

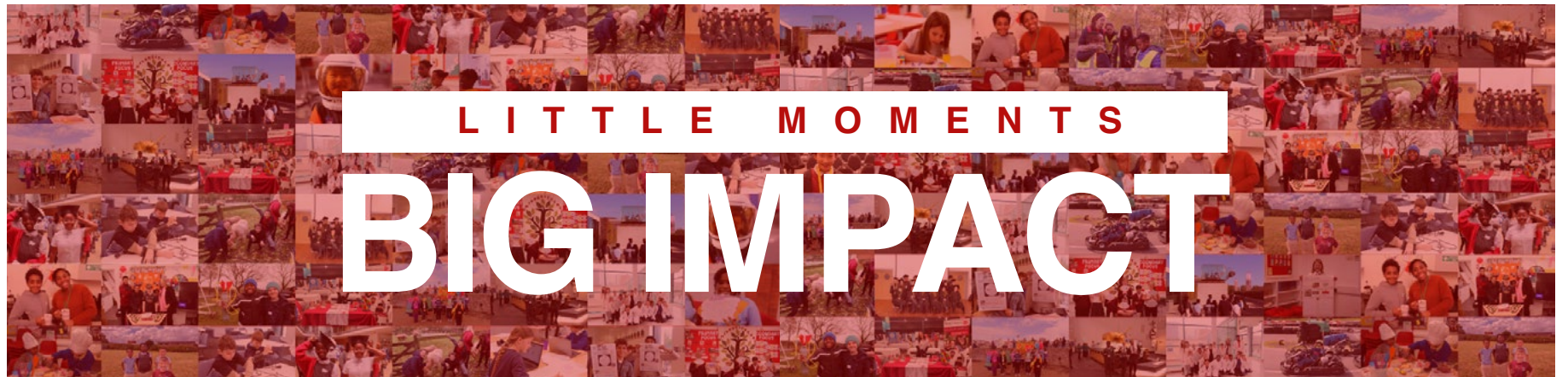
## IN THIS ISSUE

### The theory behind the little moments

Little moments don't happen by chance at IntoUniversity; they are part of a deliberate effort to create the optimal learning environment for our young people to achieve.

### Little Moments, Big City

As we enter the 10<sup>th</sup> year of our Big City Bright Future internship, we speak to two former IntoUniversity students about the little moments from the programme that affected their career pathways.



**Eilis O'Donnell, Director of Programmes and Delivery, describes how IntoUniversity's programmes facilitate the little moments which lead to a big impact.**

At IntoUniversity, we're currently taking the opportunity to celebrate all of the little moments that take place across our centres every day, which add up to the big impact we all aspire to achieve. Hearing about one of those little moments never fails to bring a smile to my face. Who doesn't love hearing about Year 6 students making a (loud) dash for spinning chairs at a Russell Group University? Who wouldn't be moved by the thought of a boy finding connection with a fellow Hindi-speaker in Brighton? And I get goosebumps when I think about those students that visited the Royal Courts of Justice and now want to be barristers. How much better off would we be as a society if they achieve that dream?

Just imagine if any one of those little moments turns out to be *the* moment? Like in a Hollywood film - time slows down, everything comes into sharp focus, our hero sees their future clearly for the first time. Awesome! At IntoUniversity, we're certainly here for those moments. But we're also here for all the other ones. Like the rainy Thursday when you forget your PE kit and have to wait ages for your bus. At the end of the day, members of IntoUniversity teams will be there, ready and smiling, to greet our children and young people. We will celebrate their small wins, commiserate their setbacks, and build up to their bright future ahead. Our teams will be there to listen and remember the small important details: How was the football match? How did the French test go?

For most people, your future isn't decided in one single life-changing moment, but is the culmination of decisions, effort and opportunities over time that shapes your path. At IntoUniversity, we aim to provide the culture, environment, programmes and relationships over the long term that add up to transform the lives of young people.

Everyone I work with has a wealth of stories of these little moments. It's no surprise, because we've designed our programmes and way of working precisely to create space for these little moments of magic to happen as frequently as possible.

The acute, deep and ongoing effects of the global pandemic and cost of living crisis are painfully apparent and re-confirm our commitment to creating as many magical little moments as possible. The negative impact on both students' wellbeing and mental health, as well as attainment has been widely reported (EEF, 2022). The Sutton Trust surveyed over 6,000 teachers back in 2022 and reported that 72% of those working in State schools in areas with the highest levels of deprivation thought the cost of living crisis and associated impact on pupils would increase the attainment gap at their school.

Our place-based centres and model mean we are ideally placed to provide support to young people facing these tough challenges. We work with young people from the age of 7. We do this because we know that young people's aspirations matter. We recruit compassionate staff who form excellent relationships with young people. Secure and trusting relationships provide young people with the safety needed to learn.

We design our programmes and train teams to use evidence-based practices. For example, we know that metacognition is strongly correlated with improved attainment. Simply put, developing metacognition

is about learning how to think about what you are learning, to understand what you already know and what you need to do to learn more. One way we design this into action is through our 'Future Readiness' Award for Secondary students: young people design, implement and evaluate their own projects. They are supported to try a range of tools, such as knowledge organisers, and are guided through reflective practices all designed to build their metacognitive skills. By focusing on their own interests, they are encouraged to develop a love of learning alongside critical skills to take back into their school classrooms.

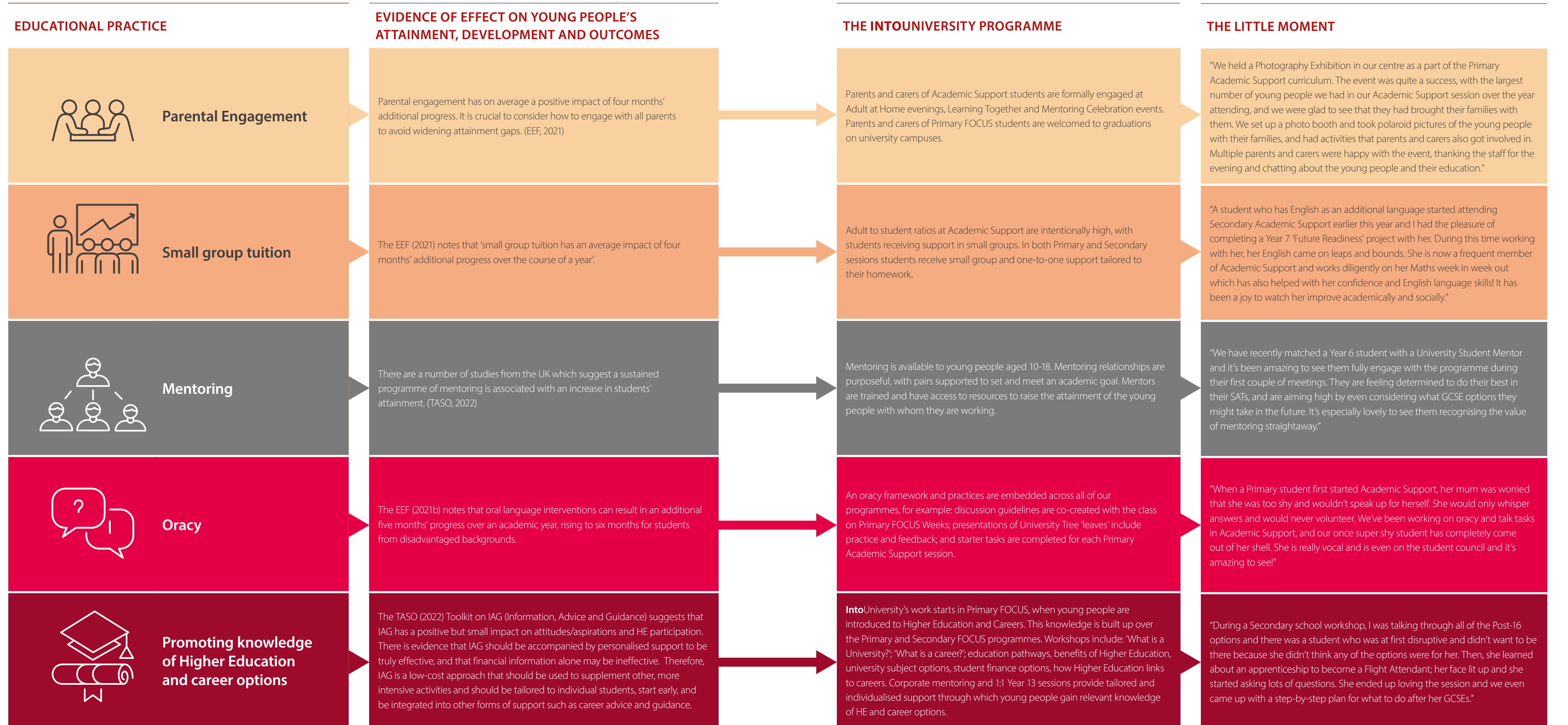
We're incredibly fortunate to have fantastic partnerships with universities and businesses which offer experiences to our young people that are rich, diverse and inspirational. These experiences include our Big City Bright Future internship, which provides over 120 students each year with a life-changing career opportunity to work in a top firm in the City. Being based in communities means we can bring these opportunities directly to where our young people live. We are there for the long term and part of the local fabric.

So when I hear that those IntoUniversity alumni have become barristers, I will not be surprised. But I will be incredibly proud.



# The theory behind the little moments

Everyday, across the IntoUniversity network, thousands of little moments occur which support students to develop learning skills and improve their attainment. But these little moments don't happen by chance, they are part of a deliberate effort to create the optimal learning environment for our young people to achieve.



## Little Moments, Big City

This summer, we will run our tenth annual Big City Bright Future programme, a three-week paid work experience programme, created especially to help school leavers who aspire to work within competitive industries. We speak to two former IntoUniversity students who took part in the programme about the little moments from the programme that affected their career pathways.



### Isha – BCBF 2019

**Isha is a former IntoUniversity Walworth student who took part in Big City Bright Future in 2019 where she interned at BlackRock. She first heard about IntoUniversity during Secondary school as staff came to her school every year to run FOCUS workshops, before she decided to attend the centre to access our mentoring and work experience opportunities.**



*"I remember receiving the email, just saying 'Congratulations, you've been chosen' and finding out that I was going to work at BlackRock. So [I loved] getting the email and knowing that everyone around me that helped me to get to that point were also as excited as I was."*

"It's nice that through Big City Bright Future, I've met amazing people that I can say I'm still in touch with, and have actually guided me to where I am now with a lot of the decisions I've made with employment as well. Because back then you were not really taught much about employment at school.

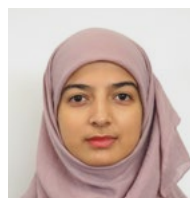
"[During the internship] they put a lot of emphasis on networking; I didn't realise till I was part of IntoUniversity and the Big City Bright Future programme that networking is a powerful tool. When you meet someone, they can connect you to another person, and they would say "You want to study law. I know someone you could speak to" or "I know someone in our office that works with the in-house law team," and they would guide you on how to go about your journey and your routes".

"IntoUniversity and Big City Bright Future has helped me with getting to where I am because of networking and building my confidence in effective communication. When I was in Secondary school I didn't have much confidence to push myself and involve myself in a lot of things, but after being part of the

programme it's really allowed me to see a different side of what putting yourself out there can do. "To younger students], I would say don't shy away from putting yourself out there now. IntoUniversity is a powerful, powerful, powerful organisation because they open doors for a lot of people and their reach is amazing. Networking is a powerful tool. Continue using the tools and the resources around you and don't limit yourself."

### Asma – BCBF 2021

**Asma is a former IntoUniversity Kennington student who took part in a virtual Big City Bright Future in 2021, where she interned at Bloomberg. She was first supported by IntoUniversity at Secondary school, during a half term Holiday FOCUS workshop themed around Medicine.**



"[The biggest lesson I learned while at IntoUniversity is] perseverance. Well, more so they've allowed me to learn it myself. Throughout GCSEs and A levels, and then through extenuating circumstances I had to go through during COVID which affected my education quite severely, I was able to get their support. And I think I wouldn't have been able to persevere through that if it wasn't for the support and the shoulder to lean on which was IntoUniversity.

"In Year 13, I got back in touch with one of the IntoUniversity staff and told her how I have been really affected going back to school and my grades have completely plummeted.

"We had a meeting and I told her about how it's very difficult for me to apply directly for Medicine for undergrad now and as we were working through graduate medicine routes, we got into a conversation where she saw from my CV that I'm also actually very suited for finance without me realising it. That's how I found out about Big City Bright Future.

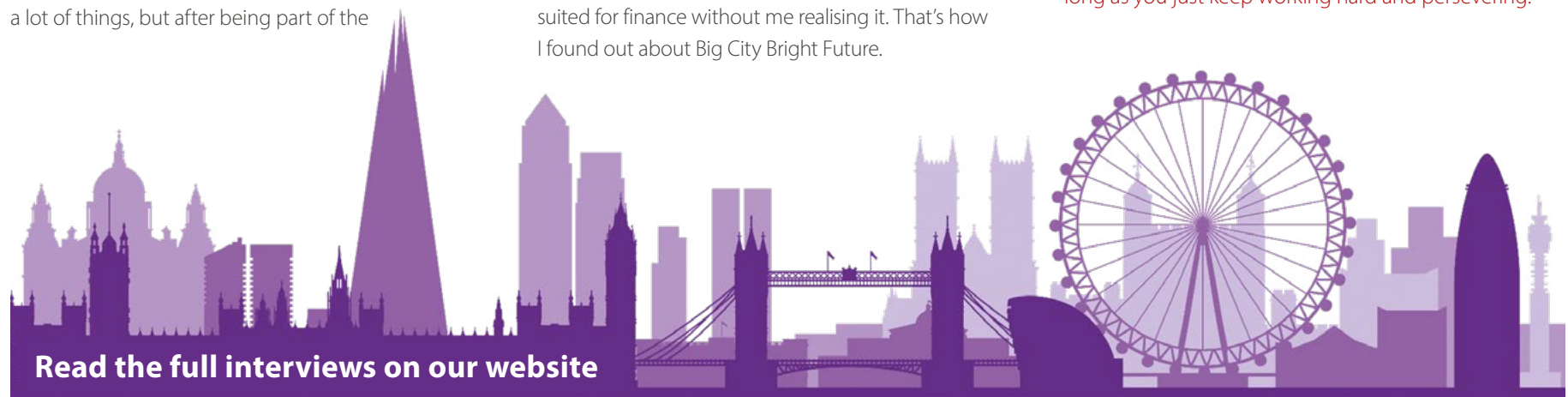
"My interview at Bloomberg really stood out to me. I think it's because they really treated me like an adult; they treated me the same as they treated any other person trying to also get into Bloomberg. That's something I really appreciated because it meant that they didn't see me as a teenager; I appreciated that they respected me in that way.

"Bloomberg had such a variety of departments and I think seeing just the variety by itself was the one thing that stood out to me the most – the way that they showed us the engineering department, the consulting department, the finance department.

"In Year 13, I was still very much set on applying to Medicine. It was quite a daunting interview process and I wasn't able to prepare for it or do mocks due to lockdowns so I decided to take a gap year. I knew that I had Big City Bright Future in the summer at that point which could financially cover me over the summer as well.

"[It was during my gap year] I decided to do something different. Engineering was something that I was passionate about as a hobby, I was into robotics. I think that's what made me decide to go for Biomedical Engineering. I came across a specific YouTube video where biomedical engineers and surgeons were able to work together and I was in awe. And I thought if I do manage to get a role in engineering, that's the kind of thing I want to do. And if I don't, I've got Big City Bright Future as an experience that would allow me to stand a chance in finance jobs because I know how competitive they are. And I also have medicine as an option because I would be doing biomedical. And I was like, well that's the degree that will allow me to have the most doors open to me.

*"The main advice I would give to younger students is that things will work out one way or another. It might take longer for it to work out, but it will work out as long as you just keep working hard and persevering."*



**Read the full interviews on our website**



We would love to hear your feedback about *aspire*.

To get in touch or to find out more about IntoUniversity please visit our website [www.intouniversity.org](http://www.intouniversity.org), drop Vicky an email at [aspire@intouniversity.org](mailto:aspire@intouniversity.org) or call us on **020 7243 0242**.

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