



Department  
for Education

# Evaluation of Breakfast Clubs in Schools with High Levels of Deprivation

Research Report

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Social Science in Government

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## Executive summary

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of a programme initiated by the Department for Education (DfE) to set up and run breakfast clubs in schools with over 35% of their pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), and which had no existing breakfast club. A key aim was to enable schools to build a sustainable club which would continue after the programme ended. The programme was delivered under contract to DfE by the charity, Magic Breakfast. Magic Breakfast recruited the schools, provided them with advice and support and organised free food deliveries. The contract included a six month set up period, followed by a period of 12 months' free food deliveries for each school. Start dates were staggered across schools, according to recruitment timings, with the earliest set up periods beginning in October 2014.

The aims of the evaluation were twofold:

- To assess processes, including barriers and enablers to establishing and sustaining breakfast club provision in schools with high deprivation; and
- To establish the perceived impact of breakfast clubs on reducing the number of children coming to school without breakfast, improving children's punctuality and behaviour, and increasing their concentration during the morning.

This report concludes that the delivery model tested here is popular with schools and appears to work in terms of providing the necessary advice and support to schools starting out, and providing foodstuffs. The programme was successful in terms of the numbers of schools recruited; the high proportion continuing with a breakfast club and the positive impacts which schools perceived for their pupils.

The programme met its target of recruiting 184 schools. All schools had over 35% of pupils eligible for free schools meals at time of recruitment<sup>1</sup>. Nearly all schools sustained their breakfast club; of schools who responded at a six month follow up, 96% had continued to provide a breakfast club after Magic Breakfast's contract with DfE had stopped.

The majority of schools in the programme were primary schools (63%). In primary schools around a quarter of pupils on roll attended breakfast clubs; in secondary schools attendance was slightly lower. On average, the amount of pupils attending breakfast

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<sup>1</sup> FSM summary data at time of recruitment was provided by Magic Breakfast. Baselines data on schools' FSM eligibility reported more fully in in later sectors is based on the January 2014 school census; the most up to date published statistics when schools started to join the programme from October 2014. Some schools recruited into the programme may have had lower than 35% FSM eligibility on the published statistics but higher eligibility at the actual time of starting the programme. This is explained in more detail in section 4.

clubs who were FSM eligible (41%) was similar to the proportion of FSM eligible pupils on school rolls (42%). However in a fifth of schools, there was a sizeable<sup>2</sup> gap with fewer FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs than were on the school roll. This suggests that some schools were only partially successful in attracting these pupils into attending.

Strong leadership, and 'buy in' within the school were seen as essential for a successful breakfast club, whilst the need to promote the clubs to parents and pupils on an ongoing basis was also highlighted by schools. Few schools reported constraints limiting the size or scope of their breakfast club; for the few that did space was the main limitation.

Schools perceived important benefits from having a breakfast club. As well as reducing hunger, breakfast clubs were perceived to improve concentration and behaviour in class and to improve punctuality for some pupils. However, no overall improvements on punctuality were perceived across classes, and schools did not perceive an improvement in school attendance rates. Additional positive impacts on pupils' social development and the way in which they helped some pupils make wider friendship groups and become more confident were also highlighted by schools.

This report makes the following recommendations that should be taken into account if considering any future extension of the programme:

- R1: We recommend that any future breakfast club programme should include expert involvement to select schools for inclusion, get their buy-in and provide expertise on the ground for ongoing support in the first year;
- R2: We recommend that a small equipment grant should remain available to schools joining the programme, with advice being given by the expert provider on how to spend it;
- R3: We recommend that schools should try where possible not to charge any pupils, and if they do so, they should keep fees low. Breakfast clubs should remain free for FSM eligible pupils;
- R4: We recommend that for future funded programmes, consideration be given to ways to shorten the recruitment process;
- R5: We recommend that consideration be given to the level at which the eligibility threshold is set for any future scheme. While schools with high percentages of FSM eligible pupils and who do not have breakfast clubs should continue to be a focus for any extension of the programme, there may be merit in reducing the 35% threshold and considering a differentially banded threshold which reflects the size of schools;

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<sup>2</sup> Defined as more than a 10 percentage point difference between the percentage of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll and those attending breakfast club.

- R6: We recommend that any expansion should consider including high FSM eligible schools who already have breakfast clubs but which could be expanded;
- R7: We recommend that any extension of the programme tasks the expert provider with supporting schools to ensure that in all schools the proportion of FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs are, as a minimum, in line with the overall FSM profile for the school;
- R8: We recommend that any extension of the programme tasks the expert provider with supporting schools to more actively target older pupils in secondary schools, through age specific marketing and promotion;
- R9: We recommend that any future expert provider is tasked with supporting schools to systematically assess if they could be doing more to maximise the impact of the breakfast club, including links to teaching and learning within a whole school approach. This should be done in a way that minimises burdens on schools;
- R10: We recommend that the programme should aim to develop a sustainable model for supplying low cost food to schools beyond the programme life cycle.

More detail on the evaluation and the findings is given below.

## **Evaluation methods**

The study used a process model as a framework for the evaluation in order to systematically assess processes as well as outputs and outcomes, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative information.

Qualitative evidence was collected from phone interviews with 40 breakfast club leads in schools in the early stages of the programme (December 2014 to February 2015). Thirty four of the 40 were interviewed a second time, towards the end of the programme (March to June 2016). Phone interviews were conducted with nine Magic Breakfast staff between February and April 2015, and with seven staff between March and April 2016. Fifteen case study visits took place in schools in the autumn term 2015; in each of which a range of staff and pupils were interviewed.

Quantitative data on the numbers and characteristics of pupils attending breakfast clubs was collected for one week in each of four time points: in the first month after introducing a breakfast club (October 2014 to June 2015), near the end of the academic year (June 2015), near the end of the programme (January 2016) and six months after the programme had ended (October 2016).

## Processes for establishing breakfast clubs

The programme hit its target for the number of schools recruited with most schools having high levels of deprivation, although recruitment was over a longer time period than anticipated.

### Participating schools

- One hundred and eighty-four schools were initially recruited to the programme. Around a quarter were in Greater London with around a fifth in each of the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and West Midlands;
- At the point of recruiting, Magic Breakfast report that all schools had at least 35% of pupils eligible for FSM. Baseline data from the January 2014 school census showed that four fifths of schools had 35% or more of pupils eligible for FSM, with almost two fifths having over 45% of pupils eligible;
- As official statistics are lagged it was possible that schools showing less than 35% on official statistics had higher FSM eligibility at the point at which they entered the programme. On the official statistics, one fifth of schools fell below the 35% threshold, with most (18% of the total) having 25%-34% of pupils eligible for FSM;
- The majority of schools were primary schools (63%). Eleven percent were secondary schools while 21% were special schools and 7% were PRUs.

### Setting up a breakfast club

- Most interviewees<sup>3</sup> in schools said that they started the breakfast club because they identified that children were coming to school hungry;
- While reducing hunger and eating more healthily were key drivers, school interviewees linked hunger with poor concentration and behaviour in the mornings at school, so also wanted to introduce breakfast clubs to improve pupils' ability to learn;
- Although interviewees identified ways in which breakfast clubs linked with other school activities, there was little evidence that these links were initially a key consideration in schools' early planning. The main exceptions to this were special schools, where breakfast was, typically, more integrally linked to supporting learning from the outset.

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<sup>3</sup> Interviewees refers to school staff interviewees. Pupils and parents were also interviewed and are identified separately.

## **Breakfast club models**

- There was little variation in the food offered; most schools served bagels, cereal and juice, sometimes supplemented with porridge and/or fruit;
- Timing, location and activities offered alongside the breakfast club show a range of delivery options, indicating that schools were taking a tailored approach, reflecting their pupils' needs and the space/resources available;
- Most schools were positive about the support offered by Magic Breakfast; some significantly so. Where there were issues, these tended to be teething problems in the early days of implementation;
- Partnership working, especially by attending regional meetings run by Magic Breakfast, did seem to be useful for the schools which attended, but staff from few of the schools interviewed had attended;
- Breakfast clubs were mainly offered on a universal basis. Schools commonly, but not always, more actively encouraged children from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend. Where spaces were limited, these pupils were generally prioritised;
- A few special schools were only able to offer breakfast to certain pupils because of physical or mental health elements of their pupils' medical conditions;
- In most schools, staff working in breakfast clubs were teaching assistants. Most schools were meeting staff costs from existing budgets by changing hours within existing contracts, so did not have additional cash costs for staffing.

## **Enablers and challenges**

- Strong leadership and buy in within the school were essential to ensure that breakfast clubs were set up and well integrated into the school;
- Forecasting demand correctly was a challenge. Some schools had problems with orders and deliveries in the first few weeks of the breakfast club;
- The need to promote the breakfast club to parents and to pupils on an ongoing basis, not just when the breakfast club opened, was a challenge but seen as important to sustain momentum of the club;
- There was a need to be sensitive and indirect when promoting the breakfast club to specific pupils or parents who the school was particularly encouraging to attend, such as FSM eligible or persistently late pupils or pupils believed to be hungry;
- The ability to change working hours or activities within existing teaching assistant contracts to provide staff for the breakfast club was an enabler;
- Location and space could be both enablers and constraints;

- A few schools mentioned that space constraints affected where they could host the breakfast club;
- Being able to use the space available to meet pupils' needs, such as having sufficient space for pupils to sit down and eat with friends or have different locations for different groups of pupils, was seen as an enabler.

## Attendance at breakfast clubs

There were generally high levels of attendance at breakfast clubs. Lower levels of attendance were found at secondary schools, particularly in the older year groups. On average, pupils attended for four days a week. On average, the proportion of FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs was broadly in line with the proportion of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll but in 21% of schools, it was more than ten percentage points lower.

## Numbers attending

- Data collected shows over 11,000 pupils (approximately a quarter of pupils enrolled) attended the breakfast clubs<sup>4</sup>. As a few schools did not return data, the actual figure will be a little higher;
- Most of the pupils (60% to 70%)<sup>5</sup> attending breakfast clubs were in primary schools. This is to be expected as most of the schools in the programme were primary schools (63%);
- Special schools and PRUs had the highest average proportions of pupils attending breakfast clubs. In special schools over half of pupils on roll attended and in PRUs around two thirds attended. In primary schools around a quarter of pupils on roll attended, and in secondary schools attendance was slightly lower (12% to 24%);
- There is more variation when looking at the distribution across each school type. In four fifths of secondary schools and just under one half of primary schools, less than 20% of pupils attended the breakfast club. Special schools showed a wider spread.

## Frequency

- On average, pupils attending breakfast clubs attended for 3.7 days at each time point that attendance data was collected;

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<sup>4</sup> Data is that collected at the third time point (the highest attendance) and is for 176 schools.

<sup>5</sup> Attendance figures are given as a range to reflect averages across the four data time points.

- Attending for all five school days was the most common attendance pattern for pupils across all school types with 41% to 52% attending every day of the week across all time points of data collection. Those who did not attend all days were fairly evenly split between one, two, three or four days attendance;
- Special school pupils were most likely to attend for all five days (62%). In secondary schools attendance was more varied with 30% attending all five days and 24% attending for one day.

### **Pupil characteristics**

- In primary schools, pupil attendance was evenly spread across the different year groups;
- Pupils attending breakfast clubs in secondary schools were more likely to be in the younger year groups with 35% of pupils attending being in year 7, 25% in year 8 and dropping further to 15% in year 9;
- On average attendance by boys and girls was broadly proportional to their numbers on the school roll.

### **FSM eligibility**

- Across all the attendance data for the combined time points, 41% of pupils on school rolls were FSM eligible and 42% of breakfast club attendees were FSM eligible;
- Across all primary schools, the share of FSM eligible pupils who attended the breakfast club was broadly similar to the share of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll. Across all secondary schools and special schools, it was slightly higher;
- Whereas 24% of schools had over 10 percentage points more FSM eligible pupils attending their breakfast club than were on the school roll, 21% of schools had more than 10 percentage points fewer FSM eligible pupils than on the school roll;
- Secondary schools, on average, had more FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs (+6 percentage points) than were on the school roll, while primary schools had fewer (-3 percentage points).

### **Continuing attendance**

- Around 20% of the pupils who attended the breakfast club at the last time point had also attended in each of the three previous time points. Pupils were most likely to have kept up attendance across all four time points in special schools (29%) and primary schools (20%);
- Pupils who attended at all four time points were also more likely to attend all five days (61%);

- FSM eligible pupils appear to be no more or less likely than non-FSM eligible pupils to have attended over the four time points.

## **Perceived impacts and sustainability of breakfast clubs**

Breakfast clubs were popular with schools, pupils and parents. Schools reported perceived impacts in terms of reducing hunger, improved concentration and behaviour, and saw breakfast clubs as helping pupils to develop social skills. No impacts were perceived on overall school attendance or punctuality, but schools did perceive improvements in punctuality for some pupils. Overall the school staff interviewed were very supportive of breakfast clubs and wanted to continue to run one.

- All schools perceived reductions in the number of pupils being hungry and most schools reported that they felt that the breakfast club was having an impact on pupils eating more healthily;
- Schools did not generally report any impact of breakfast clubs on overall school attendance figures. Schools reported improvements in punctuality for some pupils and targeted persistent latecomers to attend the breakfast club;
- Schools generally reported perceived improvements in concentration and in behaviour from pupils attending breakfast clubs. They attributed this in part to children not being hungry which helped concentration and, in part, to the new routine of the breakfast club which allowed pupils to be ready to learn when lessons started;
- Schools reported breakfast clubs bringing additional social benefits by helping pupils develop new friendship groups. Several saw benefits in pupils developing friendships across year groups;
- Schools reported additional benefits for pupils with lower self-confidence, with breakfast clubs giving a space for pupils to learn to be more confident;
- Some special schools reported that breakfast clubs supported learning and helped pupils to adapt to changes in their routine.

## **Continuing a breakfast club after the end of the programme**

Nearly all schools have continued with a breakfast club, with most joining Magic Breakfast's membership scheme.

### **Numbers continuing**

- Nearly all schools have continued to provide a breakfast club after Magic Breakfast's contract with DfE stopped. Of the 131 schools who provided information on whether they had continued with a breakfast club six months after the programme closed, 126 (96%) still had a breakfast club;

- Magic Breakfast set up a new membership scheme to offer discounted food to schools for an annual fee. Schools would also be able to continue to access the charity's advice and support, and learning from other schools;
- The majority of schools (84%) joined Magic Breakfast's membership scheme when continuing their breakfast club and a further 13% of schools intend to continue providing breakfast in another way.

### **Reasons for continuing**

- The main reason why schools wished to continue was that the underlying rationale as to why they had initially wanted a breakfast club still applied. Interviewees felt that if the breakfast club stopped, pupils would come to school hungry as before;
- The second main reason was that schools had seen the benefits of the breakfast club, such as improved punctuality and pupils being more ready to learn, and they wanted these to continue;
- Interviewees were also concerned that stopping a breakfast club would bring negative reactions from pupils, parents and staff.

### **Challenges and enablers to continuing**

- Schools cited leadership support as a key factor in continuing provision. Where a breakfast club had not continued the lack of senior support was seen as a key factor;
- When considering whether to continue, many schools reported concerns over the cost of running a club as a barrier. This was both in terms of staff time in running the club each day and in sourcing and organising food deliveries. The introduction of the Magic Breakfast membership scheme helped to reduce this concern for a lot of schools.

# 1. Purpose of the evaluation and structure of the report

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of a programme initiated by the Department for Education (DfE) to set up and run breakfast clubs in schools with high deprivation levels in England. The programme aimed to recruit schools with over 35% of their pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and which currently had no breakfast club, in order to set up a sustainable club. The programme was delivered under contract to DfE by the charity, Magic Breakfast which recruited the schools, provided them with advice and support and organised free food deliveries for a period of 12 months starting in October 2014, after a six month set-up period. The contract ended, as was intended, in March 2016.

The aims of the evaluation are twofold:

- To provide an evaluation of processes, including barriers and enablers to establishing and sustaining breakfast club provision in schools with high deprivation;
- To provide an evaluation of the perceived impact on reducing the number of children coming to school without breakfast, improving children's punctuality and behaviour, and increasing their concentration during the morning.

The evaluation focused on the perceived benefits and impacts, as seen by schools, parents and pupils. It is not designed to provide a quantitative assessment of outcomes on pupils' attainment or on other pupil behaviours.

This evaluation has the following objectives, to:

1. Identify what models of breakfast club provision have been set up and how the needs of pupils influenced these (see section 4.3);
2. Examine the processes for establishing breakfast club provision in schools to identify the barriers and enablers to planning, setting up, implementing and sustaining breakfast club provision (see sections 4.2 to 4.5 and 7.2 to 7.4);
3. Assess whether breakfast clubs have been sustained after the DfE programme had ended (see section 7.1);
4. Assess the extent to which a whole school approach has been adopted by schools (see section 4.4);
5. Assess whether the breakfast clubs have successfully recruited children and families which were eligible for FSM and/or the school had identified as most in need (see section 5.5);

6. Assess the extent to which learning has been shared by the contractor with other schools and organisations (see section 8.2); and
7. Explore schools' perceptions of whether breakfast club provision has achieved the intended outcomes for children (see section 6).

A separate study, commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation (Crawford et al, 2016) sought to investigate whether there were significant differences in quantitative outcomes between schools which established breakfast clubs under this programme, and similar schools which did not. This was a randomised controlled trial including 53 schools with a breakfast club and 53 comparison schools without. Year 2 pupils in schools with a breakfast club experienced around two months' additional progress in maths, reading and writing compared to year 2 pupils in the comparator schools. Year 6 pupils at breakfast club schools also experienced around two months' progress in writing and English compared to year 6 pupils at other schools, when assessed by teachers, and promising results in reading and maths when assessed using standardized tests. Significant improvements in perceived whole class behaviour and concentration were identified, and absence data suggest that the intervention led to the equivalent of around 26 fewer half-days of absence per academic year for a class of 30, across all pupils.

## 2. The breakfast club programme

This section explains why the DfE wished to encourage breakfast clubs to be set up in schools with high proportions of FSM eligible pupils, including a brief summary of the international evidence on effective practice. It then sets out how the breakfast club programme was to be delivered by the DfE's delivery contractor and by schools.

### 2.1 Policy background

In July 2013, the DfE published the School Food Plan (Dimbleby & Vincent, 2013), the outcome of a review of school food commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education in July 2012. The School Food Plan contains 16 specific actions aimed at further increasing the quality and take-up of school meals, developing a whole-school food culture in every school, and exciting children about good food and cooking as a basis for leading healthy lives.

The School Food Plan sets out findings about the nutritional quality of food in schools. It states that although there have been substantial improvements since 2005, there is still some way to go for all schools to achieve high standards. The plan provides examples of effective practice in implementing a whole school approach to improving school food, with strong leadership from head teachers.

In September 2013 the government announced that free school meals would be introduced for all infant school children in reception, year 1 and year 2 in England from September 2014. Results from pilot studies showed that where children were given free school meals their progress was found to be up to two months ahead of their peers elsewhere in maths and English (Kitchen et al, 2012). They were also more likely to eat vegetables, rather than unhealthy snacks like crisps. The government subsequently provided £1bn so that every infant across the country could have a healthy meal during the day and £150 million to help schools expand kitchen and dining facilities (DfE, 2014a).

The School Food Plan (Dimbleby & Vincent, 2013) also considered breakfast provision in schools. It found that in some schools, the number of children coming to school without having eaten breakfast was increasing. It reported that not eating breakfast is associated with a range of negative consequences for children. These included poorer health, adverse educational and social effects, and lower levels of energy and attentiveness. It also reported that poor eating habits in childhood were likely to lead to continued bad habits in adulthood.

The School Food Plan stated that schools with an on-site breakfast club reported an increased likelihood that their pupils will eat a healthy breakfast and that it improves attendance, punctuality and pupils settling down to learn at the start of the school day.

## 2.2 Programme design

Following on from the School Food Plan (Dimbleby & Vincent, 2013), the DfE initiated a project to set up and sustain breakfast clubs in primary, secondary, special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) where over 35% of pupils were eligible for free school meals and where there was no existing breakfast provision. The clubs were expected to:

- Reduce the number of children coming to school without having eaten breakfast;
- Improve punctuality at the start of the school day;
- Improve pupils' behaviour and concentration during the course of the morning; and
- Contribute to wider public health and education policies such as Change4Life (Public Health England, 2015) and policies designed to reduce the gap in attainment between those from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.

DfE appointed Magic Breakfast, following an open competition, in March 2014 to deliver the programme with a budget of approximately £1.1 million to March 2016. Magic Breakfast is a registered charity with experience of providing breakfast clubs to schools. The charity's purpose is to ensure that every child starts the school day with the right breakfast to enable learning.

Magic Breakfast was required to:

- Provide the main food items for all children attending a breakfast club for a year. Through contributions from their corporate sponsors, Magic Breakfast provided low salt and sugar bagels, porridge, cereals and juice at no cost to the school;
- Provide advice to schools on how they could set up and run breakfast clubs, and on how they could sustain breakfast clubs once the free support finished.

In return for receiving free food, advice and support from Magic Breakfast, schools were required to provide:

- Any food required to supplement Magic Breakfast's core food offer (for example, milk, spreads and any additional hot items they wished to offer);
- People to run the breakfast club. These could be either paid staff or volunteers. It was anticipated that some schools would use Pupil Premium funding to pay for any extra staff time needed to run breakfast clubs.

In addition to the free food and advice, a grant of £300 was available for each school that they could put towards buying any equipment they needed to introduce a breakfast club.

The initial months of the contract were dedicated to identifying schools eligible to take part and to recruit them into the programme by September 2014. There was a target for 184 schools to participate and to establish self-sustaining breakfast clubs. The initial requirement was that schools should only be included in the programme if they did not have a breakfast club. It proved difficult to recruit enough schools to meet this requirement, so it was amended to include schools that provided some food for a very small number of children, and who wanted to expand the offer to more pupils.

As single year FSM statistics can be volatile, DfE also agreed that Magic Breakfast could approach a minority of schools who were below, but close to, the 35% threshold.

## **3. Methodology**

This section sets out how the evaluation was carried out and describes the research tools used.

### **3.1 Research evidence**

As a first step in this evaluation, a literature review was carried out to identify evidence about effective practice in setting up and providing breakfast clubs, to achieve reductions in the number of children coming to school without breakfast, and improvements in behaviour, concentration and punctuality. An assessment of the research literature and a summary of the findings is presented in Appendix 3: Literature Review.

### **3.2 Evaluation framework**

The study used a process model as a framework for the evaluation in order to systematically assess processes as well as outputs and outcomes. Using findings from the scoping stage of the research, the model identified five stages in the life of a breakfast club. For each stage, the model identified key activities which the research and scoping interviews suggested a delivery contractor (in this case Magic Breakfast) and schools should be undertaking. A simplified model is shown below in Table 1.

Table 1 Simplified process model (selected activities)

Initial design & planning	Development & testing	Implementation & refinement	Ongoing delivery	Outcomes
<b>Delivery Partner</b>				
Securing head teacher commitment	Supporting school in promoting the club to parents and pupils	Delivering food to schools	Monitoring and reviewing take up and provision	Reduced numbers of pupils coming to school without having eaten breakfast
Sharing good practice on what works in other schools	Supporting schools to target pupils most in need of breakfast	Making changes to orders as early lessons learnt	Sharing lessons with other schools to develop practice across the sector	
Establishing a working protocol with the school	Initial advice on developing a sustainability plan	Working in partnership with the school to identify ongoing funding/resources		
<b>Schools</b>				Improved punctuality
Designating a senior owner	Establishing management and delivery plans	Adopting a whole school approach	Learning from implementation	Improved concentration and behaviour during the morning
Consulting with parents and pupils	Assessing the fit of different approaches for this school	Assessing whether take up is as expected; and whether pupils most in need are attending	Keeping stakeholders informed of progress and challenges	Breakfast club is sustained after the delivery partner's contract ends
Developing a whole school approach	Taking key decisions; times, venue, charging or free, open to all or targeted?	Ongoing efforts to engage parents	Reviewing and updating the sustainability plan based on experiences of delivery	

The research was designed to collect robust evidence on the expected activities or outcomes at each stage, and thereby address each of the evaluation's objectives.

### 3.3 Research tasks

The stages of the research are set out in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1 Main evaluation research tasks**

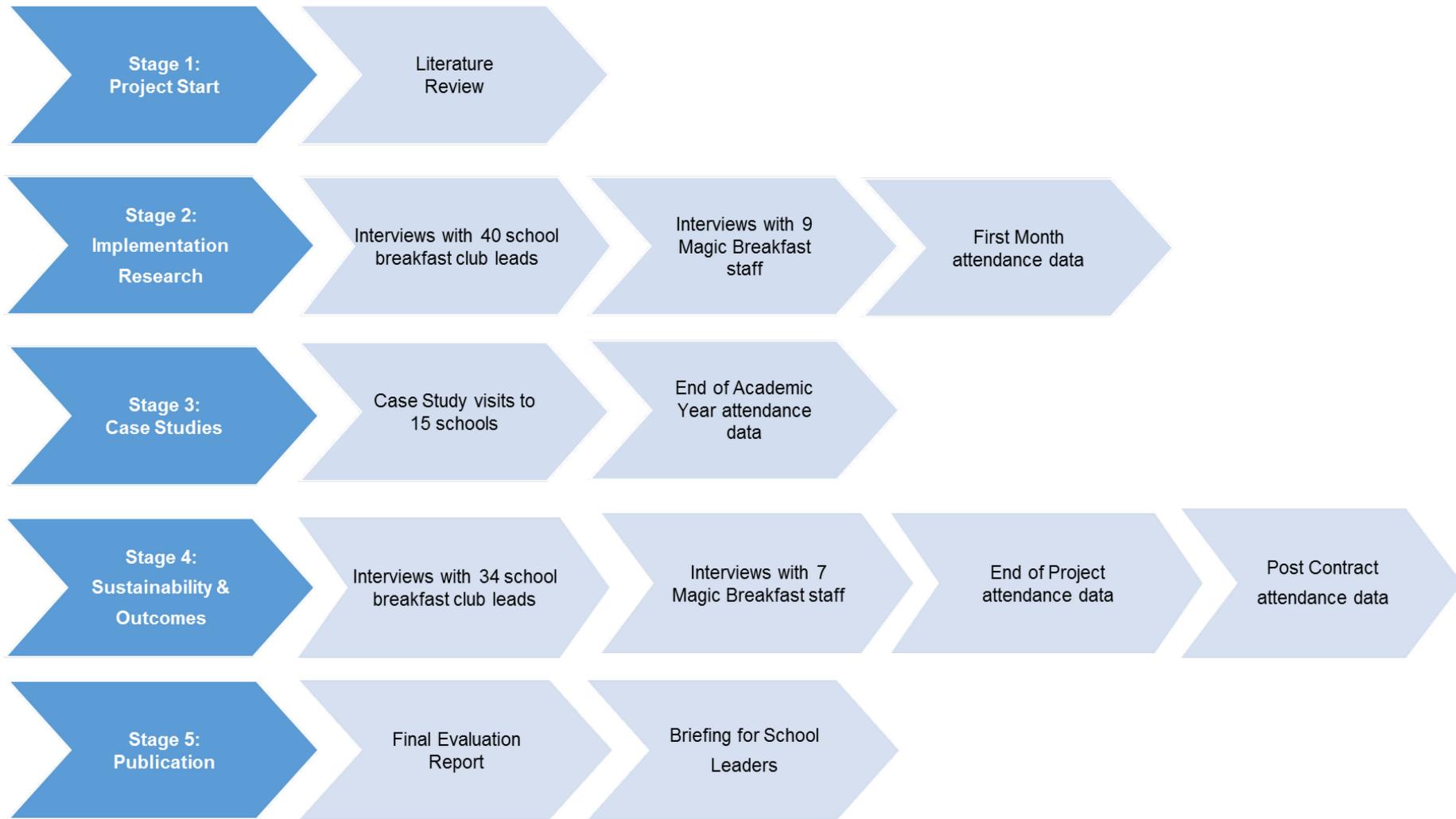


Table 2 shows which research tasks provided evidence against the evaluation objectives.

**Table 2 Research tasks linked to evaluation objectives**

<b>Evaluation objective</b>	<b>Research tasks</b>
Identifying models and the extent to which these were influenced by pupils' needs	Stages 2 and 4: interviews with schools; and Stage 3: case studies
Identifying the processes, enablers and barriers in establishing, running and sustaining breakfast clubs	Stages 2 and 4: interviews with schools and Magic Breakfast; and Stage 3: case studies
Extent to which breakfast clubs were sustained	Stage 4: school and Magic Breakfast interviews, and post contract attendance data.
Whether schools adopted a whole school approach	Stages 2 and 4: interviews with schools and Magic Breakfast; and Stage 3: case studies
Whether breakfast clubs successfully recruited children and families who most need the breakfast club	Stages 2 and 4: interviews with schools and Magic Breakfast; Stage 3 case studies; and Stages 2 to 4: attendance data at each of the four collection points
Assess the extent to which learning has been shared by the contractor with other schools and organisations	Stages 2 and 4: interviews with schools and Magic Breakfast; and Stage 3: case studies
Explore schools' perceptions of whether breakfast club provision has achieved the intended outcomes for children	Stages 2 and 4: interviews with schools and Magic Breakfast; and Stage 3 case studies

Further information about the key research tasks is included below:

**School interviews.** In order to understand the processes that schools went through when establishing and developing sustainable breakfast clubs, a sample of participating schools were contacted at two key points. Breakfast club leads in 40 schools were interviewed in the first few months of set up, between December 2014 and February 2015. The interviews sought to understand the schools' reasons for wanting a breakfast club, how they had gone about introducing it and promoting it to pupils and parents, and what, if any, signs there were of benefits to pupils. The breakfast club school leads all had other roles within the school and were a mix of head and deputy head teachers ( $n = 17$ ), school business managers ( $n = 8$ ), teaching assistants/learning mentors ( $n = 7$ ), special educational needs coordinators ( $n = 5$ ), teachers ( $n = 2$ ) and one parent.

A stratified purposeful approach was used to identify a sample of 40 schools that would be broadly representative of the schools taking part in the programme, with sufficient numbers in sub-groups to enable comparative analysis<sup>6</sup>.

The same schools were contacted for a second time, between March and June 2016, at the end of Magic Breakfast's delivery contract with DfE. Thirty four schools took part in the second wave of interviews. In this round, school breakfast club leads were asked whether the school would still continue to have a breakfast club, and what the enablers and barriers were to continuing a club when Magic Breakfast's free support had ended. They were also asked to describe what impact, if any, they perceived their breakfast club was having on their pupils. This was both for pupils generally and for particular groups of pupils, such as persistent late comers. Magic Breakfast staff were interviewed and asked about their experiences of working with schools, and the ways in which they had been advising schools on sustainability.

**Case studies:** As well as the phone interviews, in-depth case studies were conducted by visits to 15 schools during the autumn term 2015. Each case study typically consisted of interviews with staff members (those involved in running the breakfast club, teachers, support staff, the head teacher or other members of the senior leadership team), partners (governors, school caterers or other partners), and pupils who attended the breakfast clubs.

In each school parents were invited to take part in a survey to give their views on how they had heard about the breakfast club and why they had chosen to let their children attend. Parents were asked to identify any changes they had noticed as a result of the breakfast club, such as their children eating better, getting to school on time more often, or being better behaved in the morning. In terms of sustainability they were asked if they intended to continue to use the breakfast club, and if they would be prepared to pay if their school started to charge. Appendix 2: Case Study Sampling Framework gives more detail about the schools which took part in the case studies.

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<sup>6</sup> Quotas were set for FSM, deprivation quintiles, school size and school type. Appendix 1 shows the sampling framework in detail with information on the achieved quotas.

Table 3 shows the profile of interviews aimed for and achieved across the schools.

**Table 3 Case study profiles**

	Target in each school	No of schools in which target achieved	Total interviewed or replied to survey	Target total
<b>Staff</b>	4-5	14	77	67
<b>Pupils</b>	6-10	13	179	120
<b>Parents</b>	6-8	7	89	90
<b>Partners</b>	1-3	11	15	20

**Delivery staff interviews:** Nine Magic Breakfast staff were interviewed in the first and second terms of schools starting clubs (February to April 2015) about how they had gone about recruiting and supporting schools to set up breakfast clubs, and the extent to which they felt schools were delivering good practice. Interviews covered a range of staff, including senior staff, delivery staff recruiting schools, staff arranging deliveries to schools and those collecting data from schools. Seven Magic Breakfast staff were also interviewed in February to March 2016 as the charity’s contract with DfE was ending. This second interview focused on the ways in which the charity had supported schools in taking decisions on whether to continue with a breakfast club; their understanding of the kinds of clubs schools were continuing with and the barriers that schools had overcome to keep the club going.

**Attendance data:** Information on pupils attending breakfast clubs was collected at four time points over the course of the evaluation as set out in Table 4 below. For each time point, schools were asked to provide data on pupils attending the breakfast club for each day of a given week. For each of the pupils attending, schools were asked to provide their Unique Pupil Number (UPN)<sup>7</sup>, their gender, year group and whether they were eligible for FSM. Information on whether pupils had English as an Additional Language (EAL) was requested for the first two time points but was not asked for the last two, due to a low response to this question.

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<sup>7</sup> Unique pupil numbers were asked for to allow pupils’ attendance to be tracked over the four time points.

**Table 4 Attendance data collection timetable**

<b>Time Point</b>	<b>Date collected</b>	<b>Point in programme</b>
1	Oct 2014 to June 2015	At the end of the first month of the breakfast club. Collection dates were specific for each school <sup>8</sup>
2	June 2015	At the end of the 2014/15 academic year
3	January 2016	Towards the end of Magic Breakfast's delivery contract
4.	October 2016	Six months after Magic Breakfast's contract ended

For the first three time points, Magic Breakfast organised the data collection; schools returned the data to Magic Breakfast who forwarded it to ICF for analysis. For the final time point, ICF organised the data collection directly with schools and analysed the returns.

Table 5 shows the number of schools providing data for each of the time points. In the first three time points schools saw a clear link with Magic Breakfast requesting data and the provision of free food and support by the charity. The lower response rate in the final time point is most likely due to schools seeing less incentive to provide data to ICF purely for evaluation purposes. In the first time point Magic Breakfast staff reported putting considerable effort into follow-up activity with schools to gather or submit late data. In the second and third time points, while the data was collected at the same time, Magic Breakfast had to remind several schools to submit data, some of which was submitted several weeks or months after the data was due. For the last time point, schools were followed up but there was a more definite cut off point at which data had to be returned. It may also be that some schools did not submit data as they had stopped breakfast provision and did not respond to the request to say if they had done so.

**Table 5 Attendance data response rates by time point**

<b>Time Point</b>	<b>Number of school asked to provide data</b>	<b>Number of schools returning data</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
1	184	168	91%
2	184	175	95%
3	184	176	96%
4.	169	94	56%

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<sup>8</sup> Most schools provided information before December 2014 but a very few provided information in the summer term 2015.

While most schools provided data at each time point, not all schools returned a complete set of data. Examples are schools not providing FSM eligibility information for all pupils, or schools identifying pupils by class name rather than year group number (year 1, 2 or 3, for example). In the rest of this report, figures and tables therefore show the number of pupils or schools included in each calculation. While acknowledging that the data is not complete, there is still a sufficiently large amount of data to be able to generate robust findings.

**Baseline data:** Baseline data on the schools recruited to the programme was also collected by Magic Breakfast and forwarded to ICF. This included data on the Unique Reference Number (URN) for the school, the type of school, the number of pupils on the roll, numbers who had EAL and numbers eligible for FSM. Data on the final 184 schools enrolled on the programme was received in May 2015. As with the attendance data, not all school information was complete; where data was missing or inconsistent the missing elements were sourced from published DfE information.

The baseline data supplied by Magic Breakfast mainly draws on data for the 2014 school census (DfE, 2014b), which was the most recent published data available at the time schools entered the programme. In the initial set up phase of the programme Magic Breakfast used the 2013 school census figures to identify schools over the 35% threshold; as this was the most recent information available at that time. It is therefore possible that some schools which showed as having more than 35% FSM eligible pupils on the published statistics when they were initially approached had less than 35% on the published statistics when they actually started the programme (and which are reflected in the baseline information used here). It is also possible that some of these schools had higher actual FSM eligibility at the time they started the programme than showed in the official statistics because of the lagged nature of the statistics. This volatility in single year FSM statistics is one of the reasons why FSM-ever is now used in official statistics.

The baseline data was used to calculate the percentages of pupils attending breakfast clubs as a proportion of a school's population and to calculate, for example, whether higher or lower proportions of breakfast club attendees were FSM eligible pupils than the proportion in the school.

As the programme was delivered over two years, baseline information was updated as the evaluation progressed; using 2014 figures for the first two time points and 2015 (DfE, 2015a) figures for the final two. The benefit of this approach is that it allows for the most up to date comparison. However, it is not a perfect comparison as the figures are still lagged and there are some differences in the way the FSM baseline is reported between

the two baseline figures<sup>9</sup>. As a consequence in the analysis of differences in FSM pupils attending breakfast clubs when compared to the overall proportion of FSM pupils, differences of only a few percentage points should be interpreted as indicative rather than a precise difference. Appendix 4: Attendance data gives more information on the sources for baseline and attendance data.

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<sup>9</sup> The initial baseline uses the school performance table measure derived from the school census figure; the later baseline uses the raw census figure as this is the latest available. This reflects changes in the way FSM is reported in that DfE now reports information on FSM ever, rather than a single year school performance table measure.

## 4. Breakfast clubs established and supported

This section sets out how breakfast clubs were established. It reports the characteristics of the schools Magic Breakfast recruited to the programme. Drawing on interviews with Magic Breakfast and school staff, and on the case study visits to schools, it sets out what people said about the process they went through in setting up breakfast clubs, the barriers and enablers they encountered and the different breakfast club models that they set up in schools.

### 4.1 School recruitment

The DfE's contract with Magic Breakfast set a target for the charity to recruit 184 schools to participate in the programme and to establish self-sustaining breakfast clubs. The recruitment of schools proved more difficult than originally anticipated and the recruitment window was extended into the first quarter of 2015. In March 2014 Magic Breakfast identified 2,000 schools from EduBase<sup>10</sup> (DfE, 2016) that were potentially entitled to join the programme because over 35% of their pupils were eligible for FSM. Magic Breakfast then contacted local authorities and asked them to promote the initiative to eligible schools in their area, for example, in local cluster meetings. The charity also contacted schools it was already working with to ask them to market the new initiative to other schools. This was accompanied by other forms of more indirect marketing, such as notices on social media and a small newspaper advert. These approaches attracted some schools but not to the target level. Magic Breakfast then coordinated a team of volunteers from corporate partners to telephone all the schools listed to find out whether or not schools had existing breakfast provision. From this, Magic Breakfast reported that around 400 eligible schools were identified.

Originally schools were not eligible if they had any kind of breakfast provision. Magic Breakfast identified a group of schools where there was some provision but it was not considered to be large scale or of high quality. The eligibility rule was therefore amended to include these schools in November 2014, to boost recruitment rates.

The process of identifying schools, encouraging them and addressing any reservations about setting up a breakfast club also took more time than anticipated. Magic Breakfast contacted the short-listed schools about the initiative and the support available and tried to arrange meetings with the head teacher or a member of the senior management team to outline the logistics and discuss any concerns. Magic Breakfast's staff indicated in their interviews that the lead-in time with schools took much longer than they had anticipated. In particular, they reported that a main barrier was getting past gate-keepers

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<sup>10</sup> DfE's register of educational establishments.

such as receptionists *'whose job it is to deflect calls to the head teacher'* (as noted by a Magic Breakfast staff member) and identifying the correct individual who would be responsible for an out of normal hours activity such as a breakfast club.

Interviews with Magic Breakfast staff indicated a lack of local staff to follow up recruitment until well after the start of the school year in some geographical regions. The charity reported that they were unable to recruit new staff in advance of the contract being signed with DfE. This meant that some existing staff had to cover wide geographic areas and some were limited in the extent to which they could meet schools face to face, which may have been a more effective way of engaging some schools.

Where Magic Breakfast were able to make contact with the school but the school declined, Magic Breakfast staff mentioned the following reasons:

- Some schools above the threshold for FSM eligibility (35%) had an existing range of initiatives to improve the school and did not feel they had the time to commit to another one. This is not true of all schools with challenging circumstances and others took the opposite approach. Magic Breakfast reported that some schools which were in special measures were keen to take part and *'turn things around'*;
- Schools not believing they would be able to afford the time and the staff costs for additional hours;
- Schools thinking it would not work because, for example, there would not be sufficient demand or they did not have adequate space;
- Schools having tried a breakfast club before and finding it had not worked because attendance was too low to sustain it;
- Schools expecting *'too much'* from Magic Breakfast, such as wanting Magic Breakfast to run and staff the breakfast club; and
- Head teachers having a different approach to supporting pupils at school. Some saw breakfast as either not a priority or not being the responsibility of the school to deliver.

As anticipated by Magic Breakfast, some schools dropped out in the early days of delivery, after initially agreeing to take part. Magic Breakfast interviewees reported that 4 schools had dropped out by June 2015 which would represent around 2% of the total recruited.

The reasons reported by Magic Breakfast included not having sufficient drive within the school to take the breakfast club forward and schools not properly planning the staffing

of the breakfast club in advance. As Magic Breakfast had anticipated that some schools would drop out, the charity slightly had over-recruited to allow some fall out and still achieve the target of 184. Nearly all schools then stayed with the programme with 183<sup>11</sup> remaining fully committed.

### 4.2 Participating schools’ characteristics

This section reports on the type and characteristics of schools recruited to the breakfast club programme, as based on 2013 census data.

**Region:** Table 6 sets out the geographic distribution. Around a quarter of schools (28%) participating in the programme were in Greater London with around a fifth in the North West (19%), Yorkshire and Humber (17%) and West Midlands (16%). Three regions had a relatively low proportion (3% or less) of participating schools; East of England, North East and the South West. Magic Breakfast identified in early conversations with DfE that the North East generally has good breakfast club provision in place and was not a priority area for recruitment. It is not clear from interviewees why schools in the other areas have had less take-up but this may reflect differential resourcing on the ground by Magic Breakfast as well as the distribution of eligible schools without breakfast clubs.

**Table 6 Distribution of participating schools by region**

Region	No. of schools	% of schools
London	52	28%
North West	35	19%
Yorkshire and The Humber	32	17%
West Midlands	30	16%
South East	13	7%
East Midlands	11	6%
North East	4	2%
South West	4	2%
East of England	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Magic Breakfast baseline data.  
Base: 184 schools*

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<sup>11</sup> Magic Breakfast 2016a

**Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals:** Table 7 shows how schools with high rates of FSM eligibility were represented in the programme. Four fifths (80%) of schools were above the initial eligibility criteria of 35% or more of pupils eligible for FSM, with almost two fifths (39%) having over 45% of pupils eligible. One fifth of the schools (20%) had less than 35% of pupils eligible. This included three schools which had below 26% of pupils eligible for FSM which were outside the scope of the programme. Of these three, two are PRUs. In PRUs, FSM eligibility can be volatile and the unit may not know all pupils' FSM status as this may not have been forwarded by pupils' mainstream source schools. The other school is a primary which was just below the 26% limit.

**Table 7 Proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals**

<b>% of pupils eligible for FSM</b>	<b>No. of schools</b>	<b>% of schools</b>
0-15	2	1%
16-25	1	1%
26-35	33	18%
36-45	76	41%
46-55	46	25%
56+	16	9%
Unknown	10	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Magic Breakfast baseline data  
Base: 184 schools*

**Size of school:** Table 8 shows the size of schools in the programme. Just over one fifth of the schools on the programme (21%) were relatively small with less than 100 pupils on the roll; most (45%) were mid-size, with between 101 and 300 pupils on the roll. Over one tenth (13%) were large, with over 500 pupils on the roll. It is unclear why few large schools were involved in the programme, but interviews with Magic Breakfast interviewees suggested that many eligible secondary schools (typically larger schools) already had existing breakfast club provision.

**Table 8 Number of pupils on the school roll**

Number of pupils on the school roll	No. of schools	% of schools
0 – 100	39	21%
101 – 300	83	45%
301 – 500	31	17%
501+	24	13%
Unknown	7	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Magic Breakfast baseline data based on the January 2014 census.  
Base: 184 schools*

**School type:** Table 9 shows the types of schools recruited. The majority of schools were primary schools (63%). One tenth (11%) were secondary schools while one fifth (20%) were special schools. There were 13 PRUs (7%).

**Table 9 Proportion of schools by type**

School type	No. of schools	% of schools
Primary	115	63%
PRU	13	7%
Secondary	19	11%
SEN	37	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Magic Breakfast baseline data.  
Base: 184 schools*

### 4.3 Breakfast club models

Interviews with school and Magic Breakfast staff indicate that there is no ‘one size fits all’ model of running a breakfast club. Most described delivery models that reflected the space and facilities at a school and the extent to which the breakfast club is integrated with other school activities. School interviewees reported that how the breakfast club is run is also heavily influenced by the characteristics and needs of pupils. So, for example, infant and primary schools were more likely to offer clubs where staff led in preparing and serving food and more often mentioned supervised or structured activities linked to the club. Breakfast clubs in secondary schools were more likely to have a more informal structure, with older pupils serving themselves and getting food on a “collect and go” basis.

**Access:** Interviewees in nearly all schools reported that once the breakfast club was established, it was open to all pupils. Nearly all the primary and secondary schools in the case studies provided universal access, and promoted the breakfast club to all pupils, to encourage as many pupils to attend as possible. This finding is supported by a survey<sup>12</sup> which Magic Breakfast conducted with head teachers, where around 80% said that the breakfast club was available to all pupils (Magic Breakfast, 2016). Interviewees in the few schools that did restrict access reported that they would have liked to encourage more pupils to attend but did not have the capacity to do so.

While breakfast clubs were open to all, most school interviewees said they gave preference to pupils eligible for FSM. These interviewees described more actively encouraging FSM eligible pupils to attend and promoting the breakfast club more strongly to their parents. Interviewees in most schools reported that they also targeted specific pupils who they felt should attend the breakfast club but were not eligible for FSM. This typically included pupils who were frequently hungry or persistently late and pupils who had behavioural problems or who they felt would benefit from the educational activities provided alongside the breakfast club.

In a few schools, the school rationed attendance at the breakfast club because they were not able to accommodate all the children who wanted to attend, either because of space or resource constraints. Interviewees in some special schools reported limiting the breakfast club to some pupils because of the severity of pupils' health conditions. In one special school, over one third of pupils were tube-fed and the school could only offer breakfast to six to ten pupils, but for these pupils it was a very focused offer supporting their development in a holistic way.

**Charging:** Interviewees in most of the schools interviewed did not charge any pupils for breakfast and none of the schools interviewed said they charged pupils who were eligible for FSM.

*'For our pupils, not having to pay is a big thing ... can go to the canteen and not have to pay' (Secondary school)*

Again this is supported by Magic Breakfast's head teacher survey (Magic Breakfast, 2015) where 78% of the schools responding did not charge any pupils. Interviewees in some schools did charge non-FSM parents; all that did kept within the 50p a day maximum recommended by Magic Breakfast. In all schools, interviewees said they waived payments if they thought the family could not afford to pay or they felt paying

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<sup>12</sup> Excel file provided by Magic Breakfast for survey conducted in July 2015, 108 responses.

would prevent particular pupils from attending. A few schools asked parents for voluntary donations; ranging from £2.50 for a half term to 50p a day, although this did not tend to bring in significant income. There were a very small number of primary schools that charged additionally for extended childcare, where prices ranged from £1 to £2 a day and included breakfast.

One secondary school did not charge for the food provided by Magic Breakfast but charged for additional items offered by their catering contractor. This dual economy seemed to work well; pupils interviewed in the case study visit to this school said they thought it was fair to have to pay for extra items but they thought it was important that the basic breakfast was free for everyone.

**Food:** Magic Breakfast worked with schools to ensure that all the food provided met the School Food Standards (DfE, 2015b). In addition to this, the charity reported that all schools received a bespoke, detailed review of their overall provision and practice, and action needed to meet the standards.

There was little variation in the food being offered. Nearly all schools offered bagels, cereals and juice provided by Magic Breakfast. Some also offered porridge provided by the charity. A few also offered fruit; sometimes this was provided by Magic Breakfast but this was an addition to the standard offer and was not available to all schools at all times. As expected, schools provided milk, spreads and jams to go alongside Magic Breakfast's free delivery. A small number of schools offered some hot food alongside the cereals and bagel with a cooked breakfast, sometimes available on certain days of the week only.

The pupils interviewed were almost always positive about the food. Bagels in particular seemed very popular, which mirrored what school staff said. Where (the few) pupils or parents made suggestions about improving food this was mainly to suggest that a greater variety of food should be offered. Most pupils made the link between the breakfast club and eating healthily, although a few wanted bigger portions when prompted to think of improvements.

*'I used to just have cereal bar on the bus as I have to get up very early to travel to school; now I just get to school and eat here and I have more food now' (Y8 pupil)*

School staff were also generally very positive about the range and quality of the food provided by Magic Breakfast. The few schools that suggested improvements included one special school where the interviewees felt that the food included in the Magic Breakfast offer did not appeal to all of their pupils. The school specialised in autism and the teachers explained that some children were very particular about the food they ate and would only eat specific cereals or specific brand names. As a result some classes were buying in food on top of what Magic Breakfast provided.

**Location:** Most schools reported using school halls or dining areas for breakfast clubs. Some schools offered breakfast on different sites across the school in order to accommodate different pupils. Where secondary schools offered breakfast clubs in learning support or behavioural units, the main driver was to provide these pupils with a quieter, calmer place to eat, to create a sense of belonging for specific pupils, or to allow activities (games, reading groups) aimed at particular pupils. An example is a large secondary school which offered breakfast on three sites; the main location was in the dining room before school started and was open to all pupils, with around 80-100 pupils attending. Breakfast was additionally offered at a Learning Support Unit on the main site which around 20-25 pupils attended, and at a separate off-site unit for another 20 students who tended to have behavioural problems and who were being taught away from the main school.

Special schools and PRUs were more likely to use classrooms or smaller dining areas. Interviewees at these schools often described having breakfast in a small group space as being more conducive to pupils' needs. They said that eating breakfast together was a way of settling pupils in and building social skills within the group.

Locations in the case study schools could be broadly grouped into three types which are set out in Table 10.

**Table 10 Location Profiles**

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Type of school</b>
Model A:	Breakfast club takes place in one location; usually the main dining area	Primary schools were more likely to use this model
Model B:	Breakfast offered in the main dining area for most pupils with satellite clubs for smaller groups	More common in secondary schools with satellite clubs operating in learning support or off-site units
Model C:	Breakfast provided in classrooms as part of the learning day	Operated exclusively in special schools

**Timing:** In primary schools, the breakfast club typically opened around 20 to 30 minutes before school started. In secondary schools they tended to open earlier, around 30 to 50 minutes before school started. In special schools breakfast took place most commonly during the first lesson or sometimes during the first morning break. This was because pupils would most usually arrive at school by school transport and would go straight from the school bus into class and have breakfast there. Special schools were also more likely to stagger breakfast club times; with some offering food as soon as children arrived in school while others offered food during the first lesson and/or at morning break-time.

For example, in one special school some classes had their breakfast at 9:00am while others had it at around 10.20am. For each class the time was set in advance by the teacher to fit in with their lesson plan.

Some schools reported staggering times to manage numbers, such as dividing the pupils into two groups with one group eating and the other playing and then swapping.

**Staffing:** Nearly all schools were using teaching assistants to run their breakfast clubs. Teachers were also more likely to be involved in special schools and PRUs as their clubs tended to be more classroom-based. In the few schools that provided hot food, a member of the schools' catering staff would be involved but other than this, schools reported very little involvement of their catering staff in preparing or serving breakfast.

In around a quarter of the schools interviewed, parents helped run the breakfast club alongside school staff, all of which were infant or primary schools.

**Activities available alongside breakfast:** Some schools offered games and activities alongside the breakfast club. In secondary schools this was nearly always informal and unstructured. Primary schools were more likely to offer structured activities led by a member of staff or by a pupil mentor. Where primary schools encouraged particular pupils to attend, such as children who were not making the progress hoped for in English or maths, they typically ran activities alongside the breakfast club to help the pupils' development; for example by providing maths and reading activities at the same time.

An example is one primary school where the breakfast club included academic work and games. After they had eaten their breakfast, pupils chose between doing five minutes of maths or English which was led by year 5 and 6 pupils who mentored the younger pupils. Once they have completed their maths or English, pupils could go to the games table, where they could play a variety of games until the end of the breakfast club. The mentors were selected on a rota and got a free pass to the games table (without having to do the additional five minutes work) for the week after they had been mentoring. The school saw the breakfast club as being part of a whole school approach to providing additional academic support where needed, and particularly encouraged pupils who needed additional support to attend the breakfast club for these extra maths and English sessions.

**Childcare:** A few infant and primary schools included childcare with the breakfast club. The schools that did this tended to offer childcare before the breakfast club started and then everyone ate breakfast together. For example, in one primary school, parents who were paying for childcare brought their children to school for 8:00am when paid-for structured activities started. The main breakfast club opened at 8:30am when the non-paying pupils came in, at which time all the pupils ate breakfast together.

## 4.4 Stages of setting up a breakfast club

This section sets out what schools and Magic Breakfast staff said about each of the key stages in setting up a breakfast club. It draws on the process framework established in the early stages of the evaluation and set out in Table 1, with discussions being focused around the initial design and planning, development and testing, implementation and refinement and ongoing delivery. While hunger was given as the main reason school interviewees wanted to start a breakfast club, improving concentration and behaviour were also key reasons for many. Most school interviewees stressed the importance to them of wanting to provide breakfast free to pupils. School interviewees valued the support and advice offered by Magic Breakfast, especially in the early stages of setting up a club. Schools where a member of the leadership team was closely involved in the breakfast club were more likely to take a whole school approach to how the breakfast club could link with other school activities.

### Initial design and planning

**Reasons for wanting a breakfast club:** School interviewees reported wanting to introduce breakfast clubs in their schools for a variety of reasons. Children being hungry was nearly always given as the primary reason. Most school interviewees did not have a precise figure for how many children were often hungry but felt it was a significant minority. Where a figure was given, 20% to 50% was most commonly cited as the estimate of pupils affected, although one school believed it was as high as 90%. Around half the respondents mentioned that as well as children being hungry, a parallel concern was that they believed that many of the children who had eaten breakfast would have mainly eaten unhealthy food, such as snacks and chocolate and so were not getting a strong nutritional start to the day.

*'Our kids never sit down and eat a meal all together; they never have family meals. [Breakfast club] is something new; eating and sharing and having a social life'*  
(Secondary School)

As well as being an important reason in itself, most interviewees went on to explain that reducing hunger was important because they linked hunger to poor behaviour or lack of concentration and behaviour problems in class. Chaotic or difficult family situations were often mentioned by schools and given as a common reason why they believed children had not eaten or not eaten well. School interviewees spoke about parents not being organised about getting their children to school and either not providing breakfast at home or leaving the children to feed themselves which often meant they did not eat healthily.

*'For us we felt this was a social priority. Even though we did not have any firm evidence, our gut feeling was that we had significant numbers of children coming to school not fed well; not getting a good start to the day' (Primary School)*

Around one fifth of schools saw the breakfast club as a way of helping particular children get to school on time. Where punctuality was mentioned it was usually not in relation to a general problem at the school but as a problem for specific children, typically from disadvantaged backgrounds. School interviewees hoped that providing breakfast would encourage pupils to come to school earlier, and that not having to pay would also be an incentive for parents to bring their children in earlier.

*'To provide childcare'* was only mentioned explicitly as a reason for starting a club by one school interviewee and this was because their school had started offering childcare as an addition to an existing breakfast club in order to make the club more popular. Other school interviewees said they did not want to offer childcare as a primary service and saw it more as an additional offer that could run before, or at the same time as a breakfast club, as well as bringing in income because working parents can be charged.

**Set up advice provided by Magic Breakfast:** Interviewees' experiences of working with Magic Breakfast reported in the initial set of interviews were generally positive. Most school interviewees reported that Magic Breakfast were helpful and knowledgeable, with a few schools being very enthusiastic. It is clear that most schools wanted Magic Breakfast's advice on how to set up clubs and valued their understanding of the issues involved, especially in the planning and first weeks of a club running. A few school interviewees reported problems such as Magic Breakfast not following up on initial conversations or problems with early deliveries, but most schools were pleased with their Magic Breakfast contacts and the services offered once the breakfast club was up and running.

*'The support is immense, really good. If I need support they are at the other end of the phone' (Primary School)*

*'Having Magic Breakfast delivering the food has meant that we can spend time in thinking about staffing and how to run the club. Magic Breakfast removed the barrier around the food and the logistics of it, and this was something that was initially off-putting for the school' (Primary School)*

**Leadership:** Nearly all school interviewees said that either head teachers or deputies were involved in planning and setting up the breakfast club. Most then handed over the

running to others. Where head teachers who were new to the post were interviewed, they commonly mentioned that they saw establishing a breakfast club as a way of *'putting their mark'* on the school. This was especially true if a previous school they had worked in had a successful club, which was seen as being beneficial to the pupils.

In one primary school the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was the driver behind getting the breakfast club established, and was actively involved in running the club. The school had a breakfast club which working parents used and paid for. The PTA was interested in doing something that was free and open to everyone, and had been thinking about a parents' café. The head teacher suggested Magic Breakfast and the PTA agreed to lead in setting up the new offer. The two clubs ran separately; one free and staffed by parent volunteers; the other charged for and staffed by professional play workers.

**Whole school approach:** One of the research questions relates to the extent to which schools took a whole school approach to breakfast clubs. A whole school approach would mean breakfast clubs supporting the curriculum and/or linking with other school activities, such as encouraging pupils to eat healthily. Schools which stated that they'd had strong leadership input into the breakfast club, were more likely to report that they had considered how the breakfast club could link with other activities in the early stages of planning. One primary school mentioned that the whole school approach has been helped by having a new head teacher drawing on their experience in their previous school. This was one of the few schools where kitchen staff were involved. Another example is a primary school where a new head teacher wanted to extend the school day and start lessons earlier alongside taking a firmer line on punctuality. Introducing a breakfast club was seen *'as a sweetener to making them get in earlier'* as well as useful in its own right.

**Funding:** In all the schools interviewed or visited, interviewees unsurprisingly mentioned funding as a key issue. Most schools provided breakfast free to pupils indicating a reluctance to charge pupils. Interviewees in many of the case study schools emphasised that it was important for them to do this. The staff we spoke to in these schools told us they considered charging a negative action and worried that it would put pupils off attending. Nearly all schools reported that the provision of free food by Magic Breakfast was a big incentive for them to join the programme. Magic Breakfast interviewees stressed the importance of giving information to schools to show them how cheaply schools could provide breakfasts to their pupils. They reported that in their experience, many schools tended to overestimate the funding required to run breakfast clubs because of a lack of experience, and that when the charity was able to explain the realistic costs of providing breakfasts, schools were often surprised at how little it could cost them.

**Promoting and marketing:** Nearly all the case study schools mentioned the need to get the promotion of the breakfast club right, and the need to keep parents aware that breakfast was on offer. Schools used a variety of methods to alert parents to breakfast clubs including letters home, newsletters and posters in school. It was clear from the parents surveyed that their children were a key source of information about the breakfast club, and many pupils asked their parents if they could attend; often so they could see their friends in the morning. One primary school said that their main marketing for the breakfast club was targeted at pupils directly because they become *'the negotiator'* with their parents. For some primary schools, involving parents in running the breakfast club had also helped promote the breakfast club, because parents shared information about the club among their informal networks.

### Development and testing

**Piloting:** Some of the schools interviewed had tested their breakfast club concept by piloting provision with particular year groups or a selected set of pupils, such as pupils in a learning support unit, at the beginning, then extending it to more pupils once it was working well. Some, but not all schools also actively checked who was attending, so that they could ensure that the pupils most in need were the pupils benefitting from breakfast.

One primary academy kept a register each day so they knew whether pupils of families who they had targeted were attending. They particularly encouraged pupils who were persistently absent or late. The school also had a parent support worker who proactively targeted parents if their children did not come in for a few days to ask why.

**Sharing learning:** Magic Breakfast ran a series of regional workshops during the programme. In the initial set of school interviews some schools said they had attended the workshops, but most had not. Those that had, said that the workshops were useful and that they found it beneficial to see what other schools were doing. One breakfast club coordinator in a secondary school did not attend an event herself but spoke about her colleague to say:

*'She came back buzzing saying 'we need to do this and the other'. She came back really invigorated'* (Secondary School)

The reasons schools gave for not attending were generally that they felt they had enough information already or that the workshops *'were too big a commitment in terms of time and travel'*. A few schools felt they had not had enough notice in order to plan to attend. A few schools who did not make the initial workshop were considering attending future events. In the first set of interviews, Magic Breakfast staff said they were trying to give more advance notice in some areas and were thinking of changing the length so that they would be shorter; in the second set of interviews, they reported that in some areas invitations for events were now sent out three months in advance rather than the original six weeks.

### Implementation and refinement

**A whole school approach:** While some schools considered how a breakfast club could support a whole school approach in the initial planning and design phase, for most schools this appeared to be considered more once the breakfast club had been open for a while. At the time of the initial school interviews, few schools included breakfast clubs in their school improvement plans prior to the club starting. Most said they intended to include it in their formal plans for the next school year, which would strengthen a whole school approach. In the second set of interviews a few more schools had done so, but most had not.

Interviewees in most schools mentioned links with the curriculum and Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHE). Some mentioned the Healthy Schools Programme (Arthur et al, 2011). A few described how the messages around healthy eating in breakfast clubs were in keeping with healthy eating messages in extracurricular activities such as healthy cooking sessions with parents which were run after school.

*'We try and encourage families to look at how food is sourced/ look at budgets. We find a lot of these children were having coca cola and lots of sugary drinks – and prove to them they can eat healthily with the same amount of money. It will take a while but we are getting there'* (Secondary School)

In one school which did promote a whole school approach, a senior leader spoke about the need to keep staff, who were not involved with the running of the breakfast club, up to date on how it was going and how it could link to and support other activities.

*'It took a lot of time and footwork – to explain to every department what we are doing. Making sure questions were answered, everyone knew what we were doing. It takes time'* (Secondary School)

Interviewees in other schools mentioned the need to keep the whole school approach under review and to continually build new links.

*'This is the year we're having a really big push on it. We've a new head, the curriculum's all been revamped to include cooking and healthy eating; all the science topics, we have regular healthy weeks at school now, we have a walk to school week, our new head has got lots going on, and we have our PE competitions, it's quite a big thing for us'* (Primary School)

Most special schools actively linked breakfast clubs to a whole school approach. Some were using breakfast clubs as a way of teaching life skills (for example, social skills, learning to cope with changes) to students with profound disabilities, and using food in sensory learning.

**Ongoing delivery:** Interviewees in a few of the schools reported changing their breakfast club model as the year progressed. In one primary school a targeted approach changed to a universal approach. When the breakfast club first opened it was by invitation only. This was partly to target pupils who the school felt needed extra nutrition, support or contact with school; and partly to test the delivery model to ensure that the staffing worked and if children would attend. As this went well, the school expanded the offer although they continued to encourage FSM eligible pupils.

**Monitoring and evaluation in school:** In most of the schools interviewed, the main source of information about their breakfast clubs tended to be feedback from school staff. Monitoring, apart from attendance, appeared to be largely informal and anecdotal and not systematic. Some schools mentioned their intention to look more formally at the data to consider their decision about continuing to run the club and to assess outcomes.

*'We will look at the standard half-termly data to check if breakfast club kids are improving in key areas'* (Secondary School)

## **4.5 Barriers and enablers to establishing and supporting breakfast clubs**

This section draws on interviews and case studies to report the factors which schools and Magic Breakfast staff identified as the main challenges, barriers and enablers to establishing breakfast clubs.

**Senior staff involvement and championing:** The school interviews and case studies and the interviews with Magic Breakfast staff all stressed the importance of engaging the head or another member of the school's senior leadership team early on in the process as instrumental in starting a successful breakfast club.

**Forecasting demand:** Around a quarter of schools had issues with orders and deliveries in the first few weeks of the breakfast club. Several schools said it took a while for them to get their orders right; some of this was because schools had over or underestimated the amount of food they would need, but some felt this was because of teething problems in getting initial supplies from Magic Breakfast.

**Marketing and promoting the breakfast club:** Schools successfully promoted the breakfast club through both pupils and their parents. Only a few parents in the case study visits indicated that they had asked the school if it ran a breakfast club; which might suggest that parents do not expect schools to routinely provide breakfast and reinforces the need for schools to promote clubs vigorously. While parents supported breakfast clubs to help their children eat more healthily, for many this was not the main reason influencing their decision to let their children attend. Many parents said a key reason was that the start time for the club fitted better with their morning arrangements. This was the second most popular reason for parents using clubs alongside improving eating habits.

Saving money was given as a reason for using the club by less than a quarter of the parents who replied to the case study questionnaires. This relatively low response may reflect the fact that many pupils attending breakfast clubs are not eligible for FSMs so money may not be a significant issue for many parents.

Many secondary schools described difficulties in promoting the club to older pupils. They said that breakfast clubs tended to be more heavily used by the younger pupils and that promoting the clubs to older pupils was a challenge. Reasons given were that older children did not see it as *'cool to go to a breakfast club'* and a few secondary schools said it could be difficult to get older teenage girls to eat in school.

Nearly all the case study schools stressed the need for discretion and subtlety when targeting particular pupils or parents. A typical comment came from a primary school where the breakfast club was free and open to all.

*'If a child was being continually late we would say to the parent ... 'why don't they [the pupil] come in and have breakfast and then you don't have to worry' (Primary School)*

This need for a lateral approach was mirrored in other schools. One secondary school felt that pupils may still see a stigma in coming to the breakfast club and may not like it. As a result the school did not talk about a 'club' and initiated conversations in different ways; such as by using conversations around why a pupil is late to promote the breakfast club in a low key way by saying to parents .... *'did you know that you can get breakfast in school?'* rather than *'it's free [for FSM pupils] – you don't need to pay'*. Not labelling it *'a club'* also seemed to help encourage older pupils to attend.

Another primary school gave an example of a family where the children were always hungry but the mother was defensive when initially told about the breakfast club. The school then approached this more tangentially and started to praise the children when they came to the breakfast club, which they did occasionally, and made a point of saying to the mother that the children enjoyed breakfast. This combination of praise and feedback worked and the children now attend breakfast club most days.

**Staffing:** Teaching assistants most commonly ran breakfast clubs. Magic Breakfast staff suggested that using learning mentors or other staff who have links with parents can be particularly beneficial as they bring a greater level of engagement with families most in need and can be critical in getting pupils from disadvantaged families, who would otherwise not attend to do so.

**Funding:** The majority of schools did not have additional staffing costs arising from breakfast clubs and were meeting staffing needs by altering the times staff worked within their existing hours, such as teaching assistants coming in one hour earlier and replacing other work with their breakfast club activities. Only around one fifth of breakfast club coordinators said their schools were paying staff for the additional hours they worked to provide the breakfast club. An interviewee at one special school specifically mentioned cost as a constraint. This was limiting them offering breakfast to more pupils because of the additional staff costs which would be needed if the offer was expanded. Staff to pupil ratios had to be high in this particular school because of their pupils' special educational needs.

**Location:** Nearly all of the case study schools emphasised the importance of getting the location and the environment right. Having sufficient space to run a breakfast club was an obvious but necessary factor in having a successful club. A few schools mentioned that space constraints affected where they could host the breakfast club. Where schools offered the breakfast club at more than one location, this was usually more to do with the needs of the pupils than because of limited space in the main dining area.

The location often brought supplementary benefits. One PRU emphasised the positive atmosphere around the breakfast club and the way it can give a welcoming view of the school for pupils and visitors. The eating area is an open café seating area which is part of a large foyer, which forms the main communal area for both pupils and teachers. Breakfast is free to all pupils, staff and visitors. Pupils and teachers sit together in the eating area.

**Space:** A few of the school staff interviewed reported that space was a constraint which limited the size of the breakfast club. For one small primary school, this was because of very limited space. The school was only able to offer a free breakfast to a maximum of 40 pupils each day. Pupils could attend for two days each week, and attendance was rotated on a termly basis. There was also a waiting list. The school closely monitored how it managed attendance and ensured that FSM eligible pupils got priority. Case study schools were more likely to identify space as a constraint; several mentioned that they wanted to expand their breakfast club and offer it to more pupils but space did not allow this. Having enough space is important, but most schools emphasised the need to tailor the space to suit the pupils. Having the space to allow children to sit down and eat a meal together rather than to grab something and go was seen as important by nearly all schools.

**Facilities:** About half the schools interviewed mentioned storage facilities being a challenge, especially in the early stages of running the breakfast club. Many schools bought freezers with the £300 that was available to resource the club, and some bought freezers that were too small and were unable to store the amount of food needed. This could have been, in part, because the school had underestimated the popularity of the club or the amount of food needed. Many schools mentioned limited storage space as a factor constraining expansion of the breakfast club.

**Catering contracts:** Where schools had external catering contracts they tended not to describe these as a constraint, but there were exceptions. For one secondary school, the catering contract caused a delay in setting up a breakfast club. The school was part of an academy chain which had a single contract for all its catering; the contract required that all food provided in the school should be provided by the contractor and there was no provision for breakfast. The school had to obtain the agreement of the catering company and its multi academy trust to vary the contract. Although both supported the change, the process took a long time.

**Involvement of parents:** Schools that involved parents found this a positive thing to do. In one case described above, the PTA had led in setting up the club and takes the lead in running the club.

## 4.6 Summary

### Participating schools

- 184 schools were recruited to the programme. Around a quarter were in Greater London with around a fifth in each of the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and West Midlands;
- Four fifths of schools had 35% or more of pupils eligible for FSM, with almost two fifths having over 45% of pupils eligible;

- The majority of schools were primary schools (63%). Around one tenth (11%) were secondary schools while one fifth (20%) were special schools and 7% were PRUs.

### **Setting up a breakfast club**

- Most schools engaged with breakfast clubs because they identified that children were coming to school hungry;
- While reducing hunger and eating more healthily were key drivers, school interviewees linked hunger with poor concentration and behaviour in the mornings at school, so also wanted to introduce breakfast clubs to improve them;
- Although interviewees identified ways in which breakfast clubs linked with other school activities, there was little evidence that these links were initially a key consideration in schools' early planning at set-up stage. The main exceptions to this were special schools where breakfast was, typically, more integrally linked to supporting learning from the outset.

### **Breakfast club models**

- There was little variation in the food offered; most schools served the standard offer of bagels, cereal and juice, sometimes supplemented with porridge and/or fruit.
- Timing, location and activities offered alongside the breakfast club show a range of delivery options, suggesting schools were taking a tailored approach, reflecting their pupils' needs and the space/resources available.
- Most schools were positive about the support offered by Magic Breakfast; some significantly so. Where there were issues, these tended to be teething problems in the early days of implementation.
- Partnership working, especially by attending regional meetings, did seem to be useful for schools which had attended, although only a few schools interviewed had attended.
- Most schools offered breakfast club places to all pupils at the school. Schools commonly, but not always, actively encouraged children from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend. Where space was rationed, these pupils were prioritised.
- A few special schools were only able to offer breakfast to certain pupils because of physical or mental health elements of their medical conditions.
- Most schools were meeting staffing needs from existing budgets and did not have additional staff costs.

### **Enablers and challenges in establishing breakfast clubs**

- Strong leadership and 'buy in' within the school is essential to ensure that breakfast clubs are set up and well integrated into the school.

- Forecasting demand correctly was a challenge. Around a quarter of schools had issues with orders and deliveries in the first few weeks of the breakfast club.
- The need to promote the breakfast club to parents and to pupils on an ongoing basis, not just when the breakfast club opened was apparent. This was true for older pupils and those they felt who would most benefit.
- There is a need to be sensitive and indirect when targeting the breakfast club towards pupils or parents where the school felt that children may be hungry, or where punctuality poor.
- The ability to change working hours or activities within existing teaching assistant contracts to provide staff for the breakfast club was an enabler for most schools.
- Location and space could be both enablers and constraints.
  - A few schools mentioned that space constraints affected where they could host the breakfast club, and that there was not enough space for all pupils to attend who wanted to.
  - Having space with a layout that enabled pupils to sit and eat with their friends was an enabler in encouraging pupils to attend.
  - The ability to offer the breakfast club in different locations around the school to meet the needs of different pupils groups was an enabler. For example, being able to host the club in a classroom for a small group of pupils with behavioural issues, while hosting the main club in the dining hall was seen as advantageous.

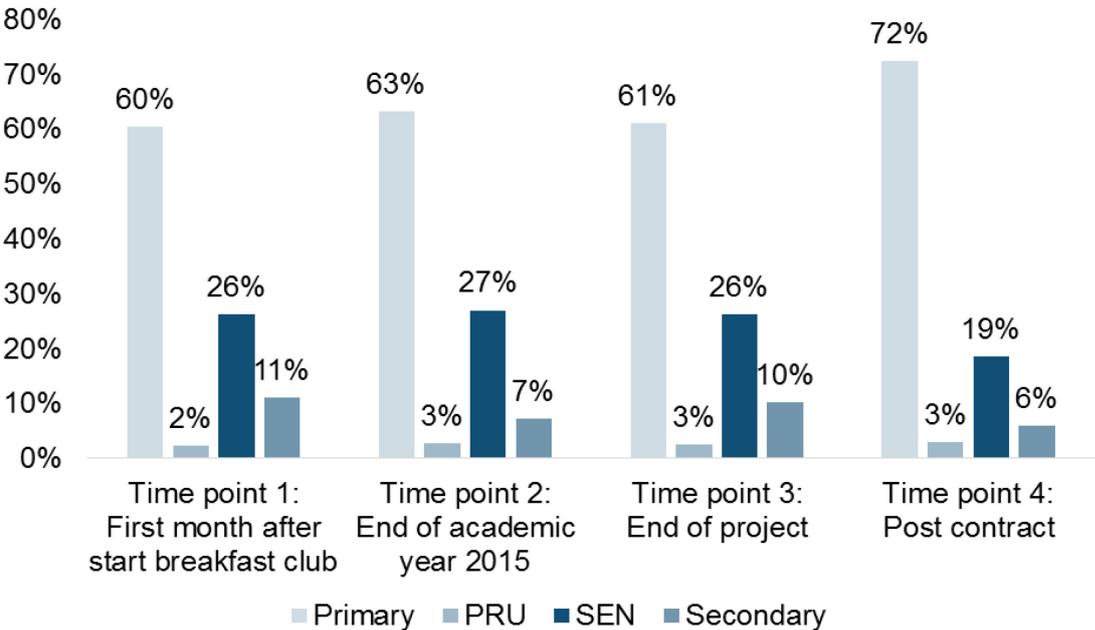
# 5. Pupils attending breakfast clubs

This section presents findings from the analysis of data on the number and characteristics of pupils attending breakfast clubs. While not all schools provided data at each collection point, and some data is missing for many schools, there is a sufficiently large amount of data to be able to undertake a robust analysis.

## 5.1 Numbers attending breakfast clubs

Substantial numbers of pupils attended breakfast clubs in each of the time points ranging from just over 6,000 pupils in the 94 schools who submitted data at the last (fourth) time point to over 11,000 pupil in the 176 schools who submitted data at the third time point. Figure 2 shows the distribution of pupils attending for each type of school in the collection weeks. In each of the four time points, most of the pupils who attended breakfast clubs were in primary schools. Primary school pupils accounted for about 60% of all pupils in the first three time points and over 70% in the last collection. This reflects the fact that most schools in the programme were primary schools (63%).

**Figure 2 Share of pupils attending breakfast club by type for each time point**



Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.<sup>13</sup>  
 Base: 9,983 pupils (time point 1), 9,887 (2), 11,290 (3) and 6,190 (4).

<sup>13</sup> For all figures and tables, Magic Breakfast collected attendance data from schools for the first three time points and ICF collected data from schools for the fourth time point.

Table 11 below shows the exact number and shares of pupils and schools by type for each time point.

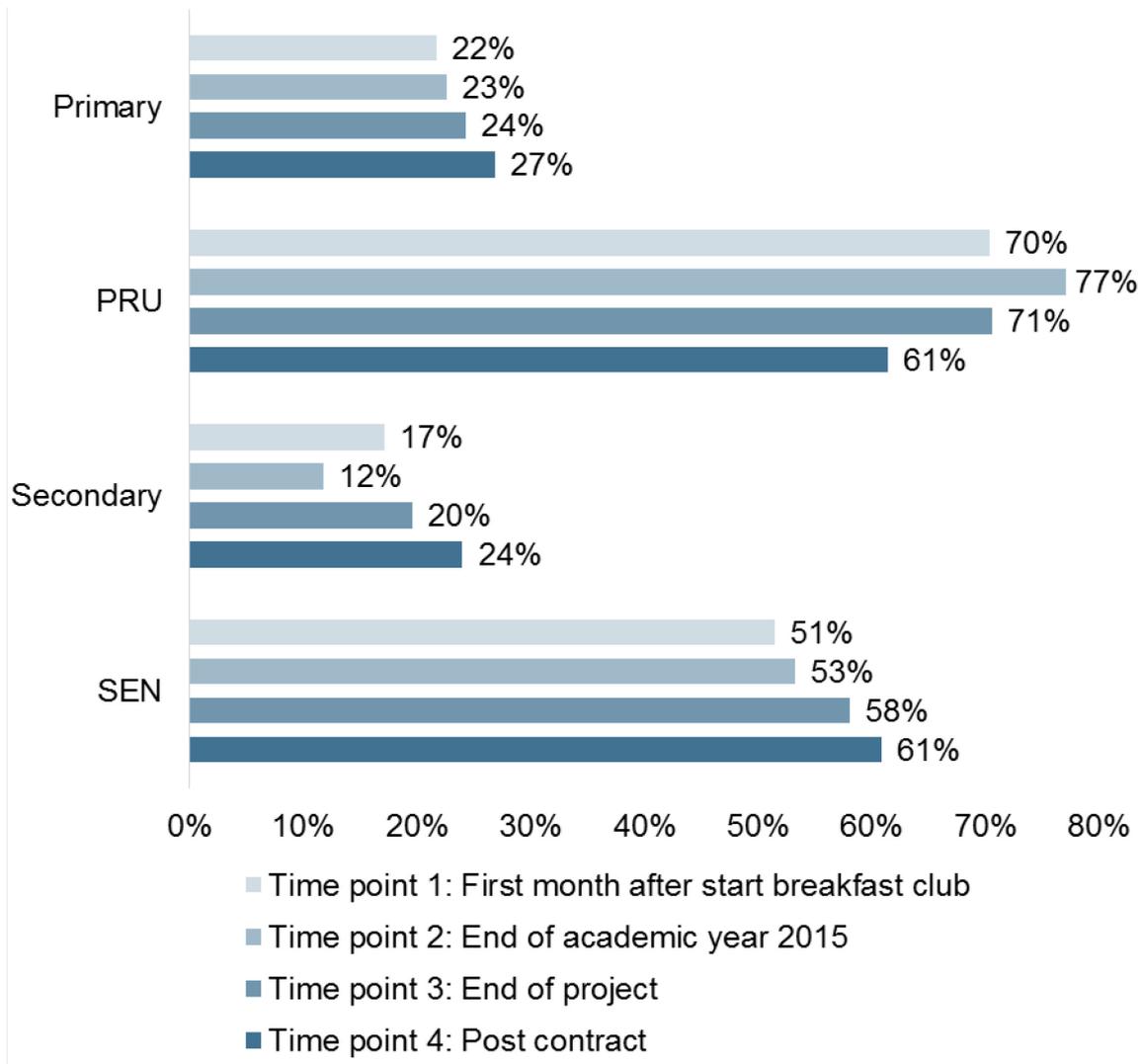
**Table 11 Numbers and spread of schools and pupils by time point**

	Time point 1: First month after breakfast club starts		Time point 2: End of academic year 2015		Time point 3: End of project		Time point 4: Post contract	
	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils	Schools	Pupils
Primary	98 (58%)	6,023 (60%)	103 (59%)	6,245 (63%)	104 (59%)	6,888 (61%)	59 (63%)	4,484 (72%)
PRU	12 (7%)	235 (2%)	13 (7%)	268 (3%)	13 (7%)	294 (3%)	9 (10%)	182 (3%)
Secondary	17 (10%)	1,110 (11%)	16 (9%)	705 (7%)	14 (8%)	1,143 (10%)	6 (6%)	370 (6%)
SEN	41 (24%)	2,615 (26%)	43 (25%)	2,669 (27%)	45 (26%)	2,965 (26%)	20 (21%)	1,154 (19%)
Total (100 %)	168	9,983	175	9,887	176	11,290	94	6,190

*Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
Base: 9,983 pupils (time point 1), 9,887 (2), 11,290 (3) and 6,190 (4).*

Figure 3 puts these figures into context by showing what proportion of pupils in each school attended the breakfast club on average. This shows that special schools and PRUs had the highest proportions of pupils attending a breakfast club. In special schools, over half of pupils attended, on average (51% to 61%) and in PRUs, around two thirds attended, on average (61% to 70%). In primary schools, around a quarter of pupils attended the breakfast club on average (22% to 27%) and in secondary schools attendance on average was slightly lower (12% to 24%).

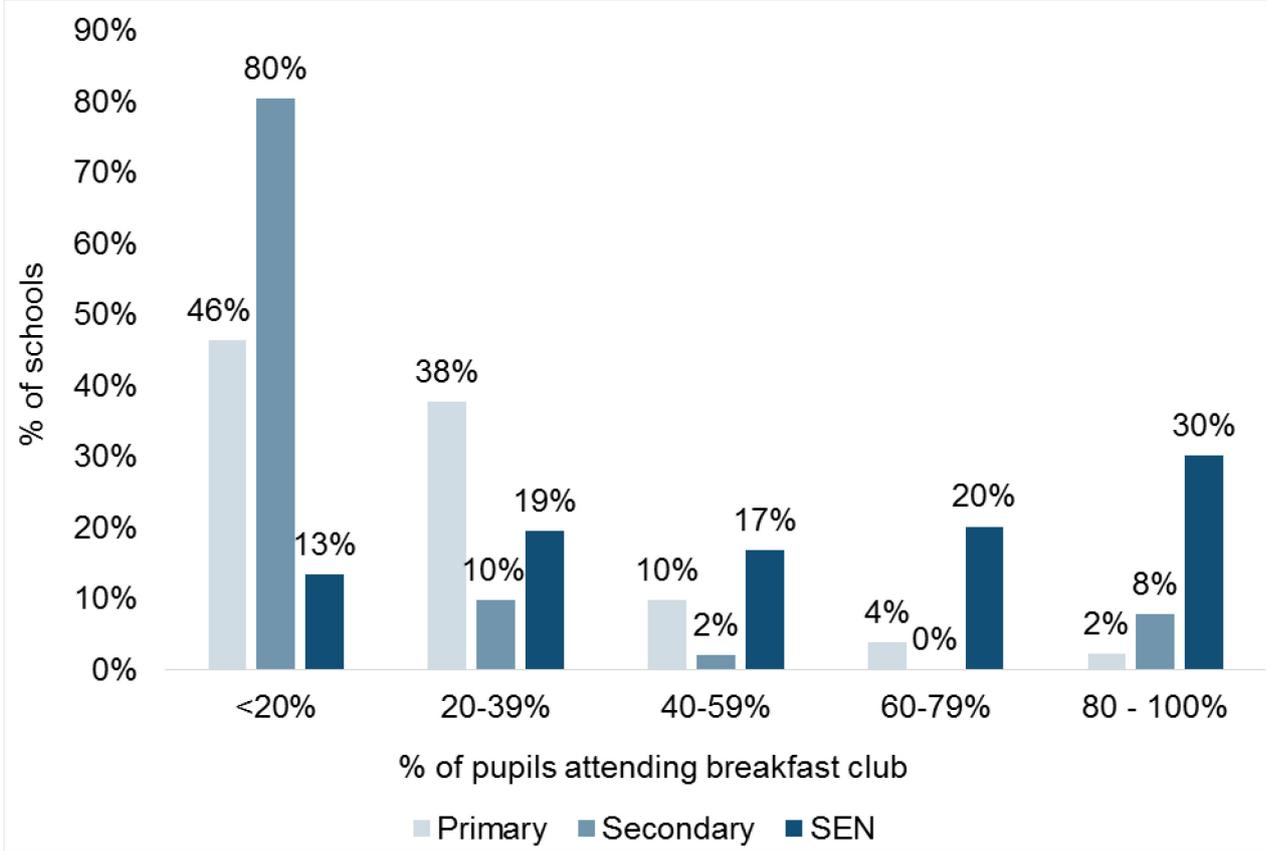
**Figure 3 Average share of pupils attending breakfast club of all pupils on the school roll (by time point and school type)**



*Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
Base: 161 schools (time point 1), 168 (2), 168 (3) and 176 (4).*

Figure 4 breaks this down further and shows the distribution of schools by quintile (i.e. up to 20% of all pupils attending the breakfast club, 21% to 40% of all pupils attending the breakfast club, and so on). This shows that in four fifths of secondary schools, less than 20% of pupils attended the breakfast club and almost all (90%) had less than 40% attend. Attendance was proportionally higher in primary schools; just under half (46%) had less than 20% of pupils attending and more than four fifths (84%) had less than 40% attending. Special schools showed a wider spread; some schools had a very high share of pupils attending and others had low proportions attending. Almost a third (30%) of special schools had more than 80% of their pupils attending while another third (32%) had under 40% attending.

**Figure 4 Distribution of school shares of pupils attending breakfast club by type<sup>14</sup>**



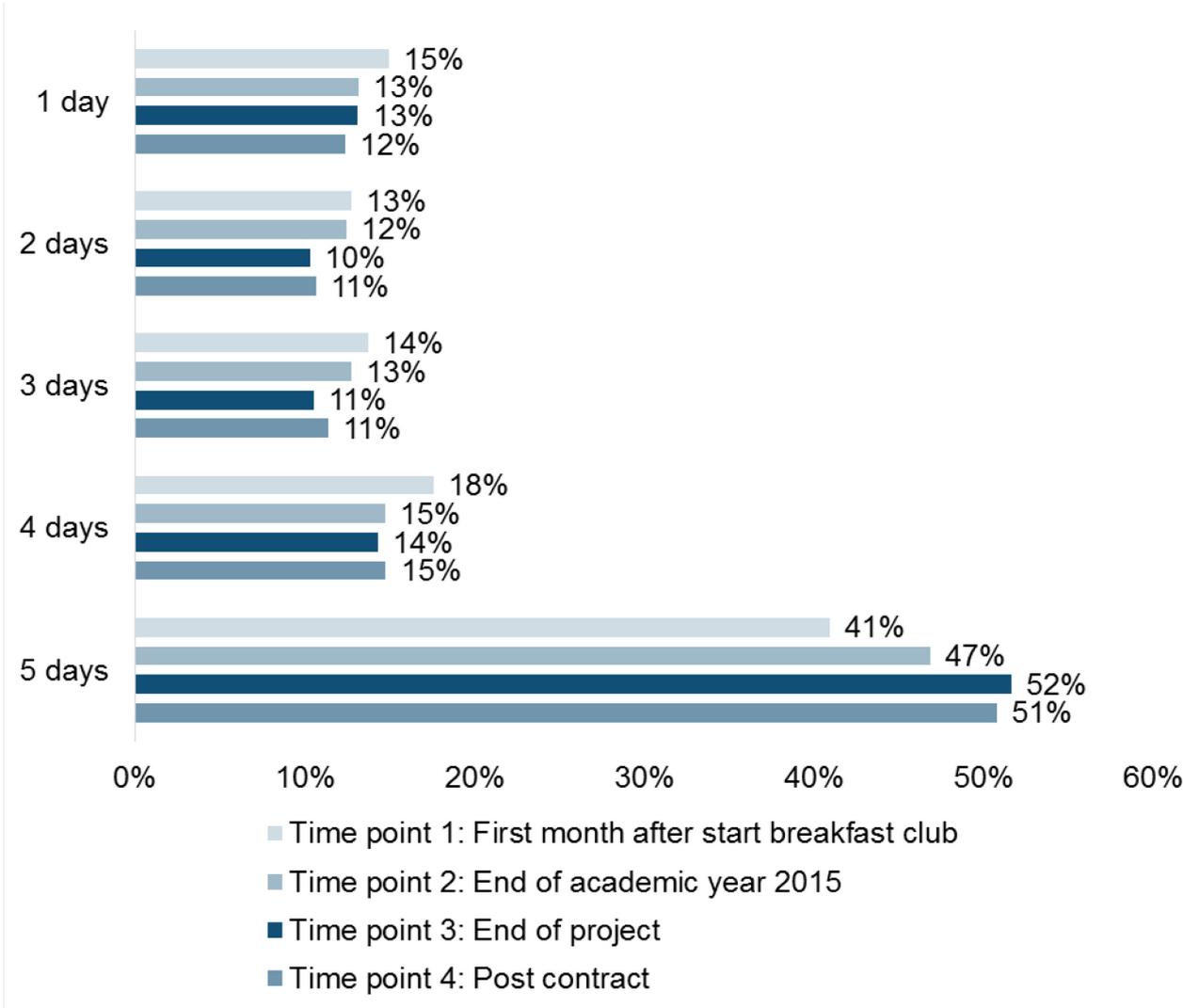
Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
 Base: 153 schools (time point 1), 159 (2), 163 (3) and 85 (4).

<sup>14</sup> Quintile shares were not calculated for PRU's as there was insufficient data to allow for an analysis at this level.

## 5.2 Frequency of attendance

Schools were asked to record which days pupils attended breakfast club for the week data was collected, at each time point. Figure 5 shows that the most common pattern was for pupils to attend breakfast club every day of the week (41% to 52% of pupils, depending on time point). Attending for all five days was the most common pattern across the four time points. Similarly, proportions of pupils who attended for one, two, three or four days did not vary much across the time points. Around one quarter attended for only one or two days (23% to 28%).

**Figure 5 Distribution of pupil attendance by number of days attended for each time point**

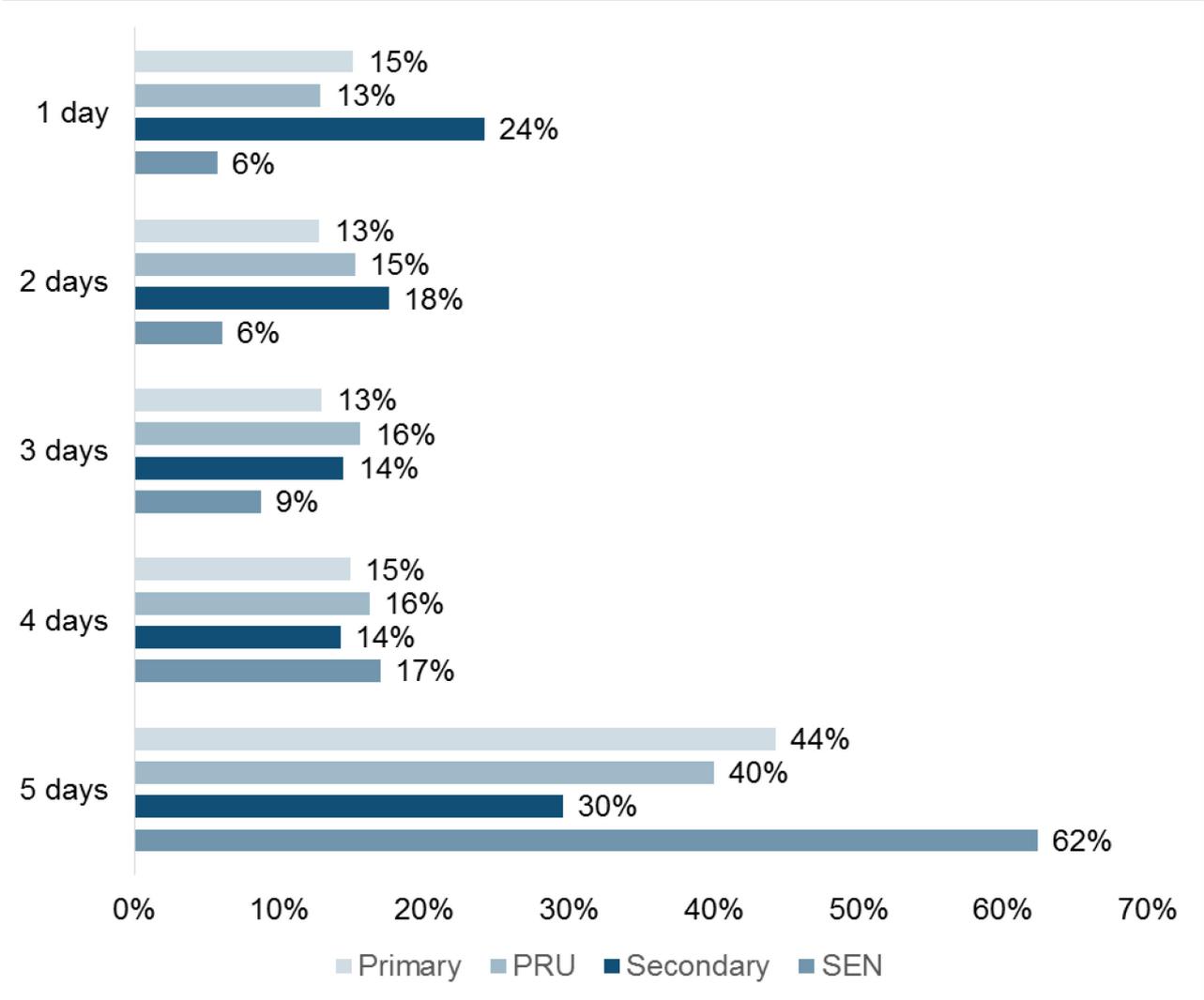


*Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
Base: 9,983 pupils (time point 1), 9,887 (2), 11,290 (3) and 6,190 (4).*

Figure 6 shows how the distribution of pupil attendance varied by school type. Pupils in special schools were most likely to attend the breakfast clubs every day with 79% attending for four or more days. Primary schools also had a high level of consistent

attendance with 59% of pupils attending four or five days. In secondary schools, pupils displayed a more varied pattern; while the largest proportion (30%) attended every day, one quarter (24%) attended only one day.

**Figure 6 Distribution of pupil attendance by school type**

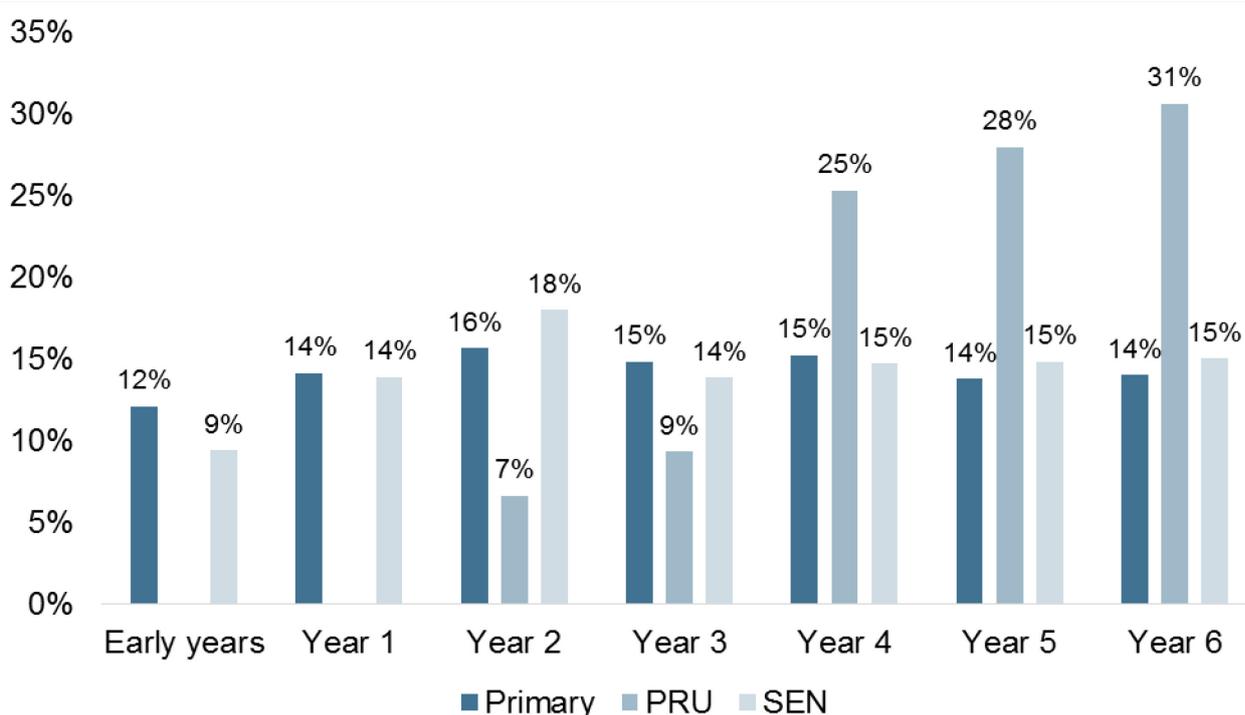


Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance.  
 Base: 9,983 pupils (time point 1), 9,887 (2), 11,290 (3) and 6,190 (4).

### 5.3 Year groups

Within mainstream and special schools, pupil attendance was evenly spread across the different year groups, as shown for primary schools in Figure 7. There was little variance across the time points so figures are presented here for the total data set. As shown in Figure 7, pupils attending breakfast clubs in primary PRUs were more likely to be older with attendance concentrated in years 4 to 6, as could be expected from the older ages of pupils in these schools.

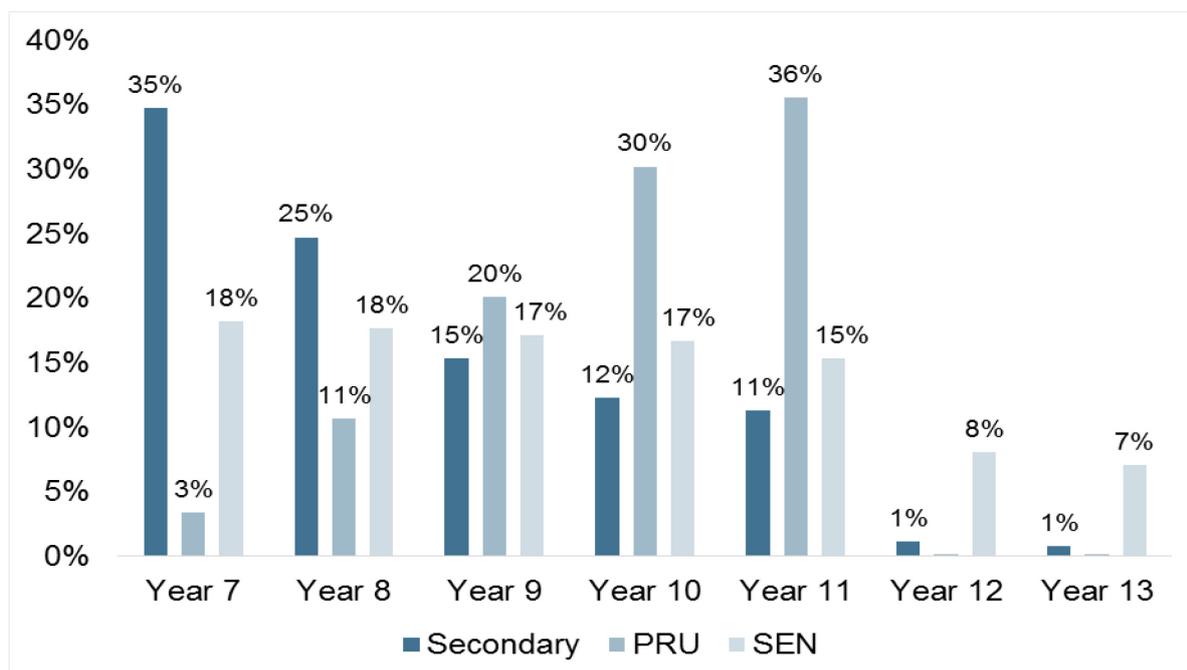
**Figure 7 Share of pupils in primary school attending breakfast club by year group and school type**



Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
 Base: 6,695 pupils (time point 1), 6,878 (2), 8,053 (3) and 4,968 (4).

Figure 8 looks at shares of pupils in secondary school years attending breakfast clubs. It shows that pupils in secondary school breakfast clubs were more likely to be in the younger year groups with 60% of pupils attending being in years 7 and 8. In PRUs, the pattern was reversed with older pupils more likely to attend; attendance increased between year 7 and 11, from 3% at year 7 to 36% at year 11. Attendance in special schools was fairly evenly spread across years 7 to 11.

**Figure 8 Share of pupils in secondary schools attending breakfast club by year group and school type**



Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
Base: 6,695 pupils (time point 1), 6,878 (2), 8,053 (3) and 4,968 (4).

There are no striking differences in the average number of days pupils attended breakfast club across the year groups. The average across all schools and for all time points is 3.7 days. For each of the age bands (early years, years 1 to 3, 4 to 6, 7 to 9 and year 10 and above), the average is either 3.6 or 3.7 days.

## 5.4 Gender

As Table 12 illustrates, more boys than girls attended breakfast clubs in each of the four time points.

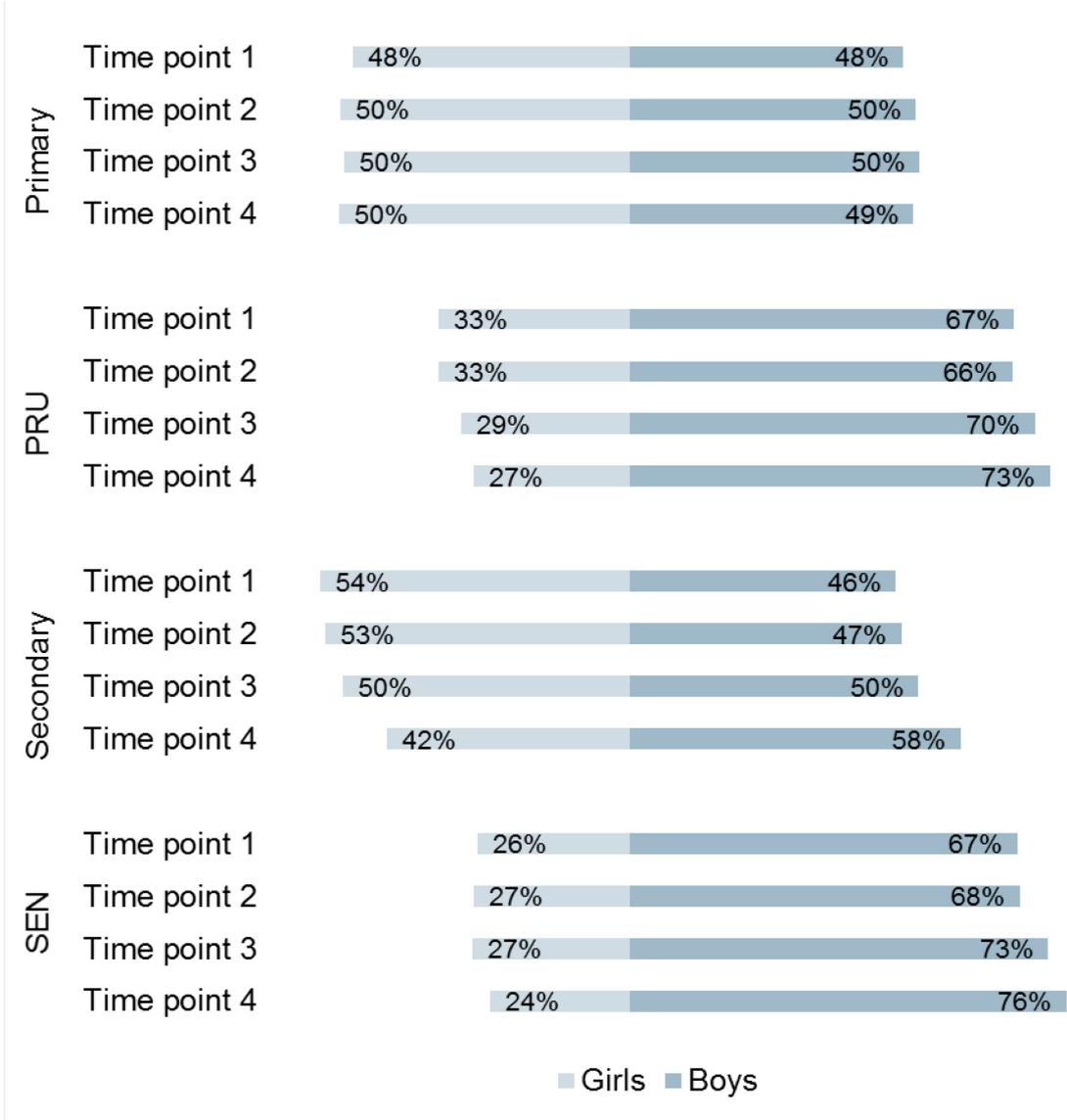
**Table 12 Number (%) of boys and girls attending breakfast clubs at each time point**

	<b>Time point 1: First month after start breakfast club</b>	<b>Time point 2: End of academic year 2015</b>	<b>Time point 3: End of project</b>	<b>Time point 4: Post contract</b>
Girls	4256 (43%)	4314 (44%)	4880 (43%)	2741 (44%)
Boys	5297 (53%)	5428 (55%)	6408 (57%)	3434 (55%)
Data missing	430 (4%)	145 (1%)	2 (0%)	15 (0%)

Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data

Figure 9 shows that the gender gap is greatest for PRUs and special schools where at each time point two thirds or over of the pupils who attended breakfast clubs were boys. In primary schools, the proportion of each gender is broadly the same, around 50%, at each time point. There was more fluctuation in secondary schools; girls were more highly represented in the first two time points (53% to 54%) but less so in the last time point (42%).

**Figure 9 Share of male and female pupils attending breakfast clubs, by time point and school type**



Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
 Base<sup>15</sup>: 9,553 pupils (time point 1), 9,742 (2), 11,288 (3) and 6,175 (4).

<sup>15</sup> As information is missing for some schools, totals do not add to 100%

For the last time point, schools were asked to provide additional information on the number of boys and girls on the school roll to see if variations in gender attending breakfast clubs reflected the gender split for pupils attending the school. Table 13 shows that, on average, the proportions of girls and boys attending breakfast clubs were broadly in line with the school roll. There was a slightly higher share of boys attending breakfast clubs in secondary schools (three percentage points more) and of girls attending breakfast clubs in PRUs and special schools (two percentage points more).

**Table 13 Percentage of girls and boys attending breakfast clubs compared to girls and boys on the school roll**

	Average percentage of girls		Average percentage of boys	
	Attending breakfast clubs	On the school roll	Attending breakfast clubs	On the school roll
Primary	50%	50%	50%	50%
PRU	27%	25%	73%	75%
Secondary	39%	37%	60%	63%
SEN	22%	23%	78%	77%

*Source: ICF attendance data.  
Base<sup>16</sup>: 91 schools (time point 4).*

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<sup>16</sup> As information is missing for some schools, totals do not add up to a 100%.

## 5.5 FSM eligible pupils

Around one third to two fifths of the pupils who attended breakfast clubs were eligible for FSMs. Table 14 shows that for the first three time points, the FSM proportion was consistent at around two fifths, with a dip in the last time point to 35%.

**Table 14 FSM/non FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs, per time point**

	<b>Time point 1: First month after start breakfast club</b>	<b>Time point 2: End of academic year 2015</b>	<b>Time point 3: End of project</b>	<b>Time point 4: Post contract</b>
Non FSM eligible	5227 (52%)	5664 (57%)	6683 (59%)	4017 (65%)
FSM eligible	4317(44%)	4059 (41%)	4591 (41%)	2153 (35%)
Unknown	439 (4%)	164 (2%)	16 (0%)	20 (0%)

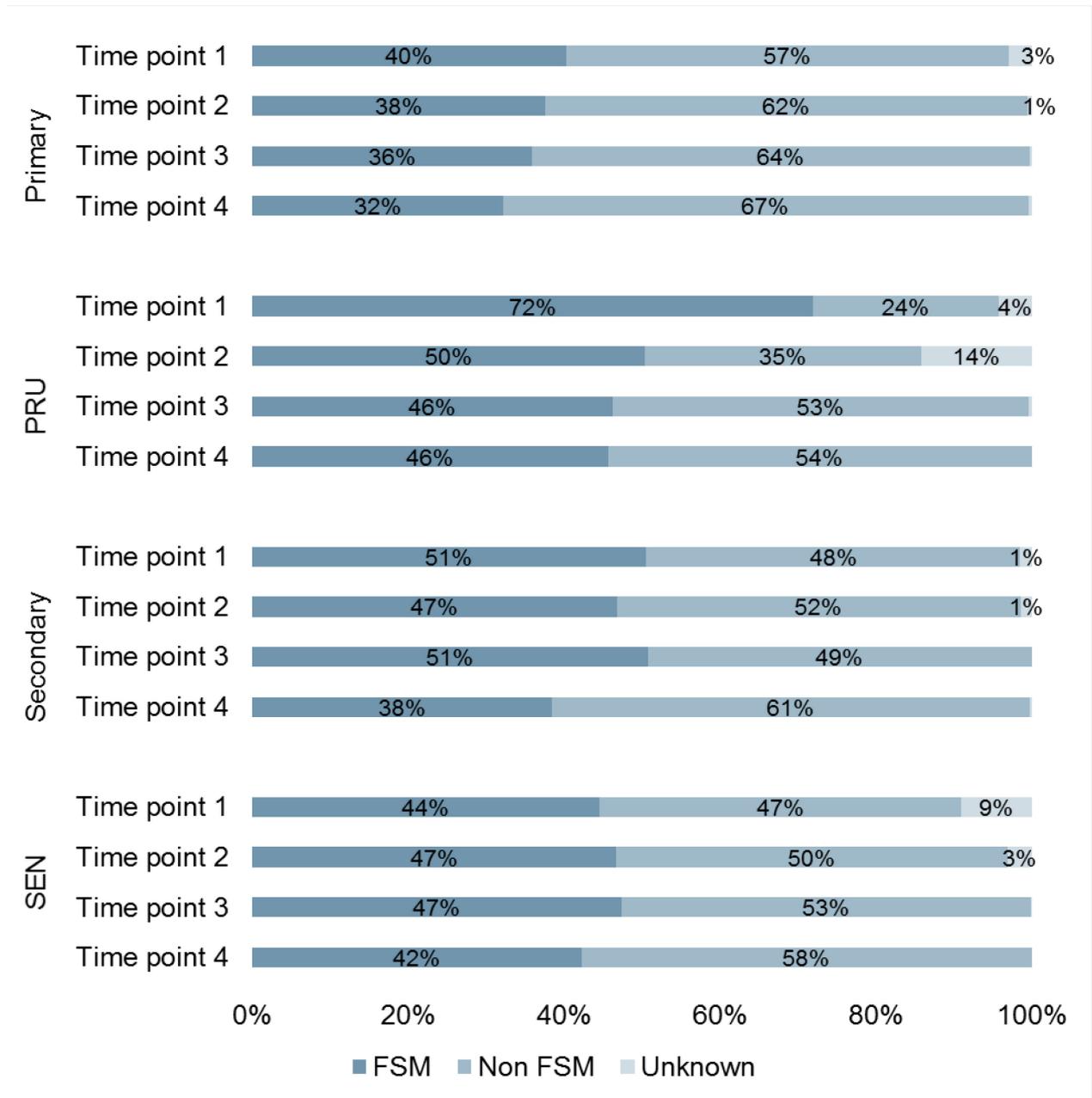
*Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
Base:<sup>17</sup> 37,350 pupils.*

Figure 10 shows the distribution of FSM pupils who attended breakfast clubs by school type. In primary and secondary schools, the proportion of FSM pupils was fairly consistent across the first three data points (at around 40% and 50% respectively) but dipped in the last time point (to 32% and 38%). In special schools, there was a slight decrease in the number of pupils who were FSM eligible from the first to the last time point, following an increase at the second and third time points. In PRUs, the first time point showed a high proportion of FSM eligible pupils (72%), falling to around half in the later three time points. In both special schools and PRUs, there was a larger proportion of pupils where the school reported that they did not know if a pupil was FSM eligible (up to 14% for PRUs in the second time point). Many PRUs reported that they do not hold information on FSM status as this is held only by referring schools.

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<sup>17</sup> Figures are rounded and therefore may not add up to a 100%.

**Figure 10 Share of FSM eligible and non-eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs, by time point and school type**

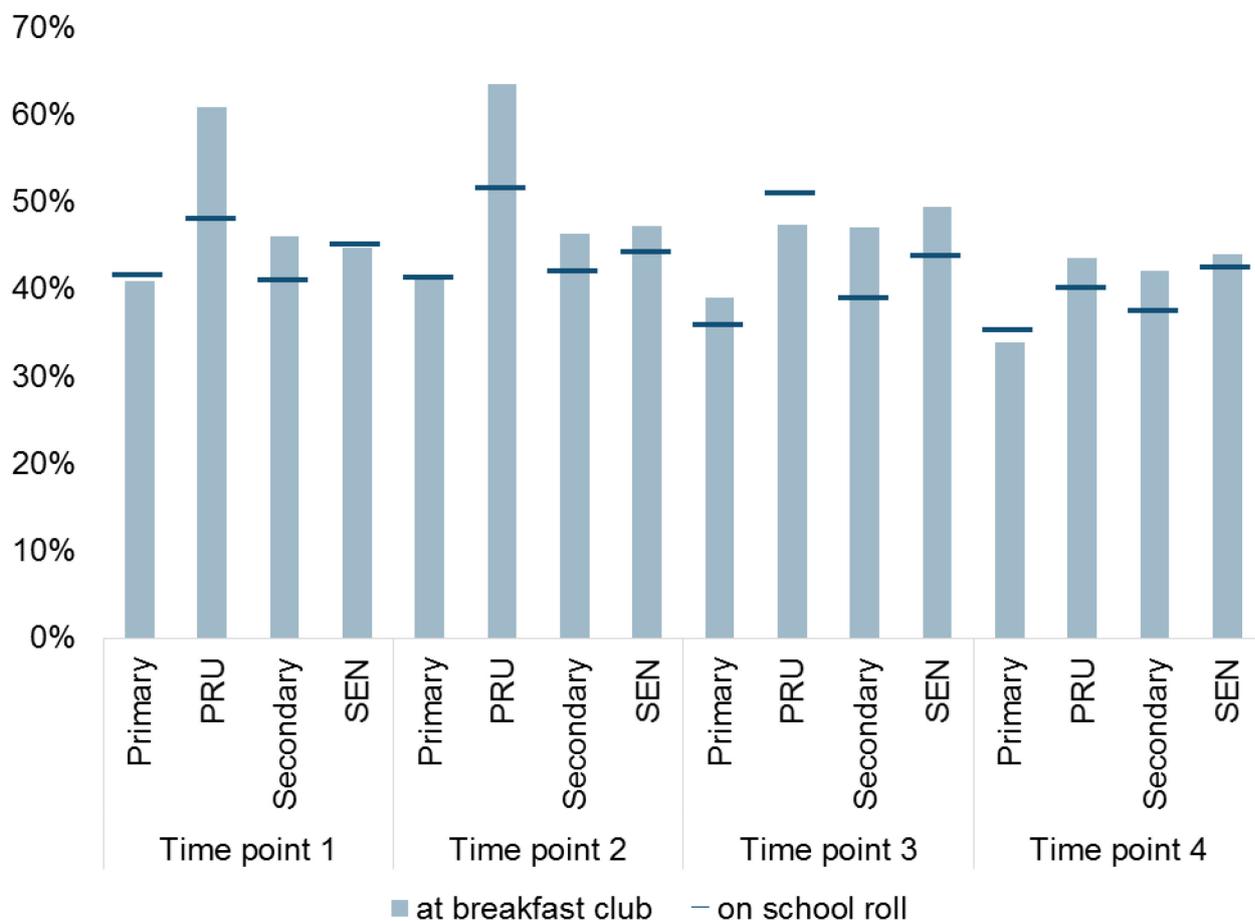


Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
 Base: 9,544 pupils (time point 1), 9,723 (2), 11,274 (3) and 6,170 (4).

An objective of the evaluation was to assess if schools have been successful in encouraging pupils most in need to attend breakfast clubs. We would expect schools that are successfully encouraging FSM eligible pupils to attend breakfast clubs, to have at least as many FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs as are represented in the school roll. The evaluation data shows that participating schools were successful in reaching this group. The overall figures, across all time points and school types, show that 41% of pupils on school rolls were FSM eligible, while 42% of breakfast club attendees were FSM eligible.

Figure 11 shows to what extent types of school were successful in attracting FSM eligible pupils into their breakfast clubs compared to what might be expected from the percentage of pupils who were FSM eligible on the school roll. This shows that for secondary schools and special schools at all of the time points a slightly higher proportion of pupils attending breakfast clubs were FSM eligible than the proportion of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll. In primary schools, if we look across all the time points, the proportions of FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs were broadly in line with the proportions on the school roll but they vary at individual time points. At time points 1 and 4, breakfast club attendance by primary aged FSM eligible pupils was 1 percentage point under the proportion of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll, at time point 2, it was equal and at time point 3, it was 3 percentage points higher. Attendance figures for PRUs are generally above those on the school roll, with the exception of time point 3, but as the number of PRUs were small these results should be interpreted as indicative only.

**Figure 11 Comparison of the average share of FSM eligible pupils who attended breakfast club and the average share of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll**



Source: Magic Breakfast school and ICF attendance data.  
Base: 159 schools (time point 1), 166 (2), 173 (3) and 91 (4).

Table 15 presents this information in a different way showing whether the average proportion of FSM eligible pupils who attended a breakfast club is more than 5% above the proportion of FSM pupils on the school roll ( $\uparrow$ ), more than 5% below ( $\downarrow$ ) or similar (i.e. between 5% above or below:  $\leftrightarrow$ ). This shows that schools on average were either recruiting FSM pupils to the breakfast club in line with the overall share of FSM pupils in their school or recruiting more.

**Table 15 Comparison of the average share of FSM eligible pupils who attended breakfast clubs and the average share of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll**

	Phase	Average share of FSM pupils on school roll	Avg proportion of FSM pupils at breakfast club	Balance (breakfast club minus school roll)
Time point 1	Primary	42 %	41 %	→
	PRU	48 %	61 %	↑
	Secondary	41 %	46 %	→
	SEN	45 %	45 %	→
Time point 2	Primary	41 %	41 %	→
	PRU	52 %	64 %	↑
	Secondary	42 %	46 %	→
	SEN	44 %	47 %	→
Time point 3	Primary	36 %	39 %	→
	PRU	51 %	47 %	→
	Secondary	39 %	47 %	↑
	SEN	44 %	49 %	→
Time point 4	Primary	35 %	34 %	→
	PRU	40 %	44 %	→
	Secondary	38 %	42 %	→
	SEN	43 %	44 %	→

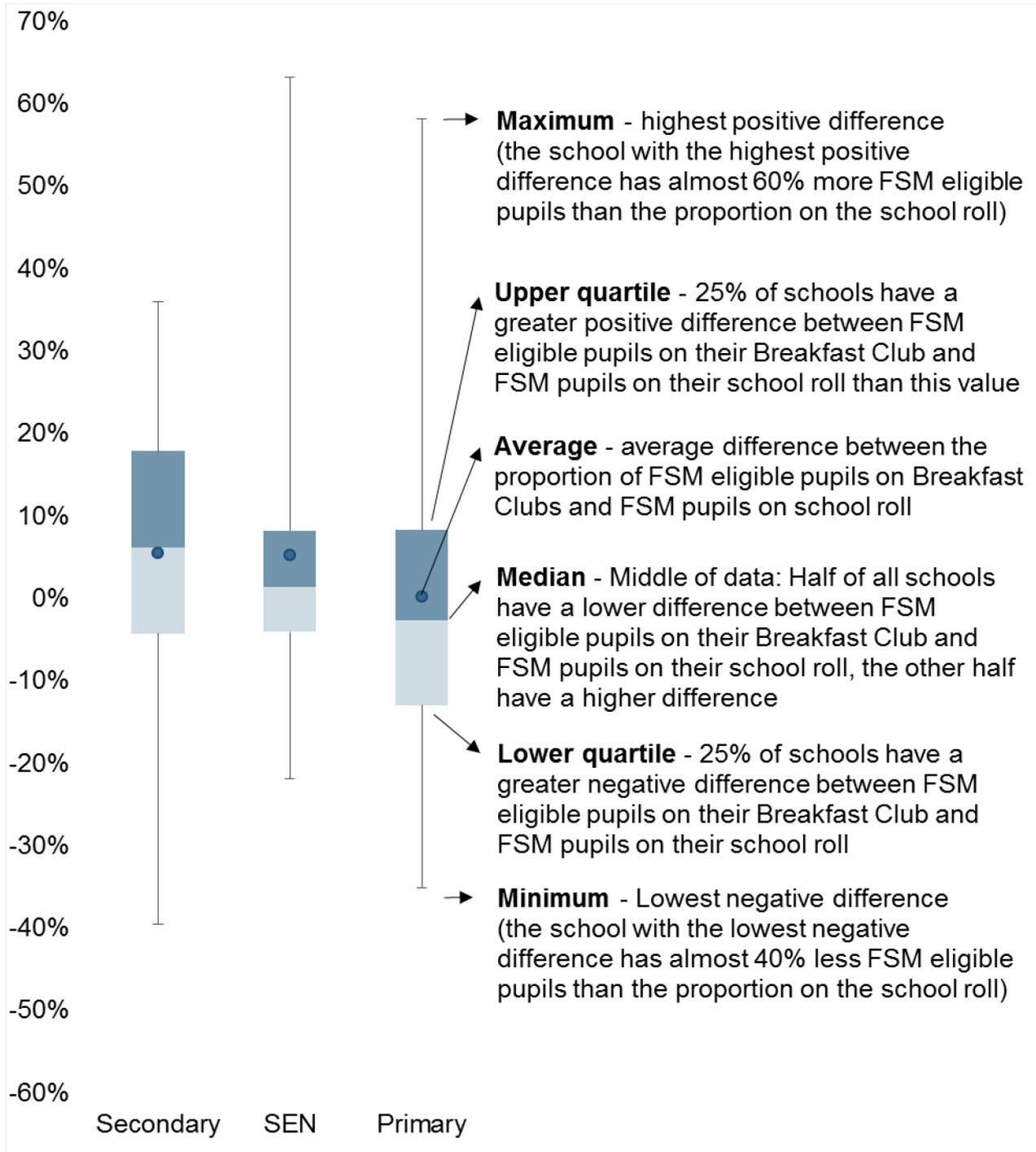
-  > 5 % above the average share of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll
-  ± 5 % the average proportion of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll
-  < 5 % below the average proportion of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll

*Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
Base: 159 schools (time point 1), 166 (2), 173(3) and 91 (4).*

There is a wider difference if we look at the distribution across schools. For time point 2 (end of academic year 2015), the difference between the share of FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs and the share of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll was calculated for each school. The boxplot presented in Figure 12 and summarised in Table 16 sets out these results. PRUs were not included as there were not sufficient numbers for analysis. It shows that, at time point 2, one half of all schools fell within the range of a plus or minus 10 percentage point difference between the share of FSM eligible pupils who attended the breakfast club and the share on the school roll. At this time point, secondary schools had, on average, more FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs (+6 percentage points) than on the school roll, as did special schools<sup>18</sup> (+5 percentage points). Primary schools had, on average, fewer FSM pupils attending that were on the school roll (-3 percentage points).

<sup>18</sup> This figure is influenced by a few schools who had a significantly greater proportion of FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast club (up to 63 percentage points).

**Figure 12** Boxplot summarising differences in the share of FSM eligible pupils who attended breakfast club and the share of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll, by type



Source: Magic Breakfast school management information.  
Base: 158 schools and 9,780 pupils (time point 2).

**Table 16 Distribution of the share of FSM eligible pupils who attended breakfast club and the share of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll, by type**

	Range	Upper quartile	Lower quartile	Median	Mean (average)
Secondary	-40% to 36%	18%	-4%	6%	6%
SEN	-22% to 63%	8%	-4%	1%	5%
Primary	-35% to 58%	8%	-13%	-3%	0%

Source: Magic Breakfast school management information.  
Base: 158 schools and 9,780 pupils (time point 2).

In order to understand what proportion of schools had a large over- or under-representation of FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs analysis was completed to show the proportions of schools having higher or lower differences than ten percentage points between the proportion of FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs and the proportion on school rolls for each time point and across all four time points. Table 17 and 18 show this analysis. On average, across all time points and school types, the proportion of breakfast club pupils who were FSM eligible was over 10 percentage points higher than the proportion on the school roll in 24% of schools. This figure was higher for PRUs (43%) and secondary schools (33%). However, these results need to be interpreted with caution as the numbers of PRUs (at all time points) and secondary schools (in time point 4) are low.

**Table 17 Percentage of schools recruiting 10 percentage points (ppt) more FSM eligible pupils on their breakfast club, by type and time point**

	Recruited more than 10 pp more FSM pupils				
	Time point 1	Time point 2	Time point 3	Time point 4	Overall
Primary	22% (21)	20% (20)	22% (23)	22% (13)	22%
PRU	60% (3)	33% (2)	36% (4)	43% (3)	43%
Secondary	41% (7)	44% (7)	29% (4)	17% (1)	33%
SEN	20% (8)	36% (15)	22% (10)	15% (3)	23%
<b>Total</b>	25% (39)	27% (44)	24% (41)	22% (20)	24%

Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
Base: 159 schools (time point 1), 166 (2), 173(3) and 91 (4).

Looking at the schools who under recruited FSM pupils, the proportion of breakfast club attendees who were FSM eligible was over 10 percentage points lower than the proportion of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll in 21% of all schools. Table 18 breaks this down by school type and time point, showing variation between the categories. Generally, a higher proportion of primary schools were recruiting lower proportions of FSM eligible pupils for breakfast club attendance than on the school roll (26%).

**Table 18 Percentage of schools recruiting 10 percentage points (ppt) fewer FSM eligible pupils on their breakfast club, by type and time point**

	Recruited more than 10 pp fewer FSM pupils				
	Time point 1	Time point 2	Time point 3	Time point 4	Total
Primary	30% (29)	30% (31)	15% (15)	28% (16)	26%
PRU	0% (0)	0% (0)	36% (4)	14% (1)	13%
Secondary	24% (4)	19% (3)	7% (1)	0% (0)	12%
SEN	20% (8)	21% (9)	4% (2)	5% (1)	13%
<b>Total</b>	26% (41)	26% (43)	13% (22)	20% (18)	21%

*Source: Magic Breakfast and ICF attendance data.  
Base: 159 schools (time point 1), 166 (2), 173(3) and 91 (4).*

## 5.6 Continuing attendance in breakfast clubs

Ninety schools provided attendance data for all four time points. Of the 6,190 pupils with attendance information at time point 4, 1,271 pupils (21%) had attended for at least one day at all of the other time points. This may be an underestimate of the number of pupils who continuously attended breakfast clubs as it is possible that some pupils who may regularly have attended breakfast club may not have attended one of the weeks that attendance data was collected for a specific reason, such as illness.. It is also possible that some pupils' data is missing from the schools' returns.

Table 19 shows that most of the pupils who attended at all four time points were in primary schools (71%).

**Table 19 Comparison of share of pupils at time point 4 who attended at all time points and the total share of pupils who attended at time point 4, by school type**

Type	Number of pupils who attended at four time points	% of pupils who attended at four time points	Number of pupils who attended at time point 4	% of pupils who attended at time point 4
Primary	897	71%	4,484	72%
PRU	15	2%	182	3%
Secondary	20	2%	370	6%
SEN	339	27%	1,154	19%
Total	1,271	100%	6,190	100%

Source: ICF attendance data for time point 4.  
Base:<sup>19</sup> 6,190 pupils for time point 4.

Table 20 examines the share of pupils who attended at all four time points by school type. This shows that special schools had the largest share of pupils who attended at all four time points (29%) and secondary schools the lowest (5%). Twenty percent of pupils in primary schools, which account for most participating schools, attended at all four time points.

**Table 20 Comparison of pupils at time point 4 who attended at all time points and those who did not, by school type**

Type	Pupils who attended at all four time points		Pupils who did not attend all four time points	
	Number of pupils in this school type	% of pupils in this school type	Number of pupils in this school type	% of pupils in this school type
Primary	897	20%	3,587	80%
PRU	15	8%	167	92%
Secondary	20	5%	350	95%
SEN	339	29%	815	71%

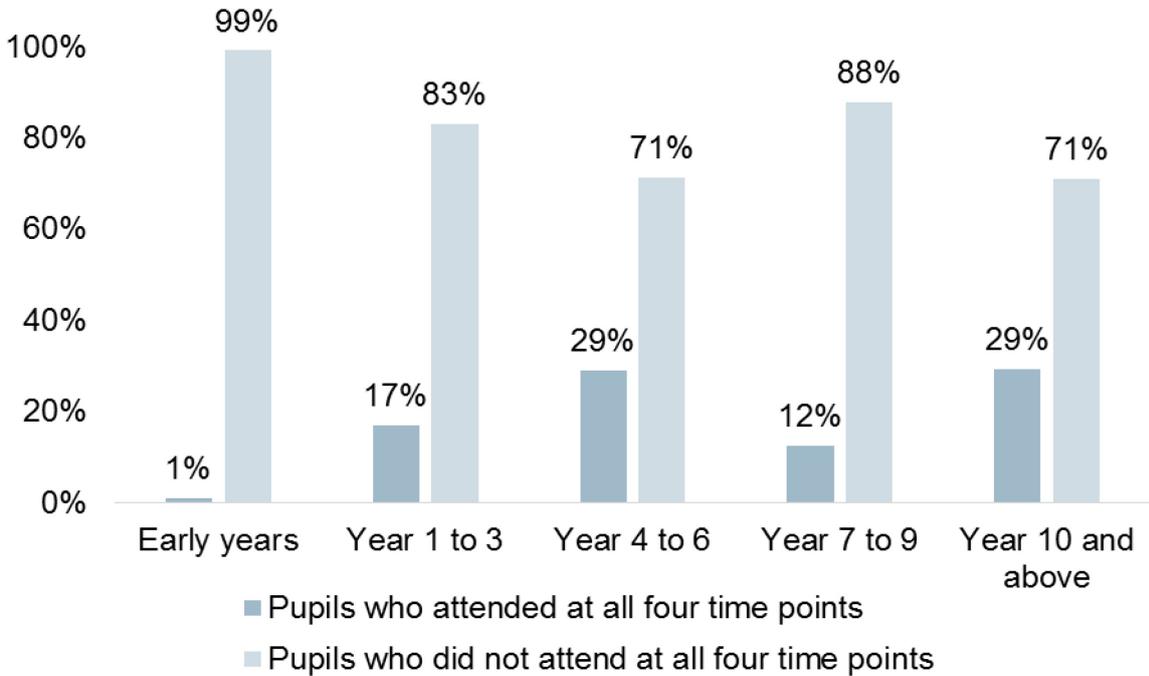
Source: ICF school management data for time point 4.  
Base: 6,190 pupils for time point 4.

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<sup>19</sup> Figures are rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Figure 13 breaks this down further, by year group. It shows that the share of pupils who attended at all four time points is highest in year groups 4 to 6, and in year groups 10 and above (both 29%). Pupils in older year groups in special schools were particularly likely to have attended at all four time points with 92% doing so.

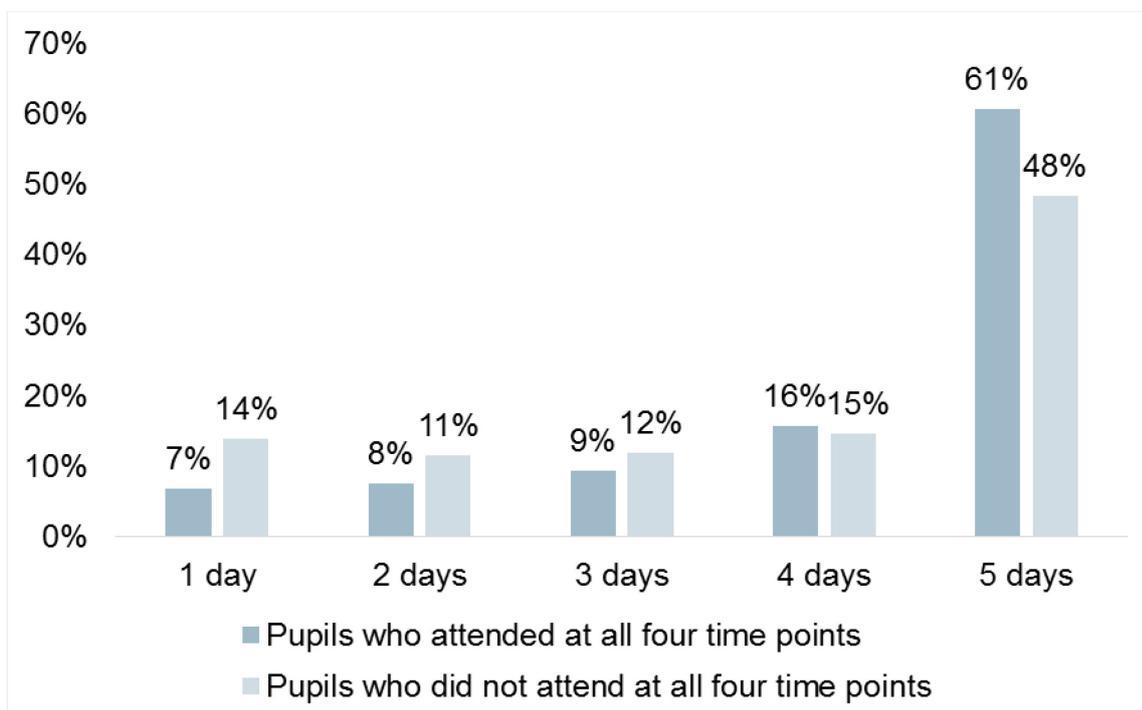
**Figure 13 Comparison of pupils who attended at all four time points and those who did not, by year group**



Source: ICF attendance data for time point 4.  
 Base: 6,190 pupils for time point 4.

Pupils who attended at all four time points were also more likely to attend more frequently. Figure 14 shows that 61% of pupils who attended at all four time points attended for five days compared to 48% of those who did not attend at all time points.

**Figure 14 Pupil breakfast club weekly attendance for all pupils and for pupils who attended at all four time points and those who did not**



*Source: ICF attendance data for time point 4.  
Base: 6,190 pupils for time point 4.*

## 5.7 Summary

### Numbers attending

- Large numbers of pupils attended breakfast clubs under the DfE programme. In time point 3, for which most schools returned data, at least 11,300 pupils were attending. At all time points some schools did not return data, so the actual figures will be higher;
- Most of the pupils attending breakfast clubs were in primary schools. Primary school pupils account for about 60% to 70% of pupils, and primary schools account for 63% of all participating schools;
- Special schools and PRUs had the highest average proportions of pupils attending breakfast clubs. In special schools, over half of pupils attended, and in PRUs, around two thirds attended. Around a quarter of pupils in primary schools attended, while in secondary schools attendance was slightly lower (one eighth to one quarter);

- There is more variation when looking at the distribution across each school type. In four fifths of secondary schools, and just under one half of primary schools, less than 20% of pupils attended the breakfast club. Special schools showed a wider spread; almost one third had more than 80% of their pupils attending while another third had under 40% attending.

### Frequency

- On average, pupils attended breakfast clubs for 3.7 days during the four separate weeks that data were collected;
- Attending for all five week days was the most common attendance pattern for pupils across all school types ranging from 41% at time point 1 to 52% at time point 3. Special school pupils are most likely to attend for all five days (62%). In secondary schools, attendance was more evenly spread across the number of days with 30% attending all five days and 24% attending for one day.

### Year group and gender

- Within mainstream and special primary schools, pupil attendance was evenly spread across the different year groups;
- Pupils attending breakfast clubs in mainstream secondary schools were more likely to be in the younger year groups with 60% of pupils being in years 7 and 8. In PRUs, the pattern was reversed with older pupils more likely to attend;
- On average, attendance by boys and girls was broadly proportional to their numbers on the school roll.

### FSM eligibility

- The average proportion of FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs ranged from 34% (time point 4, primary schools) to 64% (time point 2, PRUs);
- Across all time points and school types 41% of pupils on school rolls were FSM eligible and 42% of breakfast club attendees were FSM eligible;
- Across all primary schools, the share of FSM eligible pupils who attended breakfast club was broadly similar to the share of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll. Across all secondary schools and special schools, it was slightly higher;
- Within this average, 24% of schools' breakfast clubs have more than 10 percentage points more FSM pupils than are on the school roll, and 21% of schools have more than 10 percentage points fewer FSM pupils than on the school roll;
- At the second time point, on (median) average, secondary schools had more FSM eligible pupils attend breakfast clubs (+6 percentage points) while primary schools on average had fewer (-3 percentage points).

## Continuing attendance

- Around 21% of the pupils who attended breakfast club at the last time point had also attended in each of the three previous time points. Pupils were most likely to have kept up attendance across all four time points in special schools (29%) and primary schools (20%). Pupils who attended at all four time points were also more likely to attend all five days.
- Pupils who attended at all four time points were also more likely to attend all five days; 61% of pupils who attended all four time points attended breakfast club on each day.
- FSM eligible pupils appear no more or less likely than non-FSM pupils to attend over the four time points.
- There were no major differences at time point 4 between pupils who attended all four time points and those who did not in terms of their FSM eligibility, gender and year group.

## 6. Perceived impact of breakfast clubs

This section considers the perceived impact of introducing breakfast clubs on reducing the number of children coming to school without breakfast, and subsequent effects on improving children's punctuality and behaviour, and increasing their concentration during the morning. It draws on the two sets of interviews with schools and the case study visits, with supplementary information from a survey of head teachers by Magic Breakfast (Magic Breakfast 2016).

In general, staff, pupils and parents in case study schools were very supportive of breakfast clubs. Overall, breakfast clubs were believed to be contributing to a number of positive outcomes for pupils, such as reducing hunger, increasing acceptable behaviour, and greater concentration on learning, alongside and supporting other policies and practices schools had in place. Many schools spoke about breakfast clubs contributing, rather than leading directly, to outcomes. Other school activities were seen as contributing to the same outcomes so it was not possible to isolate specific impacts of the breakfast club. For example, in one primary school the breakfast club was introduced at the same time as the school brought forward the start of the school day and put a stronger emphasis on pupils being on time. Offering breakfast was, in part, an incentive to come in early. It was seen as a way to offer something in exchange for requiring changes to families' morning routines.

### 6.1 Hunger and eating habits

All the case study school interviewees reported that breakfast clubs were having a real impact on reducing the numbers of children being hungry in the morning. They all believed many of their pupils would not be eating breakfast if the breakfast club was not available. Nearly all of the pupils interviewed said that eating breakfast in school stopped them feeling hungry in class.

*"I used to get hungry before in class and used to get headaches and couldn't do my work." (Y4 pupil)*

Not all pupils were coming to school hungry before the breakfast club was introduced and the extent of this may well vary between the schools in the programme. In one case study secondary school, most of the parents who replied to the survey said that before the breakfast club started, their children ate breakfast most or every day before they went to school<sup>20</sup>. In the same school, several of the pupils interviewed said that they mixed and matched, eating breakfast at home some days and eating in breakfast club on other days. None said they never ate breakfast before the breakfast club was introduced. The impression given was that, for many of the pupils in this school, the breakfast club supplemented or replaced breakfasts eaten at home.

As well as reducing the number of pupils coming to school hungry, most schools reported that they felt that the breakfast club was having an impact on pupils eating more healthily. In one PRU with a fast food take away close to the school, many of the pupils said that they were eating burgers most days prior to the breakfast club opening. Staff were aware that the students were getting take away food in the mornings and felt that the breakfast club meant that pupils were eating more healthily and saving money. However, while the breakfast club was helping them to eat more healthily it did not mean that pupils always did so. None of the pupils attended the breakfast club every day. Most said they either ate breakfast at home or got something from a fast food outlet on the days they weren't using the breakfast club.

*'We don't get crisps and chocolate for breakfast as this isn't healthy. There isn't a tuck shop at school anymore as this used to sell crisps and biscuits but they are not healthy and now we have healthy breakfasts instead' (Y10 pupil)*

Staff in special schools were most likely to emphasise the importance of breakfast clubs providing access to food during the morning and helping embed routine into children's eating habits. For example in one special school, staff said that they felt it was important that all pupils had something to eat after a lengthy journey to school and that staff could encourage them to eat something more healthy than might sometimes be provided by parents.

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<sup>20</sup> This finding may not be representative of all families in the school as it is based on a small number of replies. It could be influenced by parents giving an overly optimistic response of what happens at home.

## 6.2 Punctuality and Attendance

There is mixed evidence on whether the breakfast clubs were perceived to improve pupils' attendance. Only one of the case study schools believed that the breakfast club was having an impact on their school's overall attendance figures. This was a PRU where attendance was about 90% and staff estimated it would be closer to 70% without the breakfast club. Interviewees in schools generally reported that attendance levels were good in their school and that the incentive of having breakfast at school did not affect whether or not pupils came to school.

More positive evidence comes from Magic Breakfast's head teacher survey in which 76% of the respondents reported a perception that attendance at school was substantially or somewhat better than before having the breakfast club. In the case study visits, most of the parents surveyed/interviewed strongly agreed or tended to agree with the statement that their children were less likely to take time off school.

In relation to the impact on punctuality, in the Magic Breakfast survey, 80% of the head teachers reported substantial or some improvements. In a few of the case study schools, interviewees strongly believed that their breakfast club was having an effect on overall punctuality. In the PRU case study, the staff estimated that while lateness was still a problem the breakfast club was seen as the reason why punctuality was improving.

*... 'around 10% of pupils are routinely late; it's about 20% better with breakfast club' (PRU)*

While only a few case study schools perceived an overall improvement, in all of the case study schools interviewees said that they were seeing strong improvements for specific pupils who had tended to be persistently late before and who were now getting into school on time. Many of the school interviewees reported encouraging specific pupils with poor punctuality records to attend breakfast clubs, irrespective of their FSM eligibility. Most had seen significant improvement for some of these pupils. For example, in one secondary school teachers had targeted *'the hard core who are late at least once every week'* and encouraged them to attend the club. After several conversations and prompts from staff, one year 9 pupil started going to the breakfast club which made a big difference in his arriving in school on time which has been sustained. Many of the pupils interviewed also made the link between attending the breakfast club and being in school on time.

## 6.3 Concentration

All the case study schools reported that breakfast clubs were having positive impacts on their pupils' concentration. Staff interviewees reported that these perceived improvements in pupils' concentration were very closely linked to them being able to settle in class and ready to learn. As with punctuality, they tended to see this as an improvement for specific pupils rather than as a positive change across all pupils. In Magic Breakfast's head teacher survey 92% said concentration in class was significantly or somewhat better with the same proportion reporting improvements in readiness to learn.

*'The learning support unit leader, who provides support through the day, can tell if someone has come in without eating breakfast... the feeling is it makes a difference to their learning' (Secondary School)*

*'Previously it was taking up to until around 11am for some children to settle down and concentrate.....but now since the breakfast club these children are settled by the time they come to class at around 9am' (Primary school)*

To illustrate this, in one of the case study special schools where breakfast was eaten in the classroom, the teachers said they noticed changes in concentration after the pupils had eaten. Teachers felt that children were less tired and more able to focus on their work.

A couple of school nurses were interviewed in case study schools who said that teachers reported to them that they can see a big difference in pupils who have had a breakfast

*'If a pupil is referred to me I tell them it's important to eat breakfast and to get to school on time to eat breakfast if they are not eating at home. I explain that not eating breakfast could be what's making them feel ill' (School Nurse)*

(either in school or at home) and those who have not, in terms of levels of concentration

Many of the pupils interviewed in both primary and secondary schools also said that having breakfast helped them concentrate on work in lessons. The quotes set out below are typical of the comments many pupils made.

*'When I didn't have breakfast I was hungry in class and I struggled with my work. I used to quickly do my work so I could quickly eat my snack at break time ... I only got 5 marks in my test last year but now I'm getting much higher' (Y8 pupil).*

*'If you don't have (breakfast) you are hungry .... are concentrating on food and don't concentrate on lessons'* (Y9 pupil)

## 6.4 Behaviour

In Magic Breakfast's head teacher survey 84% thought general behaviour was significantly or somewhat better as a result of the breakfast club. In all of the case study schools for this evaluation, interviewees said that some pupils attending breakfast clubs were showing improved behaviour in class. In some schools interviewees also believed that the breakfast club was helping to improve the overall atmosphere in early morning classes by making the class calmer and more ready to learn. Comments about the positive impact on whole class behaviour were more common in primary schools.

*'Behaviour is better because of the calm atmosphere in the morning'*  
(Primary School)

*'Previously kids would kick off when they came in. Breakfast Club makes them relaxed; is safe; [pupils] are in school ready to learn'* (Primary School)

One primary school teacher summed up that pupils were more settled in class as a result of being in school 15-20 minutes earlier for the breakfast club. This meant they were already in the routine of the school morning when they entered the classroom so that *'the start of class could be about learning and not about having to impose the school rules'*.

A few pupils made the link between having eaten breakfast and their behaviour in class.

*'Sometimes if I didn't eat anything in the morning I would get tired and grumpy and then I would get fed up when asked to do things in class'* (Y4 year old girl)

*'It's good because you can have breakfast with your friends and chat to them before you go to class and the teacher tells you to stop talking and listen'* (Y6 pupil)

All special schools in the case studies reported improvements in behaviour linked to

eating breakfast. For example, staff in one special school believed that hungry pupils exhibited poor behaviour because they were not able to express that they were hungry. Having breakfast at school was making a noticeable difference.

In another, staff said that breakfast could be a motivator though the morning as it was seen as a fun activity which pupils can look forward to.

## 6.5 Other benefits

Interviewees in most schools emphasised the social benefits of pupils attending breakfast clubs. These were often seen as benefits that school interviewees had either not anticipated at all or had anticipated on a smaller scale. Breakfast clubs made it easier for children to mix with other pupils who were not in the same classes as them, and with children in different age groups. Several of the primary schools saw it as beneficial that younger pupils could learn social skills from older pupils and also felt that older pupils benefitted from learning how to help others. A few secondary schools also felt this was a positive effect; allowing adolescents to mix with a wider set of people to develop larger friendship groups.

Most schools emphasised the benefits that breakfast clubs brought to some of their most socially reserved pupils. They found that having breakfast together encouraged more reserved pupils to talk to each other and provided more time to talk to the staff attending, when staff could get to know the pupils well and encourage them to communicate. An example is a secondary school which operated a satellite breakfast club in a Learning Support Unit (LSU). Selected pupils were invited to come to the breakfast club in this smaller space where they could help themselves to breakfast and mix with their friends away from the main hall. Those invited were pupils currently in the LSU and pupils who would have used it in the past but had moved back into their usual classes. Interviewees said that the smaller breakfast club encouraged pupils to become more confident and to speak up more. This change in behaviour was seen when pupils attended classes in the mainstream school as well as when attending their classes in the LSU.

*‘Socialising in breakfast club, gives [the students] confidence to speak to people. They will ask for things. It gives them courage to speak up’. (PRU)*

Most schools indicated the contribution that breakfast clubs made to improving pastoral care in the school. In nearly all the case study schools, breakfast club staff mentioned that they enjoyed meeting the pupils over breakfast and taking the chance to sit with pupils and to speak with them in a more informal setting than either the classroom or the lunchtime break allows. Nearly all schools said they valued this pastoral opportunity because it allowed staff to get to know pupils better and to build relationships so that

pupils will trust them. Many also said that it helped staff to get to know what is happening at home and to pick up early warning signs of problems.

One school mentioned that if there had been any problems or tensions building up at the end of the previous day between pupils who attend the club, the breakfast club gave staff an opportunity to calm things down and sort out issues before they escalated or spilled over into the classroom.

In line with a whole school approach, special schools mentioned using breakfast clubs to help some pupils with their social development, such as helping pupils to learn to cope with change. Schools reported teachers used breakfast clubs to introduce changes in pupils' routines. One special school gave the example of a child *'who never used to eat breakfast and generally had an issue with food'*.

*'He wouldn't sit at the table or eat or even want to look at it. But now he's touching food, he sits at the table and sits on a chair and is beginning to use a spoon. His dad told me in parents evening that now he feels like he has a son because he is sitting with the family at meal times and waits for food and will eat with a spoon. The dad said that he actually feels like part of the family now'* (Special School)

A few schools also described the breakfast club as helping to build stronger links with the community. In one primary school, where most pupils attended the breakfast club, parent volunteers helped with breakfast. The school saw this as very positive

*'There is a real ownership around it (the breakfast club)... community pride. It is pivotal we have the involvement of the community, that we have them on board. We had quite acrimonious relationships before'* (Primary School)

## 6.6 Summary

- Overall, schools were very supportive of breakfast clubs and presented them as contributing to various positive outcomes for pupils.
- All schools reported perceived reductions in the number of pupils being hungry and most schools reported that they felt that the breakfast club was having an impact on pupils eating more healthily.
- Pupils or parents were less likely to say that breakfast clubs were helping them eat breakfast where they would not have done so before. This may reflect families being hesitant to report poor eating habits at home.
- Schools did not generally perceive any impact of breakfast clubs on overall school attendance figures. The exception was one PRU which reported improvements.

- Schools reported improvements in punctuality for some pupils and targeted persistent latecomers to attend the breakfast club.
- Schools generally reported improvements in concentration and in behaviour from pupils attending breakfast clubs. They attributed this, in part, to children not being hungry and also to the new routine of the breakfast club allowing pupils to settle into school more calmly and being more ready to learn when lessons started.
- Schools reported breakfast clubs bringing additional social benefits by helping pupils develop friendship groups. Several saw benefits in pupils developing friendships across year groups.
- Schools reported benefits for socially reserved pupils, with breakfast clubs giving a space for pupils to learn to be more confident.
- Some special schools reported that breakfast clubs supported learning and helped pupils to adapt to changes in their routine.

## 7. Sustainability

This section sets out the extent to which schools continued with breakfast clubs once the free support from Magic Breakfast had finished, how they took the decision to continue or not and the barriers and enablers for sustainability. It draws mainly on the case studies, the second round of interviews with breakfast club leads and Magic Breakfast staff and on some additional management information supplied by Magic Breakfast (2016a).

### 7.1 Extent to which schools have continued breakfast clubs

Magic Breakfast's contract with DfE finished, as expected, in March 2016. The charity stopped food deliveries to most schools by December 2015, reflecting the fact that most schools started provision in the autumn term and would have had a minimum of 12 months' support by then. The charity continued to provide free food to some schools until the end of March 2016; this included schools where they judged a school was still considering whether to continue and would struggle to do so, if free deliveries stopped. Some schools continued to receive food free of charge past March 2016 because they joined the project late and were therefore yet to receive their 12 months' worth of free food.

In the interviews, Magic Breakfast reported 14 schools dropping out near the start of the programme who were replaced with other schools<sup>21</sup>. Nearly all schools have continued to run breakfast clubs after the programme ended. Of the 131 schools who replied to ICF when contacted to collect the final set of attendance data, 126 (96%) still had a breakfast club. Only five had closed their club and two of those continued to provide bagels to pupils who were hungry. Two schools had closed.

As part of their contract, Magic Breakfast were committed to working with schools to draw up sustainability plans for breakfast clubs continuing after the contract ended.

Magic Breakfast interviewees said that they were worried that schools would either struggle to keep provision going after the project ended or would not try to keep it going because they thought it would be too difficult. They therefore started to think about whether there was an alternative offer that they could develop to encourage schools to keep their clubs going. As a result, the charity set up a new membership scheme towards the end of the programme. For an annual fee, schools would continue to receive food from the charity at no extra cost, as well as access to advice and information sharing with other schools.

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<sup>21</sup> Magic Breakfast slightly over recruited to allow for some drop out.

Fees are based on the number of pupils in the school and are aimed at being less than the school would pay to provide the food itself. Table 21 below shows the fee structure for 2016/17.

**Table 21 Magic Breakfast’s Membership Scheme**

School Type	Fee (excl.of VAT)
Pupil Referral Units	Free
SEN Schools	£500
Small Schools (less than 200 pupils)	£500
Average School (200 - 400 pupils)	£1,000
Large School (400+ pupils)	£1,500

*Source: Magic Breakfast, 2016*

Most of the schools have joined this new scheme, with 154 (84%) of schools having signed up (Magic Breakfast, 2016). Schools reported that they had joined because it represented good value for money and because it took away the need for them to organise and source food deliveries. Magic Breakfast have given a commitment to schools that it will run for one year. There is no further commitment beyond that. The rationale behind a year’s commitment was in part to encourage schools to continue to plan ahead for themselves and not to become reliant on Magic Breakfast should their scheme not be able to continue.

Magic Breakfast reported that an additional 23 schools (13%) stated their intention to continue offering breakfast, but did not opt into the Magic Breakfast membership scheme and instead choosing to source the food for their breakfast club from alternative sources.

**7.2 Reasons for continuing**

Interviewees gave a number of reasons for continuing with a breakfast club. The one most commonly mentioned as the most important was that the reasons they had wanted to open the club initially still applied. Interviewees spoke about high levels of deprivation in the local community with pupils coming to school hungry before the club was introduced and families struggling financially; as the local community had not changed there was still a need to provide breakfast.

The second most popular main reason was interviewees saying that wanted to continue with the benefits the breakfast club brought, such as improved punctuality, pupils being more settled and ready to learn and the social interaction which it afforded the pupils.

*'We decided to continue with the breakfast club – even though it will now cost us to run it – because it has quite a huge impact on the children who attend'* (Primary School)

As well as wanting to continue with the breakfast club, interviewees also spoke about the difficulties of taking it away now that it was established. In one primary school, in which a new head teacher had introduced the breakfast club, in part to build better relations with

*'To stop now would have a considerable impact on kids and on what parents think about the school as a whole. Parents now see the breakfast club as a right'* (Primary School)

the local community, she described how:

In another primary school the head teacher said that having set up the breakfast club, he wanted to maintain the momentum. The school had previously had a breakfast club which had not worked well and had been closed. Now that the new club was working successfully, he did not want to stop the provision.

### 7.3 Stages to becoming sustainable

In the case study visits and interviews, schools reported that they went through the following stages in deciding whether or not to continue a breakfast club beyond the project.

**Planning ahead:** At the time of the case study visits to schools, a few schools had decided to continue to run a breakfast club beyond the end of project but nearly all were still in the process of deciding what to do. Most school interviewees said they wanted to continue and they wanted to keep the breakfast club free for all pupils. All schools were exploring options, of which around one half seemed to be reasonably well advanced in their planning.

Of the others, some appeared to be in the very early stages of beginning to think about what they would do next. This suggests they were not as far advanced in their planning as good practice would suggest they should be.

**Gauging demand:** Schools said they considered how much support there was in the school from pupils and parents when deciding whether to keep the breakfast club going. For most schools, this was done by looking at the current attendance and whether there was any waiting list, if breakfast was limited to some pupils. A few schools gauged this more systematically by asking pupils or parents what they thought. For example, a

secondary school described asking pupils what they wanted with a questionnaire handed out at breakfast club. A primary school described informally asking parents for feedback as they brought their children into school in order to gauge demand for keeping the breakfast club going.

**Establishing costs:** Magic Breakfast staff said that they had written to all schools offering advice and giving schools cost information based on their pupil numbers. The charity followed this up with regional staff contacting schools to offer more personalised support. Nearly all the schools interviewed at the end of the project had taken advice from Magic Breakfast with planning ahead. For some, this had been limited to school staff reading the information provided by Magic Breakfast; for others this had been more in depth conversations and visits with more active support in planning. Most schools who had the more in depth discussions said they had found this advice very useful. It was clear from conversations with schools that they considered the new Magic Breakfast scheme to be very good value for money. One secondary school, for example, said that they had compared the costs if they had bought food themselves to the fees for the charity's scheme. If they had bought the food themselves, the costs would have been more than double what they would pay for joining the new scheme. This was echoed by a primary school which also did the sums if they went it alone.

**Examining the outcomes:** Most schools have tried to examine the benefits the breakfast club had brought to the school. For most, this appeared to be assessing anecdotal evidence giving an overall impression as to whether the club had been successful. A few schools tried to be more systematic and looked at punctuality information and any improvements in behaviour across the school.

**Making the decision:** In all schools the head teacher was involved in the decision to continue, as expected. Only a few schools also mentioned producing a paper with recommendations to the head teacher or taking the decision to their governing body.

## 7.4 Challenges and enablers to sustainability

Schools identified the following barriers and enablers to sustaining a club.

### Enablers

**Leadership:** In the early interviews, schools anticipated that a key challenge to sustainability would be changes in leadership. A few head teachers mentioned that they were due to retire and that while they were keen for the breakfast club to continue and would recommend to their successor that it did so, they could not be certain this advice would be taken up. Even where leadership was not changing the ongoing support of the head teacher was, not surprisingly, key. This was seen in effect in one school where the

breakfast club did not continue. The breakfast club lead attributed this to the head teacher losing interest in the breakfast club.

**Seeing success:** Schools described seeing the success of how well the breakfast club was running as a big factor in deciding to continue. One primary school breakfast club lead said that when it came to the decision of continuing, there was an *'awful lot of recognition'* that it was beneficial for the school and it was fully appreciated as *'a key strand in the improvement strategy. As a result, I didn't have any convincing to do ... it's not even been a question to not continue'*.

**Increasing pupils' and parents' expectations:** In parallel to seeing successes, many schools said it would now be very hard to stop the breakfast club. One PRU said that *"taking it away would have created all sorts of issues."* As well as the obvious issues of a negative reaction from pupils and parents to taking a service away, schools also said that closing the breakfast club would bring back problems, such as pupils being hungry which would have a potential health impact, and some pupils not being ready for learning and being disruptive in class.

**Good experiences with Magic Breakfast:** Many schools described their good experience of working with Magic Breakfast as a key factor in continuing. This is evident from the high proportion of schools joining the Magic Breakfast scheme.

## Challenges

**Funding:** Funding was identified for most schools as a major barrier. Many schools described the new Magic Breakfast package as good value for money which was a key enabler to continuing although this creates a dependency on the charity's ability to continue providing food. Many schools reported that a key concern in the cost of continuing provision was that they wanted breakfast to remain free for all pupils rather than having to restrict it. They were concerned that they would have to start charging some pupils if they had to meet the full costs themselves, although they would keep it free for FSM or selected pupils. One primary school senior leader, who had sought parents' views about charging believed that many of the families of children who attend the club would be happy to pay. Despite this, she was against doing this as she did not want to alienate or exclude students who could not pay.

**Logistics:** A few schools said that a key issue was resourcing the staff time necessary for sourcing food and either going out shopping or organising deliveries. At the time of the case studies, some schools had made preliminary enquiries about how they might do this but none had identified a firm alternative plan. For these schools, a key advantage of the Magic Breakfast scheme was that the charity would be bearing the burden of getting food to the school. While organising food sourcing was not mentioned by many schools, the ones that did saw it as a significant barrier. One primary school described the main enabler for them was having the logistical support of the scheme. *'We probably would*

*have continued with the breakfast club anyway, but having someone do the delivering and buying and daily finances is the biggest help and was our biggest worry’.*

**Catering contractors:** A few schools mentioned contracting arrangements or general relations with their catering contractors as a key factor in deciding whether or not to continue. These tended to be secondary schools where a catering contractor provided additional charged items alongside the free offer at the breakfast club. In one school this was working well and was planned to continue once the project ended. In the other school, this was a major barrier to going forward. This specific breakfast club offered the Magic Breakfast food for free, and pupils could buy discounted additional items from the caterer. The school shared the catering contract with another school in its chain. When the contract was due for renewal, the catering company quoted a much increased cost for continuing the current model which the school could not afford and the decision was taken to close the free breakfast club while the catering company continued to provide breakfast at which pupils pay for all items.

## 7.5 Summary

### Numbers continuing

- Nearly all schools have continued to provide a breakfast club after Magic Breakfast’s contract with DfE stopped. Of the 131 schools who provided information on whether they had continued with a breakfast club six months after the programme had ended, 126 (96%) had done so.
- Magic Breakfast set up a new membership scheme with an annual fee to offer basic food to schools at no additional cost. Schools also got access to the charity’s advice and support and learning from other schools.
- Eighty-four percent of schools have joined Magic Breakfast’s new scheme and a further 13% of schools intended to continue breakfast provision in another way.

### Reasons for continuing

- Schools wished to continue when they had seen the perceived benefits deriving from having a club and wanted these to continue.
- Schools also thought that stopping a breakfast club would bring negative reactions from pupils, parents and staff.

### Challenges and enablers

- Schools cite leadership support a key factor in continuing provision. Where a breakfast club had not continued this was seen as a key factor.

- When considering whether to continue, many schools reported concerns over the cost of running a club as a barrier. This was both in staff time in running the club each day and in sourcing and organising food deliveries.

## 8. Conclusions and recommendations

In this final section, the findings are reviewed to address the seven objectives of the evaluation (shown in bold in both the outputs and impacts, and processes sections below) and to identify what has worked well to establish and sustain breakfast clubs, and whether any lessons could be learned from the programme. Some recommendations follow.

### 8.1 Outputs and impacts

School interviews, case studies, and interviews with Magic Breakfast staff provided evidence around the following evaluation objectives: 3) rates of breakfast clubs being continued after the programme ended; 5) whether pupils most in need were successfully reached by breakfast clubs; and 7) the perceived impact of the clubs on pupils.

Overall the programme has been successful in meeting its recruitment targets. Magic Breakfast recruited 184 schools into the programme as was required in their contract with DfE. A substantial number of pupils attended breakfast clubs with over 11,000 attending at the end of their contract.

#### **Objective 3: Assess whether breakfast clubs have been sustained after the DfE programme had ended**

Nearly all schools have continued to provide a breakfast club after Magic Breakfast's contract with DfE ended.

- A few schools (14) dropped out of the programme shortly after they had been recruited and were replaced by other schools with 183 continuing with the programme;
- At the time of the final interview, 154 (84%) of the schools who stayed to the end of the programme were continuing breakfast clubs under Magic Breakfast's new membership scheme; and
- A further 23 (13%) were intending to continue a breakfast club under their own direction.

#### **Objective 5: Assess whether the breakfast clubs have successfully recruited children and families which were eligible for FSM and/or the school had identified as most in need**

Most schools appear to have been broadly successful in recruiting FSM pupils to attend breakfast clubs but there is evidence to suggest that a substantial number have had less success.

- Most pupils attending breakfast clubs were not FSM eligible, ranging from 52% (first collection point) to 67% (last collection point);
- In total, 41% of pupils on school roll were FSM eligible and 42% of pupils attending breakfast clubs were FSM eligible;
- On average, secondary schools had a higher proportion of pupils eligible for FSM attending breakfast clubs (+6 percentage points) than on their school roll, while primary schools on average had fewer (-3 percentage points);
- In around a quarter of schools (24%), the proportion of FSM pupils attending breakfast clubs was more than 10 percentage points higher than the proportion of FSM eligible pupils on the school roll;
- In around a fifth of schools (21%), the proportion of FSM pupils attending breakfast clubs was more than 10 percentage points lower than the proportion of the school roll.

While assessing FSM eligible pupils' attendance is an important measure, it is not a total measure for capturing whether schools have been successful in reaching pupils most in need of breakfast clubs. Many of the school interviewees said that they also encouraged other pupils who they felt would particularly benefit, such as latecomers and those coming to school hungry who were not necessarily eligible for FSM. A few also mentioned encouraging pupils from low income families who were not eligible for FSM to attend.

### **Objective 7: Explore schools' perceptions of whether breakfast club provision has achieved the intended outcomes for children**

Overall, schools were very supportive of breakfast clubs and believed they contributed to most of the positive outcomes expected for pupils.

- All schools reported perceived reductions in the number of pupils being hungry, and most schools reported that they felt that the breakfast club was having an impact on pupils eating more healthily;
- Pupils and parents were less likely than school staff to say that breakfast clubs were helping pupils eat breakfast where they would not have done so before. This may reflect families being hesitant to report poor eating habits at home;
- Schools did not report a perceived impact of breakfast clubs on overall school attendance figures, but schools often reported improvements in punctuality for some pupils and targeted persistent latecomers to attend the breakfast club;
- Schools generally reported improvements in concentration and in behaviour from pupils attending breakfast clubs. Schools attributed this in part to children not being hungry, and in part to the new routine of the breakfast club which allowed pupils to settle into school more calmly and be more ready to learn when lessons started;

- Schools reported breakfast clubs bringing additional social benefits by helping pupils develop wider friendship groups. Several saw benefits in pupils developing friendships across year groups;
- Schools reported benefits for less socially confident pupils, with breakfast clubs giving a space for pupils to learn to be more outgoing;
- Some special schools reported benefits from breakfast clubs supporting learning such as helping them encourage pupils to adapt to change.

## 8.2 Processes: what worked well and what were the challenges

From assessing the experiences of schools and Magic Breakfast in establishing breakfast clubs, it is possible to identify both good practices and means of overcoming challenges. This gives evidence to address the following research objectives: 1) to identify what models of breakfast club provision have been set up and how the needs of pupils influenced these; 2) to examine the processes for establishing breakfast clubs in schools; 4) to assess the extent to which schools adopted a whole school approach; and 6) the extent to which learning has been shared.

### **Objective 1: Identify what models of breakfast club provision have been set up and how the needs of pupils influenced these**

There is no 'one size fits all' model of running a breakfast club. Breakfast clubs reflect the space and facilities at a school and the extent to which the breakfast club is integrated with other school activities. School interviewees reported that how the breakfast club is run is heavily influenced by the characteristics and needs of pupils.

Three broad models emerge. While some are more common in each school type they are not exclusively only in one school type.

- Primary schools are most likely to operate breakfast clubs in a single location such as a dining hall, and are most likely to offer structured activities alongside the club. In primary schools, the breakfast club typically opened around 20 to 30 minutes before school started;
- Secondary schools are most likely to offer breakfast clubs in more than one location in the school, providing breakfast in off site units or in Learning Support Units as well as in the main dining hall. In secondary schools they tended to open earlier, around 30 to 50 minutes before school started;
- In special schools breakfast is most likely to be in a classroom setting reflecting the transport arrangements into school. In special schools breakfast took place most commonly during the first lesson or sometimes during the first morning break.

In addition:

- Nearly all schools offered the breakfast club to all pupils but also targeted specific pupils to attend, such as pupils who were persistently late or who might benefit from the additional activities offered;
- Nearly all schools did not charge pupils for breakfast. None charged FSM eligible pupils and for other pupils, most charged 50 pence or less;
- There was little variation in the food being offered. Nearly all schools offered the bagels, cereals and juice provided by Magic Breakfast and a few also offered fruit and hot food. As expected, schools provided milk, spreads and jams to go alongside Magic Breakfast's free delivery.

**Objective 2: Examine the processes for establishing breakfast club provision in schools to identify the barriers and enablers to planning, setting up, implementing and sustaining breakfast club provision**

**Recruitment:** Magic Breakfast was able to recruit the required number of 184 schools and achieved a good range of types of school. However, recruitment took significantly longer than expected. In order to meet the target, the eligibility requirement was broadened to allow schools to participate who had previously had a breakfast club but had low attendance or where the food was of low quality, and Magic Breakfast was authorised to approach schools close to but below the FSM threshold. A fifth of the schools (20%) had less than 35% of pupils eligible.

Key barriers to recruitment were:

- Capacity - schools having an existing range of initiatives ongoing to improve the school and did not feel they had the time to commit to another one; not believing they would be able to afford the time and the staff costs; and/or expecting 'too much' from Magic Breakfast, such as wanting Magic Breakfast to run and staff the breakfast club;
- Low Priority - head teachers having a different approach to supporting pupils at school. Some saw breakfast as either not a priority or not being the responsibility of the school to deliver;
- Low perceived demand - schools thinking it would not work because, for example, there would not be sufficient demand or they did not have sufficient space; and
- Negative past experience - schools having tried a breakfast club before and finding it had not worked because attendance was too low to sustain it.

**Getting agreement to run a breakfast club:** This appears to work most smoothly when the following are in place:

- Leadership - having strong senior leadership involvement and championing a breakfast club. If the head teacher is not the instigator of the idea to have a breakfast club, engaging them or another member of the school's senior leadership team early on in the process is instrumental in starting a successful breakfast club;
- Recognising benefits - having a clear understanding of why a breakfast club is important for the pupils in each school. Pupil hunger is a clear driver but schools also wanted to introduce breakfast clubs for other reasons linked to behaviour and attainment, such as improving punctuality and readiness to learn;
- Planning - having a clear view of the logistics of how the club will run in each school in terms of staffing, food offer, venue, timing and any activities to be offered alongside breakfast.

**Establishing and running a breakfast club:** Breakfast clubs appear to become established successfully and meet their objectives when the following was in place:

- Marketing and promotion - schools continued to promote and market the breakfast club to ensure that the pupils most in need were attending. Where schools did this well they monitored which pupils were attending breakfast and targeted pupils they wanted to attend;
- Logistics – schools had the space to enable them to deliver a breakfast club in locations that met their pupils' needs, either in a central space such as a dining hall or in smaller locations around the school. Schools were either able to amend work patterns within existing contracts or pay for additional staff hours. Most schools were able to resource breakfast clubs by amending hours in existing contracts
- Delivery - schools kept the delivery model under review to ensure it was still meeting the needs of their pupils. Schools were able to predict their food requirements accurately. Some schools struggled to do this in the early stages of the breakfast club;
- Parental involvement - primary schools that involved parents on a voluntary basis reported benefits from having additional resources to run the club while building community links to help promote the breakfast club;

**Sustainability:** The quality of the advice and guidance given by Magic Breakfast appears to have been a key enabler of breakfast clubs continuing. Many schools described their good experience of working with Magic Breakfast in this way. What also helped success was Magic Breakfast's decision to develop and offer a new membership scheme, which has proved very popular with schools. This was introduced because Magic Breakfast were concerned that many schools would struggle to continue to offer breakfast.

From the interviews with schools it showed that breakfast clubs were sustained where the following were met:

- Leadership - schools continued to have strong senior leadership and head teacher support for the club;
- Low cost - the costs of continuing to run a free breakfast club could be met through continuing to receive food supplies from Magic Breakfast at a subsidised cost, or where the schools were able to meet the costs of providing food themselves, and where there were;
- No contractual barriers - the catering contract was not a barrier to keeping the club going.

#### **Objective 4) Assess the extent to which a whole school approach has been adopted by schools**

A whole school approach was not generally adopted.

- Schools generally perceived the breakfast club as being integral to supporting pupils and could identify ways in which breakfast supported other school activities.
- There is little evidence that schools had considered a whole school approach in the early stages of planning to introduce a breakfast club. A few primary schools ran learning support as part of the breakfast club, such as maths or English activities. Some head teachers in primary and secondary schools also spoke about wanting to introduce a breakfast club to improve punctuality but generally interviewees did not give examples that evidenced taking a whole school approach in the early days.
- Only a few schools reported that the breakfast club was included in school development plans or other formal school plans.
- Some more schools reported ways in which breakfast clubs linked to other school activities once clubs were more established. Examples were links with Personal, Social, Health and Economic education, links with cooking in the curriculum and links with health promotion and the Healthy Schools Programme.

#### **Objective 6) Assess the extent to which learning has been shared by the contractor with other schools and organisations**

Magic Breakfast's knowledge and experience of breakfast clubs was shared with schools.

- Most schools were positive about the advice and guidance offered by Magic Breakfast; some substantially so.
- Schools who attended Magic Breakfast's regional events reported them to be useful.

- However, few of the schools that were interviewed had attended events organised by the charity, especially in the first round of interviews. In the follow up set of interviews, Magic Breakfast staff reported making changes to the length of the events and giving more notice as changes they had introduced to widen attendance.

### 8.3 Lessons learnt

This section presents the lessons that could help improve delivery in any future programme.

- School recruitment – recruitment of schools took longer than expected. Programme planners should consider setting a longer time frame for recruiting schools into such a programme. This should reflect the time needed to contact schools and factor in the resources and time required for the delivery partner to fully staff itself.

Magic Breakfast reported that many schools above the 35% FSM eligibility threshold already had breakfast clubs, particularly secondary schools. Relaxing the eligibility criteria helped recruitment. Programme planners should consider the level at which the eligibility threshold is set so as not to set it too high that it rules out schools who would benefit, and consider banded thresholds to reflect school sizes with lower levels for larger schools, such as over 500 or 1000 pupils.

- Attendance of disadvantaged pupils - some schools were less successful in recruiting FSM pupils to attend breakfast clubs. Schools need to continue to keep under review which pupils are attending their breakfast clubs and whether more could be done to encourage and promote the club to pupils most in need.
- Planning ahead - many schools did not start thinking ahead about how to sustain the breakfast club before Magic Breakfast's support ended, or start to consider options until the contract was close to ending. This should include financial planning on how to resource the breakfast club with assigned budgets for allocating and monitoring resources so that breakfast club expenditure is identifiable in school budget lines.
- Some schools described making a quick decision to join the Magic Breakfast's membership scheme once it became an option, as they saw it as a good deal. This meant, in practice, that these schools did not fully explore other options in depth. This is understandable as they considered the new scheme a good option but it does mean that they did not seriously consider other options to see if they were available. This raises a concern that should the charity's scheme end, some schools may need support or encouragement to develop other arrangements. Magic Breakfast interviewees saw this as a risk and said that one of the reasons their scheme is available for 12 months is because they want to continue to encourage schools to

plan ahead and think through what long term sustainable options might be for their school.

## 8.4 Recommendations

**The delivery model** tested for this programme is popular with schools. The model includes a delivery contractor tasked with recruiting schools to the programme, advising them on how to set up a breakfast club, allocating small equipment grants, sourcing and providing the main breakfast items at no cost to the school and advising schools on how to improve and sustain a club. Its success is apparent in terms of the numbers of schools recruited, the high proportion continuing with a breakfast club and in the comments schools provided about how they valued the support received from Magic Breakfast.

While a counterfactual arrangement cannot be tested, it is evident that this programme achieved things that might have been difficult to achieve through an alternative delivery model such as giving schools direct grants to set up breakfast clubs themselves including sourcing advice and food supplies.

While it can be concluded that the model in this programme is essentially robust and has benefitted many pupils, there are ways in which it could be made more effective. Drawing on the conclusions this section sets out recommendations for consideration in any future programme development.

**R1: We recommend that any future expansion of the breakfast club programme should include expert involvement to select schools, get their buy-in and provide expertise on the ground for ongoing support in the first year.**

It was clear that schools valued the advice provided by the delivery contractor and that their advice, especially in the early set-up stage helped schools to start a breakfast club. There is a continued need for ongoing support to encourage schools to plan ahead and develop sustainable breakfast clubs for when support ends.

**R2: We recommend that small equipment grants should remain available to schools joining the programme, with advice being given by the expert provider on how to spend it.**

Schools valued the small injection of cash and the flexibility to use it in ways that worked best in their school to establish the club.

**R3: We recommend that schools should try where possible not to charge any pupils to attend. Breakfast clubs should remain free for FSM eligible pupils.**

It was clear in the interviews with schools and in the case study visits that school put a high emphasis on not charging pupils for breakfast. As very few schools in the

programme charged for breakfast and none charged more than the 50 pence a day recommended by Magic Breakfast, it is not possible to give a view on whether breakfast clubs would have been successful if they had charged pupils or charged them more.

**R4: We recommend that consideration is given to ways to shorten the recruitment process.**

Recruitment could potentially be shortened by implementing pre-recruitment activity to research the extent of breakfast clubs already in place and to estimate how many schools might be eligible for the programme. Recruitment should be timed to allow the delivery contractor to secure staff levels in advance, so that the primary focus can be personal contact with schools, which is labour intensive.

**R5: We recommend that consideration should be given to the level at which the eligibility threshold is set for any future scheme. While schools with high percentages of FSM eligible pupils, and who do not have existing breakfast clubs should continue to be a focus for any extension of the programme, there may be merit in reducing the 35% threshold and considering different banded thresholds which reflect the size of schools.**

The level should be set in such a way that it is not too high to exclude schools that could benefit.

This may be particularly beneficial for secondary schools where even a small reduction in the threshold would have the potential to bring in large numbers of additional pupils. This also suggests that it would be worth considering banded thresholds reflecting the size of school with lower eligibility thresholds for larger schools, say over 500 pupils (in primary schools) or 1000 pupils (for secondary schools).

**R6: We recommend that any expansion should consider including high FSM eligible schools who already have breakfast clubs but which could be expanded.**

This reflects the concern identified by the delivery contractor that many secondary schools with high proportions of FSM eligible pupils already have breakfast clubs, but may be limited in what they can offer. Linked to the point above, about the size of secondary schools, allowing schools with existing clubs but low take-up could bring benefits to potentially large numbers of children.

**R7: We recommend that any extension of the programme tasks the expert provider with supporting schools to ensure that in all schools the proportion of FSM pupils attending breakfast clubs are, as a minimum, in line with the overall FSM profile for the school.**

While breakfast clubs appear to be working reasonably well in schools and are valued by the pupils attending, the evidence suggests that more could be done to ensure that pupils most in need actually attend the club. The data show that around one fifth of participating schools had substantially<sup>22</sup> lower proportions of FSM eligible pupils attending breakfast clubs than are on the school role. This seems more likely to be true for primary schools, which on average had fewer (-3 percentage points) FSM eligible pupils attending the breakfast club than were on the school role.

It is true that FSM eligible pupils are not the only ones who can benefit from breakfast provision, but they are an important disadvantaged group. The expert provider should be able to support schools in identifying which pupils they should more support and help them develop strategies to do so.

**R8: We recommend that any extension of the programme tasks the expert provider with supporting schools to more actively target older pupils through age specific marketing and promotion.**

In secondary schools, pupils in the older age groups are less likely to attend the breakfast club which suggests that pupils who could benefit, are not doing so.

**R9: We recommend that any future expert provider is tasked with supporting schools to systematically assess if they could be doing more to maximise the impact of the breakfast club, including maximising links to teaching and learning within a whole school approach. This should be done in a way that minimises burdens on schools.**

There is little evidence of schools systematically monitoring and reviewing how the breakfast club was working and if it could be improved. Some schools did monitor and review their breakfast club, but not many. Senior leaders tended to be involved when deciding to set up a club, but after this there is little evidence that they took an interest in evaluating its effectiveness or how to integrate the club with teaching and learning.

**R10: We recommend that the programme should aim to develop a sustainable model for supplying low cost food to schools beyond the programme life cycle.**

There is evidence that many schools were late in thinking about the sustainability of their breakfast club and did not effectively plan ahead to be in a position to continue their breakfast club should Magic Breakfast support stop. It seems reasonable therefore to infer that without Magic Breakfast's initiative in setting up a new membership scheme, many schools would have struggled to sustain a breakfast offer.

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<sup>22</sup> Defined as more than a 10 percentage point difference

The charity recognised this and said it was one of the main reasons why they set up the scheme. This suggests that many schools are dependent on a delivery agent providing food supplies and taking the lead to make their breakfast club secure. For many schools there is likely to be a risk that if a delivery contractor scheme were not to continue they would struggle to sustain their breakfast club.

## Appendix 1: School Interviews Sampling Framework

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the 40 schools interviewed in the initial round of interviews between December 2014 and February 2015.

Table 1 School interviews completed at Wave 1

School characteristics	Number
<b>Percentage of FSM eligible pupils on roll</b>	
26% - 35% pupils eligible	8
36% - 45% pupils eligible	16
Over 46% pupils eligible	16
<b>Number of pupils on school roll</b>	
Less than 100 pupils	8
101 – 300 pupils	22
301 - 500 pupils	6
Over 500 pupils	4
<b>School type</b>	
Primary schools	24
Secondary/all through schools	7
Special schools (SEN/PRU)	9
<b>Schools with postcodes in each quintile of deprivation</b>	
Fifth quintile	24
Fourth quintile	9
First, second and third quintile	7
<b>Region</b>	
East Midlands	3
London	12
North West	5
South East	3
West Midlands	6
Yorkshire & The Humber	11
Academies, academy special or convertor schools	11
Schools with over 60% of pupils with EAL	11

## Appendix 2: Case Study Sampling Framework

Table 22 shows the characteristics of the 15 schools which hosted case study visits during the autumn term 2015.

**Table 22 Characteristics of schools which hosted case studies**

Sampling Criteria		Achieved
Percentage of pupils attending breakfast club who are eligible for FSM	10-23%	5
	24-49%	4
	≥ 50%	6
Type of Breakfast Club	Universal	11
	Targeted	4
Charging	Universal	2 <sup>23</sup>
	Targeted	1
School type	Primary	6
	Secondary	4
	Special	4 <sup>24</sup>
	PRU	1
Geographic Spread	East Midlands	2
	London	4
	North West	2
	South East	2
	West Midlands	2
	Yorkshire & Humber	4
Percentage of Pupils on School Roll Attending Breakfast Club	≤ 25%	7
	26-50%	4
	51-75%	1
	≥ 76%	3

<sup>23</sup> Includes 1 school asking for voluntary donations

<sup>24</sup> Includes 2 primary special schools, 1 all through special school and 1 secondary special school

## Appendix 3: Literature Review

### A3.1 Method for literature review

The literature review was semi-systematic with searches conducted using EBSCO, the Cochrane Library, and key websites. EBSCO was used to search the following databases: Academic Search Complete; Education Research Complete; SocINDEX; Child Development & Adolescent Studies; Social Sciences; MEDLINE; Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection; ERIC and Education Source.

Inclusion/ exclusion criteria for both these databases were:

- There was no cut-off publication date for inclusion;
- Papers were limited to those in the English language, but studies from outside the UK were included;
- Articles were selected for inclusion in the review based on the standard hierarchy of evidence: prioritising systematic reviews, meta-analyses, randomised control trials (RCTs) and controlled trials;
- Studies were excluded if they only focussed on impact and had nothing on process;
- Databases were searched using key words, linked by MESH terms; breakfast AND school AND 'club OR programme' AND review.

A range of websites was searched for grey literature. These included: the Wellcome Trust; Nuffield Trust; NHS Evidence Search; UK Department of Education; UK Department of Health; Welsh Government; Scottish Government; DfE Northern Ireland; Greater London Authority; the Children's Society; Save the Children UK; Barnardo's; BIG Lottery; European Commission; WHO; and UNICEF.

Six studies were initially included from the EBSCO search, and 14 from the website search.

Most of the evidence on processes tended to come from 'how-to' guides, which detailed what was considered to be best practice in setting up and running clubs. These were based on experience and identified processes, such as establishing a clear idea of the purpose of the breakfast club, the importance of having senior leadership support and features which make the breakfast club attractive to pupils. While there was a general discussion in the literature on effective practice in setting up a breakfast club, there was less evidence robustly linking individual practices and processes to specific outcomes for pupils.

There was also little evidence on the number of children not eating breakfast. One independent study found that in 2000, 5% of Year 6 children and 21% of Year 10 girls reported having had no breakfast (Balding 2001). They found that children from poorer backgrounds are more likely to skip breakfast than those from better-off families. This may be a reflection of affordability as well as some social norms and attitudes to breakfast and what constitutes a healthy breakfast (Government Office for Science 2007).

## A3.2 Summary of learning from studies included in the review

Table 3 Summary of learning from breakfast club evaluation studies included in the review

Programme	Link	Study design	Description	What did we learn about what works?
Welsh Government: School breakfast clubs (2011)	<a href="#">School Breakfast Clubs (Wales)</a>	Cluster RCT <sup>25</sup> plus process	Universal free breakfast provision in Welsh primary schools. Held in nine local authority areas, covering 111 schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better targeting of pupils who are not eating breakfast at home is needed. There was no reduction in breakfast skipping or classroom behaviour after introducing breakfast clubs; generally because those who accessed breakfast at school were those who would otherwise have eaten at home.</li> </ul>
School Breakfast Clubs, England (2004)	<a href="#">School Breakfast Clubs (England)</a>	Cluster RCT and observational analysis	Breakfast clubs in 30 schools with high deprivation in England.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is hard to conduct RCTs in this setting, given the lack of control evaluators have over recruitment, eligibility checking and implementation.</li> <li>• Inadequate supervision could lead to clubs becoming boisterous or disruptive.</li> <li>• The evaluation showed improvements in concentration, attendance and fruit eating.</li> </ul>

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<sup>25</sup> Randomised control trial

Programme	Link	Study design	Description	What did we learn about what works?
New Zealand Free School Breakfast Programme (2012)	<a href="#">Free School Breakfast Programme (New Zealand)</a>	Stepped-wedged cluster RCT	Universal free breakfast to 14 primary schools in deprived areas of New Zealand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was no effect on school attendance or academic achievement, but some effect on satiety after introducing breakfast clubs.</li> <li>• Some positive impact was found on attendance, but only amongst those who attended the club more than 50% of the time.</li> </ul>
New York City, Breakfast in the Classroom (2013).	<a href="#">Breakfast in the Classroom (New York)</a>	Cross-sectional survey comparing BIC and non-BIC schools	Universal free breakfast – offered in the classroom – in elementary schools in deprived areas of New York City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those setting up clubs need to bear in mind that children skip breakfast for a variety of reasons (predominantly, a lack of time, lack of hunger, and dieting to lose weight); this diversity needs to be taken into account.</li> <li>• For every student who ate breakfast who otherwise would not have done, three ate breakfast twice.</li> </ul>
Australia: Healthy Food For All, Evaluation of the School Breakfast Programme (2011)	<a href="#">Healthy Food for All (Australia)</a>	Annual online survey to participating schools	Long-running national programme (running since 2001) serving 369 schools in Western Australia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems identified in breakfast clubs mainly related to a lack of volunteers or staff to run the clubs, and problems with food products running out, not being available, or going off.</li> </ul>

Programme	Link	Study design	Description	What did we learn about what works?
US Department of Agriculture, Food & Nutrition Service: Evaluation of the school breakfast program pilot project (2002)	<a href="#">School Breakfast Program Pilot (United States)</a>	Experimental design including treatment and control schools.	Evaluation of a pilot of universal free breakfast provision (as compared to the control provision which pupils pay for, get free or at a reduced price depending on family income) Pilot covered 79 elementary schools in six districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a substantial increase in participation in the first year of the pilot, which was maintained in the following two years.</li> <li>• Participation by students from lower income families doubled across the two years of implementation.</li> <li>• Participation was much higher in schools where breakfast is eaten in the classroom rather than in a cafeteria.</li> <li>• There was no clear impact on academic test scores or on attendance, tardiness or discipline.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4: Attendance data

Table below shows the source of each set of baseline information and the number of schools for which we have these characteristics.

**Table 4 Data sources for pupil attendance analysis**

	<b>Wave 1 (First month)</b>	<b>Wave 2 (End of academic year)</b>	<b>Wave 3 (End of project)</b>	<b>Wave 4 (Post contract)</b>
Attendance and pupil characteristics	<b>School MI</b> delivered to Magic Breakfast, to ICF (information for 168 schools, 9983 pupils)	<b>School MI</b> delivered to Magic Breakfast, to ICF (information for 175 schools, 9887 pupils)	<b>School MI</b> delivered to Magic Breakfast, to ICF (information for 175 schools, 11290 pupils)	<b>School MI</b> delivered directly to ICF (information from 94 schools, 6190 pupils)
School roll	<b>2014 Census</b> provided by Magic Breakfast to ICF in a <b>school baseline file</b> <sup>26</sup>	<b>2014 Census</b> provided by Magic Breakfast to ICF in a <b>school baseline file</b> <sup>24</sup>	<b>2015 Census</b> (ICF retrieved information from census based on school URN's)	<b>School MI</b> delivered directly to ICF
School type	Where ICF received <b>MI</b> for wave 4 (Post Contract), this was taken from the MI. For other schools, ICF obtained this from <b>EduBase and desk research.</b>	Where ICF received <b>MI</b> for wave 4 (Post Contract), this was taken from the MI. For other schools, ICF obtained this from <b>EduBase and desk research.</b>	Where ICF received <b>MI</b> for wave 4 (Post Contract), this was taken from the MI. For other schools, ICF obtained this from <b>EduBase and desk research.</b>	<b>School MI</b> delivered directly to ICF
School FSM %	<b>2014 school performance</b> provided by Magic Breakfast to ICF in a <b>school baseline file</b>	<b>2014 school performance</b> provided by Magic Breakfast to ICF in a <b>school baseline file</b>	<b>2015 Census</b> (ICF retrieved information from census based on school URN's)	<b>2015 Census</b> (ICF retrieved information from census based on school URN's)

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<sup>26</sup>, <sup>24</sup> Or from performance tables or Magic Breakfast school visits recorded in the baseline data, if Census data was not available

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