Younger students who had taken part in the ‘Brilliant Club’ had enjoyed the challenge of working with doctoral students at Warwick University, telling inspectors, ‘This was the best thing that ever happened to me.’

George Spencer Academy OFSTED Report

How would we describe @BrilliantClub Scholars Programme in three words? “Challenging, inspiring and exciting!”

St Mary & St Benedict @StMaryStBenedict
In 2011, the charity published a five-year business plan to establish The Brilliant Club. Going with a ‘does what it says on the tin’ approach, we called it The Path to Sustainability. Five years on, and with invaluable support from our partners, we are proud to say that The Brilliant Club has exceeded the goals set out in that original strategy.

Indeed, the last school year has brought much recognition of the charity’s work. The Brilliant Club has been: named in The Guardian’s Charity of the Year awards; selected as one of 20 organisations from 1,400 applicants worldwide to join The Epic Foundation portfolio; and listed in the top 10 education and youth social enterprises in the Natwest SE100 index.

More importantly, we are delighted to have continued growing partnerships with schools and universities across the country. The Brilliant Club is now the largest university access programme for 11-18 year olds, partnering with 500 schools and 30 universities to deliver programmes of academic enrichment to 9,472 pupils.

Our provision is not limited to any given area or geography. We are working in all regions of England, in cities and towns, and in rural and coastal areas. In a nod to this, our 2016 Conference was titled ‘The Geography of University Access’. A personal highlight of the conference was discovering that, travelling to trips and tutorials, Brilliant Club PhD tutors have collectively been eight times around the equator in the last year!

This is a highlight because it speaks to a crucial part of our mission: to mobilise the PhD community to share its expertise with state schools. We know that PhD researchers can have an extraordinary impact on a young person’s education; our job is to normalise this by finding ways to engage, train and support them to do so.

We hope that this Annual Report provides many rich examples of The Brilliant Club’s impact. We would like to draw particular attention to the evaluation carried out by UCAS (page 10). This shows that our programmes have a statistically significant positive impact on progress to highly-selective universities, compared to a control group.

As our original strategy reaches its end, we are delighted to announce the publication of our new five-year strategy, The Path to Outcomes. Over the coming five years we will enrol more than 40,000 11-18 year olds on our programmes, with the aim that 6,500 will progress to highly-selective universities during that time.

If you are already working with us towards this goal, thank you for your hard work and support. If you are not yet, please consider this an invitation to get in touch!

Yours sincerely,

Simon Coyle
Co-Founder and Co-CEO, The Brilliant Club

Dr Chris Wilson
Co-CEO, The Brilliant Club
University Access

In the UK today, there is an entrenched link between household income and educational success. Pupils from low-income backgrounds are far less likely than their wealthier peers to attain five good GCSE grades, progress to higher education or secure a high-income job. For access to university is a challenge at all levels, but is acute at the most-selective institutions.

Our Mission

The Brilliant Club exists to increase the number of pupils from under-represented backgrounds progressing to highly-selective universities. We do this by mobilising the PhD community to share its expertise with state schools.

In pursuit of this mission, we deliver two core programmes:

- The Scholars Programme (page 8–15)
- Researchers in Schools (page 18–21)

Our Reach

Partnerships

In 2015/16, The Brilliant Club worked with:

- 477 secondary schools
- 28 partner universities
- 9,472 pupils across the country

Scale

In 2015/16, The Brilliant Club supported:

- 390 researchers to become PhD tutors on The Scholars Programme
- 142 PhD graduates working as Researchers in Schools classroom teachers
- 8,352 hours delivered of university-style tutorials

Targeting

In 2015/16, 100% of the pupils we worked with were from non-selective state schools and amongst Scholars Programme pupils:

- 64% of privately educated A-level pupils progress to a highly-selective university
- 19% of A-level pupils in non-selective state schools progress to a highly-selective university
- 11% of state school A-level pupils who are eligible for pupil premium progress to a highly-selective university

In London:

- 40% of our pupils live in postcodes in the bottom quintile of IDACI, and 11% live in lowest two quintiles

Outside of London:

- 30% of our pupils are from the bottom quintile of POLAR3, and 54% from the lowest two quintiles

- 43% were eligible for Ever6FSM
- 60% have no parental history of higher education

*The unique proximity of high and low affluence neighbourhoods within wards in Greater London has led us to use IDACI rather than POLAR3, which is a mixed measure that groups smaller selections of postcodes.
The Scholars Programme: A Pupil Journey

Pupils are selected to take part in The Scholars Programme by their teachers, who often run an application process. In line with our mission to support pupils from under-represented backgrounds, in 2015/16, 44% of pupils were eligible for Ever6FSM.

1 Launch trip
Each programme begins with a launch trip to a highly-selective university. Pupils are taken on a tour of the campus by current undergraduates, learn about the university from admissions staff and take part in the first tutorial with their PhD Tutor.

“I know a lot more about student loans and the costs of university. I also know about the timetables of different students after being shown examples of them.”
O. Rotchell, 15 years old, Shelley College, Huddersfield.

Programme completed: ‘French Cinema / The French New Wave’

2 In-school tutorials
Following the launch trip, PhD tutors visit the schools on a weekly basis to deliver a programme of five tutorials, based on the type of pedagogy found at highly-selective universities. Groups are made up of no more than six pupils in all years except Year 12, where the group size is four.

As the tutorials progressed a number of the pupils gained much more confidence, resulting in very engaging and dynamic group discussions where they were able to share ideas.
Tamryn Fraser, University of Sheffield. Programme delivered: ‘From Bone Boxes: Reconstructing Ancient Diet using Zooarchaeological Techniques’

3 Assignment
The in-school tutorials culminate in pupils completing a challenging university-style assignment, which is marked by PhD tutors at one key stage above their expected level of attainment. Grades are given as university-style marks, with pupils receiving a 1st, 2.1, 2.2 or a 3rd.

8352 hours of tutorials were delivered by PhD tutors in 2015/16

4 Graduation event
Pupils who successfully complete the programme are invited to a graduation event at a highly-selective university. Graduation events often take place on Saturdays, enabling parents and carers to attend too.

“An excellent insight to ensure parents are aware of how to help make the right choices for their child in the future.”
Parent, Eldon Grove Academy, Hartlepool.

Programme completed: ‘Native Americans-Termination to Activism’

Parents asked at Graduation Event:
94% “I would like my child to take part in another Brilliant Club programme at secondary school if possible.”
85% “I think that today’s visit will help me to better support my child to secure a place at university.”

Our PhD tutors are subject specialists from a wide range of academic backgrounds. This variety is reflected in the courses that they design. Our 2015/16 courses included:
- ‘Manipulating the Physics of Light: Using Lasers to Cure Disease’
- ‘Guernillas and Gorillas: Conservation in Areas of Conflict’
The Scholars Programme Impact

With support from UCAS, The Brilliant Club conducted an analysis of university destinations for pupils that participated in The Scholars Programme as Year 12s in Summer 2015.

Analysing the destination data for a cohort of 325 pupils who finished school in Summer 2016, UCAS reported that:

- 8,713 pupils worked directly with our PhD tutors
- 3,675 hours of training were delivered to PhD tutors
- 407 schools ran The Scholars Programme
- 60 universities were represented amongst them
- 8,352 hours of university-style learning delivered
- 3,675 pupils came from areas with family incomes in the bottom quintile of IDACI
- 36% of pupils we worked with were eligible for Ever6FSM
- 66% came from areas with family income in the lowest two quintiles of IDACI
- 44% of the pupils we worked with were eligible for Ever6FSM
- 57% had no family history of higher education

When compared to a control group of pupils matched for characteristics including postcode and GCSE attainment, pupils who had completed The Scholars Programme were:

- Significantly more likely to apply to a highly-selective university
- Significantly more likely to receive an offer from a university
- Significantly more likely to progress to a highly-selective university

Knowledge

Q: I have an excellent level of knowledge in the subject that The Scholars Programme focuses on, that goes beyond that of my peers

Before: 34% agreed/strongly agreed
After: 83% agreed/strongly agreed

Skills

Q: I can articulate my knowledge and my ideas successfully in a written piece of work

67% agreed/strongly agreed
92% strongly agreed

Ambition

Q: I plan to go on and study at one of the best universities in the country when I am older

80% agreed/strongly agreed
89% strongly agreed

- "My son learned that he was capable of achieving much more than he thought he could." – Parent, St. Aidans Academy, Sunderland

"I can find out new information and use it in my work successfully without help from adults"

74%
94%
62%
84%
80%
89%
The Scholars Programme 
Researcher Development Training

The ethos, approach and expertise provided reaches far beyond the programme and its impact is far greater than the cohort who take part; it is a way of approaching raising aspirations which manifests itself across the school.

Andrew Murphy, Head of School, Dyke House College, Hartlepool

The Scholars Programme Researcher Development Training supports researchers to become effective PhD tutors and to develop skills that they can use in their wider careers, including teaching undergraduates and public engagement.

The workshops were very engaging; the content was brilliant and I learnt a lot. Great advice throughout. The social event was fantastic–great to be able to network without having to rush off to a talk. The sessions were very interactive and engaging which made it easier to take home key points of information to apply to tutorials. Lots of practical ideas and solutions for teaching.

Joanna Kemp, University of Warwick. Course title: ‘Friends, Romans, Kings - Diplomacy and Control beyond the Roman Empire’

I recently applied for my first graduate teaching assistant position at SOAS and the lecturers who interviewed me were very impressed that I had experience in a classroom and of marking exams. They were also impressed that The Brilliant Club offered me support from qualified teachers and were always available to answer questions. I secured a position, I believe, largely on the strength of my experience with The Brilliant Club.

Kathryn Nash, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Course title: ‘Philosophy - Do the ends justify the means?’

I cannot recommend participating in The Brilliant Club enough. For PhD tutors, it provides incomparable outreach experience and pedagogic training. For participating schools, it allows pupils to interact with world-class researchers whilst gaining first-hand experience of university-relevant topics. I am so happy I was introduced to the Brilliant Club early in my PhD–looking forward to more years of programmes to come!

Emma Norris, University College London. Course title: ‘Health Psychology - Improving health behaviours’

My time management and forward planning skills greatly improved, as well as my communication skills, problem solving and troubleshooting. Working with young people opens up a whole new dimension and the skills I have gained as a result have already helped me to become more creative and versatile in my communication on a professional level. Being a Brilliant Club tutor is an incredible, highly rewarding experience.

Yegor Doush, Nottingham Trent University. Course title: ‘In search for Immortality - How to avert the inevitable.’

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**Designing a Scholars Programme Course**

**Excellent course design is central to the success of The Scholars Programme**

For pupils in key stages 2 and 3, we work with academics to create standard programmes that can be adapted by PhD tutors. In line with their area of specialism. For example, in 2015/16 we partnered with the Faculty of Engineering Sciences at University College London to design courses entitled ‘How Many Engineers Does it Take to Make an Ice Cream’ and ‘Taming the Bristlebot’, and with the Courtauld Institute to design an art history course based on their own collection.

For pupils in key stages 4 and 5, each course is individually designed by the PhD tutor and based on their research. PhD tutors produce a course handbook in line with our template, which is designed to ensure that pupils are supported and challenged throughout.

**Timetable**

The Scholars Programme is delivered over a series of six tutorials. Students meet their tutor and have their first tutorial at a highly selective university. The next four tutorials take place in-school before students submit their final assignment and finish their programme with a feedback tutorial and graduation event.

**Rationale**

Every handbook includes a rationale that serves as an introduction to the course, providing a ‘hook’ to get pupils excited about what they will be learning.

**Homework**

In-school tutorials are supplemented by independent pieces of homework. These tasks develop the pupil’s skills and allow tutors to provide individual feedback to each student.

**Glossary**

Every course handbook contains a glossary of key vocabulary to introduce students to technical and subject-specific vocabulary.

**Mark Scheme**

Mark schemes will show what a typical 1st and 2.2 level pupil demonstrates in terms of their understanding of the course material and the subject-specific skills they have applied.

**Course Rationale**

The pupils at our school are very engaging and do seem to love learning, particularly when the content is pitched above their Key Stage. The aim of the course is to provide an introduction to the scientific research that will be studied in more depth in later years and allow them to begin to develop critical thinking skills.

A key aspect of the course is the development of technical skills, which are directly applicable to both GP and non-GP contexts. In the course, pupils will be introduced to a range of tools and equipment, which will be used to carry out practical experiments and data analysis.

**Tutorial**

The programme is delivered through a series of small-group tutorials. Each tutorial encourages lots of discussion and covers key content and develops core skills for the subject.

**Draft Assignment**

Pupils are encouraged to submit a draft of their final assignment before their penultimate in-school tutorial. PhD tutors then provide feedback before pupils complete and submit their final assignment.

**Final Assignment**

At the end of every course, pupils write an extended final assignment or complete a problem set. This work is pitched a level above the pupils’ current Key Stage and provides the opportunity to demonstrate content and skills developed throughout the course.

**Glossary of Keywords**

**Plagiarism**

Using the work of others without attribution.

**Baseline Assessment**

A measure of a pupils’ prior knowledge before they start a new topic.

**Data Analysis**

The process of interpreting the results of an experiment or survey.

**Assignment Submission**

The process of submitting coursework to an institution.

**Homework**

Independent tasks given to students to complete outside of the classroom.

**Tutorial**

A session led by a tutor to provide instruction or guidance.

**Mark Scheme**

A scheme for assessing and grading coursework.

**Requirements**

The criteria that must be met to pass a task or assignment.

**Suggested Structure**

A template for structuring a piece of work.

**Course Rationale**

An explanation of the purpose and goals of a course.

**Homework Assignments**

Assignments given to students to complete as homework.
The Brilliant Club in the West Midlands

The Brilliant Club first delivered programmes in the Midlands in 2013. Since then we have expanded our provision with the generous support of The Dulverton Trust and The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

In the West Midlands, 4.7% of pupils who are eligible for EverFSM gain five A*–A grades.

Only 63% of physics teachers in the West Midlands have a relevant degree qualification, making it difficult to offer the subject at A level.

53% of West Midlands pupils we worked with come from areas with family incomes in the lowest quintile of IDACI.

74% of West Midlands pupils we worked with come from areas with family incomes in the lowest two quintiles of IDACI.

47% of pupils that we work with in the West Midlands are eligible for Ever6FSM.

61% of pupils that we work within the West Midlands have no parental history of higher education.

UniTracks

UniTracks is delivered in partnership with the University of Warwick. It is an online programme delivered by PhD tutors at the university. This year, schools in Birmingham, Cumbria, London and Peterborough took part, studying Societal Control: The Regulatory Dilemma.

Midlands3Cities

The Brilliant Club began working with the Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership this year. As well as disseminating their cutting-edge subject expertise through The Scholars Programme, Midlands3Cities researchers have the opportunity to take part in public engagement training delivered by The Brilliant Club.

UniPathways: Streetly Academy

UniPathways is the unique widening participation intervention that all Researchers in Schools participants are trained to deliver in their schools. It is targeted at small groups of pupils who are under-represented at highly selective universities. As well as a series of tutorials based on the participant’s own research in Year 10, pupils receive subject-specific support with their GCSE preparation in Year 11.

"The maths club is amazing. It’s very fun, so I’m enjoying attending so far. I think these clubs are a cool idea, it shows the more exciting side to subjects.

Streetly Academy pupil"
Researchers in Schools (RIS) is a unique teacher training programme designed specifically for PhD graduates. RIS recruits PhD graduates, places them in state schools and, working in partnership with schools and universities, trains them to become classroom teachers. As well as the initial teacher training, RIS delivers bespoke professional development training to help PhD researchers use their skills to the benefit of pupils and schools.

Throughout the three-year programme, RIS participants have one day per week off timetable, through which they pursue three principal aims: to increase subject expertise, to champion university access and to promote research. As well as this, participants receive an honorary academic title from a research-intensive university. Over the three years of the programme, participants become excellent classroom practitioners, committed to closing the gap in attainment and university access.

In this way, RIS supports schools and universities to address some of the major challenges facing the education sector, addressing the shortage of subject experts in particular disciplines and offering an embedded, in-school widening access programme.

Researchers in Schools offers bespoke training and support designed to equip PhD graduates to deploy their unique skills to the benefit of pupils and schools. Throughout all three years of the programme, participants attend one Development Day per term. Bringing the community of RIS teachers together, these days provide professional development training on areas such as disseminating their subject expertise and delivering Uni Pathways.

**Introduction to RIS**

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**In 2015/16:**

**Applications**

- RIS attracted over 1,415 applications from PhD researchers to train as teachers in state schools
- 87% of applicants reported that they are not considering training to teach through any other route

**Training**

- 77 participants received qualified teacher status
- 90% of participants achieved a good or outstanding QTS grade

**Partnerships**

- RIS grew from piloting with one ITT provider in London in 2014/15 to partnering with 14 across England in 2015/16
- RIS has supported 93 participants across three cohorts
- RIS participants worked in 91 schools across England

**Maths and Physics Chairs**

The RIS programme delivers the NCTL’s Maths and Physics Chairs Programme by recruiting PhD graduates in these fields into teaching positions and offering continual professional development. This programme aims to attract subject experts to join the teaching profession and to increase the pipeline of tomorrow’s scientists, mathematicians and engineers by inspiring the pupils they work with.

**RIS Three-Year Training and Development Programme**

**Summer Training**

All RIS participants complete a two-week residential that provides an induction to the RIS programme and the teaching profession. As well as introducing the basic principles of teaching, Summer Training supports PhD graduates to make the professional transition from academia to the classroom.

**QTS**

Uni Pathways

Uni Pathways is the in-school intervention that all Researchers in Schools participants deliver over the first two years of the RIS programme. Uni Pathways supports pupils to access highly-selective universities by combining: a series of university-style tutorials; curriculum-focused sessions to raise GCSE grades; and one-to-one mentoring. It is delivered to pupils in Year 10 and Year 11, and specifically targets pupils from under-represented backgrounds.

**NQT**

Uni Pathways

Unipathsway's Year One Year Two Year Three

**Research Leader in Education Award**

Participants in their third year of teaching are eligible for the Research Leader in Education (RLE) award. The RLE builds on the academic expertise of RIS participants, equipping them with the skills to understand and use evidence-informed approaches to teaching, and to carry out research within their school context. Further, the RLE supports participants to develop their leadership skills and to prepare to take on positions of responsibility in their school.

Dr Hok Man Tang, RLE research question: ‘What is the immediate and lasting impact of splitting a year group into sets according to ability?’

**I wanted to see the impact of intervention strategies on classroom teaching and to learn how the findings can best be interpreted and disseminated.**

Dr Hok Man Tang, RLE research question: ‘What is the immediate and lasting impact of splitting a year group into sets according to ability?’

**I embarked on the RLE because I wanted to develop my understanding of how educational research is done, and apply that understanding to conduct an original piece of educational research.**

Dr Richard Branch, RLE research question: ‘What is the impact of Hegarty-Maths on student motivation, teacher effectiveness and workload, parent involvement in homework, and overall student attainment?’

**Having completed my training as a classroom teacher I was passionate about continuing to develop my pedagogy and ability to contribute both to my school and the wider educational field.**

Dr Bryn James, RLE research question: ‘Investigating best practice in use of ShowMyHomework’s quiz function to improve knowledge retention and deployment for KS4 History students’

98% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that Summer Training prepared them well for starting as a teacher.

97% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that "The way sessions have been delivered has supported my learning."

87% of applicants reported that they are not considering training to teach through any other route.

90% of participants achieved a good or outstanding QTS grade.

94% of Uni Pathways pupils were eligible for the Pupil Premium.

91 schools across England.

Research in Schools (RIS) is a unique teacher training programme designed specifically for PhD graduates. RIS recruits PhD graduates, places them in state schools and, working in partnership with schools and universities, trains them to become classroom teachers. As well as the initial teacher training, RIS delivers bespoke professional development training to help PhD researchers use their skills to the benefit of pupils and schools.

Throughout the three-year programme, RIS participants have one day per week off timetable, through which they pursue three principal aims: to increase subject expertise, to champion university access and to promote research. As well as this, participants receive an honorary academic title from a research-intensive university. Over the three years of the programme, participants become excellent classroom practitioners, committed to closing the gap in attainment and university access.

In this way, RIS supports schools and universities to address some of the major challenges facing the education sector, addressing the shortage of subject experts in particular disciplines and offering an embedded, in-school widening access programme.
Cleeve Park School is a non-selective academy in Sidcup, South East London. The school is the local authority’s specialist resourced school for students with physical disabilities, and the number of pupil premium-eligible pupils is just above the national average. The school received a ‘Good’ judgement from OFSTED (January 2015) and the outstanding English results place them in the top 5% of schools nationally.

The school has struggled to recruit subject specialists in science and consequently it has been difficult to offer sciences at A Level. Researchers in Schools began working with Cleeve Park in September 2016 through The Kemnal Academies Trust and placed four participants within the school; two Physics, one Biology and one Maths.

Participants

Dr Alice Len
RIS 2016 Physics participant

This experience is allowing me to help pupils realise their full potential and I can bring cutting edge research and opportunities into the classroom.

Dr Alice Len
RIS 2016 Physics participant

They have come to us with a clear moral purpose and a real commitment to our students and to helping them to fulfil their potential.

Rachel Dixon
Director of Learning and Professional Mentor

Our science department has been completely transformed with the addition of our RIS trainee teachers. They have brought a vibrancy to the school that our Head of Faculty had been desperately looking for.

Jenni Tyler Maher
Executive Headteacher

Having RIS here at CPS has such a positive impact on our students. Our students are becoming more and more inquisitive about the world of science and are being given some great opportunities through the contacts we are able to make via the RIS teachers.

Rowen Lodge
Head of Department

Dr Thomas Conlon
RIS 2016 Physics participant

I feel very lucky to have been placed in such an amazing school. I feel like for the first time I am part of a team. The School has provided me with fantastic support and I have received excellent training from TKAT. I am building confidence in teaching and I have really enjoyed inspiring students to engage with maths and consider studying maths in the future at university.

Carmelo Di Natale, 2016 Maths Participant

Dr Thomas Conlon
RIS 2016 Physics participant

• Dr Alice Len competed her PhD at the University of Sydney.
• Dr Len taught a Uni Pathways course on Disease Detectives – Putting the pieces together to solve the mystery of what drives disease.
• Dr Len has organised for a group of Year 12 students to complete work experience next summer at University College London and is in current negotiations with King’s College London’s medical outreach program to host a medical student at Cleeve Park.

• Dr Thomas Conlon completed his PhD at the University of Leicester.
• Dr Conlon taught a Uni Pathways course on The Solar Shooting Gallery – Designing a Spacecraft for Space Weather Monitoring.
• Dr Conlon has led several year group assemblies about university access and designed an annual science day.
The Brilliant Club: Partnerships

Corporate Partners

To enhance the impact of our programmes, we partner with businesses who share our commitment to supporting pupils from under-represented backgrounds to excel academically. Through the Maths and Physics Chairs Programme, we have a particular focus on recruiting PhD graduates in STEM subjects, but are keen to recruit PhD researchers from all subject backgrounds to work either as PhD tutors or classroom teachers.

By partnering with Researchers in Schools, businesses support participants to deliver tailored interventions in their schools. As well as Uni Pathways, this includes opportunities for corporate partners to offer teaching resources, learning experiences and events, which can be delivered by the businesses themselves or by the participants on their behalf.

Case Studies

Supporting Growth: BCS

BCS has generously agreed to support The Brilliant Club for the next five years as a strategic partner, including offering extensive pro bono consulting and support, and a charitable donation each year.

Over the past 12 months, BCS has led on a range of projects that have made a significant impact in helping The Brilliant Club grow our operations. These have included: workshops to feed into the charity’s new strategy; advising on the procurement of two new IT systems; and completing a process mapping exercise for our programme team.

We are delighted to partner with The Brilliant Club and to have the chance to support them in their endeavours to improve fair access to some of the UK’s most selective universities. Many of our consultants attended these institutions and know, first-hand, how valuable that experience can be. For us, this is a great opportunity to give something back whilst helping to improve the educational prospects of students from non-selective state schools.

Paul Brock, CEO of BCS Consulting

Supporting STEM: Shell

Shell has been a Corporate Partner of Researchers in Schools since 2014. It sees subject understanding of the opportunities for careers in STEM.

To their HQ in London, its gas plants in Peterhead and Aberdeen Harbour to increase their ideas and innovation at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Shell also ran a trip for participants Hawking and Brian Cox, to bringing 250 pupils to Make the Future Live, Shell’s festival of opportunities for pupils. This has ranged from teachers attending lectures from Stephen, working with AccessEd has equipped me with the practical resources and support to get a pilot programme off the ground. We are looking forward to growing our programme here in the nation’s capital and hope to share the lessons we learn and the impact of our work with a growing AccessEd network.

Dr Tania Nguyen LaViolet, Brilliant Bachelors Founder

Shell has supported science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education in the UK for over 50 years. Teachers are uniquely positioned to inspire young people about their futures and we’re proud to help them inject their expertise and passion into classrooms across the country.

Gareth Thistleton, Shell Education Manager

The scope for engineering jobs is clear, but the amount of “behind the scenes” corporate and management positions is vast too. I was amazed at the opportunities for job switches within the organisation, engineers becoming traders, oil platform staff now in offices or theoretical researchers on oil rigs. It is something I must make clear to my students back at school. In no way is it a narrow field to move into.

Dr James Karampols, Physics Teacher, Carlshalton Boys Sports College

A university education can be transformative. Graduates have better employment prospects and earning power, better health and wellbeing, and better civic engagement. Despite the benefits for individuals and societies, inequalities in university access are pervasive across both the developed and developing world.

The Brilliant Club has supported the creation of AccessEd to help tackle this inequality. AccessEd exists to increase university access for young people from under-represented backgrounds. We select and support partner organisations who mobilise the research community to deliver academic enrichment programmes in schools.

AccessEd select partner organisations who share our values of collaboration, excellence and leadership. We support partners by providing a structured programme of support that equips them to design a pilot, show initial evidence of impact and then scale up. We tailor the support in each phase to find the right mix of materials, mentorship and networking to meet the needs of each partner.

AccessEd aims to have a system-level impact by building a global network of organisations that share the same mission to increase university access. To do this, we help to develop new ventures and build the capacity of existing organisations.

Case Study: The Brilliant Bachelors Programme

The Brilliant Bachelors Programme was founded by Dr Tania Nguyen LaViolet, a former PhD Tutor with The Brilliant Club at the University of Oxford. In 2015, Tania launched a Phase One pilot with Eastern Senior High School and Eliot–Hine Middle School, with support from Companies for Causes, a non-profit community partner. In 2016, Tania became a Phase Two partner, undertaking a theory of change process, adding staff capacity and designing a new programme.

Mission: We mobilise the PhD community to support low-income students in Washington, DC in their quest for college success.

Programme: We raise academic preparedness, elevate aspirations and promote college completion through The Brilliant Club Bachelor’s Programme: This includes tutorials delivered by PhD researchers, university trips, and other enrichment activities. We emulate university milestones, with students accumulating credit hours to graduate and earn a Brilliant Bachelor’s.
A Brilliant Club Partner Case Study

King's College London and the K+ Spotlight Summer School

King's College London, one of The Brilliant Club’s first partner universities, supports the delivery of The Scholars Programme and offers Honorary Research Associate status to Researchers in Schools participants. Alongside this, The Brilliant Club has worked with King's College London to deliver the academic component of the K+ Spotlight Summer School, part of the university's flagship widening participation scheme.

K+ supports Year 12 and 13 state school pupils in London to secure places at highly-selective universities. The programme targets first generation students, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, with strong academic records. The two-year programme consists of a range of activities, mentoring and events culminating in the annual K+ Spotlight Summer School.

Applications to K+ for the 2016/18 cohort

- 934 applications to K+ for the 2016/17 cohort
- 97% no parental history of higher education
- 97% of students who completed their academic assignment achieved a 1st or 2.1 mark
- 38 K+ students enrolled at King's in 2016
- 109 K+ students are studying or have graduated from King's College London

Admissions to King’s College London

The Brilliant Club provides crucial support to King’s K+ programme by providing PhD tutors who are committed to pursuing our aims in widening participation.

These tutors consistently design and deliver excellent programmes and provide outstanding support to our pupils.

The training they receive from The Brilliant Club on pedagogy and course design undoubtedly supports them in this.

Professor Ed Byrne AC, Principal and President, King’s College London

This week, I’ve learned to rise to challenging work that I have no experience in. This was a big eye opener for me as usually I am taught things that relate to what I know. This was great to learn as at uni and in the real working world I will face new challenges. If you could, make K+ longer!

The most important thing I’ve gained—being able to quickly make friends and have my own opinions on new material—this is especially important for university.

I gained a lot of knowledge about my topic. It was challenging which I enjoyed as it allowed me to try harder.

This week, pupils presented to a large audience of academic judges, parents and peers on subjects as diverse as:

- “Holding the Police to Account: The Case of Stop and Search”
- “Symmetric Structures and Hidden Messages in Mathematics”
- “Could Our Own Immune Systems Hold the Cure to Cancer?”

As part of the summer school, pupils complete a series of tutorials on a research topic and work towards an academic presentation and a final assignment marked to an undergraduate level. The Brilliant Club trains and places the PhD tutors who design and deliver this intensive programme to the pupils, mark their assignments and prepare them for their final presentation.

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Q&A with Maryam

Hey, Maryam!
Tell us a bit about yourself?

My name is Maryam, I’m from Hounslow and I am 20 years old. I’m currently studying Law at Homerton College, University of Cambridge.

You’ve taken part in various Brilliant Club programmes. Please could you tell us about them?

I was in Year 8 when I first got involved with The Brilliant Club. I completed an arts and humanities Scholars Programme on the essays of George Orwell, which was fascinating. It was so nice to effectively have someone say, ‘You are capable, now I want you to write a long piece of work to showcase that ability.’

There were also RIS teachers teaching at my school, who brought so much enthusiasm and expertise to the classroom. I took part in K+, as part of which I completed a Law project on the case for plain cigarette packaging. That was incredibly helpful as I was able to talk about the project extensively in my Cambridge interview. I feel like I spoke about that for almost 90% of the interview!

Please could you tell us about how Dr James supported you as a teacher?

Dr. James was a RIS teacher at my school. He was an incredible source of support on my journey to Cambridge. He always made time to provide advice and guidance about applying to university and his impact as a mentor to me can’t be overstated. He believed I had what it takes to study at a top university and helped me wherever he could. Thank you Dr. James!

What role do you think The Brilliant Club played in you achieving a place to read Law at Cambridge?

I always thought law was a very difficult subject, with a unique set of hurdles to overcome in terms of entrance exams. It can seem exclusive too, so I almost came to terms with the fact that it wasn’t going to happen.

I don’t think I would be at Cambridge and I don’t think I would be studying law if it wasn’t for The Brilliant Club. It was powerful to have someone recognise my ability at a young age and tell me that I was bright and should be considering going to a top university. It’s incredible, just for your self-confidence and self-belief. From a young age, it gives you more drive just to work that little bit harder to get there.

Has what you learned through The Brilliant Club helped you during your time at Cambridge?

Definitely. Cambridge has been challenging but it is a challenge that I have enjoyed. Being pushed means that you’re always working at the peak of your performance. I think this requires confidence in your own ability, to experience challenge as a positive thing and the academic challenge I experienced through The Brilliant Club definitely contributed to that confidence.

Why do you think the work of The Brilliant Club matters?

It is so important. At present, there are thousands and thousands of young people excluded from attending these universities because of the circumstances they are born into. Your postcode is like a lottery and in this situation, we are not accessing the best of society, the best of the UK. Many people are being shut out of higher education and we don’t know what they could discover, what they could contribute to society, if they had the opportunity to do so. These pupils must work much harder to compete with others who have an advantage based on their educational background.

The Brilliant Club helps open the doors for state school pupils to higher-education at the best universities and in doing so contributes to a more inclusive society where opportunity is more accessible.