

My Future My Choice - Introduction

A Programme Connecting Education to Aspiration for 9 to 14 year olds



Background

“It was the first time she had ever talked to us about her future and we talked lots about Secondary School” – Mother of 10 year old girl, North Bristol

It is widely recognised by primary and secondary head teachers that low aspirations and a narrow view of the world are one of the root causes of low attainment in schools. Schools, parents and young people report that ‘Careers based’ programmes come too late for some students or can narrow student choices.

In direct response, My Future My Choice was launched in Bristol in 2008. It is a unique programme for children in their final two years of primary school and the first three years at secondary school which will widen their knowledge of options for their future and raise their aspirations.

By building a comprehensive programme based on humour, multi-media, interaction and games, My Future My Choice introduces young people to an exciting range of opportunities and prepares them for making informed choices for their own future.

“It’s an inspiration to me because I can see I can do lots of different things”

– 10 year old boy, North Bristol



The Programme Gives Children:-

- A wider view of the opportunities that are available
- Raised aspirations and greater self esteem
- Better transition from primary school because they relate the move to secondary school with future success
- The confidence and knowledge to make informed decisions about qualification and progression routes from the range of 14-19 options

These messages run through the programme

Primary School (age 9 – 11)

- Life offers lots of exciting job opportunities which are available to everyone
- Setting goals and working towards them brings fulfilment
- Learning at school is related to skills for life and work

Secondary School (age 11 – 14)

Same as primary messages +

- Look outside your immediate experience when thinking about your future
- Be prepared to travel to get where you want to be
- Don't be afraid to take considered risks and learn from your mistakes-
- Don't give up on a dream

Schools taking part in the My Future My Choice programme

- Access business support for learning in a way that adds value to existing learning activities or kick-starts new ways of learning
- Take part in a stimulating theatre presentation involving business volunteers and actors (if it is available in your area)
- Have resources and example lesson plans available to them and are able to develop and share their own best practices
- Issue resources to young people that get used at home, with their family as well as in school
- Can monitor young people's changing aspirations and attitudes to learning

Evaluations of the programme



Imagine My Future captures a snapshot of aspiration before and after the stage show. After the show, on average, 40 % of children shift their thoughts after the show towards aspirations that show a wider view the world. For every 1000 children asked there were typically 102 fewer footballers, 92 fewer hairdressers and 87 fewer teachers with more architects, zoologists, doctors, engineers, scientists and arts professionals.

Explore My Future was funded by the Key Stage 2 Pathfinder, a government programme targeting improved transition to secondary school. It was extensively evaluated by NFER and accredited as an effective way of engaging children, parents and secondary schools in conversations about the future.

"We used My Future My Choice as part of our focus on a raising aspiration. Our SAT scores went up by about 20%. 81% for literacy and 86% for maths with level 4 or above." Year 6 Teacher, North Bristol MY Future My Choice Pilot phase 2009

All of the children taking part in workplace tours said it was really good and 91% of parents said their child returned from the the tour very excited.

"If I hadn't ever gone in that building (Industry partners site) I would never have known what people do with a building and the ways they worked in it and then I wouldn't have wanted to be a school councilor at my new school." Year 7 Student Councilor, North Bristol

"It gave me bigger ideas". 9 year old Girl, South Bristol

"She was really into it. She had lots to talk about with her dad". Mother, North Bristol

92% of children thought the card game, poster and stickers helped them understand the links between school and work

*"Visitors to the class loved it and used it to successfully structure their talk to the children."*Year 6 Teacher, North Bristol

Vision My Future is currently being launched in secondary schools. It was designed to encourage employee volunteering and the training programme has been enthusiastically praised by staff at GE and the BBC. The film 'Fast Forward' has been received with enthusiasm by one school's community partners (Better Together, North Bristol) because it recognises the experiences of 12 year olds.