



## Lawson's Story

Lawson attends King Edward VI Aston School in Birmingham. The school is a multi-ethnic, all boys grammar school, with 94% of pupils from ethnically diverse communities (EDC). The school took part in Birmingham Connect to promote greater social integration, and to increase understanding of people from different backgrounds. The lead practitioner at the school highlighted an interesting contrast for the pupils at King Edward Aston; while they are in a “grammar school bubble”, they also live in one of the most deprived areas in the country.

Lawson is a Black boy in Year eight and is one of the eight Connectors from the school taking part in Birmingham Connect. Before the programme, Lawson went to an athletics tournament where he did races with other schools talking with different people, however the objectives of Birmingham Connect were new and different to him. During the taster event, Lawson did boxing and attended a careers workshop with athletes and people who work in sports. He reported having fun at this event and that it inspired him:

**“Trying new sports opens the door to a lot more new paths in life.”**  
**LAWSON**

Lawson enjoyed the school led event as part of the Connect-With event series where he received training to achieve a Tennis Leaders Qualification and to umpire. He highlighted that this session prepared him well for the YST led event at Birmingham University where the Connectors provided a tennis session for pupils from other schools.

**“Well-executed idea to have us train other people and teaching schools. It was a good thing.”**  
**LAWSON**

Lawson explained that he usually does not talk to many pupils from a White background at school, however as a result of Birmingham Connect, he met someone who is White British who he perceived to be “quite cool” – positively changing his attitudes and perceptions. Lawson would say to someone thinking of taking part in Birmingham Connect:

**“Definitely do it, it's worth your time!”**  
**LAWSON**