



School Prioritisation for Maximum Impact

Vicky Dee – Director of School Partnerships
The Brilliant Club



Our Mission

**The Brilliant Club works
across the UK, mobilising the
PhD community to support
less advantaged students to
access the most
competitive universities, and
succeed when they get
there.**



Why does The Brilliant Club exist?

UCAS comparison of progression to the most competitive universities by 18-year-olds:

**28 in
100**

for the most
advantaged
quintile

**2 in
100**

for the most
disadvantaged
quintile

*Measured using the UCAS Multiple Equality Measure

The Brilliant Club



The Scholars Programme

The Scholars Programme is delivered by PhD researchers in schools across the UK, to pupils age 5-18.

[Find out more](#)

Join the Dots

Join the Dots brings schools and colleges together with universities to help build successful transitions for less advantaged students.

[Find out more](#)

Parent Power

Parent Power creates parent communities across the UK, each one supported by an anchor institution.

[Find out more](#)

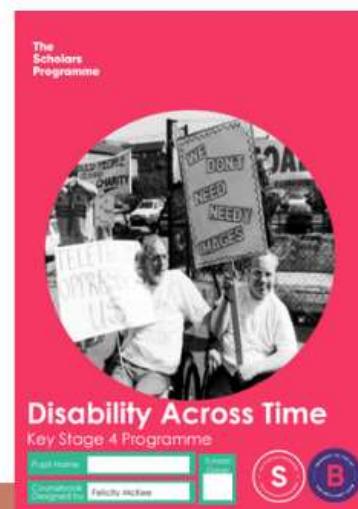
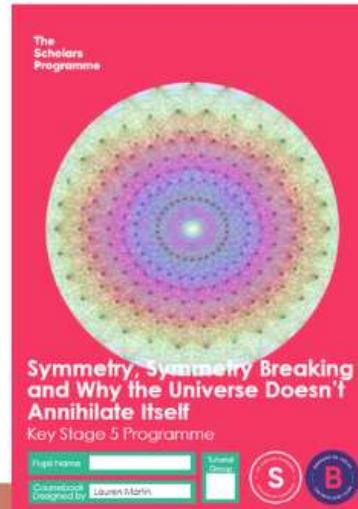
Access and Success

Alongside our core programmes, our Access and Success Projects team collaborates with other organisations to provide bespoke small and large scale projects.

[Find out more](#)

Some of our brilliant courses

KS4/5



Programme Impact: Application and progression

Year 12 students who complete The Scholars Programme are significantly more likely to apply to and receive offers from competitive universities compared to peers from similar backgrounds. As a result, they also progress to competitive universities at a higher rate.





Right now, students from the **least advantaged** backgrounds have a **1 in 33** chance of accessing the most competitive universities, compared to **1 in 3** of the **most advantaged**.



This disadvantage doesn't disappear when they enter university.



This affects an individual beyond their time at university and impacts society as a whole.

Disadvantaged students are therefore

11x

more likely to **miss out on life-changing higher education**.

DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS ARE

3x

MORE LIKELY TO
MISS OUT ON A 1ST
OR 2:1 GRADE AT
UNIVERSITY

Graduates from the most competitive universities are more likely to **access professional careers** and have higher rates of life satisfaction. On average, they will earn

£10,000
more than their peers.



Our work across the UK



Approx. 800
schools per
year



575 renewal

225 new

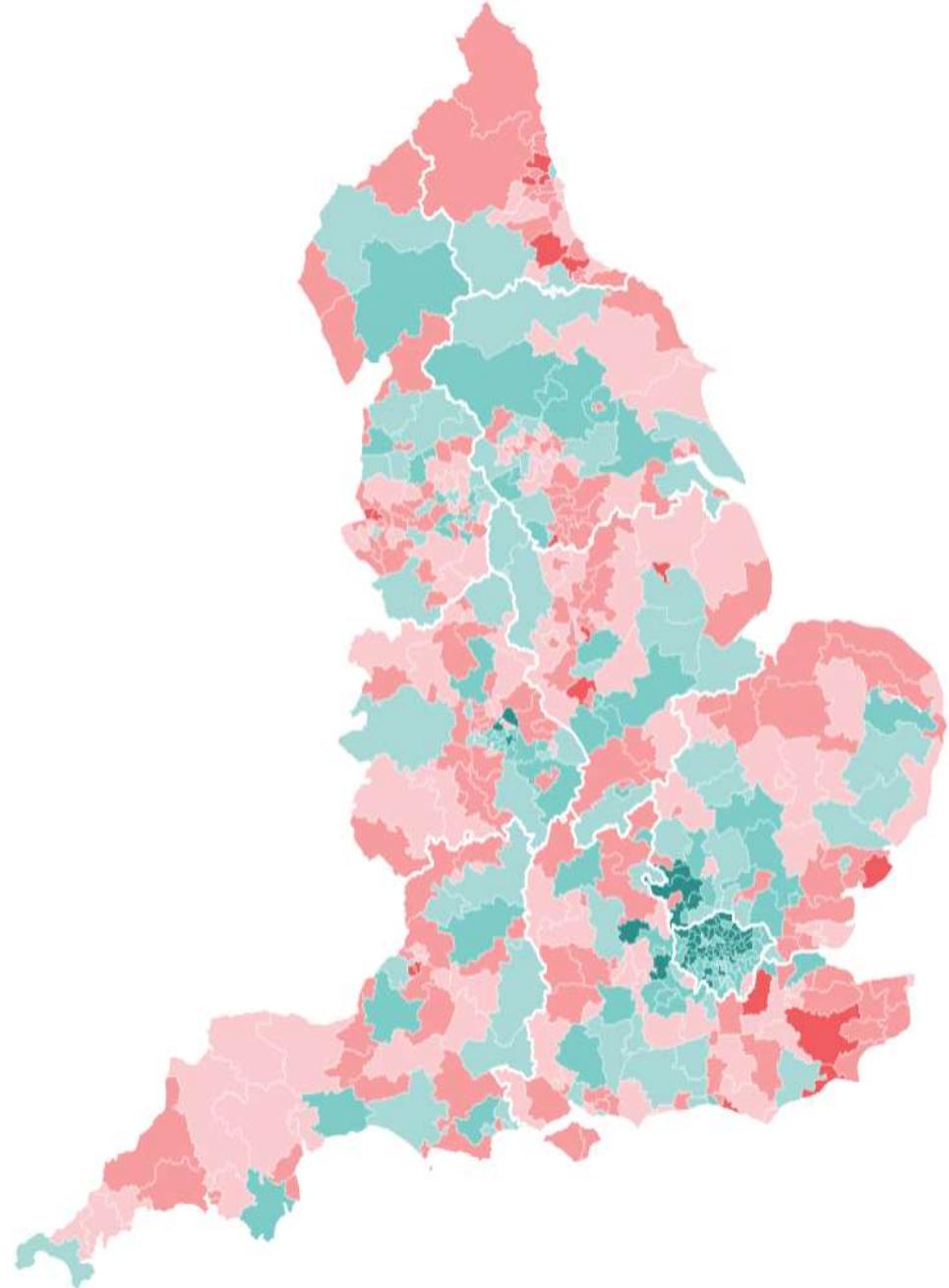
Our recent approach



“Reach out and build secure relationships with more schools and colleges – especially those in areas where we have not worked before and social mobility cold spots.”

The New Strategy (2026-29)

- Approx. 5,000 new students each year ~ 300 schools
- Place at the forefront of our strategy for growth
- The Brilliant Club, not The Scholars Programme



Sutton Trust Opportunity Index

Ranks all constituencies in England by:

- school attainment
- access to higher education
- employment status
- earnings of young people eligible for free school meals (FSM) at secondary school

Research brief



The Opportunity Index

The geography of opportunity and social mobility in England

Erica Holt-White, Carl Cullinane and Rebecca Montacute

May 2025

Overview

- The 20 constituencies with the highest ranking for opportunity are in London, with East Ham ranked top. Amongst the top 50 constituencies, all bar 8 are in London.
- The highest ranked area outside of London is Birmingham Perry Bar (West Midlands), at position 23. The lowest ranked London borough is Orpington, at 327th.
- Comparing the highest ranked area of East Ham (London) to the lowest ranked area of Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West (North East) shows a 30 percentage point gap in achievement of GCSE grade 5 in English and maths between FSM pupils in both areas.
- FSM pupils from Ruislip Northwood and Pinner are six times more likely to fall in this top 20% of earners compared to those in Leeds East, at 25% compared to 4% respectively.

Sutton Trust OI Lowest Ranked Constituencies



Rank	Constituency	Region	Attainment 8	A Level APS result	Sustained education/employment after KS4	%age with degree by age 22	Average earnings at age 28 (£)	Sustained employment at age 28
530	Liverpool Walton	North West	23	28	50%	12%	15,683	53%
531	Bootle	North West	27	25	51%	8%	15,679	55%
532	Claughton	East of England	25	25	54%	13%	15,921	50%
533	Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend	North East	31	26	51%	7%	14,121	51%
534	Bristol East	South West	26	21	53%	11%	15,492	56%
535	Stockton North	North East	28	22	56%	14%	14,456	48%
536	Hastings and Rye	South East	24	29	71%	5%	14,828	44%
537	Sheffield Heeley	Yorkshire and The Humber	25	26	63%	10%	13,617	49%
538	Bristol South	South West	26	27	59%	4%	15,576	51%
539	Lincoln	East Midlands	30	24	51%	8%	14,872	49%
540	Sevenoaks	South East	30	27	56%	5%	15,704	42%
541	Mid Leicestershire	East Midlands	28	32	52%	6%	15,834	39%
542	Cramlington and Killingworth	North East	23	28	47%	8%	16,031	53%
Lowest: 543	Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West	North East	28	28	38%	10%	14,158	46%

Working in Target Areas



- For the past five years, **~43%** of the students we've worked with go to school in a target area
- By the end of 28-29, we are aiming to increase that figure to **53%**

Securing

Building

Enhancing

What's Working Well: Leicestershire



-  Leveraging relationships with secondaries to build presence in primaries (and rewarding recommendations)
-  Emailing our old schools!
-  Asking for introductions
-  Getting out in person
-  Small, local MATs

Celebrating our University Partnerships



Keisha Patel, a PhD student from DMU is teaching pupils at Rushey Mead Academy in Leicester

“It’s like an experience of what you can pick at university. It’s got me thinking, this is just one subject but there are so many different areas and things at university, it’s quite exciting.”

Year 9 student

A Challenge: Essex



✓ Wanting to increase school presence across the region as it fits our targeting criteria



✗ Internal logistics of finding local tutors to deliver our programme and universities for graduation events

A Challenge: Essex



-  Offering online versions of our programmes
-  Exploring options with university partners
-  Keeping targets realistic
-  Financial travel incentives for tutors
-  Remembering we can't do it all at once!

