SOMERVILLE
COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

ACCESS REPORT

2025-2026



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OUTREACH
IN EVENTS



School visits

Our visit days are always popular with schools and form the backbone of our outreach programme. We've engaged with **41 of our link schools** this year, hosting **453 students** over **23 visits into Somerville.** We've also engaged with **2752 students** on **18 visits out to schools** over the course of the year, attending HE Fairs and running a range of sessions for students, from introductions to life at Oxford and Oxplore critical thinking workshops for younger pupils to giving detailed overviews of the Oxford application process and interview practice workshops for aspiring state school applicants.

Y12 Virtual Study Days

Our **Virtual Year 12 Study Days** continue to be popular and successful. This year, we had a record **289 attendees** from **138 different state schools** all over the UK, a **53% increase in attendance** since last year and the highest level of attendance since the pandemic. **97% of this year's attendees** rated the study days a **4 or 5/5** and **17% of last year's study day attendees who applied to Oxford went onto receive offers.**





University Open Days

This year's open days were a massive success and Somerville was more popular than ever! With the opening of the new Schwarzman Humanities Centre next door, we saw a massive influx of visitors, welcoming a total of **5315 visitors** over two days in the recent July days! This is **almost double** the number of visitors we welcomed over both days last July. Our student helpers were kept busy answering questions and showing visitors around, and verbal feedback was extremely positive, with prospective applicants commenting on how friendly our students were and much they loved the college.

OUTREACH **IN EVENTS**



Access Roadshow

This year's **Roadshow to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight** last September saw the Access team engage with **980 students at 8 of our link schools over 3 days**, including a Hub event on the Isle of Wight. We enjoyed engaging with students from regions with low progression rates to HE and further consolidating our relationships with the local schools, several of which booked in visits to us later in the year. Since we started working with these link regions in 2020, the **number of students applying to Oxford from the Isle of Wight has doubled**, and **the number applying from Portsmouth has increased 8 fold**.

Y12 BAME Day

Our annual **Year 12 BAME Day**, run with support from the JCR, the African and Caribbean, Islamic and South Asian Arts societies, saw **27 students** from our link schools in London and Buckinghamshire attending a bespoke visit day to Somerville intended to increase confidence in applying to Oxford amongst prospective BAME applicants. The day included college tours, admissions support and talks on student life at Oxford, as well as Q&As with student ambassadors from BAME backgrounds. **77% of attendees rated the event a 4 or 5/5**.





St Frideswide Twinning Programme

Our **twinning relationship with local primary school St Frideswide** continues to be our main sustained contact programme. From our annual Year 5 visit to Somerville, where pupils learn about university through designing their own campus, to the **Chemistry sessions** run in the school by our Biochemistry academics, where pupils have to discover who kidnapped Biggles the teddy by using science, to the **Neuroscience workshop** run for Year 6 pupils by two of our JRFs, where pupils learn about the brain through activities like making brain hats and brains out of play-doh, our **academic enrichment programme** continues to go from strength to strength, raising aspirations and fostering a love of science. On the **tutoring** side, our team of student volunteers train with reading charity Bookmark to provide **one to one reading support to pupils** in the school each week during term.

OUTREACH IN **NUMBERS**



Pupils at St Frideswide participating in a Chemistry workshop to save Biggles the Teddy bear with science!

"Oxford supports their students in any way possible"

"Oxford has many communities for many different people"

- Feedback from Y12 BAME Day Attendees.

The Somerville Access and Outreach team works towards the goals and objectives outlined in the University's longer term **Access and Participation Plan**.

Below are some college-specific statistics about our outreach work. See here for some **university-wide admissions stats from 2021-2025**, which our work has also contributed to.

- 50 outreach activities this year, with 41 school visits.
- Engaged with 3683 students across all our access and outreach events, excluding open days.
- 52 student ambassadors helping with outreach events.
- 5315 open days visitors over the two open days in July - almost double the number of visitors we welcomed in July 2025 and we had 1007 visitors last September.
- 980 students engaged with on our Portsmouth and Isle of Wight Roadshow.
- 470 applications to Oxford from our link schools in 2025 with 81 going on to become offer holders. Our link schools' offer rate is 17% - higher than the univerity's offer rate.
- 23% of our 2026 Study Day attendees came from disadvantaged backgrounds*, and 10% of attendees were eligible for free school meals.
- 70% of BAME Day attendees came from disadvantaged backgrounds* and 40% were eligible for free school meals.
- 41% of school visit attendees who gave us data came from disadvantaged backgrounds*.
- The number of students applying to Oxford from Portsmouth has increased 8 fold from 2021 to 2026. The number of students applying to Oxford from the Isle of Wight has doubled since 2021.

*Indices of Multiple Deprivation Postcode Quintiles 1-2 - the University's current measure of socio-economic disadvantage.

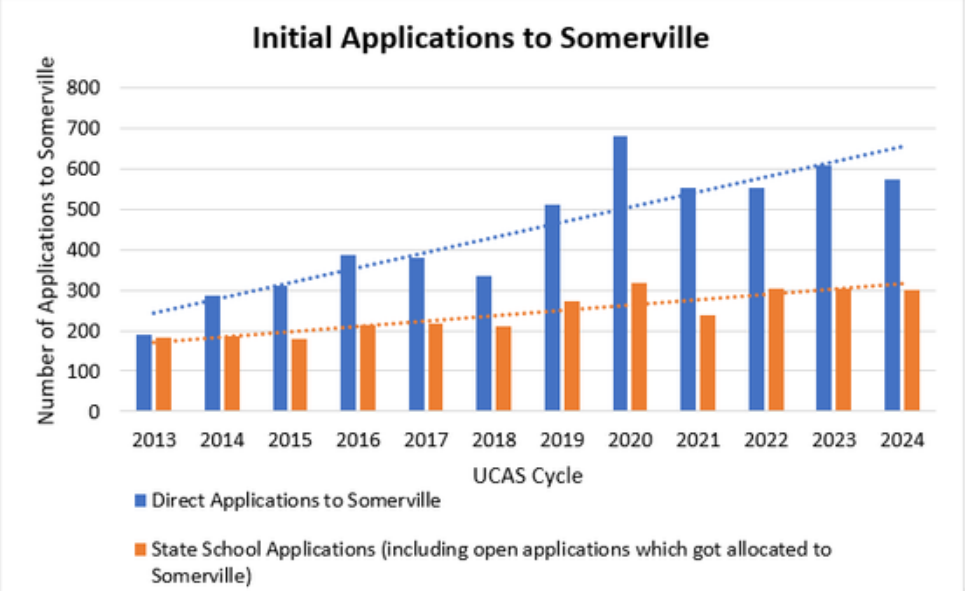
OUTREACH **IN GRAPHS**

"It really helped me know what I need to do to apply for Oxford."

"It was absolutely brilliant, the taster lecture in particular was really interesting and I thought it was explained really well."

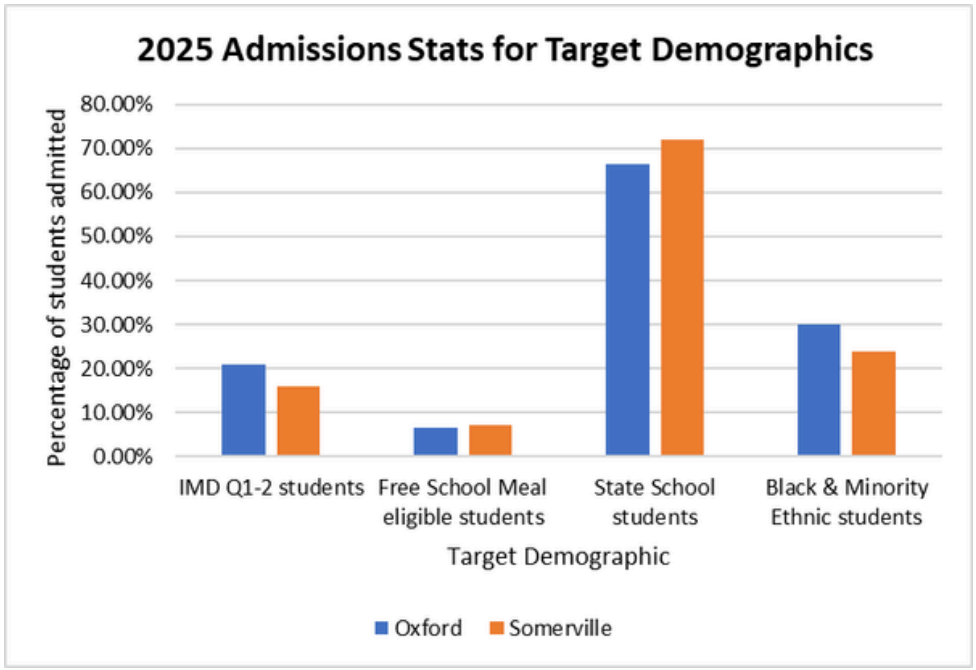
"Very engaging and enjoyable. Lovely people."

- Feedback from Y12 Study Days attendees



There has been an increase of 381 in the number of direct applications to Somerville between 2013 and 2024 and an increase of 117 in the number of state school applications we receive.

Somerville admitted higher proportions of state school and free school meal eligible students in 2025 than the university as a whole.



"The university is more diverse than I thought."

"Oxford isn't full of entitled rich white people"

- Student Feedback from school visits

"The [students] came out with a belief that it is not only for a select group of individuals."

"It helped normalise the university...and students were able to imagine themselves there as opposed to them thinking it is out of reach for them."

- Teacher Feedback from school visits



Our open days helpers at the end of a very successful couple of open days!

As always, a huge thank you for all the generous support we receive from our donors, without which our work would not be possible. We're also extremely grateful to the academics and student ambassadors who contribute to our outreach events, and enable them to be such a success.

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