

Oxford City Council – Oxford Youth Ambition

Allotment Project

Youth Ambition is an Oxford City Council programme. The aim of the Youth Ambition Programme is to build meaningful relationships with disadvantaged young people and help them to succeed in their lives. The programme works within the disadvantaged communities of Oxford and gets to know young people by delivering activities on the streets; youth clubs and multi-sports sessions.

Getting to know young people gives the staff the opportunity to identify their needs and we then support them through positive activities; issue based group work and 1:1 advice & guidance, or we will actively refer them for specialist support, if needed.

The Youth Ambition Programmes has built a partnership with the Oxford Academy School, which serves the Blackbird Leys; Littlemore and Rose Hill communities. One of the projects we have set up is an allotment project with students at risk of being excluded from school because of poor behaviour.

Youth Ambition staff worked with 5 year 9 students at risk of exclusion to plan what they wanted the allotment to look like; what fruit and vegetables they wanted to grow; what they wanted to do with the produce and what accreditation they want to get out of it.

The students chose a mixture of fruit and vegetables, including creating a herb garden; salad patch; vegetable patch and having a pumpkin making competition. Once the produce is grown they are going to sell some at the Blackbird Ley's farmers market and use the money they raise to fund a trip to the cinema. The students are also working towards AQA qualifications.

The impact of the project has been considerable, with one student Owen, saying: "I find school really difficult, so I mess around a lot, but doing the allotment has shown me I've got loads of practical skills. I want to be a gardener when I'm older now! I go to the Youth Ambition youth club in Littlemore now as well!"

Tom Peterson, Oxford Academy School's Community Liaison Manager said: "The project with the City Council has been first rate. The staff have worked with students and taught them important life skills and knowledge such as project planning; team work; health and safety and practical skills. The fact that the staff will be willing to provide references if the students do well means this project could help the boys get jobs when they leave school."

