

Report back to The Funding Network Oxford 2017

Maximum 3 pages of A4

1. Name of your organisation and the project funded by TFNO in 2016

ARCh Transition Project

2. Please give a brief description of your project, what you planned to do and what you hoped to achieve.

To recruit, train and support volunteers to work with disadvantaged children in Oxford during their last year at primary school, developing and encouraging a love of reading, helping them to reach their full potential and raising their aspirations in order to break the deprivation cycle. These children would then continue receiving support from their volunteer as they move to their secondary school, aiding their transition and providing a familiar, trusted mentor, to ensure they do not regress.

3. Did the project go ahead as you had hoped and planned? If not what hurdles did you face and how did you try to overcome them

We are now mid project, having recruited 5 volunteers to work with 15 children. The biggest hurdle we encountered was volunteer recruitment. We explored the possibility of recruiting students as we felt they would be particularly good role models, approaching Brookes University, IntoUniversity and working with Oxford for Oxford project at a number of volunteer fairs last year but no students came forward.

4. Can you describe the impact of your project.

The children being supported have all expressed how much they enjoy working with their ARCh volunteers and the quality time they have with them. One of the volunteers has been working with a “looked after” child, for whom the continuity of support has been especially important. This child told his teacher that his ARCh time was his favourite part of the week!

5. Could you give us an estimate of how many people have been reached by the TFNO funded project/work.

To date 15 children are receiving support from 5 volunteers who have undertaken our training. Therefore 20 people reached to date.

6. What did not go well and what have you learnt from that?

As above, volunteer recruitment has been a problem and we have learnt that our volunteering opportunity may not appeal to students, perhaps because of the substantial commitment involved.

Schools are currently facing vastly reduced budgets and therefore the contribution we have asked them to make towards the project has not been paid. The support is highly valued however so they have approached an Oxford charity to seek financial assistance.

7. Approximately what proportion of the funding for these activities came from TFNO?

Just over half. We are hoping to recoup the remainder as part of the school's contribution (but see above)

8. Since receiving funding from TFN how has your organisation changed? Has TFNO support opened up any other opportunities?

We are now in communication with Oxford Academy, making plans for the volunteers to commence supporting their children when they move there in September.

Volunteers from other parts of the county, having heard about the pilot project, have expressed an interest in working in a similar way and we are looking for funding to help us extend the project therefore.

9. Anything else?

We are very grateful to the Funding Network and donors and would recommend to other charities.