



HIGH WYCOMBE, U.K.

BTE Success Stories

BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT

Launched in 1992, Bridge to Employment is a Johnson & Johnson initiative that prepares youth for brighter futures. For more information about BTE, visit www.bridge2employment.org

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Why BTE?

The Bridge to Employment (BTE) program in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom, focused on increasing the number of students who pursue higher education, increasing the number of students who reach and exceed their target grades, and raising students' aspirations for working in a business environment. In the local community, only 65% of 18-year-olds have National Vocational Qualification level 3 (NQV3) qualifications (work-based awards in levels 1-5 achieved through assessment and training), and only 47% have NVQ4 (level 4) qualifications.

Highcrest Academy is a non-selective, all-ability academy, with 45% of students recognized as disadvantaged. A large proportion of the school population (34%) are students with English as an additional language (EAL). Named a "Requires Improvement" school, the Academy was looking to increase the number of students accepted by and enrolling in higher education. At the time, only 25% of their disadvantaged students achieved 5+ A*-C or equivalents including A*-C on both English and mathematics General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) tests. Of these, 44% achieved expected progress between Key Stage 2 and GCSE English and 46% achieve expected progress between Key Stage 2 and GCSE mathematics.

One of the BTE partners explained, "Our program was really about encouraging students to have the possibility to make something of their lives...Inspiring them and providing them with tangible and practical steps that it can be done."

The BTE-High Wycombe was designed specifically to provide this type of exposure to students. Working together, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Young Enterprise, Highcrest Academy and other community organizations developed a program that featured academic enrichment, career readiness and exploration activities, and higher education preparation. They aimed to increase the number of students enrolling in higher education and pursuing careers in STEM²D (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Manufacturing, and Design).

SITE PROFILE

Location

High Wycombe, U.K.

Grant Period

2016 - 2019

Sponsor

Janssen Pharmaceuticals

Coordinator

Young Enterprise

Community Partners

Highcrest Academy

Health Tech

Buckinghamshire
Healthcare (NHS)

Volunteers

44 volunteers

880 total hours

Directly Served

47 students

49% female

43% completion rate

[BTE] helped us gain insight into different paths and get to know what it would be like, rather than just applying randomly. Getting to know what skills you need, what funding you need, etc.

- BTE-High Wycombe, UK student

BTE: A Catalyst for College & Career Aspirations

BTE-High Wycombe recruited students in Year 9 to begin the program in Year 10. The recruitment drive was launched via a presentation at a school assembly. Interested students were encouraged by the school to complete an application. After applications were completed, Highcrest Academy engaged in targeted individual recruitment where students were categorized and chosen based on key demographics: low-income households, special educational needs (SEN), English as an additional language (EAL), and gifted and talented students. The program kicked off in September 2016 with 47 10th grade students.

In order to improve students' *academic achievement*, BTE High Wycombe provided tutoring sessions. Students were also provided a master class on work-readiness which aimed to help them see the connection between academic learning and future employment. In addition, students took part in a healthcare masterclass to help them understand medical terminology.

To encourage students to *consider pursuing higher education*, the program offered workshops on further education, masterclasses on universities and scholarships, and university Open Days where students could tour campuses. Students received mentoring from University students or Janssen Pharmaceutical volunteers—each mentor worked with a “pod” of students.

To assist students in *exploring their education or career paths*, the program offered career lectures, a masterclass on employability, company/hospital tours, and opportunities for students to job-shadow J&J employees.

Impact of BTE

Of the 47 students who started BTE in the 10th grade, 20 (43%) completed the program in 12th grade. The majority (16 of 20, 80%) of BTE students who completed the program graduated on time. Overall, BTE students felt that BTE motivated them to work harder in school, it made them aware of FE (future education) and HE (higher education) opportunities, and it made them feel confident in their ability to apply to and attend FE and HE. More than three-quarters of BTE students (79%) plan on attending FE or HE.

The majority of students who were planning on attending HE were accepted (82%). Institutions included the highly regarded Royal Holloway University of London, Southampton University, Middlesex

University, Royal Veterinary College and Brunel University, among others. The Janssen Pharmaceutical lead pointed out “a perfect example of the BTE program’s success and possibilities” was the university placements of one student in medicine and one student in veterinary medicine. She said, “the school has never had two students in the same year be this successful in its history.”

Students enjoyed the range of BTE activities, appreciating that the program was personalized to their interests and needs. Students spoke positively about Janssen Pharmaceutical mentors, explaining that mentors supported them in their decision-making and educational transition. Students also found the program helped them make real world connections with employees and other BTE members, and that it increased their awareness of their own skills. The program provided students with information to help define their future education and career paths. One student explained, “[BTE] has helped us gain insight into different paths and get to know what it would be like, rather than just applying randomly. Getting to know what skills you need, what funding you need, etc.” All BTE students said they would recommend BTE to their friends.

Janssen Pharmaceutical employees volunteered through such roles as helping with program planning, leading a company tour, guest lecturing, facilitating workshops, judging competitions, tutoring students and developing curriculum. The majority of volunteers recognized the benefits that the program had not only on themselves but also on the community and the young people involved.

Sustainability

Janssen Pharmaceutical will continue to work with Highcrest Academy on an accelerated version of the BTE program.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

100% of BTE students agreed that BTE motivated them to work harder in school and feel good about their future.

93% of BTE students agreed that BTE provided an advantage when applying to further/higher education or a job.

100% of BTE students reported they were aware of further/higher education opportunities

100% of BTE students reported feeling confident in their ability to apply to further/higher education.

100% of BTE students reported feeling confident in their ability to attend further/higher institution.

79% of BTE students plan on attending further/higher education.

82% of BTE students those planning on attending HE were accepted into HE institutions