholars Programme students from 24 schools were welcomed by Keble College for their Launch or Graduation events. Of all students attending a trip, 83% were Brilliant Club target students (those unlikely to progress to highly selective universities on the basis of a number of disadvantage metrics, but who have the potential to do so). The feedback from Launch events, in particular, was very positive, with 95% of students enjoying their visit to the university (compared to 88% nationally).

The Access Project (TAP) is grounded in the local community of the West Midlands. The charity offers one-to-one tuition to students by volunteer tutors, as well as mentoring in school and enrichment activities through a dedicated team of school-based Access officers. Keble partnered with TAP in 2018 by supporting the programme at Colmers School in Rednal, then continued with the recruitment of Waverley school in Birmingham in 2021. Both schools face significant adversity. As of January 2024, 44.9% of pupils at Colmers School are eligible for Free School Meals, almost double the national average of 23.8%. At Waverley School this number is 42.9%. TAP's 2024 impact assessment reports positive outcomes. UCAS data reveals that TAP students are 50% more likely to attend top universities than comparable peers. Additionally, 93%

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of surveyed participants reported greater motivation to attend a leading university after joining the programme. Academic success is also evident, with 31% of TAP A-Level students achieving at least 128 UCAS points (equivalent to ABB or higher).

Target Oxbridge is a programme to support Black African and Caribbean students in the UK to improve their chances of gaining a place at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Keble supports this programme which provides 160 places every year, roughly evenly split between Oxford and Cambridge. For 2024 entry, out of 83 applicants, 27 students received offers from Oxford. The success rate for students on the Target Oxbridge programme has risen from 29% for 2022 entry to 37% for 2024 entry, above that of the average success rates for applicants to Oxford and Cambridge (around 20%).

Keble supports the **University of Oxford's UNIQ Summer School** for academically promising students from backgrounds under-represented at Oxford and other universities. Central Admissions at Oxford reports on Oxford applications and acceptances for participants. Each year, 1/3 of UNIQ students who apply to Oxford are offered a place, compared to 1/5 of state school students. Keble is the Oxford college with the third highest number of applications from UNIQ participants. Between 2018 and 2024, 200 UNIQ participants applied to Keble, of whom 46 were offered a place and 39 subsequently enrolled.



Ambika Bhargava
2021 PPE

“ When I was in Year 6 my school enrolled me into the Brilliant Club, an outreach programme which let me experience tutorials and visit Keble College for the first time. I remember eating in Keble dining hall and telling my friends at that age how I was sure I wanted to apply to Oxford, and Keble. When it came to my application process, I knew for certain that Keble would be the right place for me and having just finished my second year here, I can see how I was so right.



Supporting prospective applicants through Subject Taster Days

Keble hosts Subject Taster Days each year for prospective Year 12 students at UK state schools and colleges, who have a promising academic profile and will benefit most from the opportunities. Four different subjects are selected for representation each year, in accordance with tutors' availability. These days include subject taster sessions by Keble tutors, admissions advice sessions, Q&As with current students in the subject, and collaborative events with the relevant departments.

Respondents were asked to indicate (via yes/no options) how the Taster Day may have helped their understanding and confidence about applying to Oxford and Oxbridge respectively, and their likelihood of applying to Oxford and to Keble. Almost all respondents indicated that the Taster Day had had a positive effect, as illustrated below, with 99% saying that they now understood the admissions process better, and 84% saying they were now more likely to apply to Keble.

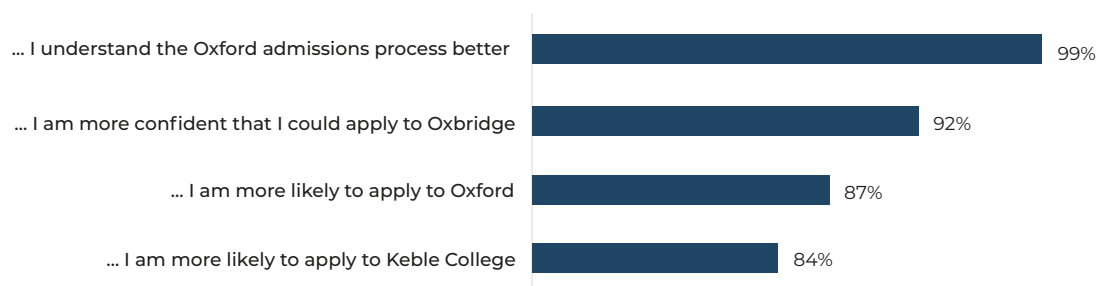


Figure 4. Students' agreement with statements relating to applying to Oxford, starting with 'After the taster day ...'

In 2022, nearly half the participants (48%) overall subsequently applied to Oxford. From the Taster Day for English, 63% of participants applied to Oxford, and 15% put Keble down as their first choice. From the Taster Day in Law, 51% of participants applied to Oxford, and 21% put Keble down as their first choice. Offers were made to 15% and 10% of participants, respectively.

While Keble Subject Taster Days are designed to support successful applications to Oxford, they also contribute to one of our key strategic aims to provide targeted support to prospective applicants and help improve their chances of progression to selective universities.

The figure below shows that of the 135 students who attended the Keble Subject Taster Days in 2022, 115 applied to higher tariff universities including Oxford (ABB or higher at A-Level), 110 received offers from these universities and 90 were accepted. The application and acceptance rates for these students are substantially higher than that of a socio-demographically similar control group, based on UCAS data analysis.



Figure 5. Progression to higher-tariff universities for Subject Taster Day 2022 participants



Venus Yeboah
2023 English & French

“When I came to the Modern Languages Subject Taster Day I was not completely convinced about Oxford or Keble and was keeping my options open. I was considering taking a gap year. After the Subject Taster Day, which was the first access event I attended, I was selected at a different Access programme at another college. But I had felt more comfortable at Keble. I compared everything to this first experience, and Keble always came off better.

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“ The student Q&A was really good because they are where I want to be as a prospective student and seeing how they got there is really insightful. I found the mock interview most interesting as I had never actually seen a philosophy Oxbridge interview before, so I found it really intriguing and insightful.

**Sixth Form student attending
Keble College Subject Taster Days**

Keble also runs or supports several other activities to support prospective Oxford applicants. These include multi-platform social media campaigns, virtual sessions and webinars. Records of engagement with these activities indicate that they are popular and/or receive positive feedback. For example, the two most popular Instagram videos had been viewed a total of 240,000 times by November 2024.



Admissions to Keble

The figures below illustrate that Oxford's and Keble's student bodies are becoming more diverse in terms of socio-economic background. From 2019 entry to 2023 entry, using the Acorn measure of disadvantage,² there is an encouraging rise at 8% for Keble and 5% for Oxford. There is also a rise using the Polar metric,³ though this is smaller, at 5% and 3% respectively for Keble and Oxford.

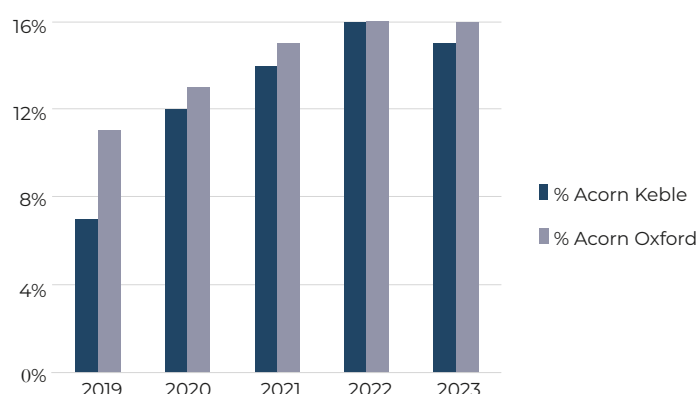


Figure 6. Students from less advantaged backgrounds (Acorn 4 & 5, financially stretched and urban adversity categories) as a proportion of the UK undergraduate intake to Oxford and to Keble College

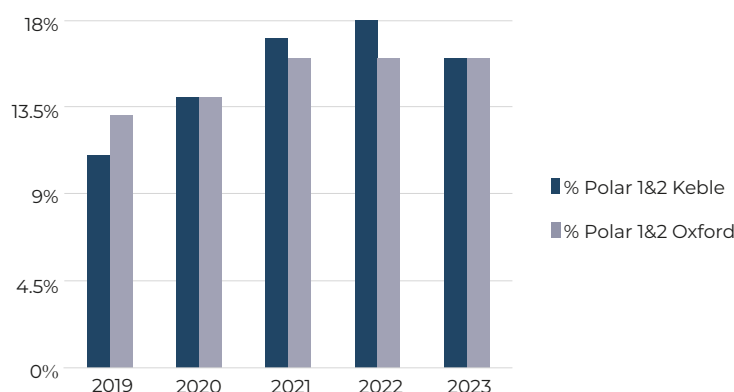


Figure 7. Students from less advantaged backgrounds (Polar 1 & 2, areas of low progression to higher education) as a proportion of the UK undergraduate intake to Oxford and to Keble College

² Acorn segments the UK population into one of 65 Acorn types. These describe the demographic make-up of a postcode. Acorn is widely used by universities as a measure of relative advantage.

³ Polar classifies areas across the UK according to the proportion of young people there who participate in higher education. It is used by Government agencies, the higher education regulator and universities.

“ I visited Keble in my first year of sixth form and distinctly remember its warm, welcoming atmosphere. Although I instinctively felt that Oxford was right for me, I was not confident at all that Oxford would think I was right for them. Now at the end of my 2nd year at Keble, I can confidently say that I have settled into the Oxford lifestyle and truly feel part of the College community.

Amelia Burgess
2022 Medicine

Oxford introduced the additional metric of Free School Meals eligibility for 2021 entry; it reports on this metric as an average over a three-year period. From 2021 to 2023, the proportion of admitted students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) ranged by college from 2.2% to 12.3% with Keble ranking 4th among Oxford colleges with 9.3%.

Oxford's and Keble's student bodies are also becoming more diverse in terms of ethnic background. Keble has generally admitted a higher proportion of students from a Black and Minority Ethnic background compared with the University of Oxford average. UK-domiciled BME students made up between 21.9% and 35.8% of colleges' UK intakes averaged across 2021 to 2023, with Keble ranking 7th among Oxford colleges with 28.9%. Over the past few years, Keble has shown impressive year on year progress, having increased its BME student intake from 24.1% in 2020 to 39.8% in 2023.

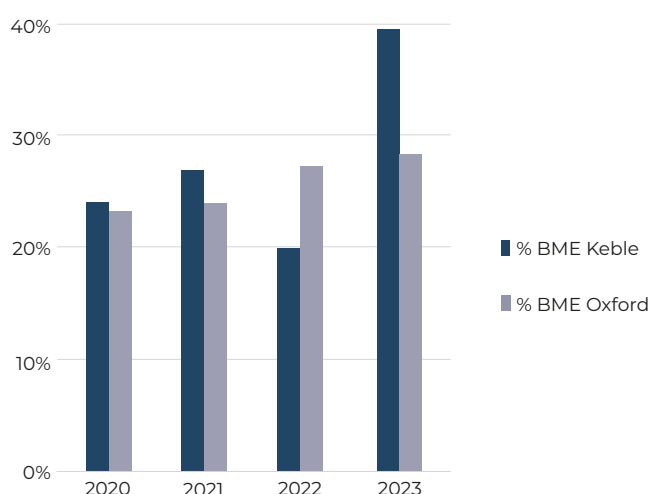


Figure 8. Students from a Black or Minority Ethnic background as a proportion of the UK undergraduate intake, Keble College and University of Oxford, 2020-2023.



Our ambitions onward

Our College was founded on philanthropy, and continues to thrive thanks to the visionary support of benefactors. This report highlights the transformative impact of donor generosity on young people's educational journeys and their access to Keble. Donors have played a vital role in funding targeted and impactful initiatives such as The Access Project. Our new evaluation toolkit will ensure that we measure and refine our programmes based on evidence, maximising their effectiveness.

Grounded in the knowledge that aspiration and attainment are nurtured through consistent contact, targeted support and innovative engagement, sustainable funding is critical if we are to maintain and expand outreach activities.

We are expanding our use of digital tools, including The Ambassador Platform, an online forum where prospective students can speak confidentially to current Keble students from similar backgrounds.

Ask us about what life at Keble College is really like

Powered by  The Ambassador Platform

Do you want to speak to someone about their experiences at Keble College? Start a chat with our friendly ambassadors now!

Student



Jess
Kent

MChem Chemistry

Hi I'm Jess and I'm a first year chemist at Keble. I'd love to help answer any questions about admissions or uni life in general :)

INTERESTS AND HOBBIES
Football • Tennis • Yoga

Ask me a question

Student



Mimi
Wales

BA History

Hi there 🙋 My name is Mimi, my pronouns are she/her and I'm a history student at Keble College Oxford! As well as my studies I'm also a dancer on the university's competition team and quite active on the Oxford drama scene 🎭 Please feel free to ask me anything about college or uni life 🥰

INTERESTS AND HOBBIES
Dance • Drama

Ask me a question

Student



Scott
St. Albans, Hertfordshire

BA Geography

Hey! I'm Scott, and I'm a first year Geography student at Keble College. Applying to university, especially Oxford, can be quite an overwhelming experience and there are many things I wish I knew then that I do know now. Hopefully I will be able help you with any questions you may have so feel free to chat with me.

INTERESTS AND HOBBIES
Cross Country • Exploring new places • Pub nights

Ask me a question

Image 1: Live chat on the Ambassador Platform through the Keble website

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The platform is moderated by members of the access and outreach team, allowing students to either 'chat' with individual students and ask for tips and advice or take part in live Q & A events. From 1 January 2023 to 1 January 2024, 102 new school student accounts were created on the platform. This digital initiative, alongside our series of online webinars, complements vital in-person activities, including subject taster events and school visits, which are carefully targeted to reach those who need support most.

Recognising the pivotal role that parents/carers and teachers play in shaping students' aspirations, we are increasing our focus on empowering these critical communities. In 2024, we launched our partnership with The Brilliant Club's Parent Power in the West Midlands. We have also created additional opportunities for teacher involvement in our in-person and virtual events. By equipping parents and teachers with the tools to guide students, we are amplifying our impact and engaging with community and peer attitudes that influence higher education aspirations.

Looking ahead, we will work strategically to reach a broader range of schools, including those less engaged, by providing tailored support to educators and designing outreach activities that address specific financial, cultural, and social barriers.

We will continue to refine our evaluation methods to gain deeper insights into programme outcomes and to expand our understanding of effective practices. We will also foster increased collaboration with other Oxford colleges and external organisations, sharing resources and best practice.

“ At Keble we structure our school programmes and partnerships around strategic goals for education equality. This includes hosting multiple weekly events for schools, as well as linking students with efficient and independent pathways to opportunities. Creating a reliable framework of engagement and maintaining its consistency is crucial. For example, our access team empowers teachers and parents to effectively support students and leverages easily accessible digital tools to extend our reach far beyond the walls of the College.

Dr Foteini Dimirouli
Access Fellow, Keble College