

**The
Scholars
Programme**



Programme and Impact Report for Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic

Spring 2024-25



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Partner universities

Our university partners provide invaluable financial and logistical support to run our trips and to recruit new PhD tutors.



1. Summary

1.1 Welcome

I am pleased to present Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy with your impact report outlining your partnership with The Brilliant Club in Spring 2024-25. I trust your students found the work with their PhD tutor inspiring and challenging.

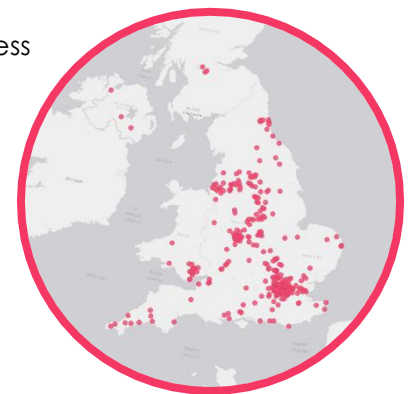
PhD tutor	Course title	University	Research area
Sophia Mitchell	KS2 - Law: What Are Rights?	Wrexham Glyndwr University	A Qualitative Study on Behaviours of Children Following the Time Spent with the Youth Justice Service on its Journey to Becoming Trauma Informed.

Update

In the Spring term this year, **243 researchers** worked with **5595 students** in **341 schools** to deliver The Scholars Programme. We continued to roll out developments to the programme, including engaging with more parents than ever before via our online information events. We also continued to implement developments to the Hub, our online platform for teachers, tutors and pupils, with accessibility, efficiency and security as the top priorities.

This report

This report provides a breakdown of students' engagement and progress towards our university preparedness outcomes: academic achievement and university self-efficacy. We also hope this document helps your school to articulate the impact of The Scholars Programme. For example, Section 3 includes wording which can be used to articulate the impact of The Scholars Programme in the language of the latest **Ofsted framework**, **Pupil Premium funding**, and **Gatsby Benchmarks**. Finally, we also share analysis findings that you could use to improve student outcomes in future placements. If you have any feedback about this report or the programme more widely, please do get in touch with me at harriet.joseph@thebrilliantclub.org.



Scholars Programme placements in Spring 2024-25

With educational inequality increasing in recent years, giving students access to stretching, enriching academic experiences is more important than ever, especially for students from less advantaged backgrounds. We are delighted to share the outcomes of [independent evaluations](#) showing that students who complete The Scholars Programme are statistically significantly more likely to apply and progress to a competitive university than other students from similar backgrounds (UCAS 2023-24 evaluation), and that the programme has a positive impact on GCSE attainment (based on data from the Higher Education Access Tracker).

We look forward to continuing to work with you and your students over the forthcoming year. We are currently signing up schools for 2025-26, so please do get in touch with your Programme Officer to ensure you have confirmed provision.

Thank you for your continuing support,

Harriet Joseph, Director of The Scholars Programme

1.2 Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy programme journey



1 Launch Events

Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy students were introduced to the programme and their course through their Tutor Launch. Students were also asked to log into the Hub and complete pre-programme assessments ahead of their first tutorials. Students could use the Hub throughout the programme to ask for support from their PhD tutor, access additional resources, submit assignments and homework, and receive feedback.

3 Final assignment

Tutorials culminated in students completing a **challenging university-style assignment**, which was marked by PhD tutors using a standardised mark scheme.

2 students achieved a 1st or a 2.1 in their final assignment

14 students submitted final assignments



4 Graduation Event

All students who completed the programme received a certificate and were invited to take part in a Graduation Event, co-hosted by a university partner, to celebrate their achievements.

2 Tutorials




Students took part in tutorials led by a PhD tutor. To emulate a university learning environment, tutorial groups are kept small and there is a focus on university-style pedagogy including independent research, critical thinking, and higher-order questioning.

Course Handbook



2. Student impact

To be able to report on the impact that The Scholars Programme has on Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy students, we look at the demographics of the students selected and measure programme outputs and university readiness outcomes.

Student Impact Framework		
	1. Student targeting	Pupil Premium Parental history of HE Postcode deprivation
	2. Programme outputs	Attendance Assignment submission
	3. University preparedness outcomes	Academic achievement University self-efficacy

2.1 Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy student targeting



In pursuit of our mission to support students from less advantaged backgrounds to progress to the most competitive universities, we target students who are eligible for Pupil Premium, who have no parental history of higher education and who live in deprived areas according to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). The below summarises targeting information of Scholars Programme students at Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy.



Pupil Premium

50 %
(7/14)



No parental history of higher education

57 %
(8/14)



Living in 40% most deprived areas according to IDACI

86 %
(12/14)



Target Students meeting 1 or more of 3 criteria

100 %
(14/14)

2.2 Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy programme outputs



This table reports how the students have engaged with the programme. We believe a high level of engagement to be a pre-requisite for a strong impact on student outcomes.

2.2.1 Student engagement

Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy attendance and assignment submission	
% average tutorial attendance	93 %
% final assignment submission	100 %

2.2.2 Launch and Graduation Events

On The Scholars Programme, students experience university-style learning and develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to go on to, and excel at, the most competitive universities. As part of this, we team up with our university partners to host Launch and Graduation Events.

Tutor Launch Event

Before the first tutorial, the students' PhD tutor delivered a session in school to get to know them, introduce them to The Scholars Programme in more detail, and share more details of the course they would be studying. Students set pledges for the programme and spent time using the Hub so that they could use it confidently throughout the programme.

Graduation Event: The University of Manchester

Students attended a Graduation Event to reflect on their achievements and celebrate their completion of The Scholars Programme. Each event included a reflection session from The Brilliant Club, a session led by one of our university partners to give students further Information, Advice and Guidance, a campus tour, and a graduation ceremony.

Parents and carers were invited to a 'Next Steps Panel' to find out more about how to support their child with making choices about university in the future.

Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy	% Strongly Agree + Agree
Graduation Event (n=9)	
I have enjoyed this Graduation Event	89 %
This event has made me feel proud about being in The Scholars Programme	100 %
I have learned something I didn't know before about this university	89 %
I will be able to study at this university when I am older if I work hard at school	67 %

2.3 Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy university preparedness outcomes



Based on academic evidence, The Brilliant Club designed an outcomes framework that details how we will support students to progress to the most competitive universities. This framework is built upon seven outcomes that [academic research](#), and a rigorous multi-stage [process of testing and validation](#) show are linked to attainment and university progression.

Academic Achievement assessed via the academic work students produce on the programme in baseline and final assignments	Subject Knowledge
	Written Communication
	Critical Thinking
University Self-Efficacy Assessed via pre and post programme surveys using TASO's validated questions	Knowledge of Higher Education
	Academic Self-Efficacy
	Sense of Belonging
	Cognitive Strategies

2.3.1 Academic achievement

Written Communication, Subject Knowledge, and Critical Thinking

Academic achievement is about the skills and knowledge that students are explicitly learning in the context of The Scholars Programme. These include written communication, subject knowledge, and critical thinking.

The following averages are based on the 8 students that have submitted both their baseline and final assignments. The table also includes UK averages, allowing you to compare scores at baseline and progress made.

Competency	Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy			UK Comparison		
	Baseline Average	Final Average	Average progress	Baseline Average	Final Average	Average progress
Written Communication	37	55	49 %	50	63	26 %
Subject Knowledge	41	57	38 %	51	65	26 %
Critical Thinking	41	55	33 %	49	63	28 %

Note – This data should be used for descriptive purposes and read in the context of the qualitative information provided in this report.

Individual student outcomes

Student Name	PhD Tutor	Baseline Assignment Grade	Final Assignment Grade	Baseline Assignment Mark	Final Assignment Mark	Tutorial Attendance %
Aaradhya Scaria	Sophia Mitchell	DNS	2.2	DNS	55	88 %
Alfie-Jay Munday	Sophia Mitchell	DNS	3rd	DNS	41	100 %
Crina Voinea	Sophia Mitchell	DNS	3rd	DNS	47	50 %
Harvey Mountford	Sophia Mitchell	3rd	WTP	44	39	88 %
Jacob Howard	Sophia Mitchell	WTP	3rd	17	40	100 %
Jessica Aubrey	Sophia Mitchell	DNS	3rd	DNS	40	100 %
Kaja Paice	Sophia Mitchell	DNS	3rd	DNS	49	100 %
Kyra Shepherd	Sophia Mitchell	3rd	2.2	47	54	100 %
Leonardo Hulme	Sophia Mitchell	DNS	2.2	DNS	56	100 %
Poppy Cresswell	Sophia Mitchell	3rd	2.2	44	53	88 %
Rebecca Mutate	Sophia Mitchell	2.2	1st	52	73	100 %
Sarah Onanuga	Sophia Mitchell	3rd	2.2	44	58	100 %
Sophie Smith	Sophia Mitchell	3rd	1st	44	70	88 %
Vilte Campbell	Sophia Mitchell	WTP	2.2	24	54	100 %

Notes

The mark schemes use university-style marking to engage students with learning in higher education. They have been developed in collaboration with an academic who specialises in educational assessment, and they are designed to measure outcomes that are considered important for school attainment, including subject knowledge, critical thinking, and written communication. Assignments are marked by PhD tutors in line with these standardised mark schemes.





For Key Stages 2-4, students receiving a 1st class grade are performing to a very high standard on these outcomes, whilst students receiving a 2:1 are performing to a high standard.

“DNS” stands for did not submit, and assignments that do not meet passing requirements are marked as working toward pass (“WTP”). Students that withdrew from the programme are not part of the impact report. Mark deductions, for example for late submission or plagiarism, are applied to the full marks and grades displayed in this table, but not to the sub-marks for competencies in the table on the previous page.

2.3.2 University self-efficacy

On The Scholars Programme, students experience university-style learning and develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to go on to, and excel at, the most competitive universities. [The Brilliant Club and Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education \(TASO\) worked together](#) to creating and validating a sector-leading standardised survey that is widely used to evaluate outcomes in higher education access and success interventions. In this section we report on the four outcomes that we feel most accurately reflect the impact The Scholars Programme has on students understanding of the journey to university, and the skills and self-belief that they need to get there: Knowledge of Higher Education, Academic Self-Efficacy, Sense of Belonging, and Cognitive Strategies.

We only report school-level data if we have responses from at least four students for both pre and post programme assessments. Unfortunately, we did not receive this data for your school, so the table below shows UK averages.

Outcomes		UK Average		
		Before	After	Change
Knowledge of Higher Education		3.5	4.0	11 %
Academic Self-Efficacy		3.8	3.9	3 %
Sense of Belonging		3.8	3.9	3 %
Cognitive Strategies		3.7	3.9	3 %

Note – Students responded to multiple statements using a five-point scale from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). This table shows average scores across questions pertaining to each outcome. This data should be used for descriptive purposes and read in the context of the qualitative information provided in this report.

Knowledge of Higher Education, Academic Self-Efficacy, Sense of Belonging, and Cognitive Strategies

The questions below were asked both at the beginning and at the end of the programme. We only report school-level data if we have responses from at least four students for both pre and post programme assessments. The table below therefore shows UK averages.

UK Average	% Strongly Agree + Agree	
	Before	After
Knowledge of Higher Education		
I know what studying at university would be like	34%	68%
I know how studying at university is different from studying in school or college	73%	89%
I believe that if I apply to university, I will get a place	55%	68%
Academic Self-Efficacy	Before	After
I know the steps I need to take to go to university in the future	69%	74%
I know a lot about what it is like to be a student at university	78%	81%
I know a lot about the differences between learning at school and learning at university	61%	63%
Sense of Belonging	Before	After
University is for people like me	59%	65%
I would fit in well academically with others at university	72%	76%
I would fit in well socially with others at university	65%	71%
Cognitive Strategies	Before	After
I can tell which information is most important when I study	70%	75%
I can tell how reliable information is when I read something	67%	70%
I can clearly explain my ideas, even when writing about complicated things	57%	66%
I can confidently explain my ideas when talking to others	65%	69%

Note – Students responded to the statements using a five-point scale from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). The tables on this page show the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements.

3. Articulating impact and further analysis

3.1 Articulating the impact of The Scholars Programme

The Scholars Programme supports schools to meet statutory regulations for **Pupil Premium**, **Gatsby Benchmarks** and **Ofsted**. This section includes wording which can be used to articulate the impact of The Scholars Programme within each framework.

Pupil Premium

The Scholars Programme has been used at Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy to target disadvantaged high prior attainers as evidence shows that these students are especially at risk of underachievement nationally. As a supra-curricular intervention, The Scholars Programme develops outcomes that are important for raising students' attainment, including subject knowledge, critical thinking, and written communication.

On The Scholars Programme this term, **7 students were eligible for Pupil Premium**. Their average attendance was **91 %**, which means they received **51 hours of tutoring** from a PhD researcher.

Ofsted

The Scholars Programme helps students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences in later life. It does this by providing a supra-curricular intervention, targeted at high prior attaining disadvantaged students, offering them the opportunity to work with a PhD researcher to produce an extended final assignment.

Students taking part in The Scholars Programme receive information, advice, and guidance at their Online Launch and their visit to a competitive university for their Graduation Event, meeting Gatsby Benchmark 7. This is part of our commitment to equip students with the knowledge and cultural capital they need for university study.

The Scholars Programme is one element of our commitment to providing a rich and broad curriculum across the school.

Gatsby Benchmarks

The Scholars Programme supports Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy in fulfilling Gatsby Benchmark 7 and is embedded into our wider school Careers Programme, supporting the school to meet Gatsby Benchmark 3 for students who are both high attaining and disadvantaged. It is an example of both a push factor (providing information, advice, and guidance as a school-based intervention) and a pull factor (showing students what higher education is like and giving them a direct experience through engaging with a competitive university).

The Scholars Programme challenges students' thinking through a series of tutorials, enabling students to gain an experience of university-style learning. This term, students have engaged with The University of Manchester at their Graduation Event.

3.2 Impact analysis and comparison data

This school impact report focuses on numbers and stories of Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy students. We understand that information about the specific programme that your students completed with their PhD tutor is most relevant to you, but we also want to share analysis that we conduct across all students on The Scholars Programme. This analysis, which is based on more robust statistical methods and bigger sample sizes of students, provides helpful insights on how to improve outcomes for students.

Factors affecting student outcomes

From analysing the data of more than 48,000 students who completed The Scholars Programme, we see that on average students make 9.8 marks progress between their baseline and final assignment mark. Students eligible for Pupil Premium make similar progress with 9.4 marks on average. 26% of students who submitted a final assignment achieved a 1st and 42% of students achieved a 2.1 grade. From the analysis, we were able to identify drivers of students' academic achievement:

TUTORIAL ATTENDANCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Students with higher attendance on average do better in their final assignment. Attending **Tutorial 6**, which provides students with the opportunity to review the assignment draft with their PhD tutor, is associated with an added average **two marks increase** between students' baseline and final assignment mark.

Students who submit their baseline assignment **do better in their final assignment by an average of four marks**, even when controlling for other factors such as tutorial attendance and student demographics.

BASELINE ASSIGNMENTS MATTER

UK comparison table

This table compares programme attainment and attendance with averages for the 341 schools that took part in The Scholars Programme in Spring 2024-25 across the UK. Averages are based on students who submitted both their baseline and final assignment.

	Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy		UK Comparison	
	Overall	Pupil Premium	Overall	Pupil Premium
Baseline assignment mark average	40	34	50	49
Final assignment mark average	55	56	63	62
Average progress between baseline and final assignment	40 %	65 %	27 %	26 %
% 1st/2.1 final assignment grades	14 %	No data	69 %	61 %
% Final assignment submission rate	100 %	100 %	87 %	82 %
% Tutorial attendance	93 %	91 %	87 %	85 %

3.3 Updates and opportunities

The Scholar



In December, we published the latest issue of **The Scholar**, The Brilliant Club's academic journal of outstanding student work. The Scholar is published annually and showcases some of the excellent work produced by students on The Scholars Programme. All assignments nominated for publication are reviewed by an expert panel of PhD researchers and only the highest scoring assignments get published. We are delighted to celebrate students' work and achievements in the country's only academic journal dedicated to publishing university-style assignments authored by school students. All editions of The Scholar are published on our [website](#).

Alumni Community

We are building a network of Brilliant Club Scholars to create a community of like-minded alumni. Becoming a Brilliant Club alumni means joining the wider Brilliant Club community, invites to opportunities from our partner institutions and networking events, and sharing their experiences to inspire the next generation. If your students would like to sign up, they can do so [here](#), and you can find out more via our [website](#).

Your feedback and notes on data collection

We hope you have enjoyed reading your school impact report. We consider it an important document to celebrate the success of your students and to provide you with detailed evidence of the academic progress that your students have made. If there are any inconsistencies in the data that we report for your school, please let us know via your Programme Officer and we will check your report. Please also do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or comments about the data displayed in this document or if you have suggestions for making the impact report more relevant for you and your school.

Parent and Carer Engagement

Engaging with parents and carers is an important aspect of The Scholars Programme. We run online events at the start and end of the programme to provide information about both the programme and university that parents and carers can use to support their children. Parents and carers can also choose to receive emails throughout the term to keep them informed about what stage students are at with the programme. At the end of this engagement cycle, parents and carers can sign up to our newsletter to keep receiving useful information.

Research and Evaluation

For the latest information on our programme evaluations, please click [here](#). Alongside evaluating The Scholars Programme, we support schools and universities to build their research and evaluation skills and capacity. You can find out more about how you can collaborate with us [here](#).

