

Schools Impact Report

2024-2025



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Our story so far

The Female Lead Society is a global community dedicated to championing young women. We empower girls in schools and universities to grow their confidence, lead bold conversations, and explore their future with ambition. By connecting students with positive role models and real-world opportunities, we help them challenge limiting beliefs and find support in a powerful peer network.

Founded in 2015 by tech entrepreneur Edwina Dunn, The Female Lead began as a storytelling project, sharing the lives of extraordinary women. From scientists and chefs to firefighters and founders. These stories now reach over 8.6 million people and are freely shared with thousands of schools across the UK and beyond.

In 2017, our research into the impact of social media on girls' self-image led to our campaign *Disrupt Your Feed*, proving that following inspiring role models online can transform confidence and aspirations. That same year, we gifted 25,000 copies of The Female Lead book to schools in the UK and USA, bringing diverse stories directly into classrooms.

By 2019, we launched the Female Lead Society, giving girls in UK schools the tools to lead change locally. In 2023, we deepened this work with our **Ambassador Programme** by inviting a select group of schools to co-create resources, join mentoring sessions, and shape our future through their lived experiences.

2024 was a breakthrough year, with over 900 students attending our Inspiring Careers of the Future events in London and Manchester. From AI leaders to gaming executives, girls met a dynamic panel of female changemakers and left energised about what's possible.

In 2025, the Ambassador Programme continues to thrive. Students completed another impactful year, taking part in standout experiences, from meeting Formula 1 drivers and museum curators to leading Q&As with inspirational women. Our 2025 Inspiring Careers event, hosted at Amazon's London HQ, was another huge success and gave students direct access to a diverse range of female leaders from pilots to photographers.

Now, as we look ahead, we're expanding our network, launching new resources, and opening even more doors for girls to see what's possible and take the lead.

Why we need to empower young women

Only **1 in 4** UK girls feel very confident about their life or future

Girls need safe spaces. Just **21%** felt safe in school in 2023, down from 43% in 2019

85% of girls and young women aged 11-21 experience sexism in their daily lives, from sexist comments (53%) to when they're online (73%)

Girls continue to outperform boys at GCSE but are less likely to pursue STEM A-levels or careers, a trend linked to the confidence gap and cultural stereotypes

Nearly half **49%** of girls say that being a girl has stopped them from doing activities like speaking up or joining a team

54% of girls say social media images made them worry about their body image; in contrast, only 26% of boys felt the same way

Disrupt Your Feed

Using social media as a force for good

The Mission

The Female Lead is committed to helping girls build self-belief and confidence. Through Disrupt Your Feed, we empower girls to harness the positive power of social media while reducing its harmful effects.

The Challenge

Social media plays a huge role in shaping girls' self-image, often in damaging ways. We found that:

61% of girls feel pressured to look like people they see online.

Many spend
a day scrolling.

3+ hours

78% of girls who follow celebrities or reality stars say it negatively affects how they feel.

Disrupt Your Feed

The Solution: Disrupt Your Feed

In response, The Female Lead launched a 5-year study (2018–2023) across five UK schools with girls aged 14-18. In partnership with data science company Starcount, participants were supported to follow inspiring female role models online and reflect on how this changed their mindset.



"Teen girls who follow inspirational female role models on social media display a more positive and aspirational self-image than their peers."

Key Findings

The results speak for themselves:

79%

of participants who followed inspiring women online reported an improvement in self-image and future aspirations

88%

of girls became more mindful of their social media use, curating their feeds to include more empowering content

70%

of girls continued to follow positive role models, showing a sustained shift in social media behaviour

Disrupt Your Feed

The Impact

Girls who disrupted their feed experienced:

- Stronger self-worth
- Healthier mental habits
- Broader ambitions

By swapping passive scrolling for purposeful following, girls regained control over their digital environments and their sense of self.

“It’s given me a completely different outlook on it, because it’s not about - obviously it’s social - but it’s not like about the materialistic side of it.”

– DYF participant

What’s Next: 2025 Campaign Refresh

This year, Disrupt Your Feed is back with a bold new phase. Our goal is to not only reach more girls, but to equip the adults around them, from parents to teachers, with the tools and understanding to support healthier online habits.

Follow The Female Lead on social media for the latest on [#disruptyourfeed](#).

Amazing Things Happen

When girls meet their role models

We've proven through our research that girls' aspirations and self-image changes when they are exposed to positive role models on their social media feeds, so we took this one step further with our campaign: Amazing Things Happen.

This campaign brings role models into the real world and gives girls the opportunity to meet women who inspire them in real life. From red-carpet film premieres with celebrities to one-on-one mentoring with business leaders, we've seen again and again the effects that seeing their role models has on young women.



Top left to right: Illy meeting Samuel L Jackson at the Captain Marvel Premiere, students networking with business leaders at our Inspiring Careers event, Sophia meeting Challengers film star Zendaya, Cristina meeting Ariana DeBose from Disney's WISH.

Bottom left to right: A lucky student meets Scarlett Johansson, a student meets the stars from Disney's Elemental, students networking with Dr Shini, students get a VIP tour from V&A Museum curator Kate Bailey.

Educational Resources

Over the past year, we co-created and tested educational resources with our Ambassador Schools, collaborating closely with students and teachers to make sure the materials work in real classrooms. Now, we're making these resources available to a wider community for free.

They'll be shared in bite-sized chunks via a bi-monthly newsletter, perfect for schools who want flexible, student-led content that sparks discussion and builds confidence.

Topics we cover:

Inspiring careers of the future

Students love: The 70+ careers highlighted within expected high-growth areas in the labour market of the future.

Exploring financial inequality

Students love: The facts and figures around the Pension Pay Gap. Many students told us they were unaware of this disparity before!

Strategies to confront sexism

Students love: Feeling empowered with tools to help when they experience sexism in school.

Women and healthcare - the divide

Students love: The video content from GP Dr Nighat, filmed by The Female Lead - busting myths around women's health.

The implications of being a working mother

Students love: Learning about this important topic early.

The power of platonic bonds

Students love: That they've never covered content like this before at school.

Career choices and finances

Students love: The interactive money game that takes them through saving, investing and spending!

Growing confidence and self belief

Students love: How the activities in this resource made them see themselves differently.

Building a personal brand for success

Students love: The real-world examples of personal branding in women they admire.

Our Ambassador Schools

The Female Lead Ambassador schools are spread across different regions of England, with many located in London. Our schools have been carefully selected to include a mix of both independent and state-funded schools, all of which have been recognised for their outstanding quality. Schools like Mulberry School and Swanlea School in Tower Hamlets, where a significant number of students receive free school meals, demonstrate the socioeconomic diversity within our Ambassador School group. Overall, our selection of schools is intended to provide a well-rounded representation of the wide range of educational institution types across England.



Leighton Park School Reading

Independent co-educational day and boarding school.



Newlands Girls' School Maidenhead

Non-selective girls academy and sixth form, rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.



Mulberry School London

High-performing, non-selective girls academy.



St Paul's Girls School London

Highly selective independent girls' school.



Ardingly College

Co-educational boarding and day school.



Lichfield Cathedral School Staffordshire

Non-selective co-educational independent day school.



Swanlea School London

Non-selective, mixed school, rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.



Surbiton High School Greater London

Selective independent girls' school.



Tiffin Girls' School London

Selective girls grammar school, rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

Exciting opportunities and events

As part of our commitment to furthering girls' aspirations, we provide exclusive opportunities and events to our Student Ambassadors and wider schools network.

Inspiring Careers of the Future 2025

Hosted at Amazon's London HQ, this year's Inspiring Careers event was another huge success. Attended by over 250 students from our schools' community, students listened to inspiring talks, networked and engaged in interactive workshops with a range of female leaders from photographers to pilots!



Our speakers this year (from left to right): Dr Khadija Stone - Junior Doctor and Magistrate, Mollie Rose Skeffington - Photographer, Aoife Moran - TikTok, Kate Mason - Sports Presenter, Ramat Tejani - Google and Anna Wisniowski - Tesco.

“The students were filled with hope and determination that they too can achieve what they set their mind to. I think it broadened their horizons and showed them they can aspire to great roles in the future and should explore what’s out there rather than settle if something does not bring them happiness and satisfaction.”

Mrs L Allaway - Deputy Headteacher

What our Ambassadors taught us...

At this year's Inspiring Careers event, we invited students to share their voices and experiences with us, live and in their own words. Here's what they told us:

We asked: who is your biggest role model?

Many girls named their **teacher** or **sister**, both ranked among the top 5 responses. But the top answer was their Mum.

1 in 4 girls said their biggest role model is their Mum.

As part of our Confidence Workshop, we asked students to reflect on a time they felt proud of themselves or overcame a personal challenge.

Here are just a few of the powerful things they shared:

I am proud of learning to love myself.

I am proud of learning to love myself and putting myself first.

I overcame living for others.

I was very proud when people doubted me and I proved them wrong.

I'm proud being a feminist in a conservative environment and standing by my principals and values.

I overcame my fear of being judged and being embarrassed so I can enjoy life.

I am proud that I kept going with my ambitions.



“This event motivated me to get excited about thinking about my future by showing me role models of how my career could look. I would recommend it, as I found it empowering and also fun.”

- Holland Park School student

Other student opportunities

Our Ambassador students gain exclusive access to an incredible network of women leading in media, sports, the arts, and beyond. Here are some of the stand out's from 2025:

From Ardingly to the West End: our Ambassadors meet Moana!

Ambassadors Isabella and Anastasia, students from Ardingly Academy, were invited to a special experience in London's West End; attending the premiere of Disney's Moana 2. As part of the event, they also had the incredible opportunity to interview Auli'i Cravalho (the voice of Moana) and the film's composers, Barlow and Bear.



F1 Futures: fast cars and fierce women with Susie Wolff MBE



Jannah and Sara, students from Mulberry School, had an unforgettable experience meeting none other than Susie Wolff; Scottish former professional racing driver and Managing Director of the F1 Academy and two of F1's top female drivers: Bianca Bustamante and Abbi Pulling!

Inside the gallery: Students meet leading Curator Dr Flavia Frigeri



Students from St Paul's Girls' School were invited to a private talk and tour at the National Portrait Gallery with Dr Flavia Frigeri, Curatorial and Collections Director.

Dr Frigeri shared her impressive journey in the world of art and curation and shared her process from idea to creation for her latest exhibition: Reframing Narratives: Women in Portraiture exhibition, including Work in Progress by Jann Haworth and Liberty Blake. This powerful piece features portraits of 130 women who've shaped history, but what resonated most with the students was the blank space left intentionally in the artwork. A space to imagine yourself, or a woman you admire, as part of the story. And that is exactly what The Female Lead is all about!

It was remarkable to have such a vivid account of a career. She set out all the challenges and rewards of the career path. There are a number of students who I could well imagine will be wanting to follow her into some sort of curatorial role now.

- Miss K Evans, Head of History of Art, St Paul's Girls School

Leaving a lasting impact

All of our Student Ambassadors shared powerful feedback, describing the experience as both fun and engaging, while also transformative in their understanding of gender equality.

100% of Student Ambassadors agreed that they:

- ✓ Gained significant knowledge through the programme
- ✓ Boosted their confidence and felt empowered to advocate for equality in their own lives
- ✓ Valued having a safe, supportive space to explore feminism with like-minded peers
- ✓ Were grateful for the opportunities to broaden their perspectives through events and meaningful activities
- ✓ Loved hearing from accomplished women further along in their careers, and felt inspired by their journeys
- ✓ Left feeling more empowered to pursue careers in male-dominated fields or advocate for women in their future work

“You can have discussions and do workshops but it’s quite unique to be able to take actual concrete steps towards resolving issues around gender inequality. This is the first time something like this has been offered.”

- St Paul's Girls School student

“We found the interactive sessions to be really good. It actually showed us how shocking some of the stats were. It was a good way to get the key facts across.”

- Ardingly student

“All of the activities were good because they made us interact in different ways and made us look at the information differently. There was a large variety of interactive options.”

- Ardingly student

How to get involved

Our programme has now grown into a digital-first newsletter, shaped by everything we've learned from working closely with our Ambassador Schools over the last two years. This means we can now reach even more parents, teachers, and young people with resources, inspiration, and opportunities.



It's simple to get involved: just **sign up on our website** and you'll start receiving regular newsletters packed with value. Here's what you can expect:



Tried-and-tested activities: short, practical, and inspiring ideas drawn from our educational resources. From guided discussions on tackling sexism to a downloadable board game of Snakes and Ladders re-imagined around confidence and self-belief.



Inspiring recommendations: books, podcasts, and articles curated from our community of 8.7 million women and leaders, chosen to empower and engage parents, teachers, and young people alike.



Exclusive access to our research: be the first to explore our insights and campaigns. Last year, we surveyed 8,000 women about returning to work after having a baby. This year, our big focus is on the gender money gap. We'll share our knowledge in ways that help young people understand the realities of being a woman today.



Unmissable opportunities and events: your young person could be invited to film premieres, celebrity interviews, or intimate workshops with trailblazing female leaders from industries as diverse as engineering and the arts.



For more information about our schools
programme and how to get involved contact:
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