Assessing the Impact of Aimhigher Kent and Medway

This briefing paper is intended to provide information on the impact of the Aimhigher Kent and Medway (AHKM) project upon the progression of young people from partner schools and the wider Kent and Medway community.

How might the work of AHKM contribute to student GCSE performance?

The proportion of students achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs (including English and Maths) in AHKM partner schools continues to grow. 2009 GCSE results show that in Kent and Medway partner schools with Year 11 Aimhigher delivery, the average percentage of students achieving 5 A*-C GCSE including English and Maths was 31%. This is a four percentage point increase from 2008 and a nine percentage point increase on 2004 results.

A tracking study of 603 Aimhigher students who participated in Aimhigher mentoring sessions found that over 80% achieved higher total GCSE points than the predicted estimates at Year 9 using Fisher Family Trust (FFT) data. This compares favourably with a subset of non Aimhigher students with similar predicted scores, where only 65% of this group improved on their FFT estimates. Furthermore, the average total points score achieved by the Aimhigher mentee group was higher than the non Aimhigher group.

“One to one mentoring has 'saved' certain students who might well have continued to dwell in the land of underachievement and de-motivation. HE awareness raising activities have definitely brought the world of HE to a wider audience.” Partner School Head Teacher

Does Aimhigher contribute to the progression and retention of students beyond age 16?

Aimhigher Kent partner schools have shown a 18% point increase in the proportion of Year 11 students staying in education, according to Connexions destination data. The percentage rate of students continuing in education post 16 has increased from an average of 67% in 2004 to 85% in 2009, in schools with consistent participation in AHKM activities.

The staying on rates of the Aimhigher cohort in partner schools is generally higher than the school average. A tracking study involving 783 Year 11 Aimhigher students in 2008-09 found that 87% of the cohort stayed on in education either at school or in Further Education.

What percentage of students from Aimhigher schools progress to Higher Education?

In 2008, 51% of students who achieved Level 3 qualifications from our partner schools were accepted via UCAS onto Higher Education courses. A 14% point increase on the rate recorded in 2006.

More students are entering Higher Education with non traditional qualifications such as BTEC. In 2003/04, 5.2% of all Kent and Medway applicants through UCAS had a BTEC qualification. This rose to 10.2% in 2008/09. Moreover, 500 further Kent and Medway domicile students applied to UCAS with BTEC as their highest qualification. This equates to a growth of 130%.

Furthermore, the share of students entering HE with BTEC qualifications from secondary schools has grown considerably. In 2003/04 the share of total HE entrants with BTEC from schools was 5%. In 2008/09 this figure had increased to 25%
The value of Aimhigher Learning Mentors
A recent survey on the views of head teachers has provided evidence that schools value the work of AHKM Learning Mentors. 16 out of 17 head teachers said that if AHKM funding ceased they would want to maintain the dedicated Aimhigher Learning Mentor role in their school. Some schools already use their own funds to supplement AHKM funding so that their AHKM Learning Mentor can work with more students.

“Aimhigher has helped me a lot. My Aimhigher mentor has advised me so much and has helped me to have more confidence in myself and my abilities” Aimhigher mentee, year 10

How effectively is the AHKM Partnership identifying students for Aimhigher intervention?
Students are profiled using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) on the basis of the HEFCE recommendation that two thirds of an Aimhigher cohort live in a disadvantaged area (identified as a high deprivation area using IMD). The profile of our targeted students shows that 68% live in high IMD areas and 76% from high Education Skills and Training (EST) deprivation areas. This indicates that AHKM resource is being channelled effectively to young people who will benefit from activities aimed at widening participation1.

Gender - In 2008/09 the AHKM gender split of targeted students is recorded as 55% female to 45% male. This ratio is an improvement on last year, when nearly two thirds of targeted students were females.

First Generation HE - 78% of our AHKM student mentees have parents without any experience of HE. Of the remaining 22%, 14% of students are not sure if their parents have an HE background, and further school knowledge is used to verify their suitability as target students.

Gifted and Talented - 10% of our current AHKM students are identified as Gifted and Talented. Over three quarters of these are classified as living in a high IMD area; indicating that AHKM partners are reaching a representative number of local Gifted and Talented learners who meet Aimhigher criteria.

Is this data useful to your institution?
Aimhigher Kent and Medway regularly publish papers detailing the impact of the project. The more recent are available on our website www.aimhigherkentandmedway.org:

- Assessing the impact of AHKM at a partnership level 2004-2008 Trends
- AHKM Monitoring the Effectiveness of our Targeting 2008-09
- AHKM Learning Mentor Survey 2008-09
- Research into Post 16 Transition amongst Aimhigher Kent and Medway Students 2008
- AHKM Head Teacher Survey 2008-09
- How does AHKM mentoring contribute to GSCE attainment and destinations post 16? 2008
- UCAS participation rates for Kent and Medway (18 year olds) 2007
- Evaluation of the effect of a Progression Framework in AHKM 2009
- Evaluation of AHKM Learning Mentor Provision in Schools 2009
- AHKM Facts and Figures Bulletin (two publications per year)

NOTE: Further information on specific subject areas or particular qualifications may be available on request, please contact Sharon Smith, Research and Evaluation Manager, at sharon.smith@canterbury.ac.uk.

1 Guidance on IMD and EST indicators: http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/deprivation07/?view=Standard