



A N N U A L  
I M P A C T  
R E P O R T

2019 | 2020

## Welcome from CEO

Welcome to The Brilliant Club's Annual Impact Report for 2019/20. It is my first annual review as CEO of the charity, and I am delighted to be writing to you.

It is safe to say that 2019/20 was not the academic year that any of us were expecting. I did not expect to come into post in April 2020 at the start of the first nationwide Coronavirus lockdown, to be speaking to teachers about school closures, or to be meeting colleagues via video call.

We had planned to work with over 15,000 pupils on The Scholars Programme this year, more than ever before. Instead, we delivered the programme to over 8,000 pupils across the UK, but in 2020/21 we hope to support over 4,000 young people whose placement was postponed in the 2020 summer term, in addition to our 2020/21 cohort.

This year became one of adaptation. We moved PhD tutor training and Researchers in Schools development days online. Determined to continue working towards our mission, we launched free-to-access

online resources for pupils and quickly developed virtual delivery for The Scholars Programme, with support and funding from our dedicated partners.

As lessons for many pupils moved online, the issue of the widening attainment gap became more pertinent. As a response to this, we launched the Brilliant Tutoring Programme. As an approved tuition partner of the National Tutoring Programme, we will deliver catch-up tutoring in core subjects through the newly-established programme in 2020/21.

I would like to say thank you to all of the schools, universities, partners and supporters we have worked with to support young people over the last 12 months. I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Anne-Marie Canning MBE  
CEO, The Brilliant Club



## Welcome from Ambassador

Thank you for reading this year's Brilliant Club Annual Impact Report! I'm Wafa and I was lucky enough to have taken part in The Scholars Programme for three years during my time at school across three different subjects: English, Maths and Social Science. I am now currently studying Physics at Queen Mary University of London and hope to work within the Space Field in the future!

For me, The Brilliant Club exposed me to different environments, which encouraged me to aim above and beyond. While on The Scholars Programme, I was able to visit the top universities in the UK too, like the University of Oxford. Being in places like that pushed me to aim for the unthinkable. And... who doesn't love trips?

At a young age, I was given an insight into what university-style work may be like which

definitely made me feel eased. When you're a young student, university can be a scary thought – you just don't know what to expect. Most of the time, you're overwhelmed by the thought of "Will I be able to cope?". But by being on the programme, we were writing university-style essays which felt like a breeze, and at that moment, I knew I could smash it.

The Brilliant Club made the transition from school to university straightforward. A piece of cake.

Wafa Mohbubul  
Brilliant Club Ambassador



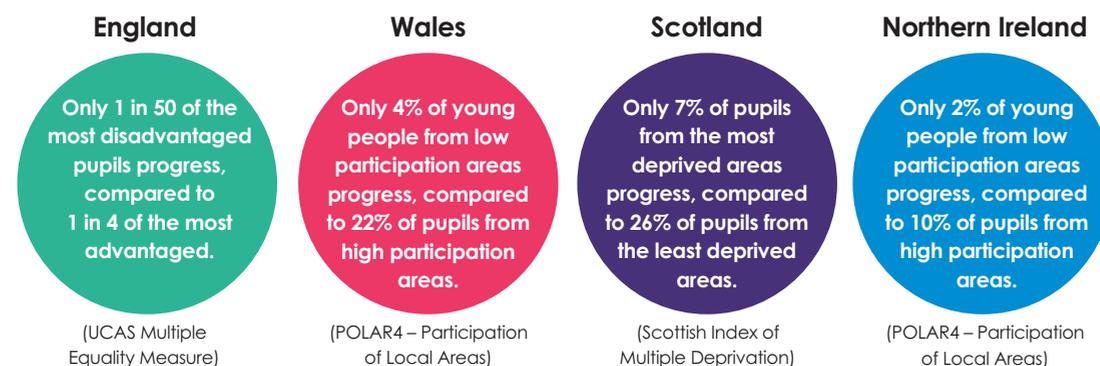
## Our Mission

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

In pursuit of this mission, The Brilliant Club delivers programmes which mobilise the PhD community to engage with pupils and teachers in state schools: The Scholars Programme, Researchers in Schools and our newly launched Brilliant Tutoring Programme as part of the government's National Tutoring programme to support those pupils most affected by the disruption caused by Coronavirus. We also collaborate with partners to deliver special projects which enable us to reach more pupils, strengthen our partnerships and make a positive impact for university access beyond our direct beneficiaries.

### The Need

In the UK today, a young person's chance of accessing life-changing higher education remains linked to their socioeconomic background. Whilst there has been an increase in progression to university over time, research shows that there are deep-rooted inequalities in accessing the most selective institutions.



### Targeting

The Brilliant Club's approach to pupil targeting means that our programmes are delivered to pupils who are least likely to be represented at highly-selective universities and that teachers have the freedom to select a range of pupils that are likely to benefit.

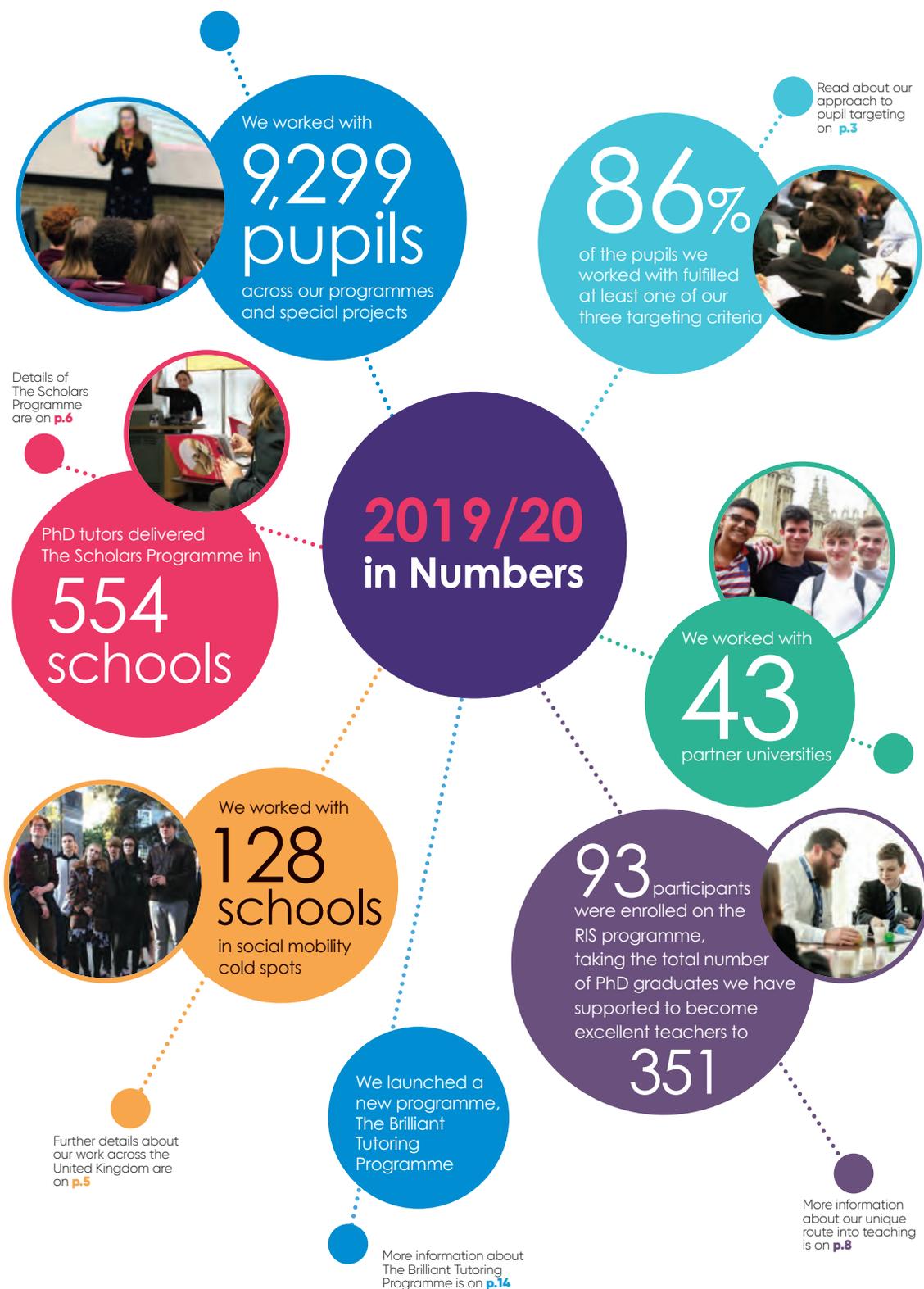
We work with teachers to ensure that the majority of pupils enrolled on The Scholars Programme or Uni Pathways, the intervention delivered by Researchers in Schools participants, meet at least one of three target measures:

- 1 Educational measure of deprivation (free school meals or equivalent)
- 2 No parental history of higher education
- 3 Deprivation according to postcode

To align our approach with the relevant context and ensure effective targeting across the UK, we use different sets of indicators for eligibility for free school meals and for the 40% most deprived areas in England (IDACI), Wales (WIMD), Scotland (SIMD) and Northern Ireland (IDACI).

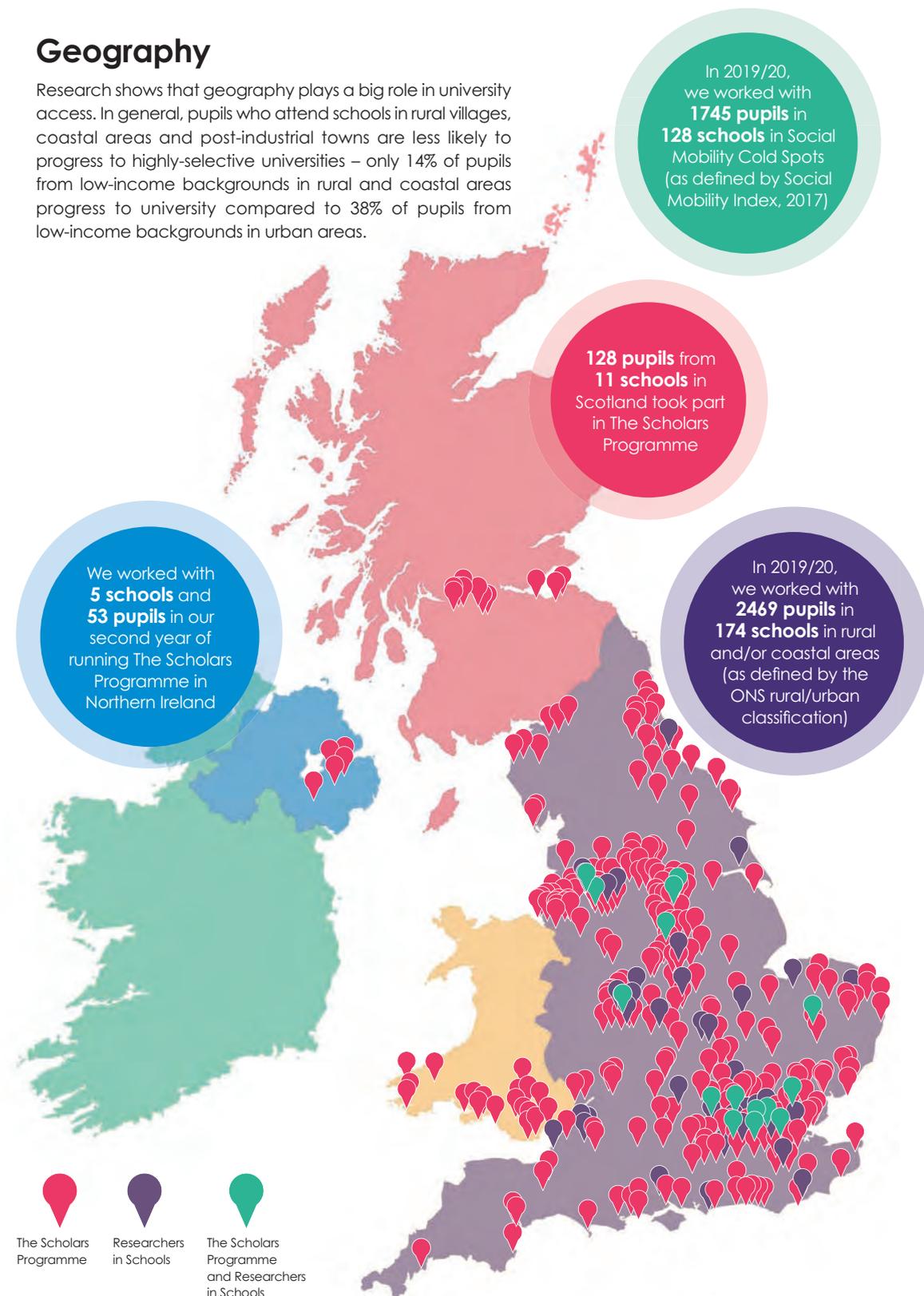
### Pupils on The Scholars Programme and Uni Pathways in 2019/20:





## Geography

Research shows that geography plays a big role in university access. In general, pupils who attend schools in rural villages, coastal areas and post-industrial towns are less likely to progress to highly-selective universities – only 14% of pupils from low-income backgrounds in rural and coastal areas progress to university compared to 38% of pupils from low-income backgrounds in urban areas.





I feel more confident over what is to come for me when I go to university next year as the feedback I received has helped me understand exactly what is expected of me when I move up to that level of work.

**Pupil, The Virtual Scholars Programme**



## The Scholars Programme

The Scholars Programme is for pupils aged 8-18 and is designed to support them to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to progress to highly-selective universities. The programme is delivered in partnership with state schools and universities across the UK and takes place over a school term.

Pupils begin the programme by visiting a highly-selective university and then participate in a series of seven university-style tutorials with a PhD tutor on courses which are based on academic research and range across STEM, the humanities and social sciences.

In 2019/20, **8,234 pupils** took part in The Scholars Programme, despite disruption brought by Coronavirus.

In 2020/21, we aim to offer the programme to **16,000 pupils**, including over 4,000 pupils whose placements were postponed in Summer 2020 due to Coronavirus.



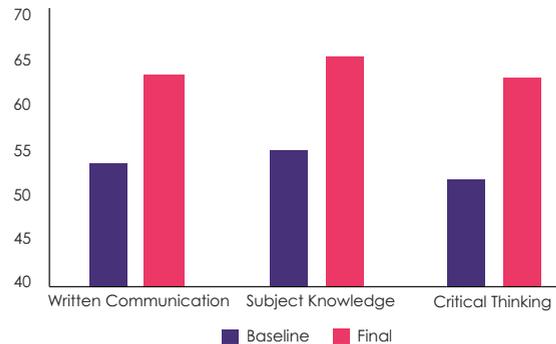
**324 PhD tutors** delivered The Scholars Programme in **554 schools**



Since 2010, over **65,000 pupils** have taken part in The Scholars Programme

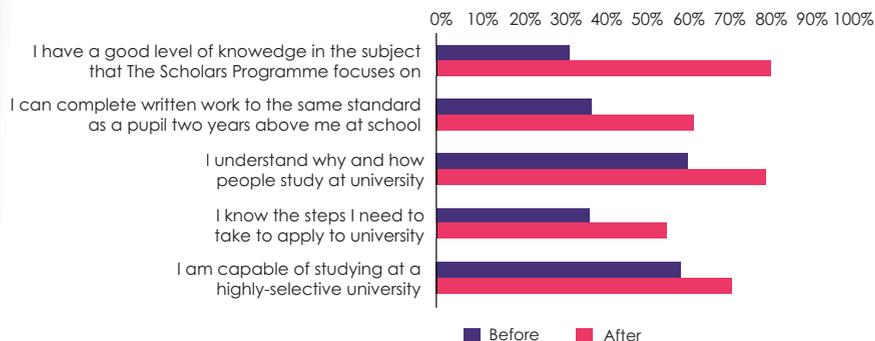
### Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is assessed by PhD tutors through baseline and final assignments. Marks are awarded according to a university style-mark scheme where, for example, marks between 60 and 69 are equal to a 2:1. Results are based on the baseline and final assignments of more than 5000 pupils.



### University Preparation

Pupils complete surveys before and after the programme. For each statement, pupils place themselves from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The graph presents the percent of pupils who strongly agree or agree (based on pre and post surveys of more than 3000 pupils).



### Brilliant Club Ambassadors

This year, we began building our network of Brilliant Club Ambassadors who have previously taken part in The Scholars Programme. We now have a group of enthusiastic Scholars Programme graduates, who are keen to share their experience of university, and how the programme supported them on their journey.



With the support of our new Ambassadors, we have been running Instagram Live Q&A sessions. These sessions were designed to give pupils the opportunity to ask questions of current university students, with each session having a different theme. The themes ranged from what courses can be studied at university, to what you can do to help ease the transition to university. Engagement between pupils and Ambassadors has been fantastic and we look forward to working together in 2020/21.



Being an Ambassador is rewarding in two aspects - allowing me to give back to a programme that has been valuable in my academic journey and helping create that same experience for younger students. **Hinal**

I love being a Brilliant Club Ambassador because I am able to help people that don't have much confidence in their abilities to get into university, which is how I often felt during my A levels. The Brilliant Club really helped me, so I am so happy that I can help other students in the way that I was helped! **Megan**

Being a Brilliant Club Ambassador has been a very interesting and enjoyable experience. The pandemic has meant I have done things such as video recordings and an Instagram Live, both of which I had never done before. Although it has been challenging, I also feel it has been beneficial to me. It has been a pleasure to work with fellow ambassadors and the staff at The Brilliant Club. **Jonathan**



“ I have picked up countless techniques for revising and managing my time which have helped me immeasurably. **Pupil, Uni Pathways, Greatfields School** ”



## Researchers in Schools

Researchers in Schools (RIS) is the world's only route into classroom teaching tailored specifically to PhD graduates. The programme is delivered in partnership with the Department for Education and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers in England.

Over three years, participants on the programme achieve our Research Leader in Education (RLE) Award. The RLE Award is designed to ensure that Researchers in Schools participants are trained and supported to deploy the knowledge, skills and networks they have gained from their PhD to benefit pupils, schools, and universities in three important ways:

1  **To champion university access**

2  **To increase subject expertise**

3  **To promote education research**

### Impact

The impact of the RIS programme is expressed first and foremost by the quality of our participants' development as classroom practitioners. In 2019/20:

**79%** of 2019 cohort participants who started the programme gained QTS, and of those **97%** received a Good or Outstanding grade.



**91%** of 2018 cohort participants who started their NQT year achieved NQT status.

**20** participants in the 2017 cohort completed the three-year programme and achieved our Research Leader in Education Award.

**85%** of those who have finished the programme have stayed in teaching.

**90%** Our 2017 cohort joined our growing alumni community in September 2020. 18 out of 20 of them have secured a teaching role and continue to work towards the RIS aims and take on positions of responsibility in their school.

**153** pupils attended Uni Pathways launch trips.



**89%** of Uni Pathways pupils said at the end of the course that they knew why and how people study at university.

The proportion of pupils who were confident about their subject knowledge increased by **37%** points.



### Essa Academy, Bolton

Essa Academy is a non-selective, mixed academy for ages 11-16, and is part of the Alliance for Learning SCITT. 29.8% of the academy's pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Researchers in Schools has been working with Essa academy since 2018, having partnered with the Alliance for learning SCITT since 2015. The school's Principal, Martin Knowles, said of his RIS participants:

“My RIS teachers are building a love of science in the school; they make things go bang and really take the time to give pupils the awe and wonder — you can see lights go on in the pupils' eyes! The level of engagement in intervention activities is brilliant: high-ability pupils working at A-level and even degree level! They are oversubscribed with pupils wanting to learn more. I would take more RIS participants in a shot!

The RIS educational research projects are aligned with our school needs. RIS participants are working with a member of the leadership team who is completing their National Professional Qualification for Headship to help ensure that the school benefits as much as possible.”

“ My RIS teachers are building a love of science in the school; they make things go bang and really take the time to give pupils the awe and wonder — you can see lights go on in the pupils' eyes! **Martin Knowles, Principal, Essa Academy** ”

### Women in STEM

The challenge of getting more young women to choose STEM subjects (in particular maths and physics) at A-Level, degree and for their careers is well-documented and persistent.

We believe the RIS programme is contributing to addressing this challenge by recruiting female physics and maths graduates into teaching who might not otherwise have considered the profession. We hope that as a result, the pupils our participants teach get to see that an academic research career in a STEM subject is accessible to all, and that studying STEM subjects can lead to a diverse range of careers.

Here are some of the activities and projects a few of our female STEM teachers have run in 2019/20:



**Dr Carly Matis** (Science, 2017 Cohort, Manchester) ran a robotics club and arranged for the school to host pupils from around the world for an international robotics competition.



**Dr Christianah Oluwadare** (Maths, 2019 Cohort, Luton) registered her school for the UKMT Junior Maths Challenge and ran a Maths Challenge club for KS3 students.



**Dr Paulina Guerrero Gutiérrez** (Science, 2018 Cohort, Essex) used her contacts across academia to run a programme of 'Skype a Scientist' sessions to enable her students to interview current science researchers about their careers and discoveries.

## Research and Impact

We share insights with the wider sector from our latest projects that examine the impact of our programmes, and publish impact case studies and research reports. In 2019/20, we published rapid reviews on Digital Inclusion and Online Delivery.

The Brilliant Club provides research and impact consultancy services to universities and third sector organisations to support the evaluation of their university access work. Our current areas of interest include the measurement of attainment-related outcomes and the development of university readiness outcomes.

### External Evaluation: University of Cambridge

Between 2018 and 2020, we commissioned researchers at the University of Cambridge to evaluate the impact of The Scholars Programme. The evaluation had two phases. Firstly, the University of Cambridge carried out a desk-based review of the charity's research and impact work to date. Secondly, the University of Cambridge conducted a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to assess the impact of The Scholars Programme on pupils' cognitive outcomes.

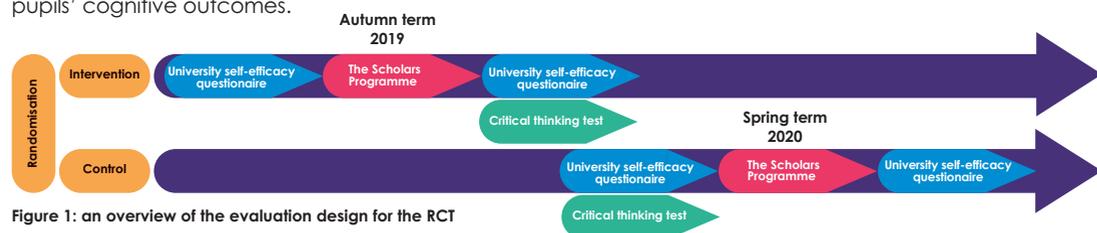


Figure 1: an overview of the evaluation design for the RCT

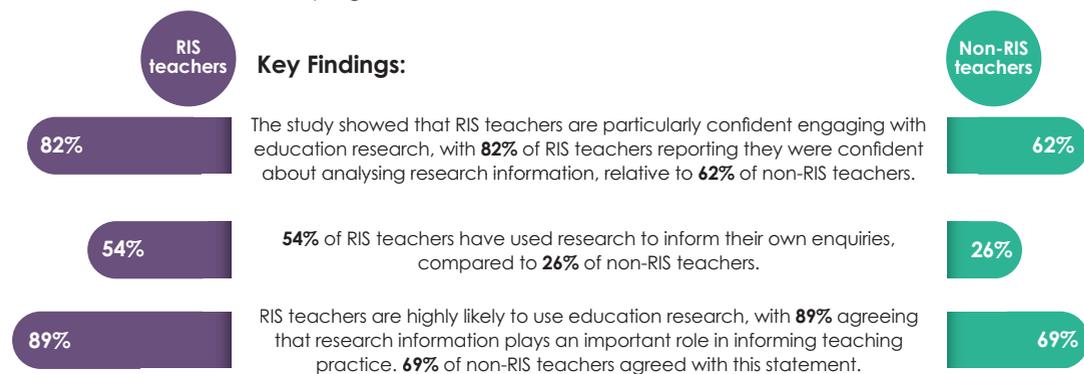
The RCT showed that pupils who take part in The Scholars Programme report significantly higher levels of self-efficacy for university-style learning, compared to pupils who do not take part in the programme. University self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to succeed at university, and is known to increase young people's sense of belonging to university, especially highly-selective institutions.

The way in which The Scholars Programme cultivates university self-efficacy is by engaging pupils with academic content and university-style learning to develop academic knowledge and skills.

Through working with a PhD researcher and producing university-style final assignments, young people can directly develop and explicitly see the knowledge and skills that they need to progress and succeed at university, and realise that they are capable of this style of learning.

### Research-Informed Teaching

In February 2020, a study carried out by the charity's Research and Impact Department showed that teachers who join the profession with a doctorate in their subject are at an advantage when it comes to interpreting education research and applying it to their teaching, with nine-in-ten reporting confidence in engaging with education research and analysing research information.

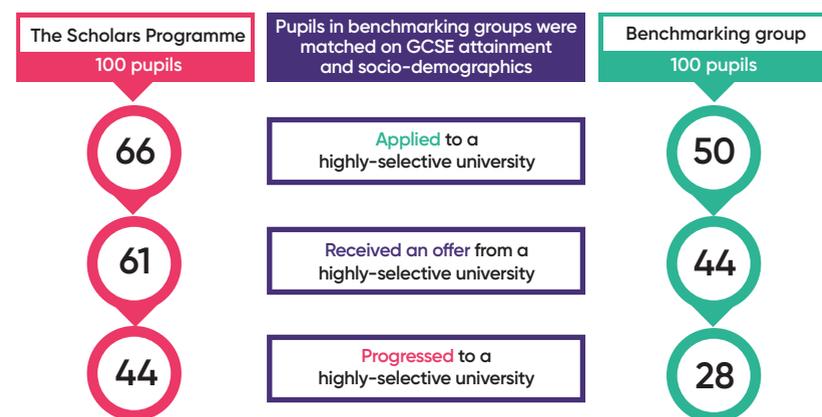


## UCAS Evaluation

For the last five years, The Brilliant Club has worked with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) to evaluate the impact of The Scholars Programme on progression to highly-selective universities.

For the fifth year running, pupils who completed The Scholars Programme are **statistically significantly more likely to apply to, receive an offer from and progress to a highly-selective university** than pupils from similar backgrounds.

In 2020, UCAS tracked university applications of more than 1360 Scholars Programme graduates who took part either as Year 10 pupils in 2016/17 or as Year 12 pupils in 2018/19. To provide a counter-factual for progression to 'DfE Top Third' highly-selective universities, Scholars Programme graduates were compared to similar pupils based on their attainment at GCSE, ethnicity and postcode.

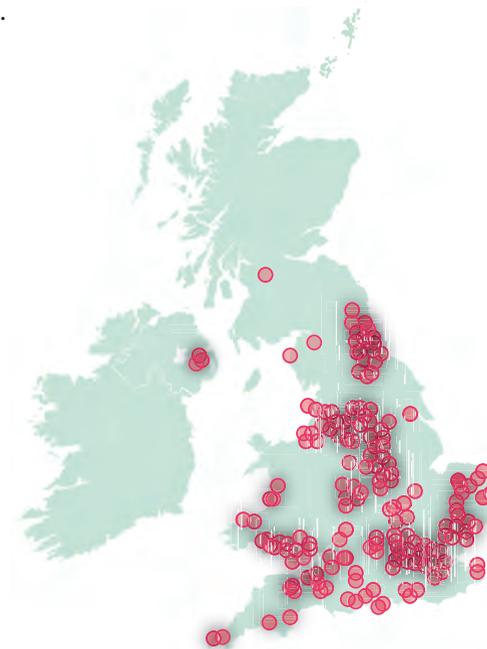


For the first time this year, the sample size was big enough to run this benchmarking analysis separately for specific sub-groups of pupils on The Scholars Programme, such as pupils being eligible for Pupil Premium or pupils in rural or coastal areas.



### Delivering results for all participants...

Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium who had graduated from The Scholars Programme in Year 12 were significantly more likely to apply and progress to highly-selective universities. This finding also holds for Scholars Programme graduates who had no parental history of higher education or Scholars Programme graduates who lived in areas with high levels of deprivation.



### ... and in every part of the country

Scholars Programme graduates from schools in rural or coastal areas were significantly more likely to apply and progress to highly-selective universities. This finding also holds for Scholars Programme graduates from areas with low university participation rates (POLAR4 Q1/Q2).

Pupil locations at the time of participation in The Scholars Programme (includes all Scholars Programme graduates in the UCAS STROBE sample)

## Coronavirus and School Disruption



Pupils at Benhurst Primary School with their Scholars Programme handbooks

In March 2020, school closures caused by the Coronavirus pandemic led to 98% of young people in the UK learning at home. With the attainment gap between the most advantaged and least advantaged pupils already increasing, there were concerns that this gap would widen further still.

The Scholars Programme was increasingly vital to supporting disadvantaged pupils during the crisis. However, the programme's well-established in person delivery model would not work in its existing format, and it became clear that the charity's plans to work with thousands of pupils during the 2020 summer term would be significantly affected.



### Our Response: Online Resources

Free-to-access online resources for new and existing pupils, parents and schools, shared on a newly created YouTube channel and via the charity's website, would form the basis of the charity's offering during the lockdown period. The resources fell into three main categories: university knowledge, university skills and academic content.

As well as utilising the knowledge of the charity's programme staff, we called upon the PhD community to produce subject masterclasses on topics outside the usual curriculum. These included **'Why didn't medieval women take selfies?'**, and **'Religious minorities in the time of a pandemic'**. RIS participants and alumni shared GCSE workbooks from their work becoming subject pedagogy experts in their schools.



#### YouTube:

During the period of school closures, the channel got over **25,000 views**.

### Oak National Academy

In May 2020, we partnered with Oak National Academy, a government-backed online learning platform. We put together a series of academic masterclasses for pupils in primary and in secondary school as part of their extracurricular offering. They included videos exploring a supra-curricular subject alongside supporting worksheets and quizzes for pupils to test themselves.

## Online Tutorial Delivery

The most significant aspect of the charity's Coronavirus response was to rapidly develop a way of delivering The Scholars Programme virtually so that pupils could continue to benefit from the programme.

The virtual programme can be delivered in two ways, depending on the needs of the school and on any national restrictions being in place:

- Delivery in school with the PhD tutor calling in remotely via a secure video conferencing platform
- Delivery to pupils in their homes via Scholars VLE (our Virtual Learning Environment) with embedded secure video conferencing

Online tutorials were delivered for 22 placements during the 2019/20 summer term.



Pupils at Tudor Court Primary School attend a virtual tutorial



**Kathryn Archibald,**  
Lead Teacher, Ross High School



"When school closures came, we knew that carrying on with The Scholars Programme would be a challenge. However, I wanted to make it work if at all possible because our students had given so much of their time and energy already that it would be a shame to not see their efforts come to fruition in their final assignment. I sat in on their first tutorial in case anyone needed support but again, they were fully engaged and working independently. The technical side of online tutorials certainly wasn't going to hold teenagers back!

I think the virtual tutorials actually sparked greater debate and discussion. Students did not have one eye on the clock so they could devote the whole hour to the tutorial. I also think it made them feel very grown-up, and it made these budding academics feel as if they were fully part of the learning that was taking place. I would not hesitate to take part in virtual tutorials again. I look forward to working with The Brilliant Club and The Scholars Programme again in the future, in whatever form it may take!"





## Next steps

Following the impact of Coronavirus in the 2019/20 academic year, we are aiming to support more pupils than ever before.

We will develop the voice of our beneficiaries, through recruiting our first ever Young Trustee and launching an Experience Expert Panel.



We will develop our special projects function, which will support our core programmes.

In 2020/21, we aim to reach over **25,000 pupils** through The Scholars Programme, Researchers in Schools, The Brilliant Tutoring Programme and special projects.

We will continue to develop our research and impact work and draw upon the findings of the external evaluation.



We will continue to grow The Scholars Programme in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This year, we are offering schools the flexibility to move seamlessly between in-person and virtual tutorials as needed, so that pupils can continue to engage with the programme.



In England, we will support more PhD graduates to become classroom teachers through the Researchers in Schools programme to have a deep and long-lasting impact on teaching in state schools.

We will continue to increase efficiency for our staff and stakeholders to make our programmes as accessible, impactful and enjoyable as possible.

We will strengthen our relationships with existing supporters and seek new supporters to work alongside us to have a long-term impact on young people's lives.



### The Brilliant Tutoring Programme

The Brilliant Tutoring Programme has been set up to support the national catch-up effort caused by school closures. We are delighted to be an approved tuition partner for the government's National Tutoring Programme, which is designed to support pupils most affected by the disruption to their learning.

Schools in England are eligible to receive 75% subsidised tutoring through the scheme. We are also able to deliver the programme to schools in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, however subsidies are not currently available.

The Brilliant Tutoring programme provides tutoring to pupils in small groups (1:3), in core subjects with our subject expert PhD tutors. Tutoring groups will receive 15 hours of tutoring over 15 weeks.

### New Five-Year Strategy

In the 2021/22 academic year, the charity will launch its new five-year strategy, which will set out our exciting plans and focus on how our aims will be delivered. We will be ambitious in scaling our programmes and establishing new initiatives across the student lifecycle.

## Our Supporters

We are grateful for the support of our partner schools and universities, supporters and Friends, including individuals and those who wish to remain anonymous.

- University of Aberdeen
- Alliance for Learning
- Ark Teacher Training
- Barr Beacon SCITT
- University of Bath
- Birmingham City University
- Bishop Grosseteste University
- University of Brighton
- University of Bristol
- Cabot Learning Federation
- University of Cambridge
- The Cambridge Partnership
- Cardiff University
- Cardiff Metropolitan University
- CHASE
- University College London
- The Courtauld Gallery
- University of East Anglia
- University of East London
- The University of Edinburgh
- University of Essex
- University of Exeter
- Fields of Learning
- George Abbot Teaching School
- GLF Schools' Teacher Training
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- Hampshire SCITT Partnership
- Harris Federation
- Inspiration Trust
- King's College London
- Lancaster University
- University of Leeds
- Leicestershire Secondary SCITT
- University of Lincoln
- Liverpool John Moores University
- London West Alliance SCITT
- University of Manchester
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- National Mathematics and Physics SCITT
- Newcastle University
- University of Nottingham
- Northumbria University
- The Open University
- University of Oxford
- University of Reading
- University of Roehampton
- Royal Holloway, University of London
- University of Salford
- University of Sheffield
- Sheffield Hallam University
- SOAS, University of London
- South Birmingham SCITT
- University of Southampton
- St George's, University of London
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Surrey
- University of Sussex
- University of Swansea
- TES Institute
- TKAT
- United Teaching
- The University of Warwick
- University of Worcester
- Yorkshire and Humber Teacher Training
- York St John University

- AKO Foundation
- Aldgate and Allhallows Foundation
- Allen & Overy Foundation
- Bain & Company, through Social Business Trust
- Bank of America Foundation
- BCS Consulting
- The Bristol Masonic Benevolent Institution
- Department for Education
- The Drapers' Charitable Fund
- The Dulverton Trust
- Epic Foundation
- Facebook
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Handpicked Society
- The Hugh Fraser Foundation
- Kleinwort Hambros
- Kusuma Trust
- Lodge of Harmony 7127
- Man Charitable Trust
- Nesta
- Prakash and Shila Dewani
- Sir John Cass's Foundation
- Social Business Trust
- The Taylor Family Foundation
- The Waterloo Foundation





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