The University of Ulster is proud of the academic achievements of its staff and students and the contribution they make to building a better Northern Ireland.

It is also proud of the direct impact it has in the communities around its campuses in Belfast, Jordanstown, Derry-Londonderry and Coleraine. This work includes developing educational, sporting, cultural and business skills in some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

With this in mind, the university has exciting plans for its new Belfast City campus which will see the bulk of students and staff based in Jordanstown relocate to the city centre by autumn 2018.

This development will bring educational opportunities and research expertise into the heart of Belfast, with the new building offering a resource for near neighbours and the wider city.

Your University and Your Community
To fully reflect the importance that the university attaches to its outreach work, the university has launched Your University and Your Community.

This initiative provides staff, students and partner organisations with a unified platform to co-ordinate and develop outreach and partnership work. This concept is at the heart of the vision for the Belfast City campus.

Achieving this vision starts now. They have already made significant strides towards the goal of raising aspirations and making programmes more accessible. This is reflected in its top 6 UK ranking for widening access to education in disadvantaged communities.

Professor Alastair Adair is leading the project to deliver the Belfast City campus. He explains:

“Working on a project like this is not only about liaising with the teams and individuals who will construct the building and supporting infrastructure. It is also about continuing the excellent work carried out in our local communities equipping the young - and the not so young - with the knowledge, skills and aspiration to participate in the programmes and opportunities that we offer.”

Real Imagination
Earlier this year, a unique outreach programme brought together three north Belfast schools (Currie, Holy Family and Star of the Sea) with the University of Ulster. The Real Imagination project enabled kids from deprived areas to tap into their creative energies and help transform their life chances for the future.

Mike McQueen, architecture lecturer, explained:

“It introduced primary school children to the idea of going to the University of Ulster as a way of improving their lives. We explored what children think about the area they live in, how they would like to improve it and helped them realise their ideas using art classes and workshops.”

Holy Family produced a model for a ‘lie down’ personal cinema. Currie pupils built a set for their annual Dragon’s Den event. And Star of the Sea’s children came up with ideas for using waste ground, including a graffiti maze.

Mike’s team also took the children on a tour of the end of year shows at the campus featuring painting, sculpture, ceramics, silversmithing, graphic design and photography.

“The children loved it,” said Mike. “They really lit up, excited by all the creative things that were right on their doorstep. I think it’s very important to give local children access to the kind of things that go on here, and fire their imagination about what their future could be.”

Find out more at www.ulster.ac.uk/realmagination and for details about all other outreach activities go to www.ulster.ac.uk/yourcommunity