



Starting early: University access in Cornwall

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The Brilliant Club



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 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.



What do we do?



The Scholars Programme

The Scholars Programme is delivered by PhD researchers in schools across the UK, to pupils age 8-18.

[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](#)



Key questions

1. What does the data in Cornwall tell us about attainment and university progression?
2. What factors influence university access?
3. How can we support our least advantaged students from an early age?
4. Our work with primary schools in Cornwall

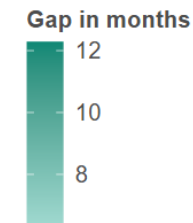
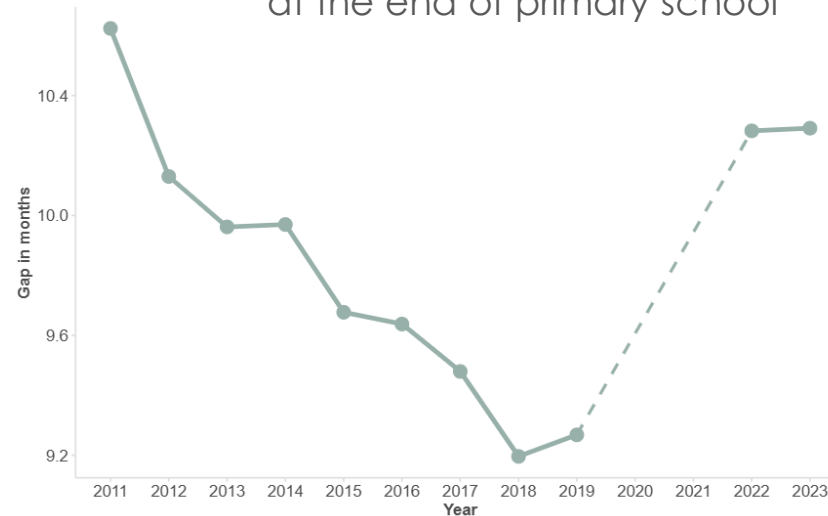


Cornwall and Higher Education

The attainment gap

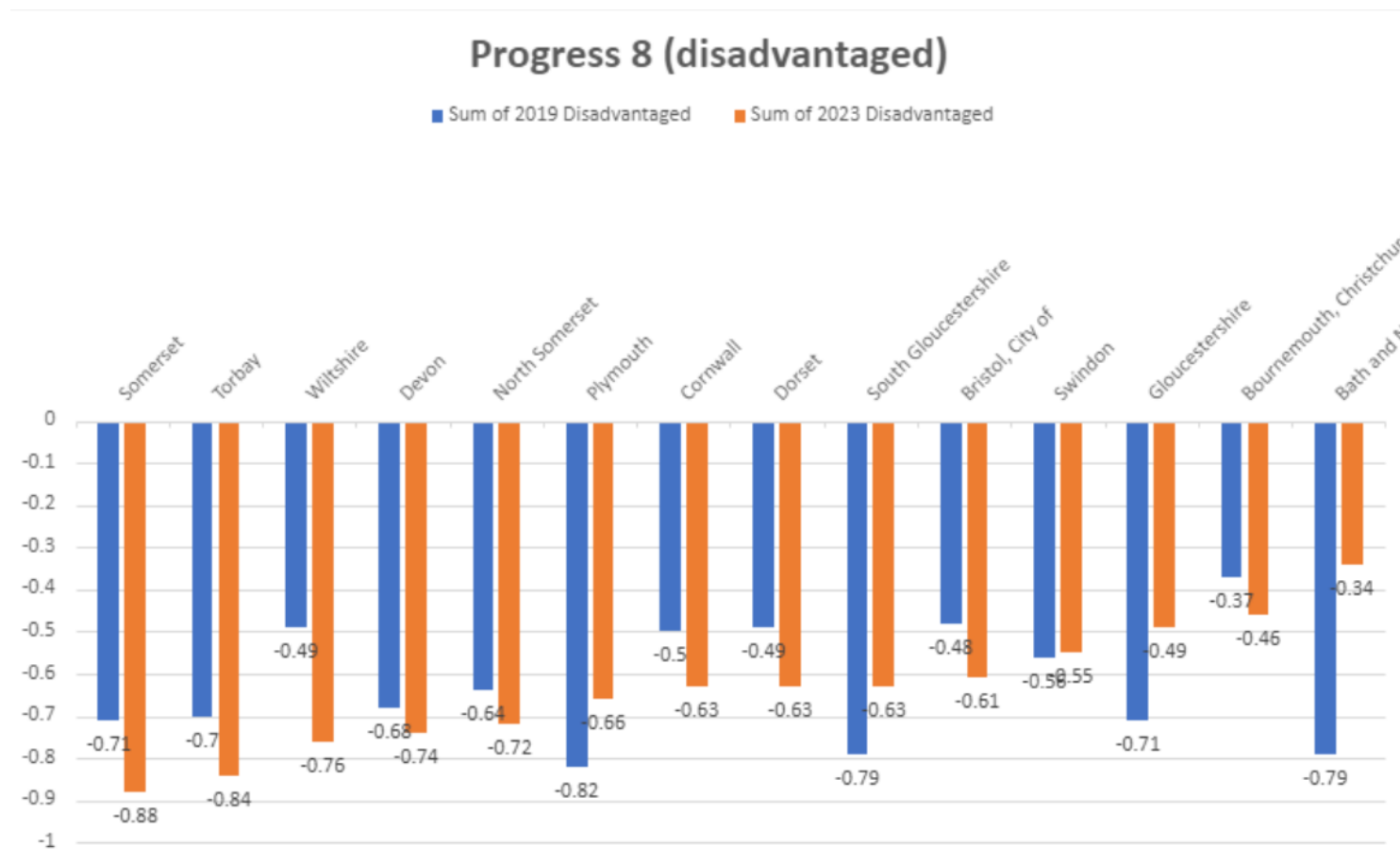
- **29%** of pupils are classified as disadvantaged by the end of primary school.
- Nationwide, the disadvantage gap at the end of primary school increased between 2019 and 2023 from 9.3 to **10.3 months** – its largest since 2011.
- The South West had the second-largest gap of **12.2 months**.
- Cornwall had a gap of **11.4 months**.

The national disadvantage gap at the end of primary school



South West
Gap in months: 12.2

Cornwall
Gap in months: 11.4

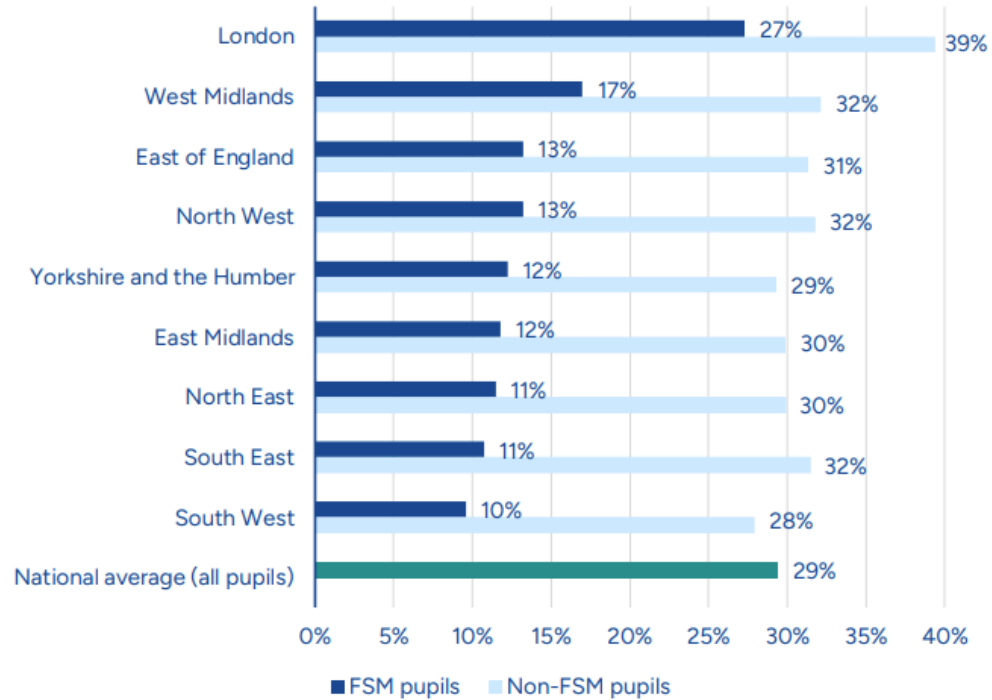


The attainment gap between disadvantaged and advantaged children in the South West is one of the widest in the country ([Education Policy Institute \(EPI\), 2023](#)).

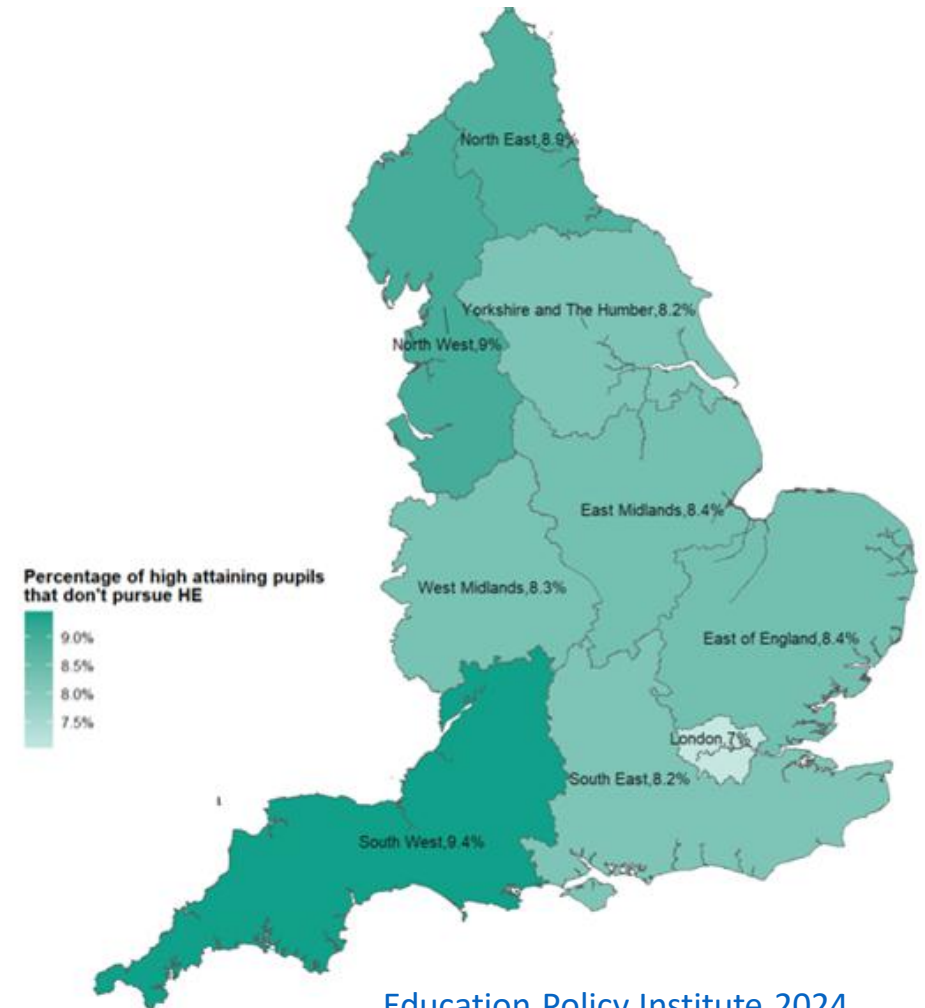
Progression to University



Figure 5: Percentage of FSM and non-FSM pupils with an undergraduate degree by age 22, by region



Note: Data from the 2011/12 to 2013/14 GCSE cohorts, captured at age 22





Starting early

Barriers to university



Confidence

Aspirations /
Expectations

Knowledge
of options

Sense of
belonging

Attainment

Financial
background

Family
expectations

Caring
responsibilities



The Scholars Programme

Gives your students the opportunity to work with a **PhD researcher** to learn about new subject areas and experience **university style learning.**

We are currently working with **over 850 schools** across the UK

Since our founding, we have worked with nearly **100,000 students**

What is The Scholars Programme?



**Group
Tutorials**

**Final
Assignment**



Feedback



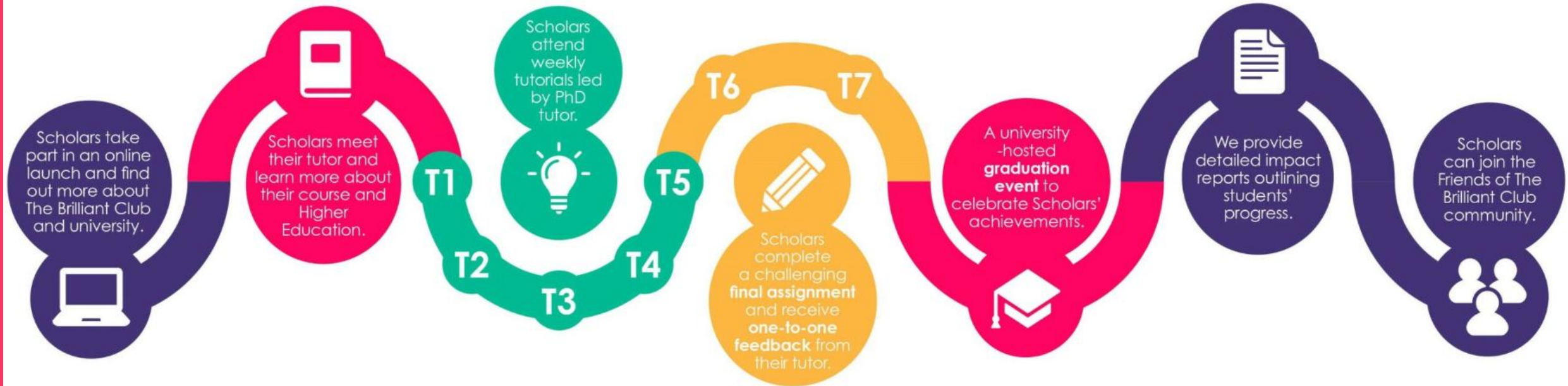
Graduation



Launches: weeks 1-2



Graduation: weeks 16-17



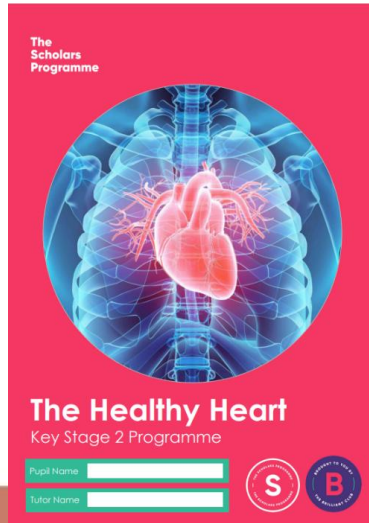
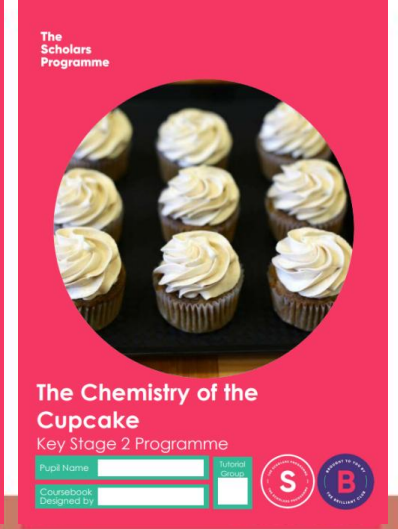
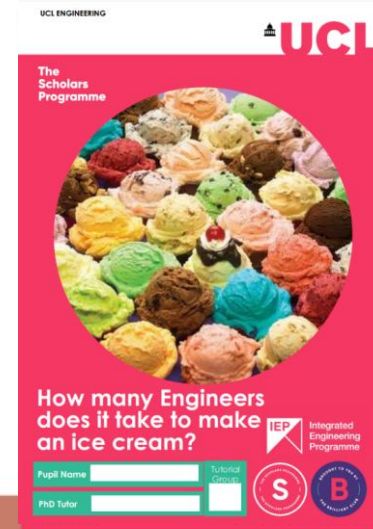
Students will have access to our online Hub throughout the programme, where they will keep in touch with their PhD tutor outside the classroom, submit their work and access additional resources



Tutorials & Assignment: weeks 3-15

Some of our brilliant courses

KS2

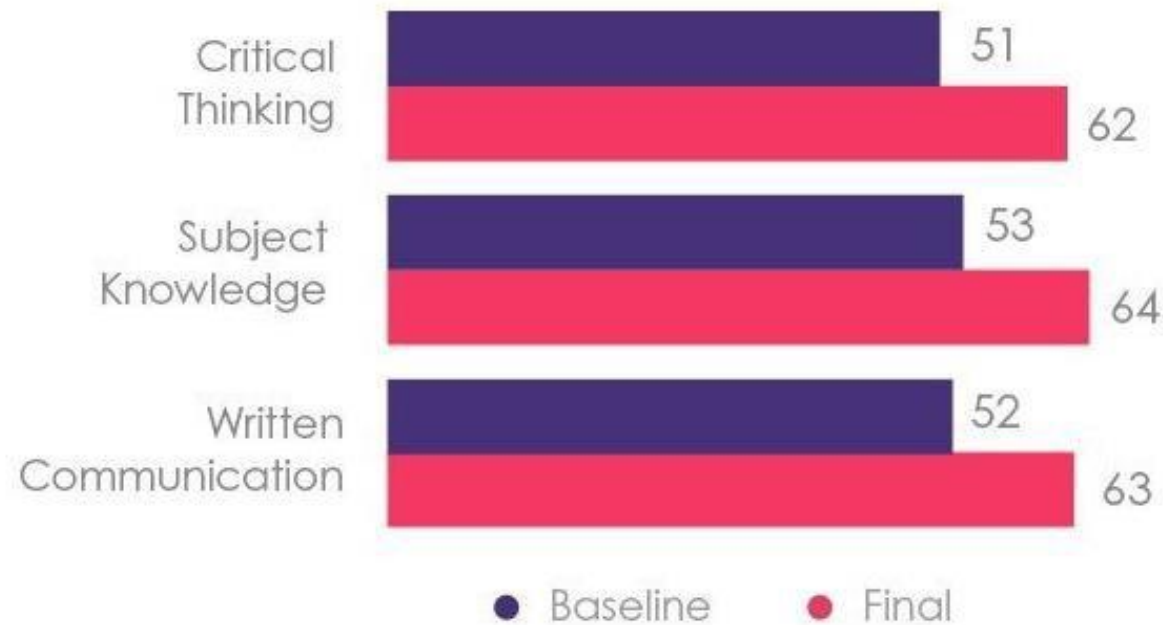


KS2 Scholars consistently make positive progress in their academic skills on the programme



The Scholars Programme: Academic Achievement

Based on 8800 pupils with baseline
and end of programme assignments



Pupil Selection



- **Key stage 2-5**
- **Middle/higher prior attainers**
- **At least 70% of pupils (10 of 14) are one or more of the following:**
 - Ever 6 FSM eligible
 - No parental history of higher education
 - Home postcode in IMD Q1 & Q2



What does the programme cost?

The school's contribution for a standard placement of 14 pupils is **£2,870**.

The **actual cost is roughly £4,277.00**, subsidised by our university partners and our own fundraising.

That's...

**£205.00
per
pupil**

**14% of one
pupil's Pupil
Premium
allocation**

**£20.50
per
session**

**Including a full
day out at a
university**

What's included?



2 launch events & 7 small group tutorials
with a world leading PhD tutor



Comprehensive online learning hub



Detailed course handbook & 3 marked
pieces of work

Full day at a university



Bespoke impact report showing pupil
progress



Penpol Primary School

The
Scholars
Programme



Into the Deep, Dark Woods: A Journey through Literature

Key Stage 2 Programme

Pupil Name

Tutorial
Group

PhD Tutor



The
Scholars
Programme



What is Fairness?

Key Stage 2 Programme

Pupil Name

Tutorial
Group

Tutor Name





Cornwall and The Scholars Programme

Since 2018, **543 pupils** and **14 schools** in Cornwall have taken part in The Scholars Programme

Final assignment by KS3 student at Bodmin College, published in [The Scholar](#)

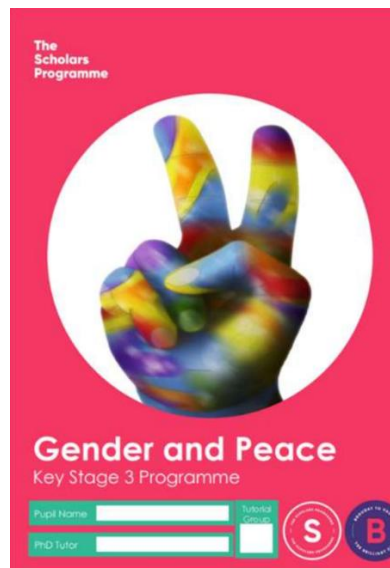
"The ethics of war primarily relies on the just war theory, which is meant to prevent unnecessary loss of life and suffering by providing conditions on when, how and why a war should be fought... Technology always changes in war, which will always prove a challenge to military ethics boards worldwide... The debate about drones and Artificial Intelligence driven weapons is ongoing."

What do Cornish students say about The Scholars Programme?

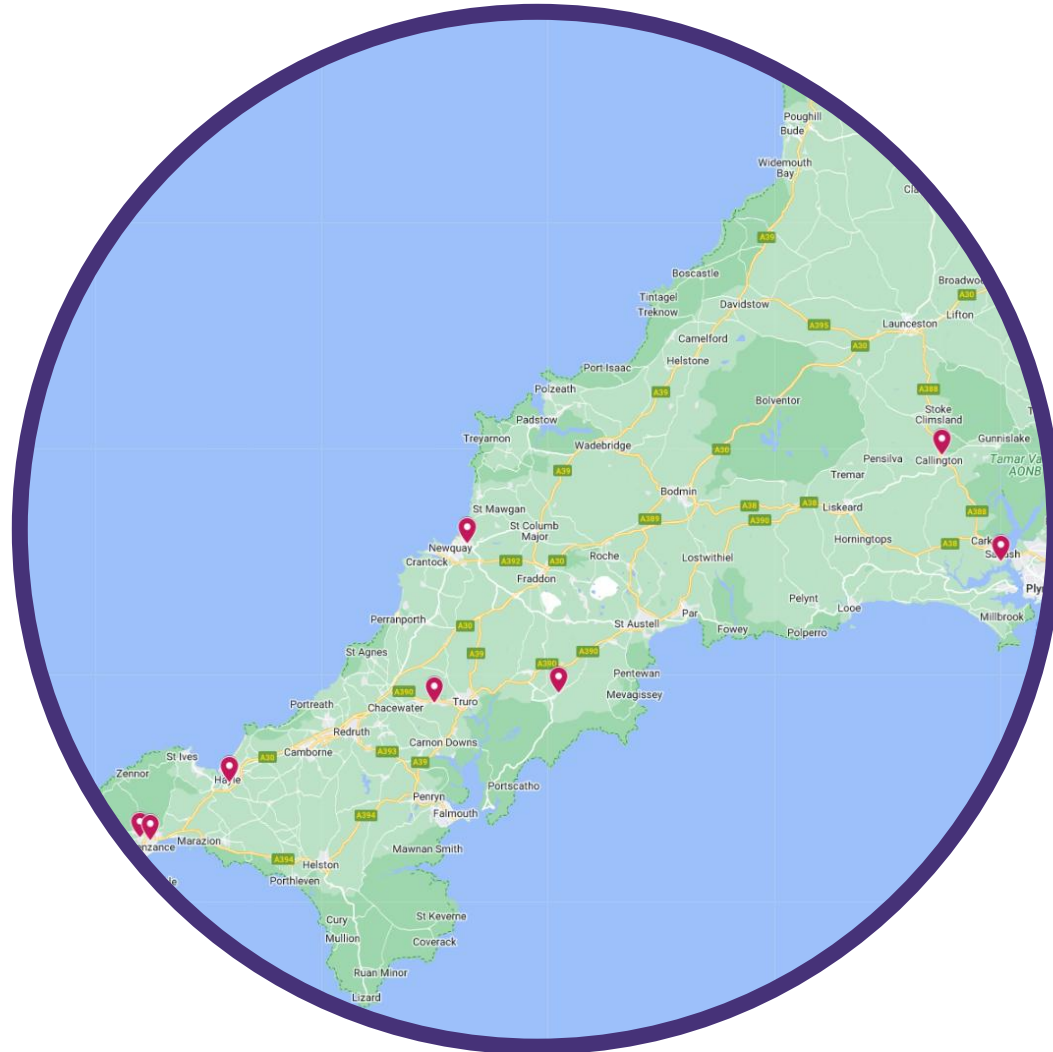
"I enjoyed it a lot and I really enjoyed deepening my knowledge on a new subject and university style education." *Hayle Academy*

"I entered The Scholars Programme to build my confidence and public speaking and I think it really helped. I enjoyed stepping outside my comfort zone" *Treviglas Academy*

"The grad event was very supportive, encouraging and exciting" *Penpol School*



Our Uni Partners in the South West



FALMOUTH
UNIVERSITY



University of
BRISTOL



UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH



Questions & Next Steps

If you are interested in getting your pupils involved next academic year, please express your interest to us via email:

Jessica.galliver@thebrilliantclub.org





thebrilliantclub.org