



The  
Brilliant  
Club

Press Release 25/05/18

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## MP praises local pupils getting a taste of university

Local MP Joan Ryan visited Year 12 pupils at Bishop Stopford's School this week to hear about their progress as part of The Scholars Programme – a prestigious national scheme which gives school pupils an opportunity to experience university-style learning.

The programme recruits, trains and places PhD researchers in non-selective state schools to deliver university-style tutorials based on their own research to small groups of pupils. The pupils Joan Ryan met with today are studying a course entitled *Skin highway: Effective vehicles in the race for drug discovery* with their tutor Fotis Iliopoulos from University College London (UCL).

As part of the programme, the pupils will also visit two highly-selective universities, where they receive information, advice and guidance about university life and making a successful university application.

The Scholars Programme is run by The Brilliant Club, an award-winning charity whose aim is increase the number of pupils from under-represented backgrounds progressing to highly-selective universities. An independent evaluation by the Universities and Colleges Application Services (UCAS) showed that nearly sixty percent of pupils who complete the programme go on to attend a highly-selective university. For pupils on the programme who were eligible for free school meals, 54% progressed to a highly-selective university, compared to a national rate of 12%. (*see more detail in note 2, below*).

Joan Ryan said:

“It was great to visit Bishop Stopford's Enfield School today, and meet pupils taking part in The Scholars Programme. I was very impressed at how they engaged with such a complex and challenging academic topic. It just goes to show what young people from Enfield North can achieve if we give them the opportunity. I wish the pupils the very best for the future, and I encourage more schools to give their pupils the chance to benefit from this programme”.

Robert Smith, Lead Teacher, said:

"I was delighted to meet with Joan Ryan and show her the work pupils are doing in The Scholars Programme. I'm proud of the achievements of our pupils who are participating and am excited to see how their participation inspires their study and university choices."

Dr Chris Wilson, CEO of The Brilliant Club said:

"In Britain today, there's an entrenched link between a young person's background and their chance of education success. The Scholars Programme helps pupils develop the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfil their academic potential and secure places at highly-selective universities. We're really grateful to Joan Ryan for taking time to come and see the great work that our PhD tutors and partner schools are doing, and the amazing things pupils are achieving."

***CAPTION: Joan Ryan MP with pupils from Bishop Stopford's School, who are participating in The Scholars Programme.***

***For further information, please contact Angela Sammon on 07951 543426***

## Notes for Editors

1 - The Brilliant Club exists to increase the number of pupils from under-represented backgrounds progressing to highly-selective universities by mobilising academic researchers. It currently works with more than 630 schools and colleges across England, Scotland and Wales. In 2017-18 it will work with 12,000 pupils

2 - The Brilliant Club recently commissioned the Universities and Colleges Application Services (UCAS) to evaluate the impact of its programmes on progression to highly-selective universities. UCAS analysed destination data from 685 school leavers who completed The Scholars Programme in 2015 and 2016. Second, it compared the progress of these pupils against a control group with similar characteristics.

Of the total cohort of pupils, UCAS reported the following impact:

- 79% applied to a highly selective university
- 74% received an offer from a highly-selective university
- 55% progressed to a highly-selective university
- 54% of Ever6FSM pupils progressed to a highly-selective university, compared to a national progression rate of 12%

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**Images**

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