

[North East Raising Aspiration Partnership](#) is a collaboration between the five universities in the region. It supports primary schools with a workshop to provide children with an introduction to university and its aim is to ensure young people have the opportunity to make informed decisions about higher education.

Barmston Village Primary School in Washington had the workshop already booked into their school calendar and staff saw the opportunity to use the Primary Career Benchmarks to frame the work as part of the school's wider careers programme.

Before the workshop, Year 5 were challenged to think about what thoughts or ideas they had about universities. Most children had a couple of suggestions such as 'you study there' and 'you go there to learn extra things'. Some children could mention names of universities including Oxford, Cambridge and Newcastle. Other ideas included 'you can live there' and 'you'll get too much homework'. This led on to a larger class discussion and children created a 'Map' of their ideas.

The workshop itself was delivered by a NERAP employee and is supported by two undergraduate student ambassadors. This was a great opportunity to demonstrate what a student looked like. The presentation element tackled some common myths about what a university is, what it offers and who can go to university. It also talked about the costs of university and how to apply. Children also learnt the names of the five universities in the North East.

At the end of the presentation, the children were given a booklet to complete where they had to think about the career that would be suited to their personality. This was followed by activities which made the children think about the different aspects of student life including the different societies and clubs there are at university.

The day after the visit, the careers leader challenged children to produce their own 'Knowledge Mat' of everything they knew about university in order to reflect on the session.

Careers Leader, Christine Sparke was delighted: 'For every child, there was a vast improvement of what they knew about university from the workshop. Most of them were fascinated by the number of courses that were available across the country and the variety of courses that they could do. The children were also more aware of the 5 universities in the local areas and the extra-curricular activities that were available at university

There were no costs to the school for this activity and it was so simple to book in. The workshop was really engaging and the materials for the children were all provided. It will now feature as part of our annual careers programme for KS2 children. It has also given me a platform to deliver further work later in the year to keep children thinking about pathways through education.'





