Annual Report
2013/14
Published June 2015
The Brilliant Club
Annual Report: Introduction

The Brilliant Club is an award-winning charity that exists to widen access to highly selective universities for underrepresented groups, by mobilising researchers to bring academic expertise into state schools.

In our core programme, the Scholars Programme, we recruit, train and place doctoral and postdoctoral researchers in schools and sixth form colleges to deliver programmes of university-style tutorials to small groups of pupils. Pupils also visit highly selective universities over the course of the programme, and receive information, advice and guidance sessions about higher education. The experience supports pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and ambition that help them to secure places at the UK’s leading universities.

Researchers in Schools (RIS) is a new programme developed by The Brilliant Club in 2013/14. A bespoke teacher training programme that requires trainees to have a PhD in their teaching subject, RIS is run in partnership with Lampton School, George Abbott SCITT, King’s College London and Challenge Partners, and has three aims: to increase and disseminate subject expertise; to promote research and to champion university access in-school.

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Numbers on this page taken from Sutton Trust, ‘Responding to the new landscape in university access’ (December, 2010)
Sutton Trust, ‘Degrees of Success: University Chances by Individual School’ (July, 2011)
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Introduction from the National Programme Director

In a year that saw the charity expand its provision and deepen its impact it is almost impossible to pick out a single moment or statistic that fully captures the good work of our partners, PhD tutors and staff. Of course, our mission to increase fair access is best reflected in those pupils who, after completing the programme, go on to study at a highly selective university. We were delighted that over half of our Year 12 cohort from 2012/13 achieved this goal, and receiving letters, tweets and emails from those pupils who do go on to these universities is a joy. Yet, despite the fact that this remains the ultimate ambition for all our pupils, this statistic alone does not fully represent our work with younger pupils, the creativity of our PhD tutors or the role of our growing list of partners.

As a former PhD Tutor, the moments in the calendar that I look forward to the most are when the lists of course titles are shared with the team. This is partly because it reminds me of how much I enjoy teaching as part of the programme, but also because without the hard work of The Brilliant Club’s exceptional team to recruit and train the researchers – and the PhD tutors’ own ideas – this material would not appear on the desks of pupils in non-selective state schools. I find it hard not to get excited by courses as diverse and challenging as “Keeping it in the Family? Intergeneration Succession in Family Businesses”, “The Arabic Influence on Medieval Chemistry”, and, particularly relevant given the establishment of our offices at Oasis Academy South Bank in Waterfords, “On the Wrong Side of the Tracks?” Writing South London, Oasis Academy South Bank in Waterfords, “On the Wrong Side of the Tracks?” Writing South London, Oasis Academy South Bank in Waterfords.

There is a certain magic in reading out our course titles and knowing that thousands of children will be sitting down with world experts to work through these tutorial programmes. However, as a charity committed to the ongoing success of our pupils, that in itself is not enough, and we remain committed to robust impact evaluation and managing to pupil outcomes. This is why I am delighted that The Brilliant Club partnered with Impetus PEF in 2013/14 to explore ways of deepening the charity’s impact through more comprehensive data collection and analysis, and a continued review of the outcomes of our programmes. This is only one example of how our partners have enabled us to grow in 2013/14 – Researchers in Schools (RIS) is the world’s only route into teaching that is reserved for researchers who have completed a PhD and we think that it can have a significant impact on the UK’s education system in the long term (see p. 20). Again, partnership is at the core of RIS with the pilot year being delivered in conjunction with Challenge Partners, Lampion School, George Abbot SCITT and King’s College London. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all our partners (see p. 22) for their support in 2013/14.

Dr Chris Wilson
National Programme Director, The Brilliant Club
March 2015

The Scholars Programme

Through the Scholars Programme we recruit, train and place PhD tutors in non-selective state schools to deliver university-style modules to small groups of talented pupils. These modules include trips to universities, in-school tutorials based on the PhD tutors’ own areas of expertise and a challenging academic assignment. Through this process pupils develop the knowledge, skills and ambition to secure a place at a highly selective university.

PhD Tutor Training

The Scholars Programme kicks off with a PhD Tutor Training Weekend, which all PhD tutors are required to attend the first three times they deliver a programme. Over these six days training they undertake a training course with a curriculum that focuses on teaching technique, professional skills, university access and the context of the UK education system. The training is delivered by qualified teachers, PhD graduates and external experts.

Launch Event

The first involvement pupils have with the programme is attending a Launch Trip at a highly selective university. Typically, the event begins with an opening ceremony hosted by the university’s Widening Participation Department, with pupils then taking part in a carousel of activities, including meeting and having their first tutorial with their PhD Tutor. Pupils also take part in outreach activities led by university staff and undergraduates, including campus tours and information, advice and guidance (IAG) sessions.

Feedback tutor and grades

Pupils also take part in a feedback tutorial led by their PhD Tutor and based around the PhD Tutor’s area of expertise. To emulate an authentic university system. The training is delivered by qualified teachers, PhD graduates and external experts.

Final Assignment

All pupils are expected to complete a challenging academic assignment which is based around the PhD Tutor’s area of expertise and pitched at one key stage above their current level. Assignments range from 1,000 words (KS2) to 2,000 words (KS5) for essays, or from five hours (KS2) to ten hours (KS5) for problem sets in STEM subjects.

Tutorials

During the Scholars Programme, pupils take part in a series of four-hour-long tutorials led by their PhD Tutor and based around the PhD Tutor’s area of expertise. To emulate an authentic university learning environment, tutorial groups consist of six or four pupils with a focus on university-style pedagogy including independent research, critical thinking and higher-order questioning.

Information, Advice and Guidance Sessions 1 and 2

All pupils who submit a final assignment are invited to the Graduation Event, along with their parents where possible. As well as including a carousel of activities, pupils also attend a formal certification ceremony including keynote speeches and the presentation of certificates to celebrate their successful completion of the programme.

Information, Advice and Guidance Sessions 3 and 4

Introduction to Criminology and Criminal Investigations Key Stage 4 Programme

Key Stage 4 Programme
Key Achievements in 2013/14

- We recruited, trained and placed almost 240 PhD tutors
- Representing over 40 universities
- In over 150 non-selective state schools
- To work with over 4,600 pupils
- 54% of Year 12 pupils from our 2012-13 cohort went on to secure a place at a highly selective university
- 100% of the schools we work with are non-selective state schools, including sixth form colleges
- 35% of all the pupils we work with are eligible for Ever6FSM
- 75% of all pupils we work with have family incomes in the lowest two quintiles of the IDACI
- 56% of all pupils we work with have no parental history of higher education
- 91% of pupils who enrolled on the programme went on to submit an assignment one key stage above their current level of study and attend a Graduation Event
- Over 1/3 of the pupils we work with have been eligible for free school meals in the last six years
- 38% of key stage 2 pupils we worked with were eligible for Ever6FSM
- 54% of pupils we worked with had family incomes in the first quintile of the IDACI
- 71% of key stage 3 pupils we worked with had no parental history of higher education

In 2013/14, The Brilliant Club worked with 4,628 pupils in 178 schools across the UK.
Tutorials and trips

At the heart of the Scholars Programme are the in-school tutorials that our PhD tutors deliver to small groups of pupils. For the younger years, PhD tutors deliver to six pupils at a time, and in Year 12 there are only 4 pupils in each session, mimicking closely the tutorial practice at highly selective universities.

In 2013/14 we made a shift from asking schools to ensure that 25% of pupils have been eligible for Free School Meals in the last six years to 33%, allowing us to increase the impact that we can have on underrepresented groups of pupils.

In 2013/14 we ran trips to our partner universities, all in the top third of the Department for Education’s rankings list. We are incredibly grateful to the ongoing support of our university partners as they host trips and deliver information, advice and guidance sessions and campus tours. A Launch Trip takes place at the beginning of a pupil’s time on the Scholars Programme, whilst a Graduation Event rewards their hard work with a certification ceremony. The opportunity to see at least one highly selective university over the course of the programme is an unparalleled immersion for our scholars and one we are very proud to be able to offer with the support of our partner universities. We ask schools to make a contribution per pupil in order to cover the cost of the PhD Tutor, but this does not go towards trips, the cost of which is covered by the universities visited.

Brilliant Club PhD tutors delivered 5,328 hours of tutorials

At KS4 pupils are 52% STEM; 48% Arts and Humanities

At KS5 pupils are 41% STEM; 59% Arts and Humanities

100% of all trips to the Department for Education’s top 33% of universities

3575 pupils went on trips to the University of Warwick, Royal Holloway University of London and University of Sussex in 2013/14

1875 pupils went on trips at colleges at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge in 2013/14

PhD Tutor case study

Davide Castiglione, University of Nottingham

Thesis Title: Difficulty in 20th century poetry: a stylistic and empirical study

Brilliant Club Course Title: Challenging Poems; What can we do with them?

From attending a two-day training event in London up to designing a course handbook, from delivering in-school tutorials up to liaising with members of my host school, I have come to fully realise how beneficial this scheme is not only for pupils, but for PhD students as well. The enthusiasm and professionalism of The Brilliant Club team means that I have constantly received support, advice and pedagogic materials. Such an environment proves invaluable for the motivation it sparks and it keeps alive in tutors.

Thanks to the scheme, for the first time I could fully explore the pedagogical potential of my research project, which I had only vaguely envisaged before.

Sanam Navsaria

Former Brilliant Club scholar

The university-style tutorials I completed with The Brilliant Club in Year 12 really gave me certainty that I wanted to study English at university. I believe it was the experience I gained from tapping into literature in these sessions that added me in getting an offer to study at Cambridge.

Dr Fiona Spensley

Senior Tutor and Tutor for Admissions, Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford

By building a movement to mobilise the postgraduate community and engage them with challenging schools, The Brilliant Club is already improving access to top universities. More than this, they are taking real steps towards a cultural shift in this country’s education system that help address educational disadvantage by bridging the gap between school and university.

The Scholar

PhD tutors and Brilliant Club staff are constantly impressed with the assignments, essays and problem sheets produced by our pupils from every programme stream. We hope that all the pupils we work with are proud of their achievements, and that they recognise their success as scholars. The Brilliant Club has recently launched its own academic journal, called The Scholar, in order to showcase this fantastic work, and to introduce pupils to the world of publishing research and enrich their understanding of higher education.

Pupils performing at a good or excellent standard at the key stage above their own:

KS2 42%

KS3 50%

KS4 56%

KS5 42%
Our Impact

The data presented in this impact report is taken from a comprehensive analysis of our provision, including internal programme tracking data, survey data from pupils and demographic and progression data from schools. The analysis covered more than 4,600 pupils in total, though the sample sizes for each data point varies depending on the availability of data. As well as expressing our gratitude to the teachers, data managers and other school staff who supported our data collection, we would like to thank Impetus PEF for the help they provided with data analysis.

87% of Y13 pupils applied to a Sutton 30 university

54% of Y12 pupils progressed to a Sutton 30 university

Key Stages 2–4

Before
After

I know what university is and how students learn when they are there 68% 97%

I know what I need to do if I want to go on and study at university when I am older 68% 92%

I know a lot for somebody my age 62% 85%

I know a lot about the subject that my Brilliant Club programme is about 44% 90%

I can complete my work to a higher standard 44% 83%

I can find out new information and use it in my work without help from adults 78% 91%

I feel confident talking to my friends about university 78% 91%

I feel confident talking to a university teacher about my work 78% 91%

I can get my ideas across well when speaking in a small group 72% 83%

I can complete my work to first year undergraduate standard 84% 90%

I feel able to overcome difficulties and setbacks in my learning 71% 90%

I feel motivated when I am set challenging learning activities 72% 88%

I plan to take the steps that will help me improve as a learner 85% 94%

I plan to go on and study at university when I am older 80% 93%

I plan to go on and study at one of the best universities in the country when I am older 84% 90%

Key Stage 5

Before
After

I have high-level knowledge that goes beyond the A-Level curriculum 47% 43%

I have advanced skills in the subject area(s) this programme focuses on 60% 67%

I understand in detail how universities work and the key differences between them 64% 92%

I understand what I need to do to apply and secure a place at university next year 60% 89%

I know what steps I need to take to help me improve as a learner 79% 92%

I feel confident talking to a university teacher about my work 74% 92%

I can get my ideas across well when speaking in a small group 74% 87%

I can complete my work to first year undergraduate standard 84% 93%

I feel able to overcome difficulties and setbacks in my learning 71% 90%

I feel motivated when I am set challenging learning activities 82% 93%

I plan to go on and study at university when I am older 78% 87%

I plan to go on and study at one of the best universities in the country when I am older 78% 87%
Our work with researchers

We are proud of the work that we are able to do in partnership with universities throughout the country and with the outstanding PhD tutors that we recruit and train. Our assessment centre process is incredibly rigorous, with just over one in two applicants being accepted. The framework for the Researcher Development Programme is designed to map well against the Vitae Researcher Development Framework in providing training on knowledge and intellectual abilities, personal effectiveness, research governance and organisation and engagement, influence and impact.

We have worked with over 600 PhD and postdoctoral researchers over the past four years, and are one of the largest widening participation employers for PhD and postdoctoral researchers in the country. As such we value our employees incredibly highly and our aim is that working with The Brilliant Club can supplement a researcher’s PhD, help them deliver on their public engagement remit and provide them with a paid, professional and well-regarded work experience opportunity. Termly training weekends are the route through which we deliver training to PhD tutors from all over the country. The Brilliant Club values feedback and continuously monitors feedback from tutors on its training provision.

Almost 240 tutors trained by The Brilliant Club from 42+ universities
2,848 hours of training delivered to researchers
Over 100 new courses designed by Brilliant Club tutors

Our PhD Tutor training weekends
Rachael Curzons, Director of Teaching and Learning

Each year we host three PhD Tutor training weekends, one per term. You can see below the feedback from our 2013/14 sessions.

New tutors strongly agreed or agreed that the training weekend…

91% made me more confident that I will be able to use appropriate teaching techniques in different classroom situations
88% helped me to understand the role of questioning in the learning process
85% made me more confident that I will be able to accurately assess pupil learning and provide constructive feedback

Returning tutors strongly agreed or agreed that the training weekend…

99% developed my understanding of effective teaching and learning
93% helped me to develop techniques to identify pupil prior knowledge
82% made me more confident that I will be able to ensure pupils are engaged with the course material

Of all tutors…

94% Rated the training weekend as excellent or good

Guests
We invite inspirational practitioners and thinkers from the world of education to come and speak to our PhD tutors about their work and give them advice before going into school for the first time. It is a perfect opportunity to give our new PhD tutors an insight into UK pedagogy from current teachers and university professionals who are passionate about access in higher education. In 2013/14, guest speakers included Russell Hobby, General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, Charlotte McCormick, teacher at Oasis Academy South Bank, Nick Rose, psychology teacher at Tunford School and blogger on evidence-based teaching and learning and Louise Lochee-Bayne from 168, a global educational social network for Gifted and Talented pupils.

Professor Thomas Ward
Pro-Vice Chancellor, Durham University
As well as supporting Durham University in reaching its ambitious widening participation and access targets, collaboration with The Brilliant Club has afforded our researchers the excellent opportunity to engage the public with their research and enhance their teaching skills as part of a structured training programme.

UCL tutors completed 116 placements in 116 schools
Poverty and Progress in England: 1834-1948

Key Stage 2 Programme

The Scholars Programme: Evidence of Success

The Brilliant Club was recently featured in the OFSTED publication “The Most Able Students: An Update on Progress Since 2013” as an example of effective use of pupil premium funding and as something that university admissions tutors are positive about.

OFSTED said:

“(Admissions) tutors are positive about schools which are engaging with The Brilliant Club and other schemes set up to widen participation in, for example, higher education. They also told inspectors that, while the biggest barrier for disadvantaged students to gain a place at top universities remains attainment, the information, advice and guidance they get from schools is also crucial.”

The Office For Fair Access (OFFA) and the National Strategy for Access and Student Success (NSASS)

The Scholars Programme is designed to cohere with best practice guidelines drawn up by organisations concerned with access and widening participation in higher education, including the Office For Fair Access (OFFA) and the National Strategy for Access and Student Success (NSASS). Our programmes work with pupils at primary school in Year 6 to Year 12 in secondary school and are built around consistent relationships between universities and individual schools. This means that the Scholars Programme offers our partner universities the opportunity to take part in a sustained, long-term access initiative that provides targeted support and engagement throughout the whole student lifecycle, as identified in both the OFFA guidance for university access agreements and the NSASS. We encourage Widening Participation and Researcher Development departments of universities to work together, adopting the ‘Whole Institution Approach’ supported by OFFA. Our contribution model means that Pupil Premium funding in schools and widening participation funding in higher education institutions work in a complementary and cohesive manner.

The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit: evidence, reliability and progress

The Scholars Programme aligns with the Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit, which is described on their website as ‘an accessible summary of educational research, which provides guidance to teachers and schools on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.’

The website outlines the objectives of the toolkit in terms of impact, evidence and decision-making:

“One particular spending decision which the research can inform is how to spend the Pupil Premium. Introduced in 2010, the aim of the Pupil Premium is to raise achievement among disadvantaged children. It provides additional funding to schools for disadvantaged pupils to ensure they benefit from the same educational opportunities as pupils from wealthier families. In the 2014-15 financial year the Pupil Premium is worth £354 per eligible child in secondary schools and £1,300 per eligible child in primary schools. Average impact is estimated in terms of the additional months’ progress you might expect pupils to make as a result of an approach being used in school, taking average pupil progress over a year as a benchmark. Evidence estimates are based on the availability of evidence (i.e. the number of systematic reviews or meta-analyses and the quantity of primary studies which they synthesise); the methodological quality of the primary evidence; and the reliability or consistency of this impact across the studies reviewed.”

The impact levels for small group tuition and homework are ‘moderate’, as equivalent to +4 and +5 months’ progress respectively, and feedback has an impact considered by EEF as ‘high’, as equivalent to +8 months’ progress. The estimated evidence level for small group tuition is currently ‘limited’, whilst for homework and feedback it is ‘moderate’.

The Scholars Programme is informed by a number of principles that have been shown to be effective in other educational contexts. In particular, we believe that small group tuition, independent homework and feedback are not only features of university-style learning that we would like to emulate but are also effective tools for supporting pupil progress.

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The Brilliant Club has brought University College London’s ethos of research-based learning to younger audiences, stretching them to their academic limits, building up their knowledge and pushing them on research topics that are not normally taught until undergraduate level.

Poverty and Progress in England: 1834-1948

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A focus on growth

The Brilliant Club believes that it can and should be a normal occurrence to walk the corridors of any non-selective state school in the country and find PhD tutors sharing their skills and expertise with pupils.

Indeed, a longstanding aim of the charity is to help mobilise a national cohort of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to support state school pupils to progress to university.

2013/14 saw The Brilliant Club pilot programmes in the North East and the East of England. We are working to ensure that by 2017/18 no school should be unable to take part in The Brilliant Club due to their location, and look forward to reporting progress at the end of 2014/15.

We are hugely grateful for the support of Challenge Partners in supporting with this expansion.

North East Expansion: Case Study

Leanne Adamson, North-East Regional Director

In the summer term of 2013/2014 we ran our first programmes in the North East region. This was a really exciting opportunity to be working in a new region in partnership with Durham University, to help in widening access to highly selective universities for pupils in the region. During the summer term we placed eight PhD tutors to work with nearly 100 pupils in five schools across the region, teaching courses which varied from “Using the Placebo Effect to Pass Your Exams” to “Encounters in the New World: The Clash of Cultures in an Age of Expansion”.

The programme began with a Launch Trip to the science park at Durham University and the pupils had their Graduation Event in the grand building of the university’s debating chamber. Two pupils from this small North East cohort even went on to have their final assignments featured in The Scholar, our youth academic journal. The feedback from pupils, teachers and Durham University was very positive about the programme with Victoria Richley, Lead Teacher at St Wilfrid’s RC College commenting on the “phenomenal success of their Year 7 and Year 10 students on the programme” and noting that the school sees the programme as “a key strategy to raise the aspirations of our students at St Wilfrid’s RC College.”

East of England Expansion: Case Study

Hollie Brown, East of England Regional Director

Since autumn 2014 we have placed PhD tutors in Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk to deliver courses such as ‘Creating Worlds From Nothing: Geometry from Euclid to Poincaré’ and ‘To Be, or Not to Be: Existentialism in Literature and Film’, designed to develop pupils’ core academic skills and build academic resilience. Schools have been very receptive to the programme, and keen to see The Brilliant Club expanding. Paul Henery, Head Teacher of St. Edmund Primary School, said, “We first heard about the Brilliant Club as part of our involvement with the London Leadership Strategy last year, and we were excited about the opportunities the Scholars Programme provides for more able pupils to find out first hand about university life and to take part in high quality tutorials in a particular subject. Our school’s motto is “Learn More, Think More, Be More”’, our aim is that all our children fulfil their potential, whatever their backgrounds, and this programme will give a group of our pupils a very exciting and worthwhile experience which, I am sure, will shape their futures. We are looking forward to seeing the impact of the Scholars Programme and feel very pleased to be part of this initiative, now that it is being extended to schools in Norfolk.” Mikyla, a pupil from Wayland Junior Academy, the first school to take part in autumn 2014, commented that, “The Brilliant Club has taught me to challenge myself. It showed me what it would be like at university and how my life will be different then. It is preparing me for my future. I need to be one step ahead and keep trying.”

*At the time of going to press, the University of Southampton and the University of Manchester have become our most recent partner universities.
A focus on impact

2013/14 has seen The Brilliant Club place a greater focus on assessing and improving the impact of its programmes. With support from a range of partner organisations we have undertaken a detailed review of our programme and taken steps to both widen and deepen our impact. In particular, we are grateful for Impetus-PEF’s input into a thorough programme review, from which we will be putting a range of improvements into practice from 2016/17.

The Brilliant Club Year on Year Performance

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<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Y13 pupils applying to Sutton 30 universities</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Y13 pupils progressing to Sutton 30 universities</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pupils worked with</td>
<td>2,678</td>
<td>6,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of PhD tutors employed</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils eligible for Ever 6 FSM</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils with no parental history of HE</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pupils achieving a 1st or 2:1 grade</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teaching hours delivered</td>
<td>3,133</td>
<td>9,378</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Martha McPherson
External and Community Relations Director
The Brilliant Club

Parental engagement activities are a key avenue through which to pursue our mission of widening university access to underrepresented groups and a growing expertise in this area is imperative to ensure that the cohorts of pupils we currently work with are reaching their full potential when it comes to university application time. Increasing parents’ access to information, advice and guidance is a key method of supporting the impact we have on pupils.

To this end, we have taken two major steps in the way that the Scholars Programme interacts with our scholars’ families. Firstly, we have trialled parent attendance at graduation events, most notably at the Sheldonian Theatre at the University of Oxford, the Cambridge Union at the University of Cambridge, King’s College London, the University of Warwick and Durham University.

It was lovely to welcome families to hear more about what their sons and daughters had been up to, and we certainly needed to budget more time for photo opportunities – particularly at events where gowns and mortarboards made an appearance!

So far, over 600 parents have come to trips, and we have used this as an opportunity to find out more about what they know about university, and where we might be able to support their knowledge.

As the results above show, there is more work to be done to make parents feel secure in their understanding of the tricky world of student finance and the application process.

This initial research fed into the second development, the ThinkUni programme, our first-ever programme to be aimed at families and the first to invite non Scholars Programme parents, carers and pupils to take part. The ThinkUni programme is generously funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and will be developed over the coming year.
Researchers in Schools

In 2013/14, inspired by the success of our PhD tutors working part-time in schools and questions from head-teachers about their availability to make the transition to full-time teaching roles, The Brilliant Club established a new programme – Researchers in Schools – the world’s only teacher training programme that requires you to have a PhD in your teaching subject. Following a consultation with stakeholders from across the education sector, The Brilliant Club entered into a partnership with Lampton School, George Abbott SCITT, King’s College London and Challenge Partners to recruit and place a small pilot cohort trainees into 10 non-selective state schools in West London with three aims:

- To increase and disseminate subject expertise: Increasing the number of high-level subject specialists in non-selective state schools, including shortage subjects like maths and physics, ensuring the dissemination of both subject knowledge and cutting-edge expertise within individual schools and throughout the wider system.
- To promote research: Utilising the unique skill set of researchers through a bespoke ITTP that develops the research skills of both pupils and teachers, with a focus on independent enquiry, evidence-based teaching and action research.
- To champion university access: Promoting researchers as in-school champions of higher education, who support access to research-intensive universities and provide discrete programmes of learning to challenge and stretch pupils.

In May 2014 we ran a six week recruitment window for applicants, to begin their teaching in September 2014. Throughout this period there were over 400 enquiries from postdoctoral researchers and 181 full and relevant (e.g. eligible) applications were received for the RIS programme, including over 100 applications for the maths and physics posts. From this group, 21 were appointed for the first cohort; 14 Maths and Physics trainees and seven other in English in History positions.

Due the success of the pilot, The Brilliant Club was awarded a direct grant to grow the programme and we are currently recruiting for 100 trainees who will make up Cohort 2, beginning teaching in September 2015. For this cohort we have already received over 600 applications and within this group, 82% of applicants are not currently considering other routes into the classroom, demonstrating the ability of RIS to utilise an untapped resource.

Follow the programme @RISchools or on the website: www.researchersinschools.org.

Richard Branch
Researchers in Schools trainee, Lampton School

I have used my one day of research to maintain ties with my old research group at Oxford University, contributing to a grant and assisting a PhD student. I truly believe I am a researcher in school.

82% of applicants are not currently considering other training routes
54% pupils are in the highest quintile of the IDACI in RIS schools
54% respondents to an Ofsted survey said RIS has had a positive impact on their school

The Brilliant Club is delighted that Researchers in Schools was selected by the Department for Education to be the training provider for the government’s Maths and Physics Chairs programme. This saw Maths and Physics trainees supported by a range of business sponsors and competitive salaries of up to £40,000 then directed to fuel the pipeline of maths and physics talent in the UK.

All trainees became Honorary Research Associates at King’s College London and were given a day a week to support the programme aims, for – by example – continuing to pursue their own research. The programme supports all trainees to secure QTS and complete their NQT year. The first cohort of trainees includes an astro-physicist, an archaeologist, a post-doctoral fellow from Harvard University and an expert in mathematical modelling. All will become Honorary Research Associates at King’s College London.

70% of all RIS trainees have a PhD in Maths or Physics
54% pupils are in the highest quintile of the IDACI in RIS schools
82% of applicants are not currently considering other training routes

Nick Gibb, MP
Department for Education
The recruitment of specialist Maths and Physics chairs will raise academic standards in these vital subjects and equip pupils with the knowledge and skills most needed to deliver the Government’s long term economic plan. Our plan for education will ensure all young people are able to fulfil their potential, and attracting the very best teachers is a key to delivering that plan.
Our partnerships

The Brilliant Club model is built on partnerships. The value of our partnerships cannot be over-stated: we simply couldn’t do what we do without our partners.

K+ Summer School

In 2013/14, The Brilliant Club entered into the second year of its partnership with King’s College London’s flagship K+ programme to recruit and train tutors to deliver the academic component of the Spotlight Summer School. The Brilliant Club supported tutors to design challenging academic programmes that culminated in the production of an academic project. The tutorials took place at King’s College London as part of a week of activities that saw participants access the university’s library, work with their peers on a presentation and engage with academics.

One participant said, “The Spotlight Summer School was an eye-opener and just showed me how much I love history and how capable I am of studying the subject at university. It was an experience I am unlikely to forget and grateful to have been a part of such a great week.”

K+ is a structured two-year programme which aims to equip post-16 students, from underrepresented groups, with the knowledge, confidence and skills to transition successfully to university. The programme is aimed at Year 12 pupils studying in a non-selective state school or college in a Greater London borough who have achieved at least 6 A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent, including English Language and Maths, and a minimum of 5 A or A* grades, or do not have parents or carers who have studied at university in the UK or abroad.

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Oasis Academy South Bank

The Brilliant Club’s partnership with Oasis Academy South Bank began in 2013, and we have enjoyed a highly successful collaboration for the last two years. The Brilliant Club has found the opportunity to embed both their programme and staff in a school setting greatly rewarding. OasisB offers an excellent base for our programme whilst also allowing The Brilliant Club the opportunity to develop a deeper and more broad-ranging programme than we would normally be in a position to provide to schools. During 2013/14, the programme has seen a large cohort of pupils benefit from sustained access to some of our best PhD tutors. Through programmes of university-style learning that have included PhD Tutor placements, trips to highly selective universities and information, advice and guidance resources, we have worked with the staff of OASB to support them in building a culture that champions hard work and academic excellence.

In turn, OASB has supported the charity by hosting our London office and aspects of our PhD Tutor recruitment and training activities, as well as helping ground our organisation in the context of a secondary school that maintains the highest of aspirations for its pupils. In 2013/14 The Brilliant Club ran nine placements at OASB, three in the STEM stream, three in the Social Sciences stream and three in the Arts and Humanities stream. In total they worked with 84 pupils. The pupils visited the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the University of London. To broaden their cultural literacy pupils also visited The Courtauld Gallery and The Natural History Museum.

University Learning in Schools

University Learning in Schools began life in 2013 with a question: could a partnership between researchers - who possess exceptional subject knowledge – and teachers - who possess the pedagogical experience - help improve student outcomes? In partnership with Achievement for All 3A’s, The Brilliant Club embarked on a journey to address this question by pairing five PhD students from King’s College London, UCL, CERN and the University of Warwick with teachers from Lampton School and Haberdashers’ Aske’s Federation Trust. Their task was to create academic units of work for KS3 students in English Language, English Literature, Biology, Geography and Physics in order to enhance teachers’ subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, ultimately increasing pupils’ achievement in core subjects. From war poetry, and ‘weapons of microphone destruction’ to laser technology via Byron’s Road to Osiana and childhood in Bolivia and Lesotho, the pairs have created challenging and innovative resources designed to stretch and stimulate pupils. The project will continue into 2014/15 by pairing ten researchers with ten teachers to cover a more broad range of curriculum subjects, including History, ICT and Chemistry.

The Brilliant Club Annual Conference

The Brilliant Club ran its inaugural conference in conjunction with King’s College London and The Bridge Group on Wednesday 24th July. The conference was opened by a keynote address from Lord Sutherland and was closed by Professor Les Ebdon (Office of Fair Access) and was attended by delegates from schools, universities, government bodies and the third sector. Highlights included a session on Oxbridge applications with three admissions tutors from both institutions and a panel debate about fair access that included Dr Peter Claus (University of Oxford), Professor Patrick McIglew (University of Bolton), Rajay Nakh (The Open University), Kenny Frederick (former head teacher of George Green’s School) and Enam Ahmad (Former Brilliant Club student, now studying at King’s College London).

We are looking forward to running our second conference at King’s College London on Wednesday 8th July. Details can be found on our website under ‘Events and Conferences’.

The Open University Internship Programme, sponsored by Santander

The Brilliant Club worked with the Open University and Santander to place two interns who were working towards the completion of their PhDs in our offices. The scheme is designed to give small and medium enterprises (SMEs) valuable access to innovative, skilful and creative minds to deliver defined projects which can fundamentally change the organisation. Dr Vincent Trutt worked in our London office and Main Walker was based in our Midlands office and both made huge contributions to the work of the charity. This is part of a broader partnership with the Open University, established in 2013/14 that has allowed researchers at the institution to become Brilliant Club tutors and support our growth in new regions of the country.

We have benefited from partnerships with a whole range of other organisations who have helped us to increase our impact and widen our reach. These include:

- Achievement for All
- The Brightside Trust Challenge Partners
- Deloitte
- The Department for Education
- The Dulverton Trust
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Goldman Sachs HeadStart/EDT
- Impetus PEF
- Lampton School
- The Mayor of Newham National Association of Head Teachers
- Oasis Academy South Bank
- Office for Fair Access
- PwC
- Sir John Eastwood Foundation
- Student Hubs
- The Sutton Trust
- Teach First
- UnLtd