National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Teaching Schools Evaluation

Final Report

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Introduction

This report is the final publication from a two-year study (2013-15) on the evaluation of teaching schools commissioned by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). The broad aim of the project was to gather robust qualitative and quantitative evidence to understand the effectiveness and impact of teaching schools on school improvement, and the quality and scope of external support required to enhance these. This has been achieved through case studies of 26 teaching school alliances, a national survey of all 345 teaching school alliances in cohorts 1-3, and secondary research and analysis of national performance and inspection results.

In November 2010, the Schools White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' set out the UK Government's plan to establish a national network of teaching schools as part of the policy aim of developing a self-improving school system where "many more schools access great leadership development and learn from best practice" (Steve Munby, 1st March 2011). The Government's vision is to give these 'outstanding' schools (as judged by Ofsted inspections[1]) the role of leading and developing 'sustainable approaches' to teacher and leadership development across the country (Department for Education, 2010: 23).

The first cohort of 100 teaching schools across 97 teaching school alliances[2] (TSA) were designated by September 2011, followed by the designation of a second cohort of 86 teaching school alliances in March 2012 and a third cohort in February 2013. By January 2015 there were 598 teaching schools across 486 teaching school alliances in England and the analysis in this report has been based on this figure. However, following more recent designation rounds there are now 692 designated teaching schools across 538 teaching school alliances (correct as at October 2015).

Overview of the evaluation

This evaluation used a mixed methods approach to examine the ways in which teaching schools and their alliances were formed and developed over time and how and why (or why not) they were making a difference to improvement within the locality and/or beyond (Figure 1).

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[1] The categories of 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' that are used in this report refer to Ofsted judgement results.

[2] One alliance may be led by more than one teaching school.

Figure 1: The mixed methods methodology: integrating evidence
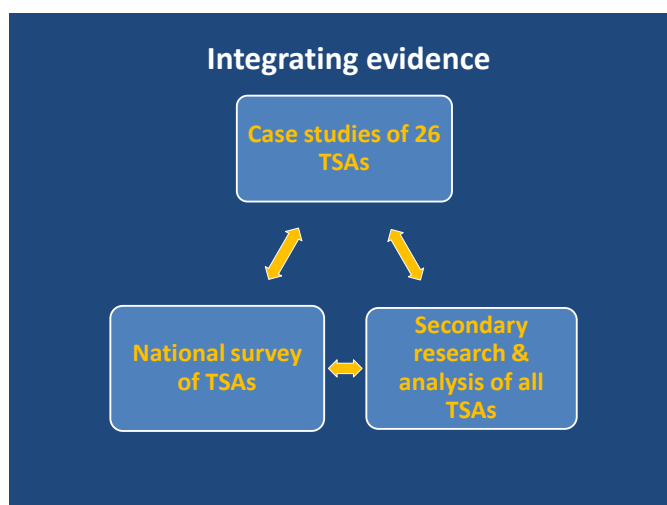
Case studies

Our methodology involved 18 case studies of cohorts 1 and 2 teaching school alliances and 8 case studies of cohort 3 TSAs **(n=26)**. These alliances were led by teaching schools in contrasting socioeconomic contexts, in different phases and sectors, of different sizes and types, of different urban/rural locations, and with different governance structures. **Appendix 1** provides a summary of the key characteristics of the 26 case study teaching school alliances (based upon the data reported by the TSAs in October 2014).

A longitudinal approach was used to baseline, track and capture the changes and developments of the 18 cohorts 1 and 2 teaching school alliances. The research team paid three two-day visits to each alliance during the life time of the project and interviewed senior and middle leaders with a wide range of roles and responsibilities in the teaching schools, their strategic partner schools and organisations (e.g. higher education institutions, local authorities) as well as schools that received support from or within these alliances.

The case study methodology also involved a two-day visit to eight cohort 3 teaching school alliances in the spring term of 2015. The purposes were to:

i)   identify experiences that may be specific to this cohort of TSAs and;

ii)   examine the extent to which findings from the 18 cohorts 1 and 2 alliances may also be applied to these relatively 'new members' and through this, enhance the robustness and authority of the evidence base for our observations and recommendations.

Surveys

Informed by the findings from the case studies, two online surveys were developed and carried out with the first three cohorts of teaching school alliances (n=345) in the autumn term of 2014 (October-December): one for middle leaders of teaching schools and the other for senior leaders of teaching schools and their strategic partner schools. The online surveys sought to explore the characteristics of teaching school alliances and their key areas of change and development as perceived by these two groups of participants. The surveys also sought to explore the extent to which involvement in the teaching school work may relate to improvement in aspects of teaching and learning in participants' own schools.

A total of 149 school leaders from 127 teaching school alliances (cohort 1: n=35; cohort 2: n=47; cohort 3: n=45) responded to the senior leader survey, representing a response rate of 37%. Only ten middle leaders responded to the middle leader survey. The analysis presented in this report is drawn from the senior leader survey (**Appendix 2**) because the response to the middle leader survey was too low for it to be statistically meaningful or valid.

Table 1 below shows that responses from primary-led teaching school alliances were slightly under-represented compared to their secondary peers.

Table 1: Analysis of responses by sector

	National Population (by school)		Survey Responses (by school)	
Nursery & primary-led TSAs	152	**44%**	44	**35%**
Secondary-led TSAs	144	**42%**	62	**49%**
Special school-led TSAs	39	**11%**	13	**10%**
Other	10	**3%**	8	**6%**
Total	**345**	**100%**	**127**	**100%**

Figure 2 shows the role of those who responded to the senior leader survey. The majority were director of an alliance (n=44, 28%) and the headteacher of a teaching school (n=42, 26%). The total responses of 159 provided here is greater than the returns of 149 respondents because some respondents had multiple roles.

Figure 2: Senior leader response by role
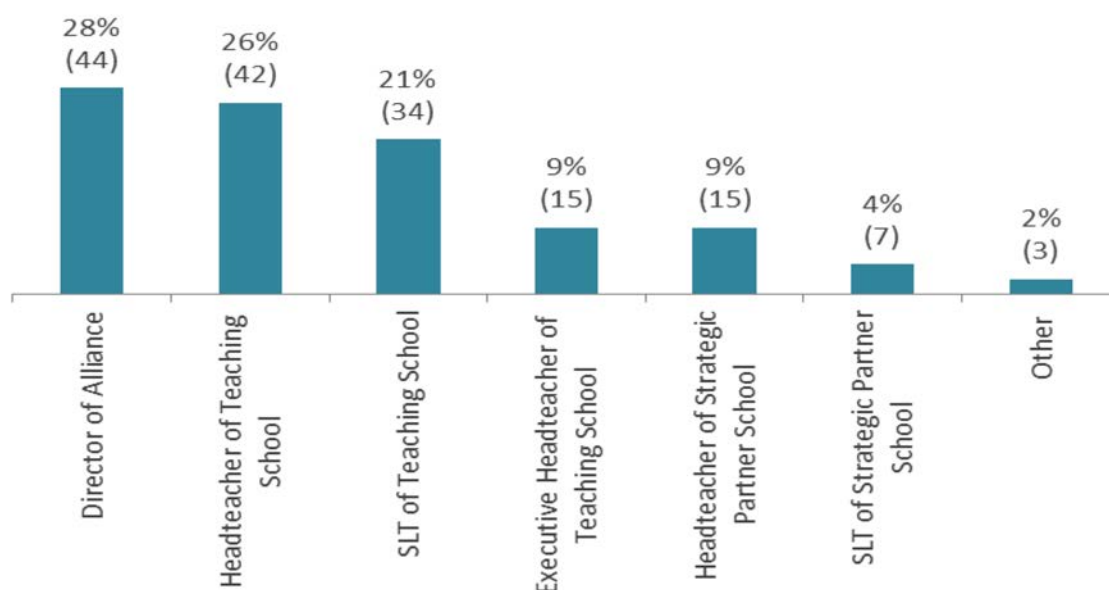
In this report where survey results are presented, we focus on responses from the **127** senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs. Overall results of the analyses which included the 22 senior leaders of strategic partner schools (from 15 teaching school alliances) and those which did not were broadly similar. Variations were found relating to the extent to which involvement in the TSA work had helped to improve teaching, learning and teacher commitment in their own schools. Findings from the case studies suggest that we need to interpret these differences with caution because, at least in part, the breadth, depth and duration of strategic partner schools' involvement in the teaching school work varied considerably. Also, the 22 senior leaders only represented a very small proportion of the total population of strategic partner schools involved in the 345 TSAs.

Other interviews

The research team also conducted face-to-face or telephone interviews with representatives from the NCTL, and the Chair of the Teaching Schools Council (TSC). The purpose was to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the range of support that teaching schools were receiving and the directions of policy development for the teaching school programme.

Secondary analysis

NCTL commissioned a separate investigation[3] using the National Pupil Database, propensity score matching (PSM) and multilevel modelling techniques to explore whether there was a relationship between being part of a teaching school alliance and improved pupil outcomes at Key Stages 2 and 4. Two-level multilevel models, with pupils nested within schools, were used. Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility, gender, Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) score, special educational needs (SEN) and language spoken at home were used as control variables in the analyses. Analyses were conducted for each cohort and each year separately, starting with the outcome data for the year following the school becoming a TSA member.

Interim report on early development

The interim report from this evaluation provides a detailed account of the emerging issues from the early development of 18 cohorts 1 and 2 case study teaching school alliances (Gu, Rea, Hill, Smethem and Dunford, 2014).

Our first visits to the 18 case study teaching school alliances in the summer term of 2013 suggested that they made a good start, and that they were continuing to evolve in terms of the scope and depth of their partnership work. In all the case study TSAs, a collective sense of commitment to the learning and achievement of children was perceived to have bound partners together and driven the development of the teaching school work. However, in terms of how each TSA partnership operated (e.g. its governance structure), there were considerable differences in how membership (versus engagement) of a teaching school alliance was perceived, and how each TSA fulfilled the teaching school priorities. The development of these case study teaching school alliances, at this early stage, also pointed to challenges relating to the sustainability of the teaching school work and tensions between competition, autonomy and collaboration.

Organisation of this report

This report brings together qualitative and quantitative evidence from a two-year study and summarises what has been learnt about the successes and challenges that teaching schools and their alliances have experienced over time. It provides an overview of the policy and research origins of the teaching school programme and examines the ways in which the programme has worked (or not worked) effectively.

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[3] The analysis was led by Professor Daniel Muijs.

It describes the structural, cultural and relational mechanisms and system leadership qualities and skills that have enabled effective delivery of the teaching school activity and provides insights into the sustainability of the programme and its potential influence on the development of a self-improving school system.

This report is divided into four parts. **Part 1** presents the context of the teaching school programme. **Part 2** reports the evolution and development of the teaching school programme in practice. **Part 3** puts the spotlight on the future development of the teaching school programme, especially in terms of challenges to quality and sustainability. **Part 4** concludes the report with key messages and recommendations.

Part 1: The Context of the Teaching School Programme

The purpose of Part 1 is to set the scene for the analyses in subsequent sections of this report. It provides not only an overview of the teaching schools programme, but also detailed analyses of the profiles of teaching schools and their alliances.

Part 1 is divided into two main sections that focus upon:

- the policy and research backgrounds of the programme

- the emergence and development of the programme including descriptions of the application process to become a teaching school, the review process to remain being a teaching school, the expected roles and responsibilities of teaching schools and their alliances (as defined by policy), and the spread and reach of teaching school alliances over time.

1.   The Policy and Research Contexts

1.1   The origins of the teaching school programme

> The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.
>
> Barber and Mourshed, 2007

This simple yet powerful insight emerged from research on the factors that have contributed to success in the world's best performing education systems (as defined by performance in the PISA 2003 assessments). The research investigated how such systems select the right people to become teachers; develop them into effective instructors; and ensure that every child receives the best possible instruction. The experience of some of the world's most successful education systems, as captured in this research and elsewhere, formed a strong policy influence for the Importance of Teaching White Paper, published by the Government in November 2010.

The White Paper

The White Paper essentially set out five key pillars of reform that might be summarised as follows:

a) Increasing school autonomy via the academies programme and free schools, and putting schools in the driving seat of school improvement
b) Freeing up teachers to teach by strengthening school discipline, reducing bureaucracy and reviewing the national curriculum
c) Improving the quality of teaching through changes to entry to the teaching profession, to initial teacher training and to ongoing teacher development
d) Sharpening accountability through changes to the inspection system and performance reporting
e) Making school funding more equitable

The White Paper ushered in, through the substantial expansion of the academies programme, a fundamental change in the nature of the English education landscape, arguably not seen on such a scale since the 1988 Education Reform Act introduced the Local Management of Schools. Alongside the sizeable increase in the numbers of academies, however, the White Paper was also responsible for a quieter, but potentially no less significant, revolution – the roll out of a national teaching schools programme.

The following extracts from the Importance of Teaching demonstrate how teaching schools were established as a critical vehicle for delivering both an uplift in the quality of teaching and a school improvement system led by schools for schools. The White Paper (DfE, 2010) announced that the Government would:

'Develop a national network of Teaching Schools on the model of teaching hospitals to lead the training and professional development of teachers and headteachers.'

'Increase the number of National and Local Leaders of Education – headteachers of excellent schools committed to supporting other schools – and develop Teaching Schools to make sure that every school has access to highly effective professional development support.'

'Bring together the Training School and Teaching School models, to create a national network of Teaching Schools…which will take a leading responsibility for providing and quality assuring initial teacher training in their area. We will also fund them to offer professional development for teachers and leaders.'

'Expect Teaching Schools to draw together outstanding teachers in an area who are committed to supporting other schools.'

'Continue to support programmes which are successful in developing leaders in schools. Through the new Teaching Schools network, we expect the National College to enable many more clusters of schools to offer their own high quality 'middle leader' (e.g. heads of department or heads of year) development programmes.'

'Expect the Teaching Schools to identify and develop teachers with the potential to take on headship. We will continue to fund succession planning work (via the Teaching Schools) in the areas with the biggest challenges.'

'Expect [Teaching Schools] to help to deploy National and Local Leaders of Education and leading teachers in support of other schools locally. We will look to these schools to brigade together and broker as necessary the different forms of support that other schools might need.'

These plans encompass a very broad range of responsibilities from initial teacher training to middle leader development, succession planning, school improvement and strategic brokering of support across an area. Teaching schools were clearly established as one of the main policy levers designed to achieve the second of Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber's (2010) 'three types of things' that all high-performing systems do well – develop teachers into effective instructors in all schools.

Teaching School pilots

The White Paper (DfE, 2010) brought a new definition to the responsibilities that the Government would place on teaching schools. It began to outline how a teaching school might interact with the rest of a more autonomous school system, and set out a firm commitment to a national network. However, the development of the concept and the establishment of the first teaching schools predated the White Paper by some years.

In 2004 Sir George Berwick, drawing on his experience of leading the Ravens Wood School in Bromley, submitted proposals to the Cabinet Office to establish a national network of teaching schools. A year later the first Teaching School pilots were established as part of the London Challenge, subsequently followed by participation of some schools in Greater Manchester and the Black Country. In 2007 Berwick and Matthews wrote The Teaching School Concept – a paper which sets out a vision of teaching schools as *"*deliberate and successful learning communities, akin to teaching hospitals*".*

In their later publication, 'Teaching Schools: First Among Equals?', Matthews and Berwick (2013) reflected in greater detail on the practical and policy influences which

inspired the original teaching school concept. In particular, they cited three main influences:

1) the concept of teaching hospitals, medical training and clinical excellence
2) the development of highly effective schools that play a major part in teacher education and professional development
3) the development of successful school improvement initiatives, particularly involving school partnerships

The parallels between teaching hospitals and schools are not exact, not least because the relationship between a hospital and other neighbouring hospitals is very different to the relationship between a school and other neighbouring schools. Also the relationship and quality control mechanisms between a teaching hospital and its affiliated university are very different to those between teaching schools and their higher education institution (HEI) partners. Teaching hospitals have close relationships and structured quality control mechanisms with their HEI partners which are almost non-existent in the teaching school model.

Nonetheless, the experience of the teaching hospital movement clearly provided inspiration for the development of teaching schools. Teaching hospitals have a strong commitment to training and research; they take responsibility for the vocational training of medical professionals; they are seen as centres of clinical excellence in which patients have high expectations of the treatment they will receive; they generate knowledge through research; and they export trained professionals into the wider health system (Matthews & Berwick, 2013).

The education-based antecedents of the teaching school concept are varied and are found in many other countries. Matthews & Berwick (2013) point to the existence of Demonstration Schools, in some cases for over a century, in the UK, Canada, and Australia; and an established Laboratory Schools movement in the US (see also Darling-Hammond, 1994; Bullough et al., 1997; Adair Breault, 2013). Distinguishing features of these schools included exemplary practice, a locus for research and development, opportunities for pre-service and continuing teacher professional development, and activities to promote their influence more widely. There is also a strong tradition of schools supporting initial teacher education, be it University Training Schools in Finland or the more than 200 former Training Schools established in England from the year 2000 onwards.

However, as Matthews & Berwick (2013) point out, the Teaching School concept differs markedly from these forerunners in terms of 'the school alliances and school-to-school support functions expected of [teaching schools].' This is where the impact of the third policy influence cited above, the development of school improvement initiatives based on school partnerships, can be seen. One of the key elements of

these initiatives was the identification of headteachers leading 'outstanding' schools as National Leaders of Education (NLE), who had the skills and capacity to support partner schools which needed to improve. This partnership-based and schools-leading-schools approach to improvement later formed an enduring element of the newly emerging teaching school model.

Ofsted's 2010 evaluation of the London Challenge describes the emergence of the teaching school model and highlights the potential influence of the Teaching School concept on improvement in schools. The evaluation found that teachers 'universally welcomed their impact on the quality of their teaching' and that 'school managers could point to measurable improvements in the quality of the teaching, with consequent improvements in outcomes for pupils' (Ofsted, 2010: 15). The teaching schools themselves also reported that the quality of their own teaching had improved further and that this was the primary reason why they wanted to continue with the teaching school work: 'they recognised that their own staff and pupils benefited' (Ofsted, 2010: 15).

The Improving Teacher Programme (ITP) and Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP), which formed a core part of the early teaching schools' work, embraced an intensive approach to professional development which involved learning, discussion, practical exercises and live teaching. Ofsted reported that practitioners found that this shared reflective approach to professional learning was 'much more effective than a more traditional model of continuing professional development.' They valued the ability to work with teachers from other schools and to reflect on their own teaching in an environment outside their own school. Such experience, it was claimed, 'taught teachers to become reflective practitioners and they began to share that skill with their colleagues at their home school…The process of sharing itself reinforces the training received by the 'lead' teacher and boosts confidence as well as expertise' (Ofsted, 2010). These observations led Ofsted to conclude that 'the model appears to provide one solution to the longstanding difficulties of how to share good practice among schools.'

A further evaluation of the City Challenge Leadership Strategy (Rudd et al., 2011) reinforces Ofsted's observations. It found that the organisation of the teaching school programme had core common features, regardless of locality. All three leadership strategy areas offered the Outstanding Teacher Programme, the Improving Teacher Programme, and the teaching and learning immersion programme for groups of middle leaders. The feedback from both those teachers receiving support and the teaching schools providing support suggests that the training programmes were of good quality and provided good value for money. Participants particularly valued: the school to school nature of the support and the use of local contexts and local solutions; the effect that programmes built capacity within schools and changed the culture of school improvement; and the mechanisms in place to support staff through

extended follow-up. Rudd et al. (2011) found that the teaching school model was viewed positively by both providers and recipients. It was seen to have provided high-quality continuous professional development (CPD) and led to improved teaching and learning and enhanced leadership capacity.

1.2   What the teaching school programme can learn from the wider research base

The concept of teaching schools has both benefited from and contributed to a much wider educational debate about the role of collaboration between schools as a means of providing effective continuing professional development to teachers and as a mechanism for improving schools. It is, therefore, informative to consider briefly the wider research base on initial teacher training, CPD, school-to-school collaboration and system leadership, both in England and internationally, to understand the insights it can bring to the evaluation of the teaching schools programme.

Initial teacher training (ITT): entry pathways

In the last two decades government has promoted an increased number of employment-based and school-centred routes into teaching, simultaneously increasing school involvement and seeking to attract more mature and second-career entrants (Day and Gu, 2010). The university-led or 'traditional' route into teaching and alternative entry pathways were explored as part of a longitudinal study undertaken by Hobson et al (2009) which gathered evidence relating to beginner teachers' experiences of ITT, induction and early professional development in England.

The study found that the geographical location of ITT programmes had been influential in the choices of route and provider for over three-quarters of respondents. Nearly half of the respondents reported being attracted to their ITT programme by the balance of in-school and out-of-school training. Those following university-led programmes were more likely to assert a desire to train alongside their peers as an influence on their choice of route than participants who had chosen alternative pathways into teaching.

Differences between the experiences of student teachers that had followed different routes into teaching tended to be related to the quality of support they received and their relationships with mentors. Trainees that undertook employment-based and school-centred programmes reported more favourably on the level of support they received and their mentor relationships compared to those that had followed university-led pathways. However, in a re-analysis of the data from the

aforementioned study, Hobson and Malderez (2013) questioned the efficacy and purposefulness of current models of school-based mentoring for new teachers in England, specifically a failure at the individual, school and policy level to create appropriate conditions for the effective mentoring of trainee teachers.

Other research draws attention to the perceived lack of theory in professionally-based initial teacher training, whereby the university-based learning environment is claimed to provide trainee teachers with an important platform for developing their knowledge, understanding and reflectiveness relating to theories of learning and the nature of teaching. This is an issue of concern across a range of contexts including England (Hobson et al, 2012; Smith and Hodson, 2010), Australia (Allen and Wright, 2014, Hong Kong (Cheng et al, 2010) and the United States (Segall, 2001).

In their analysis of empirical research on teachers' education and outcomes, Cochran-Smith et al (2012) argued that alternative routes into teaching continue to be a contentious and highly politicised issue. They concluded that research into teachers' entry pathways and their post-entry outcomes, such as students' achievement, teacher performance and retention, has the potential to contribute to ongoing policy discussions, but that some important methodological limitations in these studies prevent them from offering deeper insight into the effectiveness and consequences of different routes into teaching. Their critique reveals that future studies need to consider more closely differences among and between the entry pathways as well as variations in the characteristics of teachers who opt to enter the profession through traditional and alternative means.

Continuing professional development

There is a considerable and growing body of evidence from both the UK and beyond relating to the key characteristics of effective teacher professional development programmes and the influence these can have on practitioners and the students they teach. Some studies report changes to teacher cognition and practice (Ermeling, 2010; Morais et al, 2005; Ponte et al, 2004) and the facilitation of student motivation (Cherubini et al, 2002) while others highlight changes to teacher beliefs and expectations of students (Timperley and Philips, 2003) as a result of professional development.

Vesco et al (2008) reviewed a number of studies that report on the positive impact of communities of learning on teacher practice and student achievement while other research points to more specific influence of teacher CPD on student learning in reading (Lovett et al, 2008) and science (Fishman et al, 2003). More broadly, Garet et al (2001) sampled over 1,000 maths and science teachers to compare the effects of different forms of professional development on their learning. Their results

revealed three core features of CPD activity that have a significant and positive effect on increases in teacher knowledge and skills and inform changes in their practice: a clear focus on content knowledge; opportunities for active learning; and alignment with other learning activities.

In a recent review of the evidence on CPD, Cordingley et al (2015) undertook an 'umbrella review' of existing literature reviews into evidence on effective professional development for teachers. One of their key findings was that teacher professional development and learning programmes with a strong focus on pupil outcomes have a significant impact on student achievement. They also found that longer and/or extended CPD programmes tended to be more effective than shorter ones, with those lasting at least two terms having a greater chance of influencing and shaping organisational and cultural change. Their findings underscored the importance of multiple and iterative activities after the initial input of the programme as important features of CPD. CPD programmes that are overtly relevant to participants' daily practice and their experience of and aspirations for their students were found to be most successful. Other characteristics of successful CPD included a positive learning environment, sufficient time and space for learning to take place and a level of consistency between the professional learning experience and wider socio-educational contexts of the settings in which participants work.

Drawing upon longitudinal data from a national mixed methods project on variations in teachers' work, life and effectiveness over the course of their careers, Day and Gu (2007) emphasise that teachers do not necessarily learn through experience and that expertise is not acquired in an even, incremental way. Their analysis of teachers' professional life phases reveals distinctive differences in teachers' career trajectories and in their professional learning and development needs over time. They argue that schools need to develop 'expansive' rather than restrictive learning cultures and practices which pay attention to individual differences, needs and preferences, and which help to enhance the continuity of positive development of teachers' professional commitment and effectiveness.

Subject specific CPD

In their overarching review of the evidence on CPD, Cordingley et al (2015) report a number of similarities and distinctions between subjects in relation to maths, science and English specific CPD. For example, the alignment between CPD content and what is being encouraged and promoted by policy makers in the same subject appears to matter less for English than it does for maths and science. In maths and science the focus on assessment in CPD tends to be more closely linked to an understanding of subject content whereas in English this features more generically, for example, to promote pupil engagement or focus teaching. In science CPD there

tends to be a much stronger emphasis on the provision or curriculum delivery material than for English and maths CPD.

Keay (2005) explored subject-based CPD practices within a Physical Education (PE) department with newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Using a combination of interviews and ethnography the findings suggest PE departments in their study have a strong focus on welcoming NQTs into their subject community as a means of both supporting their integration and to encourage them to adopt the norms of the department.

Harrison et al (2008) report on a collaborative cross-cultural research study based in England and Israel that set out to investigate the means by which science teachers can improve their practice across a number of different domains of the discipline through CPD. Their findings point to the importance of an evidence-based approach in the design of CPD programmes and indicate a need to set professional challenges while tailoring CPD to teachers' individual needs.

School partnerships as a catalyst for collaborative professional development

The development of educational networks has grown in popularity over the last three decades. Veugelers and O'Hair (2005) argue that the common threads across various forms of networking and educational change are related to the belief that improving teacher learning is the precursor and condition for student learning and that teachers learn best through sharing ideas and planning and co-constructing learning collaboratively.

'Joint practice development'

Fielding et al's 2005 study on 'Factors influencing the transfer of good practice' coined the phrase 'Joint Practice Development' (JPD) to describe the collaborative practices 'that seem most relevant to the professional contexts of schools learning with and from each other.' The study argued cogently that transfer of 'ready made' packages of 'good' or 'best' practice between institutions did not resonate with the teachers and school leaders to whom they spoke, but that instead mutual engagement was critical to the task of opening up and sharing practice between practitioners and institutions. The authors identified four touchstones to guide further policy and practice, which may be of wider significance to the development of the teaching schools programme:

- *Relationships*: The research identified the importance of prior trusting relationships in facilitating effective joint practice development, not least to

create the conditions in which teachers have sufficient trust in their colleagues to engage in reciprocal lesson observations.

- *Institutional and teacher identity*: Badging of schools as the 'originator' and 'partner' often stood in the way of effective joint learning by inhibiting developments in the partner school, while less hierarchical frameworks were often deemed more productive.

- *Learner engagement*: Practice transfer is more likely to be successful when the recipient of the practice has been involved from the beginning in the process of agreeing and planning the transfer activity.

- *Understanding time*: Sufficient time is needed to learn and adapt a new practice, often through joint planning, observation and other forms of joint work.

Building on Fielding's work, Sebba et al. (2012) identified ten key processes that are critical to the development of effective joint practice development across a teaching school alliance. These encompassed (but were not limited to) clearly articulating the aims for the alliance; developing trust and building effective networks; recognising roles and distributing leadership; challenging and supporting partners and addressing competing priorities. In their analysis of successful joint practice development in five teaching school alliances, Tregenza et al. (2012) point to the particular role of school leadership in creating conditions, securing resources and aligning JPD with the strategic development priorities of the alliance.

Many of these ideas are also explored by Chapman, Hadfield and Armstrong (2011) who describe how the effective design and implementation of collaborative professional development requires school leaders to move from a 'micro-mobilisation' phase, in which they are courting and aligning potential partners, advocates and enthusiasts, to a 'macro-mobilisation' phase during which they are creating structured opportunities for teachers to work together and embedding those in the fabric of the school, and in the relationships between schools.

There is also a significant body of international evidence about what works in effective collaborative CPD or Joint Practice Development. Stoll (2015) draws on case study research with teaching school alliances (TSA) in which groups of schools entered into collaborative research and development projects as part of an initiative to promote and develop strong pedagogy, professional development and leadership. Findings suggest the inter-school collaborative research and development activity between schools benefitted participating teachers through helping them develop new ways of thinking about their practice, increasing expectations and motivation and promoting a greater openness towards their colleagues. Similarly, in their research with federations of schools in England, Chapman and Muijs (2014) found that inter-

school collaboration provided more opportunities for CPD between schools. Staff reported sharing practice amongst colleagues as a more powerful form of professional learning with a more direct impact on practice than external training.

Schleicher (2012) draws on good practice from across the OECD to argue that improving the 'technical core' of teaching 'requires the development of educational ecosystems that support the creation, accumulation and diffusion of this professional knowledge' and that schools are 'learning organisations where teachers can improve and learn from each other's accumulated knowledge' (p47).[4] However, OECD's Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) surveys in 2008 and 2013 consistently show that teachers tend to be more likely to report relatively few opportunities for direct professional collaboration to enhance student learning (OECD, 2011, 2014a & 2014b). Moreover, to date there is little hard evidence linking such ways of working to improvements in pupil outcomes.

'Networked communities for professional learning and development'

In much of the education research literature emanating from the USA, professional learning and development of staff members forms a central aspect of many of the examples of school partnership work and is often viewed as either a means of inter-school collaboration or an important justification for schools to establish partnerships with external organisations and agencies.

For example, Newman and Sconzert (2000) report on an evaluation of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge, a five-year initiative that ran from 1995 to 2001 with the goal of improving student outcomes and learning by reconnecting schools with their communities and strengthening inter-school collaboration, improving classroom instruction and restructuring education at the system-level. Professional development was highlighted as one of four promising strategies to have emerged from this initiative with activities including network-wide teacher and principal meetings, inter-school visits to share best practice and within-school classroom observations. Furthermore, both teachers and principals reported the process of sharing experiences with their peers across their network through professional development activity as a key means of addressing professional isolation, promoting shared goals and facilitating professional learning communities.

The power of sharing professional learning across schools was highlighted also by Smith and Wohlstetter (2001) in their work with school networks in Los Angeles. Working under the assumption that professional learning should be a coordinated system of training that is interlinked with changes to the curriculum and the work of practitioners in the classroom, professional learning was linked to the shared

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[4] Schleicher 2012, p.47

objectives of the school family so that, where required, they could collectively address the training needs of teachers across all the schools in the network.

Drawing on an ethnographic study that explored teacher participation in a formal teacher professional development network, Niesz (2010) found that the contribution by the membership of such a network was to facilitate the (re)production of meaning, identity and agency amongst the teachers and school district leaders involved. Network practice and professional dialogue that was informed by theory, inquiry and reflection on professional experience was found to promote situated teacher learning and change. Hofman and Dijkstra (2010) reported similar findings from a research study into teacher networks as vehicles for professional development. They found that collaborative activity that promotes reflection and builds a community of practitioners with space for new methods and strategies to be applied in the classroom can be a most promising means of professional development and job satisfaction.

In England, Varga-Atkins et al. (2010) reported on a large-scale multiple methods research study with networks of schools in Liverpool. The findings showed that where practitioners benefited from professional learning in these networks, the quality of joint professional development was a key factor in the success of the networked professional development programmes. Drawing on their work with networked learning communities, Katz and Earl (2010) undertook a large-scale survey of 60 school networks (over 600 schools) in England to explore the impact of the networked activity on pupil outcomes and teaching practice. Their results indicate an association between a school's involvement in a network and improvements in pupil attainment and changes to the ways teachers think about their practice as a result of the networked activity.

In relation to leadership development, Hadfield and Chapman (2009) drew on a large body of research with networks of schools to highlight the increased demands of school network leadership and the associated need to subsequently build leadership capacity and distribute leadership more widely across the network. As a result, staff members with little prior leadership experience were handed opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in this area. Similar findings are reported by Chapman and Allen (2006) and Chapman et al. (2004).

Further afield, Edwards (2012) reports from the New Zealand context where the Ministry of Education have adopted a professional learning community approach to support the implementation of their new curriculum by facilitating the development of practitioners' capacities and expertise in school curriculum design. Similarly, Mullan and Kochan (2000) identified the potential for an increase in and improvement of professional development provision as a key motivation for schools to join the West

Alabama Learning Coalition, with school principals believing membership would enhance professional learning opportunities for teachers.

Linking research with development in practice

Building on the concept of schools collaborating in Joint Practice Development, the USA literature also provides examples of schools engaging in longitudinal research and development with other schools and with academic partners such as universities. For instance, Dolle et al. (2013) report on the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's Pathways programme, an initiative that aims to improve the attainment of community college maths students. In order to address this aim, Carnegie formed a Networked Improvement Community (NIC), a professional network of 24 community colleges and four universities across eight states, with additional stakeholders including professional associations working in similar areas and educational researchers and experts in mathematical instruction and curriculum design. Action research is a key feature of this programme, with a strong emphasis on practitioner led enquiry and a bottom up approach to systematic redesign.

Donovan, Snow and Daro (2013) discuss the merits of a similarly large-scale countrywide programme: the Strategic Educational Research Partnership (SERP) that partners schools and practitioners with educational researchers. Unlike traditional, transitional approaches to educational research, the focus of SERP is long-term, on-going partnerships between researchers and school districts to allow stronger relationships to form and facilitate the extension of research and development that encompasses the generation and implementation of new knowledge relating to teaching and learning. Influenced by the principles of teaching hospitals, where clinicians and researchers work together between the lab and the hospital floor, SERP has established what they refer to as 'field sites'. These are areas where there is a readily available resource of researchers in place to work with schools and districts. As with the previous example, the work is practitioner-led, with researchers addressing issues identified by teachers to ensure the work of SERP is relevant and clearly linked to practice.

The Consortium on Chicago School Research provides a comparable example of school reform on a broad scale that is characterised by researchers and practitioners working closely over a prolonged period to build capacity at the school level and influence change at the system level (Roderick et al, 2009; Bryk et al., 2010). In British Columbia, a province of Canada, the Network of Performance Schools was established in 1999 as a means of school improvement with practitioner enquiry placed at the forefront (Halbert and Kaser, 2002). Over time, the network has developed into a large professional learning community in which practitioners share

ideas and practices, engage in joint problem solving and test out new and innovative strategies.

In sum, it is clear from the research literature both from England and further afield that school-centred partnerships and collaborations can, when based on certain principles, structures and processes and with high quality leadership, provide opportunities for deeper and more sustained professional learning between practitioners than might be achieved through more 'traditional' forms of CPD alone. There is clear evidence that such networked learning opportunities enhance professional practice and contribute to capacity building in participating schools. However, as yet, the empirical evidence which indicates that networking enhances pupil learning and leads to improved attainment is far from conclusive (e.g. Sammons et al., 2003; 2007; Fruchter et al., 2015). The evaluation of the Network Learning Communities (NLC) initiative in England concluded that

> '*Although survey respondents had fairly positive views of their own school's involvement in an NLC, only a minority believe that networking had an important impact on improving student outcomes (attainment or behaviour). Views of the influence on student motivation and on professional learning were relatively more favourable. Analyses indicate considerable variation between individual survey respondents and in average responses at the school level in perceptions of level of engagement and impact of NLC involvement. There is little evidence to indicate a link between improvement in pupil attainment at KS2 or KS3 and participants' perceptions of extent of NLC engagement*'
>
> <div align="right">Sammons et al, 2007: 233.</div>

School-to-school support as a mechanism for improvement

Increasingly, school-to-school collaboration is being seen as a means of not only bringing teachers together in professional learning contexts, but as a way to achieve rapid and significant improvement at an institution level – in a school or schools facing performance challenges.

Much of the international research relating to school partnerships emanates from the USA where, in some districts, networks of schools engaging in collaborative improvement are well established. One example which may be relevant to the development of teaching school alliances in England is the West Alabama Learning Coalition (WALC). Located in one of the most deprived regions of the USA, the WALC is made up of six inter-organisational groups of schools, community colleges, universities, businesses and social service agencies working together to: improve student outcomes at all levels; improve pre-service teacher education; facilitate

collaborative learning communities; enhance professional development and learning; and undertake research and development. Each of the WALC networks of schools has a designated team that coordinates and facilitates the collaborative activity that, in the case of school-to-school support, includes developing support structures for schools to address student underachievement and staff under-performance or creating subject specific tutorial programmes to improve student outcomes (Mullen and Kochan, 2000; Kochan and Kunkel, 1998).

Cutajar and Bezzina (2013) draw attention to the Maltese model of school partnerships, highlighting the educational reforms that took place in 2008, which grouped all the country's schools into ten clusters or 'regional colleges'. The purpose of this reform was to move away from the traditional centralised system of education in which many schools operated in isolation and competition to a model of collaboration and mutual support where schools would work in partnership with one another, and increasingly with parents, communities and non-government organisations (NGOs), to share physical, human and intellectual resources, engage in joint problem solving and share new ideas and educational practices. Case study research at one of the 'regional colleges' revealed that while this reform is still in its infancy there are signs of a shift towards a new culture of collaboration, although the relative isolation of teachers remains a challenge.

Another example of systemic reform towards increased school-to-school support activity is provided by Hargreaves et al (2008) who report on a case study of a pilot programme of school municipality co-operation in Finland. In this case, a group of five school principals took on an additional district role, meaning that one third of their time was devoted to working and supporting improvement across the entire school district. These principals had a wider municipal education responsibility, including the facilitation of shared provision in areas such as management, supervision and educational evaluation and development. The broader aims of this particular reform were to synchronise the work of individual schools with the wider system with a view to promoting a common vision and creating a more unified school system.

In Schools Leading Schools I and II, (2008 and 2010), Hill and Matthews chart the growth and development of the National Leaders of Education (NLE) programme in England. Like teaching schools, NLEs blossomed as a concept through the City Challenge. From their introduction in 2006 there are now over 1,000 designated NLEs supporting schools across the country. NLEs use their own expertise and that of staff in their school (called a 'National Support School' (NSS)) to support other schools in challenging circumstances.

The conditions which lead to success in schools leading schools are summarised as commissioning, capacity, capability and commitment (Hill and Matthews, 2010).

Commissioning is the process whereby the relationship with the NLE and the school receiving support is brokered. The authors claim that this needs to be carried out swiftly, decisively and with care. Capacity refers to the ability of the NLE and their school to take on a significant outreach commitment. This means not only having outstanding leadership, which is shared, but also sufficient outstanding teaching and support staff, particularly in core subject areas. Capability captures the strategies and processes that NLEs need to support other schools successfully. Hill and Matthews (2010) argue that successful NLEs have systems for restoring calm and acceptable behaviour, and ensuring consistently effective teaching and rigorous assessment of progress and intervention, where it is insufficient. They have strategies for assessing priorities and finding the most appropriate solutions; communicating with different and often challenging stakeholders; and modelling, communicating and implementing vision and aspirations. Finally, the commitment of successful NLEs is evident in their tenacity, resilience, vision of what is possible, urgency and humility.

The evidence for the impact that these school-to-school support mechanisms and interventions have on student outcomes is still limited, but broadly positive. Hill and Matthews (2010) found that in the 26 schools which had received NLE support over a 3-year period, the annual rate of improvement was over double the national average and that it had enabled them to close the gap in performance on other schools – an 8.5 percentage point increase for supported schools from 2006/07 to 2008/09 compared with the national average improvement of 4 percentage points over the same period. More importantly, the results continued to improve, even though in many cases the NLE/NSS support would have ended or tailed off in the 2008/09 school year.

Later evaluations of the City Challenge programme also provide some evidence of the success of such bespoke, customised school-to-school support provision, especially in the London Challenge area (e.g. Baars et al., 2014; Kidson & Norris, 2014). Analysis of the 2010 pupil outcomes data showed positive statistical associations between the provision of external leadership support and pupil attainment in London (Rudd et al., 2011). The associations in Greater Manchester and the Black Country, however, were found to be more ambiguous. Hutchings et al. (2012) reported a similar picture in their evaluation. In London, schools in each quintile of 2008 attainment improved significantly more between 2008 and 2011 than those in areas outside City Challenge (with the exception of the highest quintile of secondary schools). However, in Greater Manchester and the Black Country, only those in the lowest quintiles of attainment improved by significantly more than those outside City Challenge areas. Nonetheless, the fall in number of schools below the floor target was found to be greater in all City Challenge areas than elsewhere, as

was the improvement of the percentage of primary and secondary pupils reaching the expected level (Hutchings et al., 2012).

In sum, the national and international research evidence sends a clear message that collaborative inter-school partnerships can offer resources, expertise and opportunities for organisational change and improvement in teaching and learning. However, Chapman and Muijs' (2013, 2014) analysis of school federations reminds us that the ways in which partnerships are structured and governed can make a significant difference to their impact on pupil outcomes. Their study concluded that the improvement was greater and more rapid in federations with a shared governance structure and an executive headteacher than in looser forms of collaboration which showed little impact on pupil outcomes. Analysis of the effects of academy chains (Hutchings, Francis and Vries, 2014) also suggests that the sponsored model of academy chains is itself not an answer to improving the academic achievements of low income students. Rather, the key to success is strong leadership which is driven by a clear sense of moral purpose, direction and mission and which creates appropriate and responsive structures and cultures for a sustainable approach to growth.

System leadership and whole system reform

The research base clearly demonstrates that the teaching schools programme has its origin in a range of school improvement initiatives, from the pioneering work in the City Challenge programme, to the emergence of Joint Practice Development, seen as an effective form of CPD, and the increasing focus through NLEs and other partnership mechanisms on school turnaround. What makes the teaching school concept innovative is its interconnectedness and scale. Envisaged as a programme with national reach, with collaboration between schools at its heart, teaching schools are seen to possess the potential to provide opportunities for developing system leadership.

In 2007 Hopkins and Higham elaborated the concept of system leadership and illustrated its potential power as a catalyst for systemic reform. They set out an emerging taxonomy of five system leader roles, all of which may still resonate today within the current English policy context where there is a greater push towards various forms of school-to-school collaboration and a growing emphasis on the national development of a self-improving school system:

1) Leading a successful educational improvement partnership between several schools

2) Leading and improving a school in extremely challenging circumstances

3) Partnering another school facing difficulties and improving it

4) Acting as a community leader shaping networks to support children's welfare and potential

5) Working as a change agent or expert leader

In 2011, David Hargreaves, in his think piece "leading a self-improving school system" began to explore how teaching schools and their alliances would need to take on the mantle of system leadership in order to achieve the aim of creating a self-improving system in which schools themselves drive the improvement agenda set out in the White Paper. His maturity model (2012) for a self-improving school system proposes a framework for teaching school alliances to judge the strength of their partnership work and to progressively deepen the impact of their partnership by moving from 'beginning' through 'developing and embedding' to 'leading.' Central to the model is the concept of creating high social capital at a school level and collaborative capital at a system level. As Hargreaves (2011) argues,

> When social capital in an organisation is at a high level, people start to share their intellectual capital, that is, their knowledge, skills and experience: as they trust and respect one another, they do not feel the need to protect their intellectual capital and guard it from others (Hargreaves, 2011: 17)

Collaborative capital, in contrast, 'is an attribute and asset of the system, not of a school or a partnership'.

> It describes a state where strategic alliances between schools are commonplace, where collaboration-cum-competition is the normal and natural way in which the system operates, and the principles and practice of system leadership are widely shared. In a system with collaborative capital, the power of the schools' social capital to support the sharing of intellectual capital and to generate new intellectual capital increases sharply. The system evolves a new system capacity: the knowledge and skills of collaboration in alliances accumulate to create a new form of capital (Hargreaves, 2011: 26).

These ideas of social and collaborative capital that are central to the Teaching Schools concept resonate with thinking about whole-system reform emanating from the USA and Canada. Based on research in New York and Pittsburgh, Leana (2011) found that students in elementary schools showed higher gains in mathematics achievement when their teachers reported frequent conversations with their peers that centred on mathematics, and when there was a feeling of trust or closeness among teachers. In other words, a school's overall social capital was a powerful and significant influence on student achievement gains above and beyond individual

teacher experience or ability in the classroom. Furthermore, when principals spent more time building *external* social capital, the quality of instruction in the school was higher and students' scores on standardized tests in both reading and mathematics were higher.

These findings, alongside other research evidence and his direct experience of school reform in Ontario, have contributed to Fullan's (2011) theory of the key drivers behind effective system reform. As he states, 'high social capital and high human capital must be combined, and of the two the former is more powerful.' He suggests that the achievement of lasting and comprehensive system reform requires a leading focus on four key drivers, which may provide a helpful guide in understanding the development and assessing the likely effectiveness and impact of the teaching school programme:

1. **The learning-instruction-assessment nexus** - making sure that the centrepiece of action is based on learning and instruction. In this regard, relentless development of 'capacity building' – to make learning more exciting, more engaging, and more linked to assessment feedback loops around the achievement of higher order skills

2. **Social capital to build the profession** - using the group to accomplish the new learning-instruction culture. More specifically, approaching the solution as a social capital proposition to build the new teaching profession. This will require building collaborative cultures within and across schools

3. **Pedagogy matches technology** – so that education becomes easier and more absorbing, and learning and life become more seamless

4. **Systemic synergy -** The drivers must be conceived and designed as working interactively - the main criterion of systemic reform is that **all** schools and districts are engaged in improvement efforts.

In sum, system leadership is, in essence, 'a systemic approach that integrates the classroom, school and system levels in the pursuit of enhancing student achievement' (Hopkins, 2008). As the evidence from the City Challenge programme shows, key interventions to reduce the number of underperforming schools worked best 'when the Challenge advisors and other key stakeholders, including NLE/LLEs, School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and LA officers, worked effectively together' (Hutchings et al., 2012: vii). Claeys, Kempton and Paterson (2014) add that such middle tier school-to-school support networks and partnerships can only operate effectively and sustainably when there are 'high-level sponsorship and support' from central government:

> One of the defining lessons from London is the importance of high-level
> sponsorship and support from politicians and policymakers. The learning

from the emerging challenges, which are predominantly bottom-up initiatives, points to the difficulty of operating a challenge at a region-wide scale in today's educational landscape without the strong sense of cohesive mandate that only central government can provide. This would not require the same level of top-down involvement government had in London Challenge because greater capacity now exists across the system. What is required is to draw things together at scale in a concerted attempt to transform outcomes for pupils right across the country.

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Their observations remind us of an old 'truth' about educational change. Systemic change relies on a strong sense of moral responsibility, a passion for learning and achievement, and a collective commitment from **all** involved. However, system leaders alone cannot create or sustain the structural and cultural change that is critical for a whole system reform. This is because the effective enactment of system leadership requires, inherently, 'interrelationships and interdependence between different levels of the system' (Pont et al., 2008: 57) so that practices, expertise and enthusiasm for improvement within individual schools and networks of schools can be connected and scaled up in a coordinated and coherent manner.

2.   The Emergence and Development of Teaching Schools: An Overview

2.1   Becoming a teaching school: policy overview

> Teaching schools are outstanding schools that work with others to provide high-quality training and development to new and experienced school staff. They are part of the government's plan to give schools a central role in raising standards by developing a self-improving and sustainable school-led system.
>
> > Department for Education website

Since the 2010 White Paper announced its plan to roll out teaching schools on a national scale, both the role of teaching schools in the education system and the criteria for becoming a teaching school have become increasingly well defined.

The overall Teaching Schools programme is overseen by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and teaching schools are represented by the Teaching Schools Council[5]. There are six clearly defined 'core areas of responsibility' for Teaching Schools, known generally as 'The big six'. These are:

- School-led initial teacher training (ITT)
- Continuing professional development (CPD)
- School to school support (StSS)
- Identifying and developing leadership potential
- Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs)
- Research and Development (R&D)

2.1.1 The application process[6]

Applications to become a teaching school have been managed on a cohort basis by the National College for Teaching and Leadership. The first cohort of teaching schools was designated in September 2011. Since then there have been a further seven rounds of applications. Cohort 7 teaching schools were designated in August 2015, following ministerial sign-off.

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[5] The Teaching Schools Council (TSC) is 'a body representing all Teaching Schools and working with System Leaders across England promoting an inclusive school-led system' (http://tscouncil.org.uk/).

[6] The application and review processes reported here (sections 2.1.1 & 2.1.2) were current and highly relevant to the development of case study teaching school alliances in this evaluation. They represent an important part of the policy context for teaching schools during the lifetime of the project. The latest guide for potential applicants can be found on the government website: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-schools-a-guide-for-potential-applicants.

There are three routes for applicants to apply either as a single teaching school alliance, job-share teaching school alliance or multiple teaching school alliance (see 2.2.1 for details). The way in which an applicant proposes to structure their alliance as per the above routes depends entirely on their circumstances. Funding is allocated per teaching school alliance and not per designated teaching school, therefore one school must act as the 'lead' school to manage funding. In applying to become a teaching school, schools must demonstrate that they meet the stringent eligibility criteria for Teaching School designation. According to the NCTL[7], these are that the school must:

- Have a clear track record of longstanding collaborative relationships with a significant number of partner schools based upon trust and mutual respect, resulting in substantial school improvement across a locality or group of maintained schools
- Be judged to be 'outstanding' by Ofsted for leadership and management, teaching and overall effectiveness
- Show consistently high levels of pupil performance and progress or continued improvement over the last 3 years and be above current floor standards
- Have outstanding senior and middle leaders who have demonstrated that they have a strong track record and on-going capacity to:
  o Make a significant and high quality contribution to the training of teachers (ITT)
  o Provide highly effective professional development for teaching and/or leadership (CPD)
  o Provide successful support to under-performing schools within a school to school support partnership, federation or chain (StSS)

In addition, the headteacher of the school applying must[8]:

- Be judged to be an outstanding serving headteacher with at least 3 years headship experience and expect to remain at current school for at least 2 years following designation
- Be accountable for 1 or more schools which meet the teaching school criteria
- Have the full support from the school's governing body and director of children's services (DCS) or senior educational professional

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[7] Cited from *Teaching School Cohort 7: Eligibility Criteria* (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/426066/teaching-schools-cohort-seven-criteria.pdf)

[8] Cited from Teaching School Cohort 7: Eligibility Criteria

As well as meeting the eligibility criteria, plans of each alliance are assessed for[9]:

- leading the development of a school-led ITT system, through School Direct and in some cases by seeking full accreditation as an ITT provider
- leading peer-to-peer professional and leadership development
- providing support for other schools

Successful teaching schools will also be asked, as part of their start up process, to outline how they plan to[10]:

- designate and broker specialist leaders of education (SLEs)
- identify and develop leadership potential
- engage in research and development activity

Applications are reviewed by an experienced group of education assessors (mostly headteachers of teaching schools) who undertake a process of sifting, review and evaluation of applications based upon the evidence presented. During this time, further feedback is gathered from other schools or partners that are referenced in the application. Any school that applies may be subject to a visit to explore and verify information provided in the application form. If the number of applications that meet the eligibility criteria exceed the number of places available, schools are selected for designation on the basis of the evidence of need which takes into account geographical coverage and representation of rural and urban contexts, the representation of different types and phases of school, and the representation of the socio-economic mix of schools as measured by receipt of the pupil premium/free school meals.

Since March/April 2014, the growth strategy for the teaching school programme has been revised, in consultation with the Teaching Schools Council, to focus on areas of greatest need (e.g. rural and coastal areas) and ensure geographical coverage so that all schools can access teaching school support. The latest application and assessment process allows for greater flexibility for schools applying in target geographical areas. Schools will still be required to be judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted, and demonstrate high levels of pupil attainment and progress but will be given greater flexibility on evidencing previous track record in Initial Teacher Training (ITT), Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and School to School Support (StSS). Flexibility can only be applied to one of three strands per applicant. This change recognises that whilst the assessment standard remains the same, schools in areas of greatest need may have had less opportunity to engage fully in these areas. Successful applicants are allocated an NCTL Teaching and Leadership

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[9] Cited from Teaching School Cohort 7: Eligibility Criteria
[10] Cited from Teaching School Cohort 7: Eligibility Criteria

Adviser (TLA) to support them to strengthen these areas in their first year of designation.

2.1.2   The review process[11]

The National College for Teaching and Leadership has been committed to 'giving teaching schools the freedom to deliver improvements across their alliances and the school system in ways that best work for them' (Teaching Schools Review of Designation policy).

The NCTL views a teaching school's role is to retain its credibility and the programme to deliver quality and impact. A review will be undertaken if a teaching school appears to:

i)   no longer meet the eligibility criteria, or

ii)   be failing to carry out the roles as intended.

The process involves:

i)   identifying a teaching school requiring a review;

ii)   notification to the teaching school;

iii)   the submission of a supporting statement by the teaching school; and

iv)   decisions by the review panel.

Review panels are held termly and the panel consists of three teaching school leaders and a former Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI). The panel members review the available evidence such as performance data, relevant Ofsted reports as well as the submitted supporting statement.

Decisions that result in de-designation of a teaching school can only be taken by the teaching schools review panel. The exceptions to this are where:

- a change in circumstances which results in a teaching school which has been in post for less than a full school term no longer meeting the eligibility criteria for the role; and/or

- a full Ofsted inspection of the teaching school results in a judgement of 'requires improvement' or below.

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[11] The information presented here is accurate as of November 2015. Any updates on the *Teaching Schools Review of Designation Policy* can be found on the government website: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/384358/teaching-school-rod-policy.pdf

In the above exceptional cases, teaching schools will be automatically de-designated and there is no right to appeal. Since the start of the programme only 1% of teaching schools have been subject to automatic de-designation.

With regard to the majority of the cases, teaching schools are identified for a review for one or more of the following reasons:

- **Eligibility:** They fail to continue to meet the eligibility criteria because
  a) an Ofsted inspection results in a lower than required judgement;
  b) school performances falls below minimum expectations;
  c) the headteacher of a teaching school leaves without adequate succession arrangements in place;
  d) the school's governing body withdraws their support for the school to continue to deliver the teaching school's remit
- **Misconduct:** There is evidence of professional misconduct by any member of a teaching school's senior leadership team that brings the teaching school or NCTL into disrepute.
- **Delivery:** The Teaching School fails to demonstrate, either at its annual review or at any other time, that it has met minimum expectations in relation to the delivery of each of the 'Big 6'.

To date, 38 (5.05%) teaching schools have been de-designated since the start of the programme. Eight of these have been automatic de-designations where an Ofsted inspection has resulted in a judgement of 'requires improvement' or below. Twenty-four were de-designated as a result of the review process triggered by their Ofsted judgement dropping to 'good'.[12]

It is important to note that an Ofsted rating of 'good' does not necessarily result in a teaching school being de-designated. There are currently 16 teaching schools that have been reviewed and retained their designation despite the lower Ofsted rating.

Of the remainder, one was de-designated for a significant drop in performance data, one due to not having sufficient capacity to deliver the role and two for insufficient succession arrangements when the headteacher left. Succession arrangements when a headteacher moves on, are usually reviewed internally by the NCTL and are only taken to a formal panel should they be considered to be insufficient so that the school may need to be placed under review or de-designated.

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[12] The data were accurate as of 29th October 2015.

There are three possible outcomes of a review:

1) Teaching School status is **retained**
2) Teaching School status is placed **under review** for an agreed period of time (usually one year)
3) Teaching School status is **removed (de-designation)**

In the case of de-designation, the teaching school is given a period of up to six months in which to work with the NCTL to explore three options: i) **existing teaching school alliance continues** under the leadership of another teaching school within the alliance; ii) **a succession plan for the alliance is put in place** where an eligible strategic partner is identified to take on the leadership of the alliance (which agrees to apply to be a teaching school in the next application round); and iii) **a transition plan for the alliance is put in place** to merge with another teaching school (from a different alliance) which will take over the leadership of the alliance with an objective to transition the work into their alliance.

2.2   Reach and engagement of the Teaching Schools initiative

2.2.1 The composition of teaching school alliances

Teaching school alliances are led by teaching schools and represent a network of schools and organisations that have agreed to work together to deliver the six core areas of responsibility identified for teaching schools.

When the Teaching Schools initiative was initially launched, there were two types of teaching school alliances:

- **single alliance**: one teaching school leading one teaching school alliance

- **job-share alliance**: two small or special schools jointly leading one teaching school alliance

A third type of teaching school alliance was introduced in 2012 – **multiple alliance** which allows two or more teaching schools to lead one alliance. Each teaching school in a multiple alliance has to meet all the criteria and demonstrate a strong track record in the areas of ITT, CPD and StSS, whereas teaching schools in a job-share alliance can contribute jointly to some of the evidence on capacity or track record (to reflect and support the small/special school context). Funding is allocated per alliance irrespective of the type of teaching school alliances. As highlighted in the interim report, the multiple alliance model was welcomed by some teaching schools

in this evaluation because it was seen as enabling them to guard against the danger of de-designation if one teaching school leading the alliance lost its 'outstanding' status (Gu et al., 2014). In some cases the growing capacity of individual teaching schools and their enhanced track record in the required areas can result in the splitting of alliances as they grow and/or change of alliance types. In this evaluation, two case study TSAs successfully transferred from job-share alliances to multiple alliances. Moreover, teaching schools also have the option to join existing alliances if they choose to.

Nonetheless, as Table 2 shows, the large majority of cohorts 1 to 5 teaching school alliances are still led by 1 teaching school[13].

Table 2: Number of teaching schools independently (single-alliance) or jointly (job-share or multiple alliance) leading their alliances (by cohort)

	1 TS		2 TSs		3 TSs		4 TSs		5 TSs	
Cohort 1	64	78.0%	18	22.0%						
Cohort 2	68	82.9%	14	17.1%						
Cohort 3	100	81.3%	17	13.8%	5	4.1%			1	0.8%
Cohort 4	127	78.9%	26	16.1%	7	4.3%	1	0.6%		
Cohort 5	35	85.4%	5	12.2%	1	2.4%				

Teaching school alliances include strategic partners who lead and/or make significant contributions to some aspects of training (including ITT & CPD),development and StSS in the teaching school work. Strategic partners may range from schools, universities, academy chains, local authorities and/or dioceses, to private/third sector organisations.

Whilst the vast majority (87%) of strategic partners are schools, 528 in cohorts 1 to 5 teaching school alliances are non-school organisations, including over two thirds of all Local Authorities (LAs) (Table 3). Higher education institutions (HEIs) and School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) consortia are other major groups.

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[13] Based upon snapshot analysis. Datasets were compiled for the respective years and cohorts to which they refer, so there may be slight inconsistencies in the way data are measured and captured between years and cohorts.

Table 3: Non-school organisations as strategic partners

	Organisations		Alliances	
	Number	%	Number	%
Diocese	31	6%	49	5%
LA	118	22%	205	21%
HEI	83	16%	437	45%
School Centred Initial Techer Training (SCITT)	59	11%	96	10%
Other	241	45%	175	18%
Total	**532**	**100%**	**962**	**100%**

Evidence from the interim report suggests that teaching schools differ considerably in how they construct their alliances, and the degree of commitment and engagement shown by partner schools. This has important implications for the evaluation. There is no single concept of a teaching school or an alliance. They are varied in their composition and enactment of policy. This local variability increases the likelihood that some may show better outcomes than others (some ways of organising and implementing may be more successful than others) and reduces the chances of identifying an overall impact on pupil outcomes across all teaching schools. In some instances a teaching school alliance will be constituted mainly of the lead school and its strategic partners forming a tight inner hub of activity, with a broader group of alliance members availing themselves of the opportunities offered by the teaching school on a more ad-hoc basis. In other alliances, the alliance members have greater day-to-day engagement in both delivering and benefiting from aspects of the local programme on offer and are more involved in the strategic direction of the partnership. Moreover, over time a school may decide to become more (or less) involved in the teaching school work, or to be involved in more than one teaching school alliance, or to become a teaching school in their own right, or to leave the alliance altogether, for example, to join a different teaching school alliance.

Such observations led us to conclude that 'membership' of a teaching school alliance is a very fluid and dynamic concept , and has become more so during the period of our research. Teaching schools have different interpretations of strategic partners and alliance members and use different approaches to build their alliances (Gu et al., 2014). The results of the NCTL's internal data collections also found that schools that were identified by cohorts 1 and 2 teaching schools as having been 'actively' engaged in different strands of the teaching school activity were not necessarily 'alliance members'. Such results support our observation that engagement in the teaching school activity has a wider meaning than alliance membership. This is an important finding that should be borne in mind in interpreting the impact of teaching schools on improvement and standards in schools.

Taken together, evidence suggests that understanding the complexity and fluidity of this membership issue is key to understanding how teaching schools are working to fulfil their commitments and responsibilities, how and the extent to which they are making a difference to improvement (Gu et al., 2014).

2.2.2 Participation and reach over time

The analysis of TSA reach and participation is largely based on the Key Information Form (KIF) data collected from teaching schools between 2012 and 2014. The KIF contains details of alliance membership and is submitted to the NCLT annually.

The 2014 returns were collected between April and October 2014. Alliances that had been operating for less than a year (i.e. cohorts 4 and 5 in 2014) were not required to complete details of their full alliance membership[14]. Thus, when reviewing the growth of teaching school alliances and all schools involved in the initiative (e.g. overall participation and reach) in this report, **all five** cohorts of alliance members were considered; and where possible, application data from cohorts 6 and 7 were also included. However, when the analysis was focussed on *the characteristics of individual alliances* (e.g. alliance size and composition), **only cohorts 1-3** alliances were considered.

Analysis included all state-funded schools recorded on Edubase in October 2014. Independent schools were excluded unless otherwise stated. In the analysis, the 2014 Key Information Form (KIF)[15] was matched to relevant school characteristics (from Edubase), performance data (from performance tables) and other NCTL or Department for Education (DfE) datasets, where required[16]. This combined dataset is referred to as the 'TSA database' throughout this report. The results of the analysis provide a detailed picture of Teaching School Alliances (TSA) and the profile of schools engaged within them in October 2014

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[14] Cohorts 6 and 7 were not included in the analysis of participation since they were designated in February and August 2015, after this datacut was taken.

[15] 5% of alliances submitted information after the date of extraction in October 2014 and are therefore not included in this analysis. In addition, a further 36 alliances submitted only partial information and are now being followed up.

[16] All data was correct as of October 2014 (when the Edubase extract was taken). Performance data relates to Summer 2013 and Ofsted data to June 2014 as these were the latest available datasets in October 2014 .

The growth of teaching schools

The DfE set a target of designating 600 teaching schools by 2016. This target has now been effectively reached with 598 teaching schools designated by January 2015, leading 486 alliances[17]. In February 2015, an additional 61 cohort 6 teaching schools were designated which brought the total number of teaching schools to 659[18]. There are now 692 teaching schools representing 538 teaching school alliances. This includes 59 cohort 7 teaching schools which were designated in August 2015 following ministerial sign-off.[19]

The growth in the number of teaching schools designated at each of the seven application stages is shown in Figure 3 below[20]. It is believed that the change in the National College's growth strategy for the Teaching Schools initiative – which focussed more on ensuring geographical coverage (e.g. rural areas), has contributed to the reduction in applications for cohorts 5, 6 and 7 (see 2.1.1 for details). Otherwise, the numbers of applications for the first four cohorts appear to suggest that there is a sustained appetite from eligible schools to become part of this national initiative.

Figure 3: The number of teaching schools designated at each application stage

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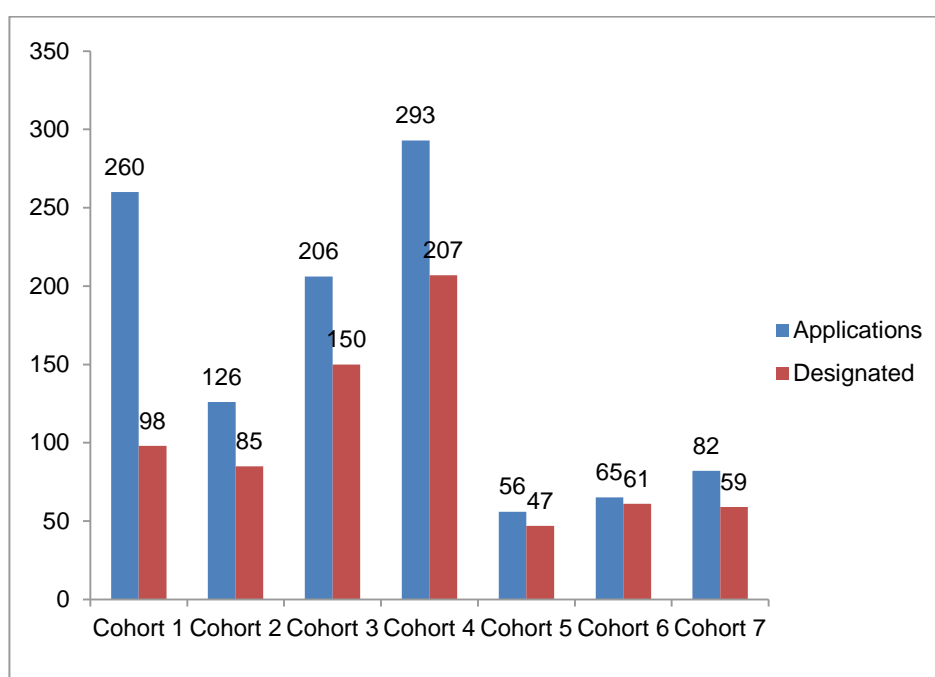
[17] All data were correct as of January 2015.

[18] Based upon data in February 2015.

[19] Figures were correct as of 28th October 2015.

[20] Based upon data at the point of the designation: September 2011 for cohort 1; March 2012 for cohort 2; February 2013 for cohort 3; March 2014 for cohort 4; September 2014 for cohort 5; February 2015 for cohort 6 and August 2015 for cohort 7.

Overall participation

As of October 2014, at least 7,144 schools were linked with the Teaching Schools initiative, representing 32% of all maintained schools in England. This is an increase of 11% on October 2013[21]. Since then, cohorts 4 and 5 teaching schools were designated in April and September 2014 respectively, followed by cohort 6 in February 2015 and cohort 7 in August 2015.

There were 3.3 million pupils attending these schools[22], representing 44% of all pupils in England. This is a significant increase from 1.25 million children in 2012 which represented 15% of children at all state schools in England.

Table 4 below shows the increase in percentage points from 2013 to 2014 in relation to the proportion of schools from each major phase or type of education that were members of an alliance. Appendix 3 provides a summary table of the underlying data for Table 4 which outlines the numbers of schools in each alliance role in each year broken down by school phase.

Table 4: Proportion of schools from each major phase or type of education that were a member of an alliance

	Participation 2013	Participation 2014	Increase in percentage points
Secondary	42%	56%	+14%
Primary	17%	27%	+10%
Nursery	14%	27%	+13%
All with Early Years	17%	29%	+12%
Special	31%	42%	+11%
Independent	2%	3%	+1%
Academy	39%	50%	+11%
Free school	8%	17%	+9%
Other schools	5%	15%	+10%

Source: TSA database 2014

The National College's records show that overall the average alliance size has continued to rise since 2012. Alliances from the first three cohorts have, on average, 32 members (+6 since 2013). However, it is important to note that this masks a

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[21] Excluding independent schools
[22] Including cohorts 1-5 teaching schools and their alliance schools

considerable variation, with some alliances based on as few as five schools, and with others counting as many as 80 in their number.

Although the average size of cohort 3 teaching school alliances (23 members) is relatively smaller than that of their cohorts 1 and 2 peers (34 members), the profile of cohort 3 teaching school alliances is similar to the first years of cohorts 1 and 2, with a higher number of smaller alliances.

Since 2011, over 850 schools have left teaching school alliances, with over 500 leaving in 2014. Out of all leavers, 170 have re-joined, with 80 re-joining in 2015. These statistics again support evidence from our evaluation that membership of a teaching school alliance is a constantly evolving concept, and that because of the fluidity of the membership, it is not always possible for senior leaders to answer the question 'How big is this alliance?' (see 4.1 for more detailed discussion). Nonetheless, records from the National College show that a total of 35.5% of all primary, secondary and special schools in England have even been identified as part of a teaching school alliance through a Key Information Form.

Participation across school phase and type

Secondary and academy schools[23] are overrepresented among teaching schools compared with primary schools and special schools. This pattern has remained consistent from 2012, 2013 to 2014. Table 5 shows that the take-up among primary and nursery schools has increased in recent cohorts.

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[23] This will be related since a high proportion of academies are secondary.

Table 5: Number of applicants and designated teaching schools from each major phase of education at each round[24]

		Primary	Secondary	Special	All Through	PRU	Nursery	Other schools
Cohort 1	Applications	104	133	23				
	Designated	**46**	**65**	**9**				
Cohort 2	Applications	56	49	21				
	Designated	**38**	**46**	**16**				
Cohort 3	Applications	101	75	17		1	8	4
	Designated	**74**	**54**	**15**			**7**	**3**
Cohort 4	Applications	155	86	25		4	19	4
	Designated	**106**	**67**	**17**		**3**	**9**	**1**
Cohort 5	Applications	34	21	5	1		5	2
	Designated	**32**	**20**	**5**	**1**		**3**	**2**
Cohort 6	Applications	26	17	11	1	1	7	2
	Designated	**23**	**14**	**11**	**1**	**1**	**4**	**2**
Cohort 7	**Applications**	**31**	**24**	**9**	**1**	**1**	**15**	**1**
	Designated	**21**	**19**	**9**		**1**	**9**	
Total	**Applications**	**507**	**405**	**111**	**3**	**7**	**54**	**13**
	Designated	**340**	**285**	**82**	**2**	**5**	**32**	**8**

However, although in absolute numbers there have been more primary teaching schools than any other type since the designation of cohort 4 in April 2014, this only reflects the very large number of primary schools in the country. Table 6 below compares the number and proportion of 'outstanding' cohorts 1-5 teaching schools[25] from each major phase of education with all 'outstanding' schools and all state schools in October 2014. It shows that amongst the 'outstanding' secondary schools (n=677), approximately a third (34%) are teaching schools. The comparable figures for special, primary and nursery schools are 17%, 9% and 8% respectively, suggesting that there is even more room for growth in these sectors.

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[24] Based upon data at the point of the designation.

[25] As of October 2014, 22 teaching schools (4%) were rated by Ofsted as 'good'. This number may be based on the timing of schools that are pending a review of designation, or have been through a review and been approved to remain based on their evidence of impact. The Ofsted criterion to become a teaching school in the first place remains at 'outstanding'.

Table 6: Comparison of outstanding TSs, outstanding schools and all schools by phase (2014)

	Outstanding TS	Outstanding schools	All schools
Primary	265 (46.2%)	2,811 (67.9%)	16,717 (76.9%)
Secondary	226 (39.4%)	677 (16.4%)	3,217 (14.8%)
Special	60 (10.5%)	362 (8.7%)	1,025 (4.7%)
Nursery	19 (3.3%)	237 (5.7%)	415 (1.9%)
Other	3 (0.5%)	51 (1.2%)	360 (1.7%)
Total	**573[26] (100.0%)**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: TSA database 2014
Includes all schools with an Ofsted rating on the database (excludes FE)

In terms of phase of schools in each role within the alliance, the overall participation is also highest amongst secondary and academy schools, followed by special schools. This pattern has also remained consistent since 2012. However, although primary and nursery participation remains lower proportionally, both have seen a higher increase between 2013 and 2014 than secondary or special: primary has increased from 17% to 27%, compared with 42% to 56% for secondary and 31% to 42% for special.

Figures 4 and 5 below show another consistent pattern of TSA participation between 2012 and 2014. Amongst alliance member schools (those that are not teaching schools or strategic partners), the proportion of primary is roughly in line with that for all schools in England. However, amongst strategic partners, they remain under-represented (see also Table 7). This may be related to the national under-representation of teaching schools in the primary sector.

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[26] Outstanding teaching schools only, excluding independent and FE (which do not have Ofsted ratings attached within the TSA database).

Figure 4: Phase of schools in each role within the alliance (2012)
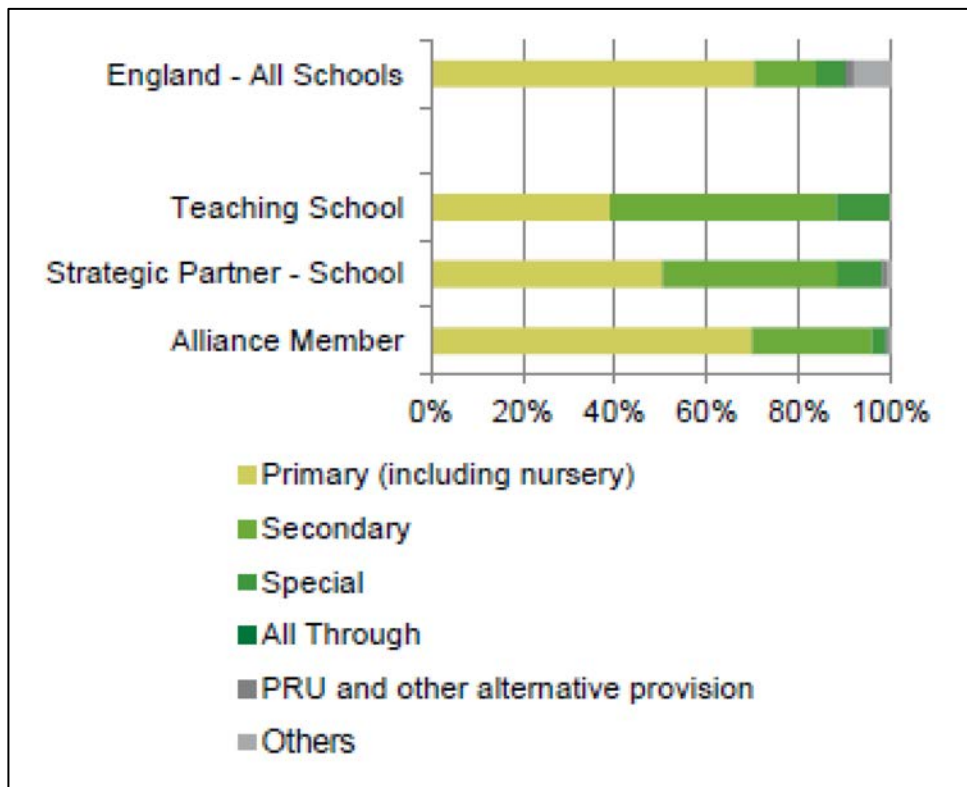
Figure 5: Phase of schools in each role within the alliance (2014)
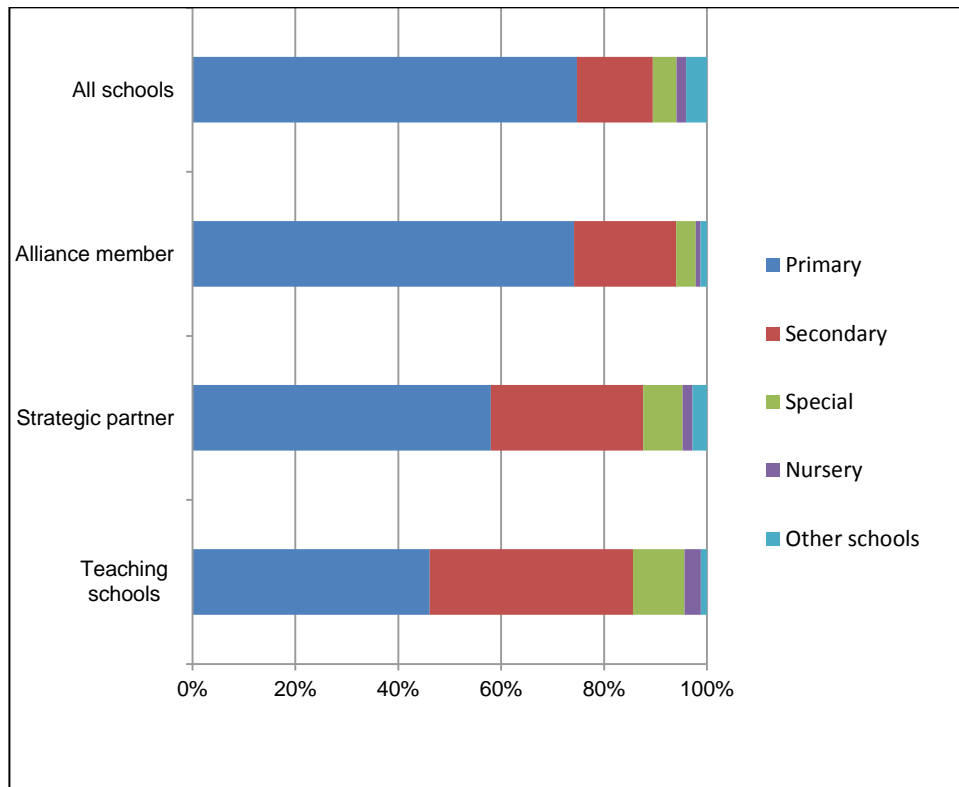
Table 7: Proportion of each alliance role from each major phase of education (2014)

	Teaching schools	Strategic partner	Alliance member	All schools
Primary	276 (46%)	1,878 (58%)	2,454 (74%)	16,790 (75%)
Secondary	237 (40%)	957 (30%)	655 (20%)	3,316 (15%)
Special	60 (10%)	249 (8%)	126 (4%)	1,033 (5%)
Nursery	19 (3%)	62 (2%)	31 (1%)	415 (2%)
Other schools	7 (1%)	91 (3%)	42 (1%)	918 (4%)
Total	**599 (100%)**	**3,237 (100%)**	**3,308 (100%)**	**22,472 (100%)**

Source: TSA database 2014

Participation by urban-rural schools

The pattern of urban-rural reach has been consistent over time. Figure 6 below shows proportions of schools from each urban-rural type of location that were linked to teaching school alliances in 2013 and 2014.

It is clear that TSA participation remains the highest amongst schools in urban locations, followed by schools in town and fringe locations. In 2014, 20% or less of schools based in a village or hamlet setting were linked to an alliance. However, rural settings have seen the highest growth as a proportion of 2013 TSA: from 10% to 20% in hamlet and isolated dwellings and from 10% to 18% in villages. NCTL's record in 2013 also shows that strategic partners tended to make up a larger part of alliance membership in TSAs led by rural teaching schools: 69% as compared to 42% in alliances led by urban teaching schools.

This is likely to be a result of the unique challenges that are faced by small urban and/or rural teaching schools in forming, developing and sustaining a teaching school alliance. An NCTL commissioned internal report (Day et al., 2015) found that these challenges are related to geographical separation, individual schools' cultures of self-sufficiency and tribalism, resource limitations, limited leadership capacity and teacher release capacity. In small rural primary schools, teachers reported that it was often extremely difficult to take time out of the classroom. Releasing staff members from small schools was also difficult due to the high number of teaching headteachers in these schools. Thus, joining forces and building individual and collective capacity through collaboration were found to be conditions that were critical to their development and effectiveness. It enabled them to deliver the breadth and depth of teaching school work that otherwise would not have been possible.

Figure 6: Proportion of schools from each urban-rural type of location that were engaged in teaching school alliances (any role) (2013-2014)
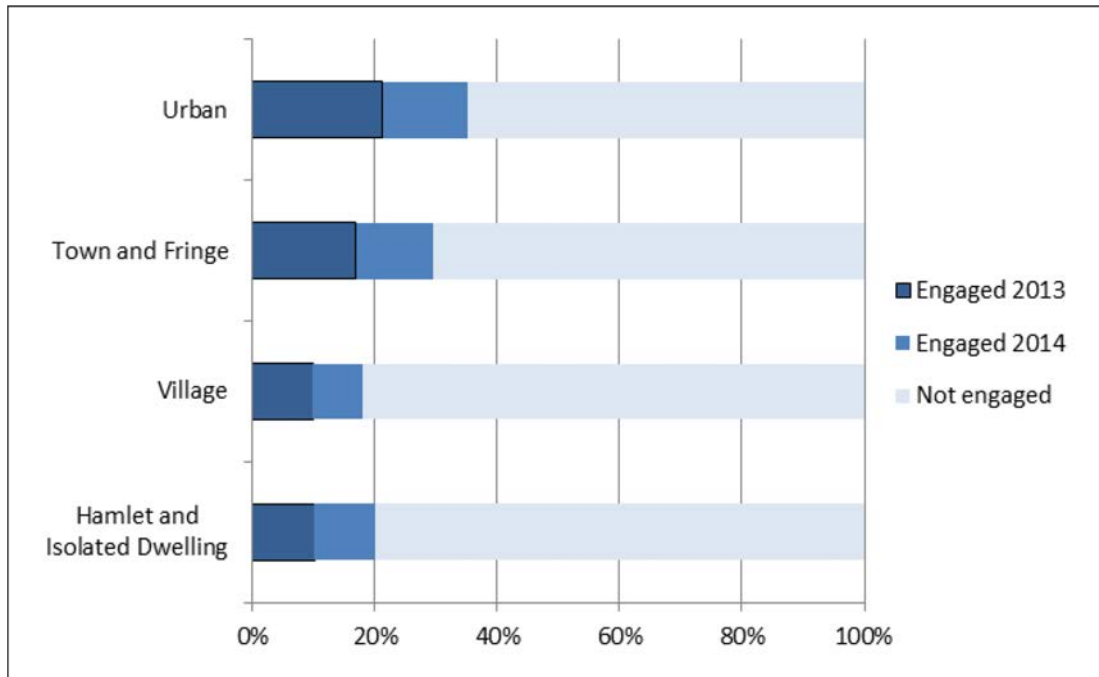
The latest data show that, in proportion to the distribution of all 'outstanding' schools, there is also under-representation of teaching schools in rural settings. Table 8 suggests that teaching schools are well represented in urban locations but that there could be more alliances led by teaching schools based in rural locations.

Table 8: Proportion of schools from each urban-rural type of location that are Outstanding schools and teaching schools (2014)

	Urban (>10K)	Rural
All Outstanding schools	3,142 (75.9%)	996 (24.1%)
Teaching schools	507 (84.6%)	92 (15.4%)

Participation by geographical area

- **Regional level**

Teaching schools

Geographical distribution of teaching schools in 2012 and 2015 can be seen in the maps below (Figures 7 and 8). There is a clear tendency for low-reach areas generally to be away from major cities.

However, there are only small variations between regions in terms of teaching school representation. The latest statistics show that teaching schools typically represent 2% to 3% of the total population of schools across eight of the nine regions in England, with the exception of London which has the highest representation of 4% (proportion of teaching schools in the region). Although the North East has the smallest number of teaching schools, as the total number of schools in the region is small, the participation of teaching schools in this region is comparable to that in the rest of the country (3% in October 2014).

Table 9 shows that in proportion to the distribution of all 'outstanding' schools, teaching schools' representation across all regions was also similar in 2012 (3%-5%) and 2013 (6%-9%). There was no obvious pattern of variation at regional level in these two years. However, in 2014 the variation across regions appeared to be relatively greater. Proportionally the number of 'outstanding' schools that became teaching schools was the lowest in the North West (11%) whilst Yorkshire and the Humber had the highest proportion of 19%.

Figure 7: Map of designated TSs July 2012 (cohorts 1-2)
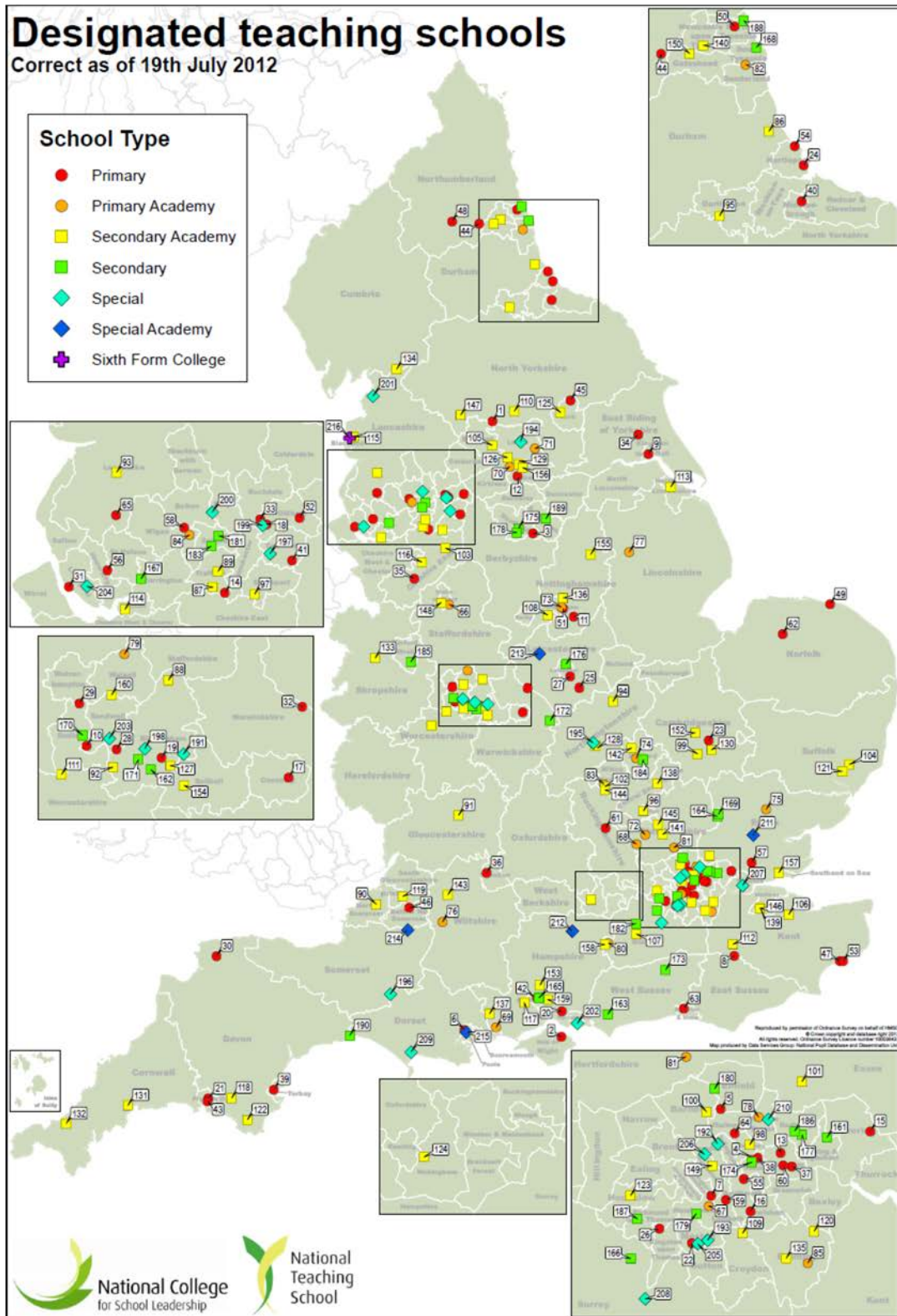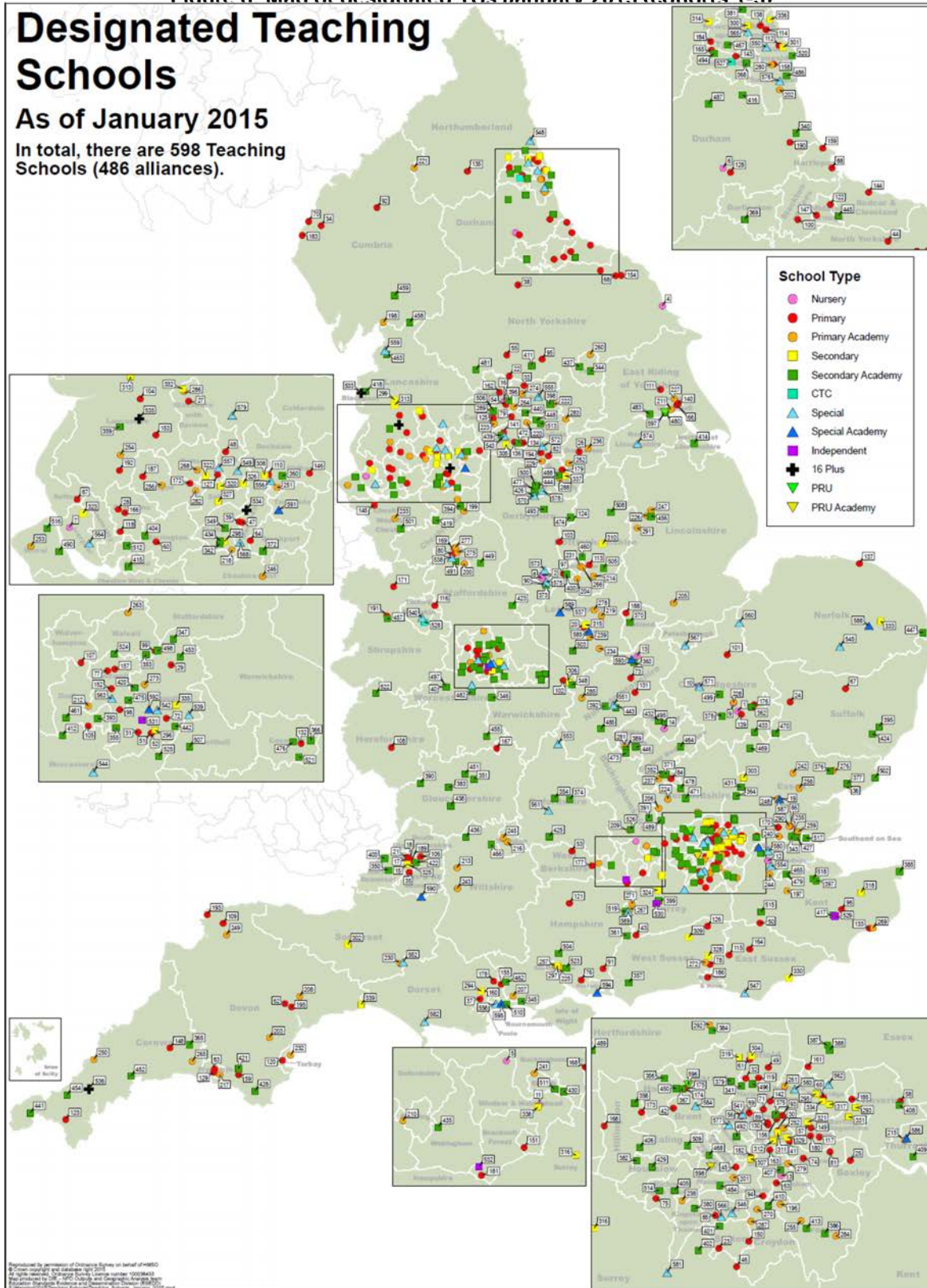
Table 9: Comparison of 'outstanding' teaching schools, 'outstanding' schools and all schools by region (2012-2014)[27]

Region	Outstanding schools (OS) 2012	Teaching Schools 2012		Outstanding schools (OS) 2013	Teaching Schools 2013		Outstanding schools (OS) 2014	Teaching Schools 2014		Total No. of schools 2014
	No.	No.	% of OS	No.	No.	% of OS	No.	No.	% of OS	
East Midlands	348	14	4%	354	24	7%	330	47	14%	2,097
East of England	496	19	4%	501	38	8%	424	66	16%	2,629
London	673	33	**5%**	705	62	**9%**	675	99	15%	2,617
North East	244	12	**5%**	258	20	8%	250	39	16%	1,204
North West	722	22	**3%**	764	45	**6%**	686	76	**11%**	3,275
South East	689	27	4%	704	47	7%	618	75	12%	3,469
South West	479	17	4%	496	28	**6%**	412	53	13%	2,395
West Midlands	410	22	**5%**	438	38	**9%**	404	67	17%	2,367
Yorkshire and the Humber	376	17	**5%**	389	31	8%	339	65	**19%**	2,319
Total	**4,437**	**183**	**Average 4.3%**	**4609**	**333**	**Average 7.6%**	**4,138**	**587**	**Average 14.8%**	**22,472**

Teaching school alliances

Figures 9 and 10 show all nine regions had a similar level of reach (proportion of schools in the region which were members of an alliance) in 2012 and 2014. In 2012 the North East (together with South East) had the highest reach at 11%. London had a more modest 9% of schools participating in the teaching schools initiative, despite having a proportionally high number of alliances. In 2014 both regions had relatively high participation in TSAs and relatively high proportions of Ofsted 'outstanding' schools.

It is worth noting that although London has the highest proportion of Ofsted 'outstanding' schools and the highest proportion of teaching schools (see above reference to 4%), the proportion of schools participating in TSAs in London has not been the highest over time. Case studies in this evaluation show that teaching school alliances may operate outside the locality and regional boundaries. Nonetheless, evidence here suggests that larger numbers of alliances do not necessarily relate to higher reach in the region.

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[27] Source: TSA database 2012, 2013 and 2014. The data for each year represents a snapshot at a given point in time.

The North West has relatively low TSA participation over time (lowest in 2014) but relatively high proportions of 'outstanding' schools. In contrast, Yorkshire and the Humber has the lowest proportions of Ofsted 'outstanding' schools but relatively high TSA participation over time (highest in 2014). This pattern is consistent with that of the geographical participation of *teaching schools* outlined above.

Figure 9: TSA reach at regional level (2012)[28]

Alliances	
11	North East — 11%
28	South East — 11%
24	West Midlands — 10%
16	Yorkshire and the Humber — 10%
16	South West — 10%
18	East Midlands — 9%
31	London — 9%
26	North West — 9%
18	East of England — 8%

Number of schools

Teaching School Strategic Partner - School Alliance Member Not Engaged

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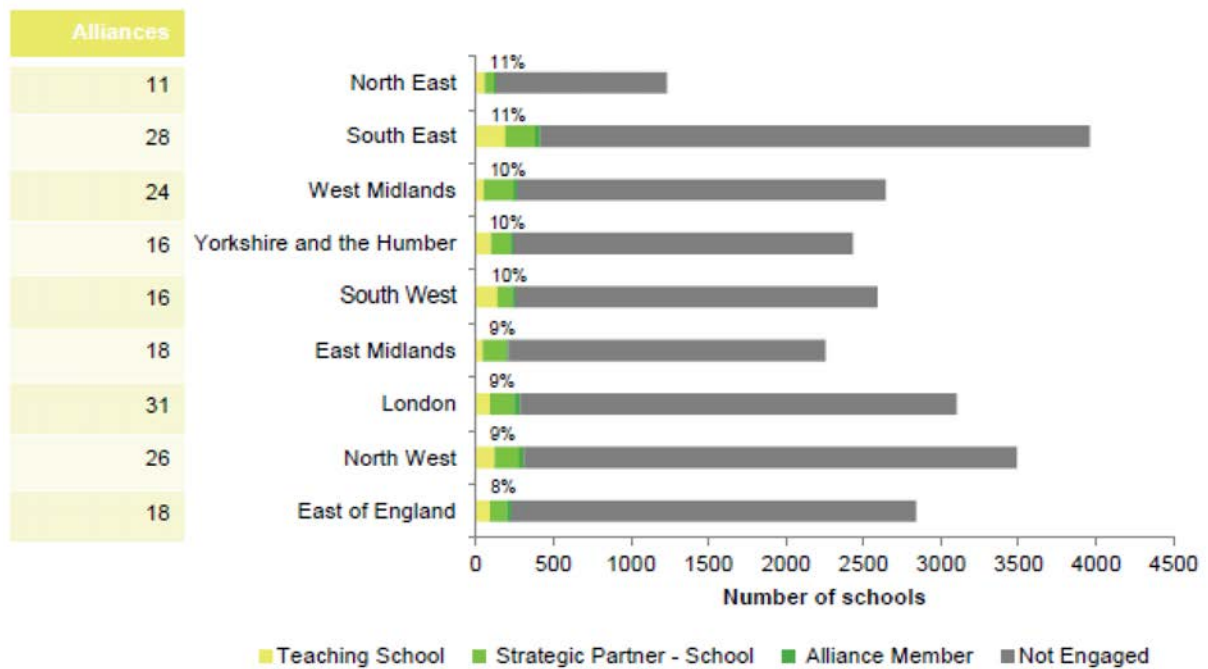
28 Figures exclude further education colleges.

Figure 10: Distribution of Ofsted categories and proportion of schools engaged in TSAs within each region (2014)
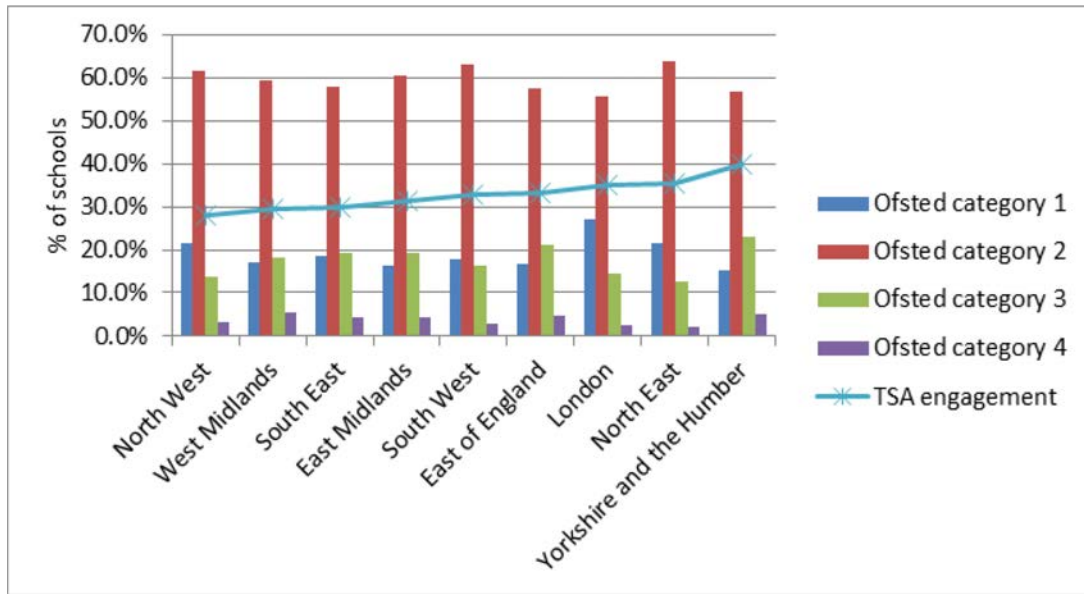
- **At local authority level**

The proportion of schools in each local authority that are engaged in the Teaching Schools initiative varies considerably. From 2012 to 2014 it remains the case that distribution is not even across the country. Appendix 4 shows participation across each local authority area in 2014. Key observations of pattern of participation are as follows.

Teaching schools[29]

- The proportion of teaching schools in each local authority area ranges from 0% to 10% (excluding City of London and Isles of Scilly which only have one school each), with the average being 3%.

  - The five local authority areas that have the highest proportions of teaching schools are: Rutland (10%), Hackney (9%), Harrow (8%), Thurrock (7%) and Sandwell (7%).

  - There are no teaching schools in Kensington and Chelsea, and Knowsley, where there are 40 schools (22 with Ofsted 'outstanding' rating) and 63 schools (12 with Ofsted 'outstanding' rating) respectively.

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[29] Data source: TSA database 2012, 2013 and 2014. The data presented here is correct as of January 2015.

- The number of teaching schools in relation to the number of 'outstanding' schools in each local authority varies considerably, with the average being 17%.

    o In four local authority areas, at least half of their 'outstanding' schools are teaching schools. These are: Thurrock (n=4, 67% of all 'outstanding' schools; 7% of all schools); Barking and Dagenham (n=3, 60% of all 'outstanding' schools; 5% of all schools); Kingston upon Hull (n=6, 55% of all 'outstanding' schools; 6% of all schools); Blackpool (n=1, 50% of all 'outstanding' schools; but only 2% of all schools)[30].

    o In another eight local authorities, at least a third of their 'outstanding' schools are teaching schools: Hartlepool (n=2, 40%; 5% of all schools); Cambridgeshire (n=14, 40%; 5% of all schools); Sandwell (n=8; 38%; 7% of all schools); Rutland (n=2, 33%; 10% of all schools); Bracknell Forest (n=2, 33%; 5% of all schools); Stoke-on-Trent (n=5, 33%; 5% of all schools); Middlesbrough (n=2, 33%; 4% of all schools); Coventry (4, 33%; 3% of all schools).

    o Southwark has the lowest teaching school engagement. There is one teaching school in this area representing 3% of all 'outstanding' schools (n=33) and 1% of all schools in this area (n=108).

Teaching school alliances[31]

- The proportion of schools in each local authority area that are linked to the Teaching Schools initiative varies widely and this has been the case over the last three years (2012-14). In 2014 variations in participation in TSAs ranged from 5% to 93%, with the average being 32%.

- In 31 local authorities (out of 152) at least half of schools are members of an alliance. Amongst these, five local authorities have the highest reach with at least 80% of their schools participating in TSAs. These are: Hartlepool (93%), Torbay (89%), Isle of Wright (85%), Merton (81%), and Southend-on-Sea (80%).

- Excluding City of London and Isles of Scilly (which only have one school each), there are now only six local authority areas with less than 10% of their schools participating in TSAs: Havering (5%), Southwark (7%), Peterborough (8%), Solihull (9%), Derbyshire (9%)[32], and South Gloucestershire (9%).

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[30] It is worth noting that there are only two 'outstanding' schools in Blackpool (as of January 2015).

[31] Data source: TSA database 2012, 2013 and 2014. The data presented here is correct as of January 2015.

[32] It is worth noting that Derbyshire, which has just above average proportions of Ofsted category three and four schools, all five of its teaching schools were designated in the most recent cohorts (4 and 5 in 2014).

- Although the vast majority of local authorities have seen growth in overall numbers of schools participating from 2013 to 2014 (n=135, ranging from 1% to 54%), there has been no change in reach in four local authorities and eleven have seen a decrease in TSA school numbers. It is worth noting that some of the significant increase in reach may be related to the designation of cohort 4 teaching schools in April 2014 and that this will be further expanded as a result of more designations in 2015.

  o In Hartlepool and Waltham Forest, the proportion of schools that are members of a TSA has increased more than 50%, from 39% to 93% and 26% to 77% respectively. There are two teaching schools in each LA area but the total number of schools in Waltham Forest (n=81) is twice as many as that in Hartlepool (n=41), suggesting that the two teaching schools in the former LA have linked with a greater number of schools in their work.

  o The proportion of schools in another three local authority areas which are a member of an alliance has increased more than 40% from 2013 to 2014. These are St. Helens (3 teaching schools; from 8% to 57%), Poole (1 teaching school; from 30% to 77%) and East Riding of Yorkshire which is a rural LA with relatively high proportions of schools in Ofsted category of 3 and 4 (2 teaching schools; from 11% to 57%).

  o In Middlesbrough, which is in the top ten LAs nationally for proportions of children eligible for Free School Meals[33], reach of teaching school alliances has increased from 39% in 2013 to 47% in 2014.

  o Amongst the eleven LAs where TSA reach has decreased, the change has been only marginal (1% to 2%) in five areas: Bath and North East Somerset (41% to 40%), Portsmouth (58% to 56%), North Somerset (16% to 14%), Norfolk (16% to 14%) and Solihull (11% to 9%). Both Leicester and Southampton have seen a decrease of 16%, but from 79% to 63% in Southampton and 39% to 23% in Leicester. Lambeth has the greatest decrease of 57% - from 75% to 18%. There are 3 teaching schools in this area (3% of all 92 schools), representing 11% of 'outstanding' schools (n=27).

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[33] 30%

(6) Participation by level of deprivation (as measured by percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals)[34]

Schools with a high proportion of pupils eligible for and receiving free school meals are slightly over-represented in TSA participating schools in comparison to non-TSA schools, and this is particularly marked for 'alliance members'. The latest data in October 2014 shows that 53% of TSA schools are located in the upper two quartiles compared to 49% of non-TSA schools (see Figure 11 below). Such consistent differences over time may be associated with the higher concentrations of teaching schools in urban areas, and indeed the birth of the concept in inner city areas such as London, Manchester and the Black Country.

Figure 12 shows that although teaching schools generally have lower than average levels of FSM, they are more likely to fall into the upper quartiles than Ofsted 'outstanding' schools. The chart also reveals that the pupil intake of 39% of 'outstanding' schools, compared to slightly less than a third of teaching schools (32%), represents the lowest level of deprivation (as measured by percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals).

Table 10 shows that there are also variations in participation across school phase. Special teaching schools are almost all in the top two quartiles for FSM (97%). In contrast, secondary teaching schools are much less likely to be (29%).

Figure 11: Distribution of schools across FSM quartile[35] for each teaching school role
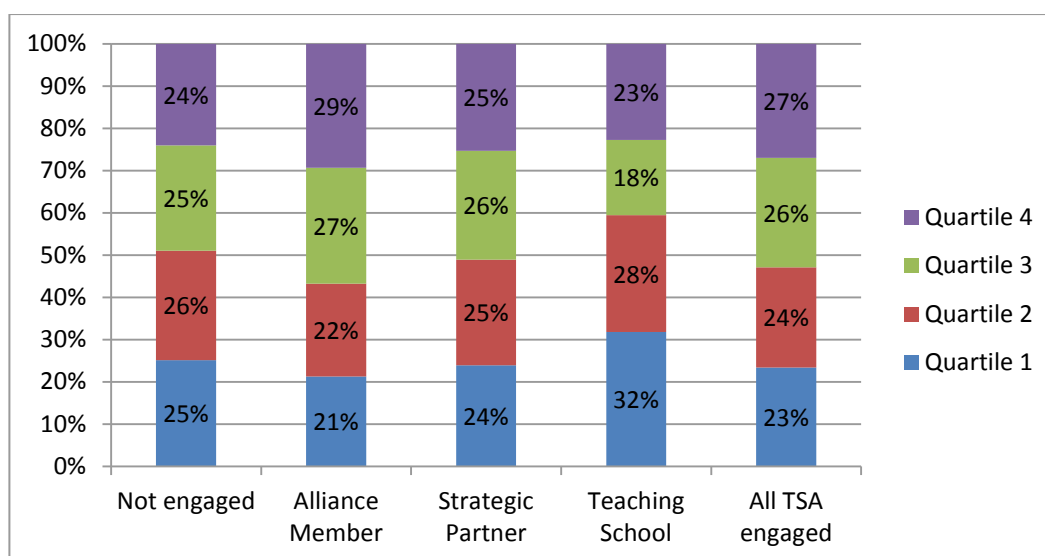
Source: TSA database 2014

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[34] FSM data presented here is the Edubase FSM variable (extracted October 2014). All FSM analysis excludes nursery, post-16, alternative provision, independent schools and other schools with no valid data.

[35] FSM quartiles derived across all phases using FSM variable from Edubase 2014 with exclusions noted above. Proportionally schools in quartile 1 have the fewest children eligible for free school meals.

Figure 12: Distribution of teaching schools and all outstanding schools across FSM quartiles [36]
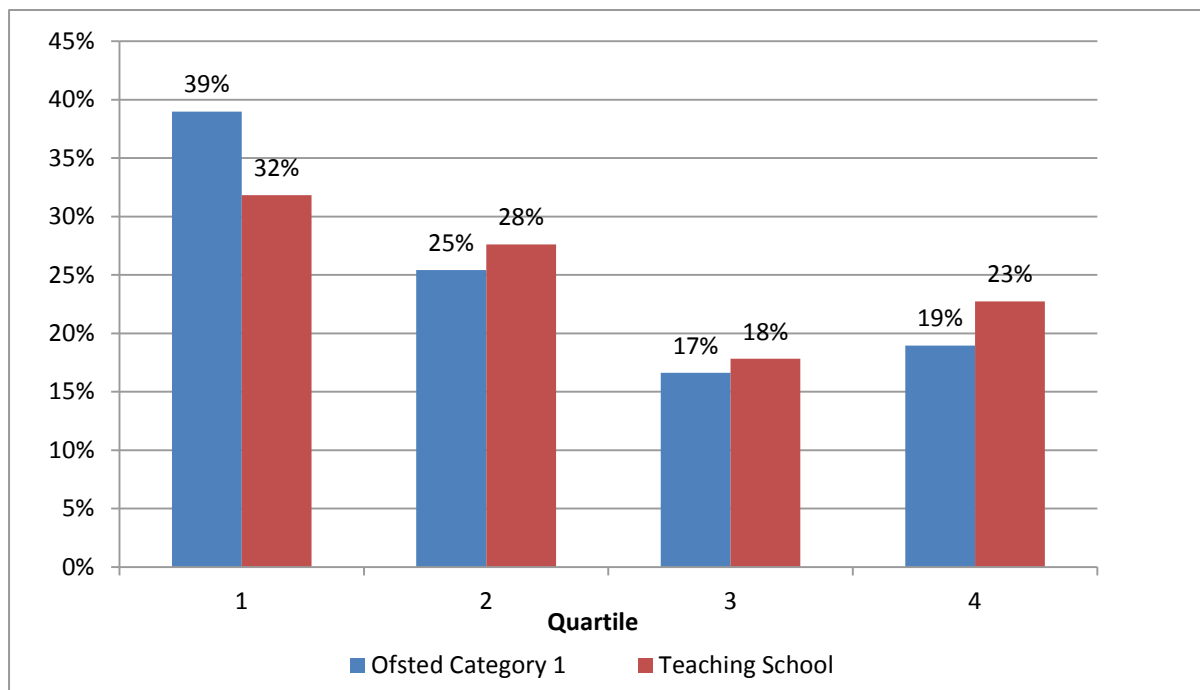
Table 10: Proportion of teaching schools in FSM quartiles by phase

	Quartile 1	Quartile 2	Quartile 3	Quartile 4	
Primary	34%	27%	19%	20%	100%
Secondary	35%	35%	17%	12%	100%
Special	3%	0%	16%	81%	100%
Total	32%	28%	18%	23%	100%

Participation by Ofsted performance

The latest statistics show that the Ofsted performance of teaching school alliances is similar across cohorts 1-3 and that it is broadly in line with the national average of performance (Figure 13). However, compared with the overall performance of schools that are not participating in TSAs, all three cohorts of teaching school alliances have a slightly higher proportion of 'outstanding' schools.

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[36] Ofsted figures do not include Further Education (FE) which do not have an Ofsted rating attached on the database.

Figure 13: Breakdown of Ofsted category for each cohort (as of October 2014)
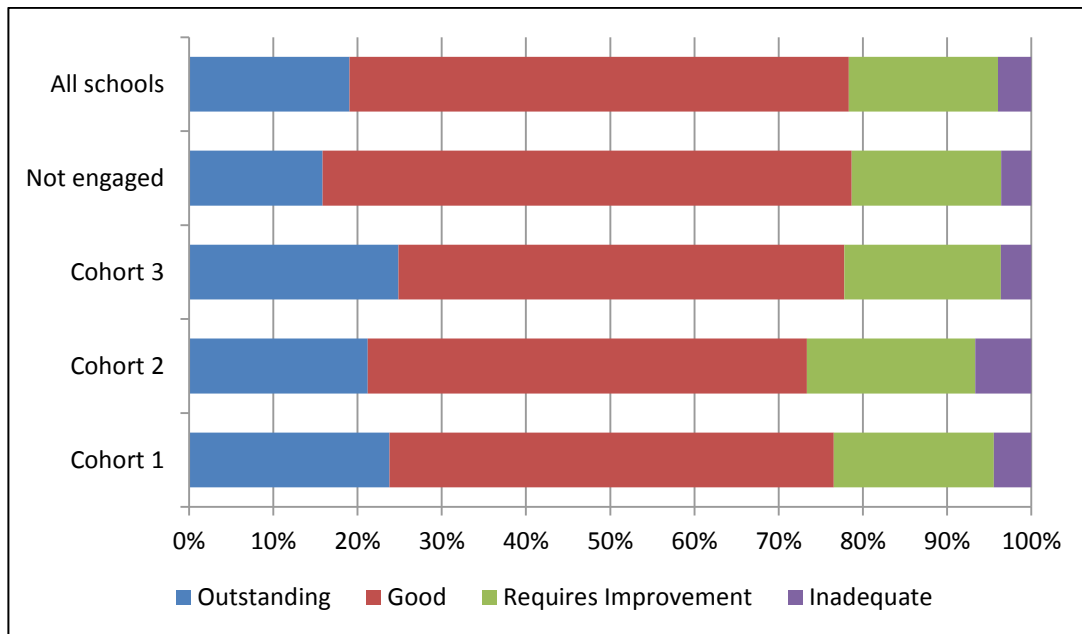
In terms of overall Ofsted performance by TSA role, Figure 14 shows that strategic partners have a higher proportion of 'good' and 'outstanding' schools compared with the overall performance of all schools in England. It also shows that proportionally more alliance members are in Ofsted categories 3 and 4 compared with the overall schools' population. As expected, almost all (96%) teaching schools have an Ofsted 'outstanding' judgement grade[37].

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[37] As stated above, as of October 2014, 22 teaching schools (4%) were judged by Ofsted as 'Good'. This number may be based on the timing of schools that are pending a review of designation, or have been through a review and been approved to retain their Teaching School designation based on their evidence of impact.

Figure 14: Ofsted breakdown by teaching school role (as of October 2014)
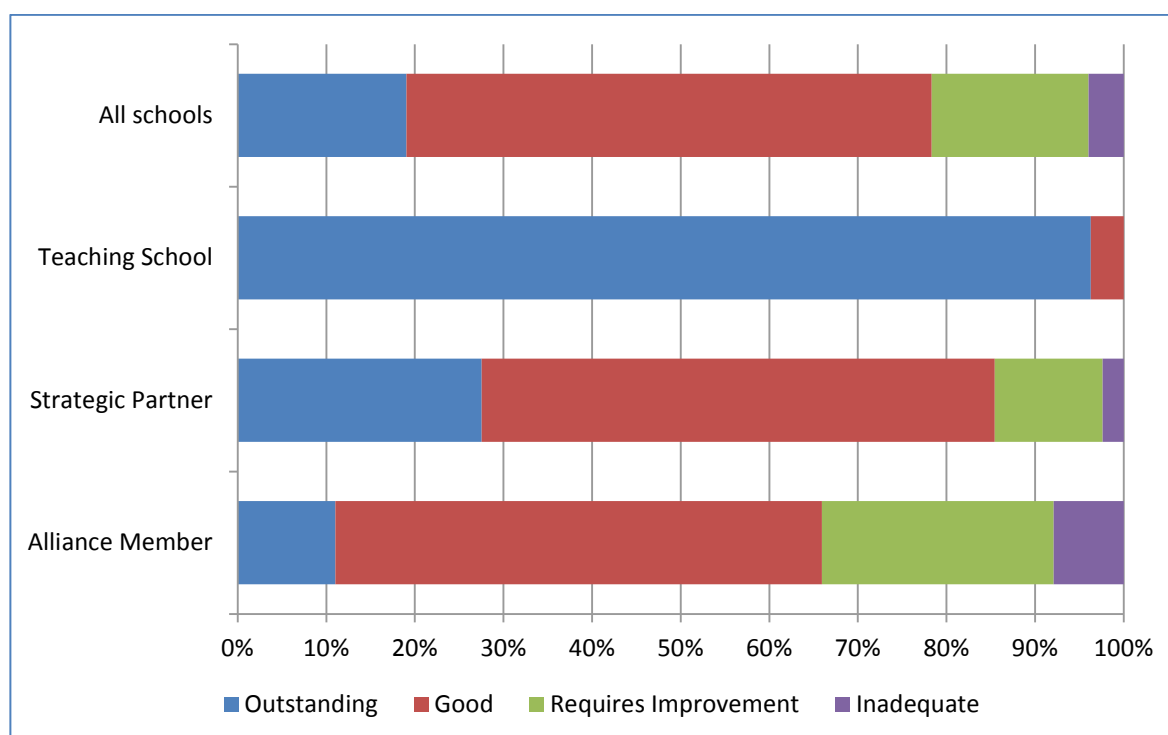
Source: TSA database 2014

NOTE: excludes FE, which doesn't have Ofsted rating on the TSA database

(8)   Participation by National Leaders of Education[38] and Multi-Academy Trusts

As of November 2012, 80.5% of teaching schools (n=153) were also national support schools[39]. This pattern has been relatively consistent over time: in October 2014, almost four fifths of teaching schools were also national support schools. Moreover, the vast majority of cohorts 1-3 teaching school alliances (all except 19) have at least one NLE amongst their strategic partners and members. In the current population of NLE schools, 80% are part of a TSA.

According to the academy data supplied by the DfE in December 2014, there are 299 multi-academy trusts (MATs) that have 3 or more schools. Close to half (46%) of this group of MAT schools (n=1,837) are linked with TSAs, either as teaching schools, strategic partners or alliance members. Table 11 shows that this group of MAT schools is more likely to be linked with TSAs compared to all schools overall, especially for primaries and special schools. Moreover, teaching schools themselves

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[38] NLE data is correct in October 2014.

[39] Teaching schools may choose to become National Support Schools (NSSs) on designation. We do not have the data to clarify how many teaching schools of the 80% were NSSs before their designation.

are also more likely to be in this group of MATs: 16% (n=96) of the 599 state maintained teaching schools, compared with 8% (n=1,837) of all state maintained schools, are MAT schools.

Table 11: Proportion of MATs that are participating by phase

	Primary	Secondary	Special	Grand Total
MATs that are participating in TSAs	40%	58%	58%	**46%**
All schools that are participating in TSAs	27%	56%	42%	**32%**

Source: TSA database 2014

2.3 Summary

Since the first cohort of teaching schools was designated in September 2011, there have been a further six rounds of applications. In February 2015, the designation of 61 cohort 6 teaching schools brought the total number of teaching schools to 659. Thus, the DfE's target of designating 600 teaching schools by 2015 has now been effectively reached. By October 2015, there are 692 teaching schools representing 538 teaching school alliances. As for October 2014, at least 7,144 schools were linked with teaching schools, representing 32% of all maintained schools in England.

The data presented in this section have explored the characteristics of schools that are participating in TSAs. Analyses show that there are differences in characteristics, including geographical reach and school phase.

- Secondary and academy schools are overrepresented among teaching schools compared with primary and special schools.

- Although there are no considerable variations in terms of teaching school representation at regional level, there is a clear tendency that low reach areas are generally away from major cities.

- There are also considerable variations at the local authority level. Analyses show that some local authorities have none or low teaching school representation (e.g. Kensington, Chelsea and Southwark) despite the existence of relatively high numbers of 'outstanding' schools in these areas. In other areas, such as Blackpool, although the number of teaching schools is seemingly low, proportionally the number of schools with 'outstanding' Ofsted rating is also relatively low.

There is evidence which suggests that engagement in the range of teaching school activities has a wider meaning than alliance membership – which is itself fluid and subject to change as TSAs grow and mature. In light of this evidence, it is important to recognise that participation (being named as a school with a link) is not the same as being engaged. This has implications for interpreting the findings on TSA partnership development, the delivery of the Big 6 and the impact of the teaching school work on improvement. Moreover, the considerable variations in teaching school representation across local authorities, urban-rural areas and areas of different levels of deprivation may also have important implications for teacher supply and retention, especially in low reach areas.

Part 2: The Evolution and Development of the Teaching School Programme in Practice

The purpose of Part 2 is to provide detailed, in-depth analyses of a range of key issues relating to the effective working of teaching schools and their alliances. These analyses draw from the case studies of 18 cohorts 1-2 teaching school alliances and 8 cohort 3 alliances, as well as the national survey of senior leaders of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools. Particular focus is placed upon

- the leadership and governance of teaching schools and their alliances

- the principles of effective partnership development and how these principles are enacted over time

- the ways in which the Big 6 activities are delivered within and across teaching school alliances, and the perceived achievements and challenges

By examining the experiences of the frontline leaders of this new policy initiative, Part 2 provides an evidence-based discussion on **how** the initiative has evolved and matured in substantial ways, **to what extent** it has worked (or not worked) effectively, and **why** it remains an evolving entity.

Figure 15 below describes the framework used to organise and underpin the discussion in each of the four constituent sections. It considers the relationships between system leadership qualities and skills and the structural, cultural and relational mechanisms that system leaders develop to enable effective delivery of the teaching school activity.

Figure 15: Framework of the building blocks of Part 2

**Delivery of the
Teaching School
Activity**

**System
Leadership**

**Developing
structural & cultural
mechanisms in TSA**

**Developing
relational
mechanisms in
TSA**
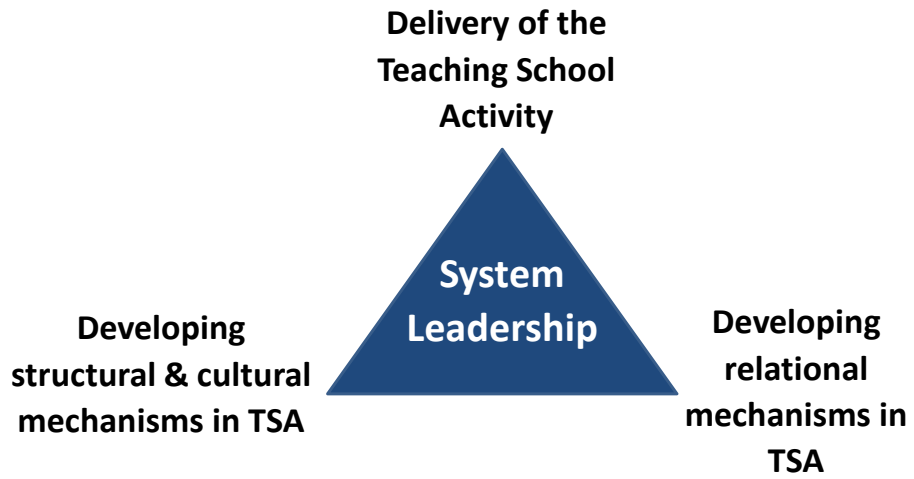
3.   Developing Structures to Lead

3.1   Governance and operational management

3.1.1 Growth and development

Almost all the 26 case study teaching school alliances (with the exception of 2) in this evaluation had established layered governance structures described by Rea & Hill in their work for the NCTL which is included in the National Teaching Schools Handbook (2012).

Our case studies suggest that the most common form involves a single core **steering group** (e.g. Strategic Board, Governing Board or Executive Group) that provides the overall strategic direction and decision making for the TSA, supported by a **strategic group** that reports to the steering group and a small number of **operational working groups** responsible for specific streams of work relating to the six core areas of responsibility for teaching schools.

Specific governance and accountability arrangements may vary across alliances and most have experienced considerable changes over time. Our three annual visits to the 18 cohorts 1-2 teaching school alliances suggest that strategic partner institutions (including schools and HEIs), local authorities, and in some cases, neighbouring teaching school alliances, are now more likely to have greater representation and leadership roles in alliance governance.

Nonetheless, irrespective of these changes, the governance of the TSA development is still primarily driven by the teaching schools in all 26 case study teaching school alliances.

The governance group

The large majority of the teaching school alliances in this evaluation are governed by an overarching steering group that oversees the teaching school development.

For example, in 12 case studies[40] a strategy group exercises overall accountability for the work of the Alliance. This group comprises senior leaders and governors, primarily of the lead teaching schools, including the headteachers, the teaching school managers (or directors of teaching schools), chair of governors and occasionally the business manager as and when needed. The participation of the

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[40] everyonelearning@, Buckingham, Colmore Partnership, Ebor, Hallam, Odyssey, Partnership, Portswood, Salop, South Lakes, and Transform TSAs and the Cambridge Teaching School Network

members of the governing body was perceived to have made an important contribution to the strategic and operational management of the alliances' work.

The commonality of this form of governance is also supported by the survey results. The vast majority (n=114, 89%) of senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs reported agreement that 'senior leaders and governors of the lead teaching school(s) are part of the governance body for our TSA', with more than one in three (n=49, 38%) in strong agreement (Appendix 5).

In some cases[41], the governing body of lead teaching schools monitors the progress of TSAs through reporting mechanisms which enable them to keep abreast of TSA development.

Denbigh TSA and North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership provide examples of arrangements where governors form a formal, centralised governing body for the TSA. The Manchester TSA is also in the process of developing a governance model which has a governor representative from each of the member schools 'so that we could actually see the teaching school in operation' (Executive Headteacher). Their long-term plan is to have an overarching teaching school governing body rather than individual representation from member schools.

In the Denbigh TSA, participation involves a subset of governors of the governing body of the teaching school:

Denbigh TSA Governance Structure

- Chairs Committee of the **Governing body** of the teaching school (responsible for formal accountability of the TSA) and working party within the Finance and Buildings Committee who examine the teaching school and its finances;
- **Strategic group** comprising one representative from each Strategic Partner and two from the teaching school, chaired by director of teaching school (responsible for strategic direction of teaching school)
- **Director of teaching school** (responsible for operational management)
- **Personnel** at three secondary strategic partners (responsible for delivery and implementation of the 'Big Six')

The North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership, led by Everton Nursery and Family Centre (a cohort 3 teaching school), is governed by an alliance committee of governors that consists of governing body representatives from not only the teaching school but also four strategic members of the alliance. It is believed that such

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[41] Examples including Bishop Rawstorne, Colmore, Cultivus, Denbigh, George Spencer, Lincolnshire, Manchester, ShiNE and West London TSAs

arrangements are able to facilitate transparency across the group with regard to the work specific to the teaching school.

> The Chair of Governors of the teaching school explains
>> I felt very strongly that if Ofsted came into any of the member schools there could be a challenge to any of the governors if they were not aware of what their teachers and leaders were doing and why they were doing it … with the emphasis on attainment in the new Ofsted framework and the issue of accountability, I felt governors had to be able to say "this Teaching School is impacting on this school in this way".
>
> The governance committee meet regularly where the headteacher of the Teaching School provides them with an overview of current activity across the alliance and allows them to carefully monitor what is happening on the ground in each school and assess the impact of this activity.

We found in the evaluation that although the overarching structure and role of TSA governance appears to be relatively stable over time, as teaching school alliances develop, broaden and deepen their activities, they bring about changes in personnel in the governance group as a result of their evaluation of the functioning effectiveness of their governance arrangements.

> The alliance is led by Notre Dame High School, a large 11-18 Catholic converter academy in Sheffield which was designated as a cohort 1 teaching school in September 2011. When the governance group was initially formed, there were three members who did not represent a faith organisation. Two years later, although the church remained a key partner, it was slightly less dominant as the governance group became more inclusive with representation from a greater number of non-faith primary, secondary and community schools. Moreover, the Barnsley Local Authority was no longer a member of the Governance Group. Rather, the teaching school joined the Barnsley Challenge Strategic Board to support schools in the locality and make a wider impact on improvement.

Strategic and operational management

For the majority of case study teaching school alliances, major changes in the strategic and operational management of TSA development are demonstrated through the increased representation and involvement of strategic partner schools, local authorities, HEI partners, and in a small number of cases, neighbouring TSAs. This is a recognition that they need to play to the distinctive and complementary strengths of their strategic partners in their offers to schools. Efforts have also been made to reduce the bureaucracy, so that TSAs have greater flexibility and capacity to respond more efficiently to development needs.

In a small number of case studies, the change of senior leadership of the teaching school has led to a reshuffle of the strategic and operational arrangements of the TSA. Such change reflects the new leadership beliefs of what their alliances stand for. A clear tendency in all the cases is to create rigorous accountability structures and processes that enable the TSA development to build on and benefit from the collective capacity, expertise and commitment from their strategic partner schools and institutions.

The new headteacher took over the leadership of the Shiremoor Primary School one year after the school was designated as a cohort 1 teaching school. The alliance changed its name from Shiremoor TSA to ShiNE TSA to reflect the new ethos that *'through schools helping and supporting each other, we have the expertise to offer brilliant teaching and learning to all our young people' (*TSA website). Strategic and operational decisions about the TSA development are jointly made by headteachers of alliance partner schools. Working groups are created to focus on different strands of the teaching school activity and each is led by senior leaders from different partner schools. A representative from the North Tyneside Authority is also involved in the decision-making process for the TSA. Their involvement is seen as an important strategic move which enables the alliance to closely align their activities with the provision of school improvement support within the region.

These changes have benefited from the deepening of trust between lead teaching schools and their strategic partners. This provides an important contributory factor to the effective strategic functioning and operational development of teaching school alliances.

The changes also reflect senior leaders' clearer and more mature understanding of the identity of their alliances and the need for them to invest in and create broader collective and collaborative intellectual and social capital within and beyond their alliances (e.g. with neighbouring teaching school alliances and the locale). More evidence on the social, organisational and partnership conditions for governance changes will be presented later in this report (section 4).

3.1.2 Challenges

Governance structure of TSAs interacting with that of multi-academy trusts (MATs)

An important change identified in the second and third years of this evaluation was that the development of multi-academy trusts was overlapping more closely with the development of teaching school alliances. This can be seen in 12 case study teaching schools[42].

There are overlaps between the 'harder' governance structures of MATs and the relatively 'softer' (especially in terms of accountability arrangements and access to resources) and more ad hoc layered governance and strategic and operational arrangements of TSAs. For example,

Elmridge Primary School was designated as a cohort 1 teaching school in September 2011[43]. Elmridge gained its academy status on 1 September 2012 and sponsored Acre Hall Primary School to become an academy on 1 July 2013. Both governing bodies joined together and formed a governing committee for The Dunham Trust. With support of the LA, the Trust also sponsored a free school for children with special educational needs, due to open September 2015. The Elmridge Local Board – to which the executive headteacher of Elmridge Teaching School reports the progress of the teaching school work – is one of the three local boards that are accountable to the 5 Directors of the Dunham Trust (Figure 16).

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[42] Cultivus, Denbigh, Ebor, everyonelearning@, George Spencer, Lincolnshire, Norwich, Partnership, Portswood, Transform and West Herts TSAs and Cambridge Teaching School Network

[43] Cultivus TSA is a multiple alliance jointly led by Elmridge Primary School and St Chad's Primary School.

Figure 16: Governance structure of The Dunham Multi-Academy Trust
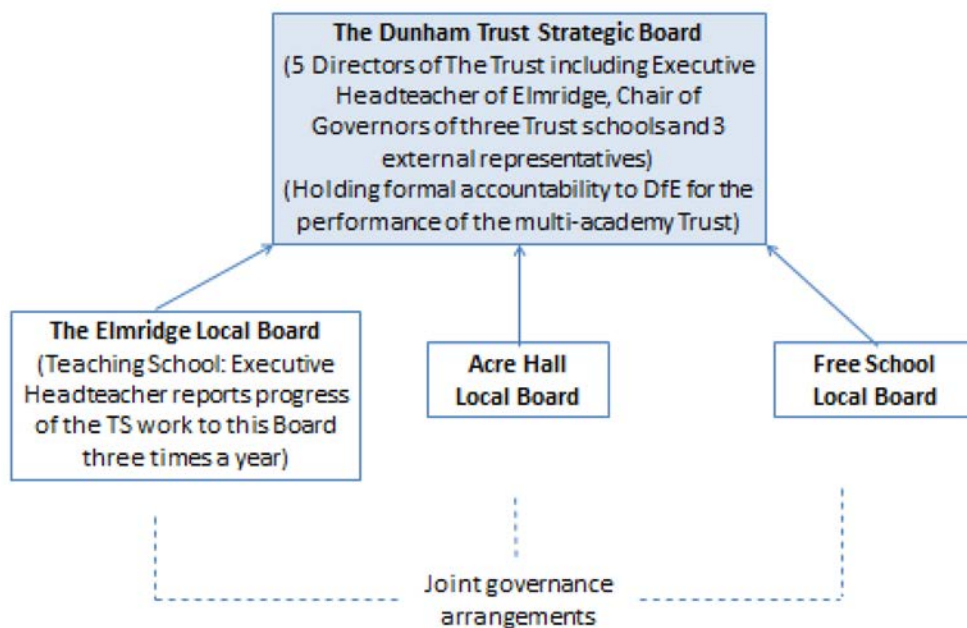
In some cases, however, there has been a lack of clarity about the benefits (or disadvantages) of interaction, especially in the early life of the MAT.

The Cambridge Teaching Schools Network (CTSN) comprises Comberton Village College (cohort 1 teaching school), the Cambridge All-Through TSA (jointly led by three cohort 2 teaching schools: Histon and Impington Junior School, Parkside Federation, and Swavesey Village College) and Saffron Walden County High School (cohort 3 teaching school).

A considerable number of partner schools in CTSN, including schools that have been supported, are part of a multi-academy trust or federation with one of the five teaching schools. A governor at Histon and Impington Junior School did not feel that it was necessary to have individual school governors on the steering group of the CTSN, not least 'because the Histon and Impington Junior School's governors are still [in April 2014] finding their way through the governance of the one-year-old MAT'.

In the case of the West Herts TSA (WHTSP), one strategic partner is forming their own MAT and intends to expand this. While this had not caused any problems for the alliance as yet, it remains unclear how the development of these other governance arrangements could affect the functioning of the alliance. Evidence from other case

studies seems to suggest that the West Herts' experience is not unique. MATs could peel away from the alliances, unless the latter show that they can be relevant to the agendas of the MATs. More discussion on issues related to the tensions and benefits of the overlapping development of teaching school alliances and MATs can be found in section 9.3.

Internal accountability

Externally, the teaching schools of all 26 case studies are accountable for the use made of the funding they receive, and for reporting to the NCTL. With regard to internal accountability, almost all have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for groups at different levels. These are often supported by formal Memoranda of Understanding and/or Partnership Agreements. However, case study teaching schools (especially those with experience of different governance structures) felt that accountability mechanisms tended to be on the 'looser' end of a continuum compared to the 'tighter' arrangements in MATs. The Steering Groups, for example, are perceived by many case study alliances to have an important **coordinating function** within alliances, but although most take reports on progress there is *'no true holding to account'* as yet. This has led a Director of Teaching School to comment in the survey: *'The lack of accountability that we can enforce over other schools means that we can at best act as consultants.'*

The George Spencer TSA is led by George Spencer Academy (GSA), a cohort 1 teaching school. When talking about the nature of the internal accountability within an alliance, senior leaders felt that if the Government wishes to hold the teaching school accountable for the performance of the alliance schools, then efforts should be made to incentivise the membership of teaching school alliances so that the structure and resources are in place to ensure that the teaching school has the '*power'* to drive standards and improvement across their alliances. One of the major challenges that GSA faces is that schools that are in most need of support may not actively seek support. Even if they do, the teaching school cannot ensure that advice has been followed up effectively: *'We can guide. We can recommend. We can even offer to come in to support and follow up. But at the end of the day, we can't hold anybody to account and we act as consultants really'* (Head of Alliance). Her view on the nature of the partnership between alliance schools is shared by the Executive Principal of GSA:

> 'You come together as a teaching school alliance for more than just improving the results. You come together to share best practice. Ultimately, yes, you trust that it is going to have an impact on the results. But it is more than that. It is about learning from each other. It is about doing joint practice development and doing research together and things like that across the schools and being there for different purposes. … It [teaching school alliance] is a network for support and challenge but without the formal structure of accountability.'
>
> Executive Principal

In the national survey of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools, 84% of senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs agreed that it is important that we establish a mechanism which holds all schools to account for their performance in our TSA with more than 1 in 4 having expressed strong agreement (27%). However, the vast majority (64%) felt that establishing a mechanism which holds all schools to account for their performance remains an ongoing challenge in their TSA (Appendix 5).

Concerns with accountability are supported by the comments shared by responses to the open question in the survey. One indicative excerpt is shared below:

> The drive to raise all teaching to good or better within the Alliance provides challenge where leadership within [alliance] schools is not robust and the Teaching Alliance does not have the power to deal with this.

External support and challenge

The large majority of our case study teaching school alliances recognise that the lack of external challenge on the senior governance body of the TSA is a weakness in governance. They agree that the body would benefit from the input of external members who have a wide range of experience and expertise within and outside education. They will be able to provide impartial challenges to the strategic and operational development of the teaching school work.

One of the few exceptions in this evaluation is the Cultivus TSA (see Figure 16). The five Directors of the Dunham Trust represent professional backgrounds of education, law, business and finance. The executive headteacher of Elmridge Teaching School is one of the five directors who, together with Chair of the Directors, also sits on the Elmridge Primary Local Board and reports to the Board about the development of the teaching school work. However, it is important to acknowledge that this governance group was especially set up for the Trust, rather than for the teaching school alliance.

3.2 Leadership of teaching school alliances

3.2.1 Growth and development

Vision and rationale to lead

In line with Matthews and Berwick's observation that the leadership of teaching school alliances is 'the latest manifestation of system leadership' (2013: 17), we have also found in our evaluation that all senior leaders of teaching school alliances (including headteachers of teaching schools as well as TSA leads) articulate a strong **altruistic mission** and a commitment to make a difference to the learning and life chances of *all* children. Such commitment and moral purpose played a key role in their decision to lead a teaching school, despite the recognition that building and leading a teaching school alliance is proven to be 'sheer hard work'.

As we have reported in our interim report, becoming a teaching school was perceived by almost all senior leaders of cohorts 1-2 case study alliances as being a '**natural progression**' from teachers' track record of school-to-school support (StSS), initial teacher training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD) work. The teaching school initiative has provided a 'formalised' structure for their previous work which enabled them to capitalise on their existing school networks and consolidate and extend the scope and depth of their existing practice and collaborative working (Gu et al., 2014).

More than half of the senior leaders reported that a commitment to **meeting local need for school improvement** was also a key driver for their decision to play a part in the teaching school initiative because 'the teaching school *is* a self-improving system; the ball's in our court' (Executive Headteacher, Transform TSA).

> The Odyssey Teaching School Alliance is led by Pate's Grammar School (PGS) in Cheltenham which was designated as a cohort 3 teaching school in September 2013. The headteacher and governors of PGS are clear that successful schools do not continue to succeed if they allow themselves to become inward-looking and complacent. They need to develop and grow, learning from best practice elsewhere. Equally, they believe, 'Schools in a strong position have a professional duty to contribute to the development of others...we believed that we had expertise we wanted and felt we ought to share with others.' Within this combination of internal school improvement and an outward-looking moral purpose, the headteacher and governors of PGS see the promotion of social mobility as one of the school's priorities. They believe that they will be better placed to contribute to this if they are more actively engaged in the wider educational community. Becoming a teaching school was, therefore, seen as an opportunity to broaden and deepen the range of contacts and collaborations that PGS have with other schools and organisations, and through these, to extend its reach and impact as the national framework for system leadership develops. (Odyssey TSA)

Variations in structures to lead

In all 26 case study teaching school alliances, TSA development is still primarily led by the accountable teaching schools. However, we have found that in a small number of case studies leadership has been increasingly distributed across strategic partner schools and/or alliance schools over the course of the evaluation. The strategy has been to devolve responsibilities for leading the work of the partnership to other schools, by having designated 'lead schools' for the Big 6 elements of the teaching school role with 'support schools' for each element.

For example, eight case studies[44] have established working groups of associated partners to organise different strands of the Big 6. These working groups, co-ordinated by the TSA Steering Group, enable the TSA to work collaboratively and more effectively across a wide range of activities.

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[44] Buckingham, Colmore, everyonelearning@, Lincolnshire, Portswood, Salop, Transform and West London TSAs.

The South Lakes TSA represents one of the few TSAs in our case studies that is centred upon a strongly established entity: the South Lakes Federation (a cohort 1 teaching school). The Federation, as a mature partnership, offers sound relationship and structural mechanisms for the establishment of the TSA. The South Lakes Federation (SLF) Board comprises the heads of the teaching school and the other nine schools in the SLF, plus representatives from an associate member of the SLF and further education and university partners. The leadership of the alliance is widely *shared* amongst the ten schools from the Federation. This is perceived to be important in defusing tensions and potential difficulties and also providing support and challenge from different perspectives.

In others,[45] key senior leaders in the teaching school or in other strategic partner schools continue to lead (or co-lead) different strands of the Big 6 without a formal working group structure.

Building, developing and sustaining leadership structure and capacity and administrative support

In all case study teaching school alliances, the expansion of the teaching school work has created new leadership development and promotion opportunities across different levels. Evidence from both case studies and the national survey of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools shows that promotions from within an alliance into senior and middle leadership roles are also seen as opportunities to **identify, nurture and retain talent** and enable **succession planning**.

Evidence from case studies

Almost all case study alliances have appointed a dedicated Director of Teaching School (or teaching school lead/manager) to manage the strategic and operational developments of the TSA. In the South Lakes TSA, for example, having such an employee of sufficient seniority, who has influence with headteachers and good local knowledge, was found to be useful in driving forward the work of the TSA.

There is strong evidence from all case studies which shows how leading and engaging in the design and provision of ITT and CPD programmes and school-to-school support (including SLE support) has helped to 'empower schools from the middle up' (Strategic Partner, everyonelearning@ TSA). The teaching school work created professional opportunities for leadership and thus was helpful to aspiring leaders in gaining leadership experience at an earlier stage.

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[45] Including Bishop Rawstorne, Cultivus, Ebor, Denbigh, George Spencer, Hallam, Norwich, Odyssey, Partnership, Sheringham and West Herts TSP TSAs.

The Executive Headteachers of the two teaching schools that lead the Cultivus TSA (Elmridge Primary School and St Chad's Primary School) believe that the development of the teaching school work it is 'one of the most fantastic CPD opportunities for the rest of the staff' (Jo, Executive Headteacher, Elmridge). Over time there is a greater level of leadership distribution in both schools. For example, Elmridge used to be led by Jo and her Deputy with support from two Assistant Heads when it gained the teaching school status. Three years on, Jo is now the Executive Head of the Durham Multi-Academy Trust and the Associate Head (previously promoted from Deputy) is the Head of School for Elmridge. The current Deputy of Elmridge, who is also the Teaching School Lead, is working with Jo to manage the development and delivery of the teaching school work as well as operational support across the multi-academy trust.

Evidence from the national survey

Although there is evidence in the survey which points to **increased leadership ability and capacity within the alliance** to meet partner schools' improvement needs (see Appendix 5 for outputs for Questions 5 and 6 as tables and graphs), it is important to note that only slightly more than half of the senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs expressed agreement with these:

- 58% reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to increased leadership ability to mobilise resources to meet the improvement needs of partner schools. About 1 in 5 (20%) reported 'very significant' changes in this area.

- 52% reported the same levels of ('a lot' and 'very significant') changes in relation to increased leadership ability to diagnose the improvement needs of partner schools within the alliance.

With regard to leadership succession, 52% reported partial change in relation to increased numbers of staff moving on to senior leadership posts within and outside the alliance. About 1 in 10 (10%) reported no change in this area.

In the qualitative component of the survey (Q9a) respondents spoke of the support between senior and middle management as having been 'the most impactful' as it provided the opportunity for middle manager to 'lead developments in partner schools' and thereby 'improving their own practice'. For example,

> Middle and senior leaders sharing most effective practice has been
> excellent. Giving opportunities for middle leaders to lead developments in
> partner schools has made them improve their own practice. Appointing

many of our middle leaders as SLEs has provided them with new skills that they are using within the TSA.

These gains in leadership capacity, however, are not without their costs and challenges. Qualitative evidence from the survey (Q9a) suggests that the strong impact on alliance schools has come at the cost of 'huge demands on system leadership' that 'there are much greater than the demands placed on school leaders.'

In order to meet the demands of the TSA development, all case study teaching schools have invested in **expanding staffing capacity** and **establishing sustained administrative support**.

All case study alliances employ an administrator and see this appointment as important in providing efficient support for the quality delivery of the teaching school work. All have a teaching school lead or director who is responsible for all the day to day development and operation of the TSA work. In addition, almost all also employ a business manager or a person in charge of business operations and marketing of the teaching school work. It is worth noting that the cost of these alone may be greater than the core grant. More discussion on issues related to TSA finances and sustainability implications can be found in section 6.

West Hertfordshire Teaching Schools Partnership (WHTSP) is centred on two 'outstanding' primary schools: Bovingdon Academy and Hammond Academy that formed part of the first cohort of teaching schools that became effective from September 2011. Both were led by experienced headteachers, Martin Mangan for Bovingdon and Gail Porterfield for Hammond. The two heads acted as joint chief executives of the partnership (and both retired in 2014).

Martin and Gail had to invest a huge amount of time and effort in getting WHTSP up and running. One year later, they were still spending at least a day a week on alliance business. Originally they were supported by a part-time administrator but this proved inadequate, and a full-time marketing and operations manager on a term-time contract has been in post since October 2012.

In more than half of the case study alliances[46], headteachers of the lead teaching schools restructured the leadership team and/or appointed additional staff to increase capacity and secure a sustained focus on the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

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[46] Including for example, Buckingham, Cultivus, Denbigh, everyonelearning@, George Spencer, Salop, Sheringham, Transform and Wandle TSAs.

Sheringham TSA is a cohort 2 alliance led by Sheringham Community Primary School. By 2014, Sheringham's SLT had been re-configured to take account of the capacity needed to lead on teaching school work. Two Assistant Headteachers were non-class based and spending time on the teaching school role as well as other whole school and leadership activity across the school. This had been partly a reaction to increased workload, and partly to ensure that there was a sustained focus on Sheringham children through teaching staff who were not also leading on teaching school activity. An ex-headteacher was recruited as a full-time Y6 class teacher. The headteacher saw this as a 'natural evolution of SLT', supporting the leadership of the teaching school and at the same time ensuring a sustained focus at Sheringham on the quality of teaching and learning.

Changes in personnel in key senior leadership positions were found to have impacted on the capacity and/or strategic direction of the teaching school alliance.

A small number of teaching schools[47] experienced change of headship over the course of this evaluation project. All but one of the new headteachers and executive headteachers were appointed from within the lead teaching school or an alliance school in our case studies who, in the view of their predecessors, were a testament to effective leadership succession planning. Our third visits in early 2015 suggest that these new leaders, driven by their own values and visions, were able to extend the past and existing achievements and lead their schools and alliances to a new phase of growth and development.

The West Hertfordshire Teaching Schools Partnership (WHTSP) is a cohort 1 TSA, initially led by Bovingdon Primary Academy and Hammond Academy. The new Executive Principal of the Aspire MAT at the heart of the alliance has made a concerted effort to reach out to other TSAs, to other schools and other groups of schools, and to the Local Authority since she took over in 2014. She has engaged local headteachers' groups – attending all local meetings to present WHTSP's purpose and asking heads what they can offer and what they need. This open approach is being taken in order to build trust. The 'West Hertfordshire' name has been retained, as it is seen as helping to counter any idea that the alliance is an elitist group of outstanding schools. It is felt that the teaching school alliance has entered **a third phase of development**, following firstly its initial setup with a primary focus on ITT and secondly the subsequent development of a MAT at the heart of the alliance and the creation of the Executive Principal role.

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[47] Including, for example, Bishop Rawstorne, Denbigh, Salop, ShiNE TSAs and Colmore and West Herts TSPs

In contrast to the WHTSP, the change of headship in the Shiremoor Primary School has led to change in the name of the alliance from Shiremoor TSA to ShiNE TSA. In 3.1.1 we provide evidence of the ways in which the alliance governance is run and managed have changed accordingly. The example below focusses on the new headteacher's leadership values and practices that have led to the structural changes in this cohort 1 alliance.

Barbara Slider, previously Deputy Headteacher of Shiremoor Primary School, became Head of School in 2012 and shadowed the then headteacher for one year before formally taking over the headship role in 2013. Barbara had a different vision about the alliance. She sees the alliance as a collective partnership where schools and institutions across all phases 'come together to share our skills, experience, talent and capacity to help improve the learning and achievement of young people' within and across the local areas. As a result, she decided to share the leadership of the teaching school work widely across the alliance partners. Different strands of the Big 6 are now jointly led by alliance schools. Strategic and operational decisions about the alliance's development are also jointly made. Barbara believes that this new way of working will help not only to share the workload and expertise, but more importantly, increase the ownership of the teaching school work and its impact amongst partner schools and institutions. Moreover, the TSA is now working closely with the Local Authority and the other four teaching school alliances in the area which has enabled it to contribute to a coordinated and coherent approach to school improvement in the region.

Bishop Rawstorne TSA provides another example of successful leadership succession planning within the teaching school. It shows how the performance of the teaching school itself has grown from strength to strength under the new leadership and how the confidence and profiles of the new leadership team have also grown as a result. The continued success of the teaching school was felt to have given the new leadership team greater credibility to lead their alliance in the next phase of development.

Bishop Rawstorne CofE Academy became a cohort 2 teaching school under the leadership of Executive Headteacher Alan Davies. In the same year Paul Cowley, previously Deputy Headteacher, took on the headteacher role. Initially he had concerns about whether his leadership profiles, especially in relation to school-to-school support, would qualify him to lead a teaching school. The school made a successful case to maintain its teaching school status after Alan's departure in 2014 and this outcome paved the way for Paul's leadership of the teaching school work.

Evidence suggests that the school is growing from strength to strength under Paul's leadership. In 2014, the Ofsted pilot inspection indicated that the school should retain its 'outstanding' status if it underwent a full section 5 inspection. In the same year, the school's Key Stage 4 results increased to 83% (5 A*-C grades including English and maths) which placed the school in the top 40% of similar schools' results and in the top 20% of all schools. They were extremely proud of the maths result with 90% of all pupils attaining grades A*-C. Paul and his senior leadership team felt that such achievements not only boosted the profile of the school within the region, but also gave him and his team greater credibility to support other schools and fellow colleagues to raise standards in the area.

Paul has made a conscious decision not to become an executive head, but is applying to become an NLE. The senior leadership team of the teaching school work was restructured in 2013 and again in 2014 in order to balance the development of the teaching school activity and the improvement of the school. Paul commented, 'We have been through a steep learning curve. In terms of the leadership of the TSA, we went through a full circle.' The Deputy Headteacher, Peter Rawlinson, who was leading the teaching school work until 2013, is now Director of the Teaching School.

Job-shares and multiple alliances

Eight of the 26 case study teaching school alliances were formed on a job-share basis whereby the teaching school bid was jointly made between two or more schools. Once designated, the central funding was shared between them. The job-share model was perceived to have provided a natural complement of skills and specialisms, and helped to create the necessary capacity required to develop and deliver the teaching school work. Some alliances have taken additional steps to guard against being seen as owned by one school. For example, in the case of the Colmore Partnership TSA (and a few others[48]), it is felt that the alliance name describes their approach to joint working.

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[48] Including, for example, Hallam, Salop, Cultivus, Transform, Ebor, everyonelearning@, Lincolnshire, West Herts, West London, and the Partnership TSAs

The Colmore Partnership Teaching School Alliance is centred on two cohort 3 teaching schools: Colmore Junior and Colmore Infant Schools. Both are led by experienced headteachers, Cheryl Millard at the Junior school and Viv Randall at the Infant school, who have a strong track record and reputation of working together in close partnerships with the local authority and other schools to raise standards in teaching and learning and make a positive impact on pupils' life chances in Birmingham. Joining force to form a teaching school alliance together was perceived by them as a natural progression and celebration of the '*great*' and close partnerships between the two heads and the two schools. Such a partnership 'gives us the confidence to laugh at ourselves, and to encourage people to relax' in an open and trusting professional culture where they support each other and learn from each other. Cheryl and Viv retired in the summer of 2015 and were replaced with one Executive Headteacher (appointed from an alliance school) to lead both schools. Thus, the decision to go with the job-share model was also a strategic one which showed their careful succession planning of senior leadership positions for both schools and for the alliance.

The experience of three other case study alliances – Cultivus, Partnership and Manchester TSAs – represent a different example of alliance leadership and partnership development. All three were awarded Teaching School status on a job-share basis initially. One year later a main development has been the successful application by both job-share schools to be designated separately as teaching schools. Their TSAs have thus become multiple alliances.

The teaching schools of all three alliances agree that starting as a job-share was still the right decision: it made for a stronger application and the schools learned much from working with each other. For Cultivus and Partnership TSAs, while they would continue to work in close collaboration, the geographical distance between the two lead schools has played a part of each growing their capacity and formalising their work with different alliances of schools and local authorities in two separate counties.

The Partnership Teaching School Alliance (TPTS) is a cohort 1 TSA. The two job-share schools jointly leading the alliance explained the benefits they had gained together. By 2014, the job-share arrangements meant that the two schools led on different aspects of the teaching school role (Fiveways on their NQT support programme and school-centred ITT; Fosse Way on School Direct placements, and the brokering and deployment of SLEs). The schools talked about the benefits of one of them having the capacity and skills to start off an initiative and then the other school taking on the project: 'the product has been better than what we could have achieved individually' and has meant 'an improved offer through collaboration' (Headteachers of the schools).

By 2015, the two schools applied for and were successfully designated as separate teaching schools. For both schools, the impetus for this was a more mature relationships with their local schools, a desire to provide and influence local responses to needs, and to respond to both Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset agendas separately: 'relocation to the heart of each locality and a greater sense of local ownership' (Fiveways TS application); 'a focus on activity in our own area will intensify and extend the impact to other schools' (Fosse Way TS application). The two teaching schools' continued commitment to work closely and maintain their strong partnership is demonstrated in their new names 'TPTS: Somerset' (led by Fiveways) and 'TPTS: B&NES' (led by Fosse Way).

The executive heads leading the Cultivus TSA felt that the multiple alliance model also provided them with a greater sense of security because if one school lost its Ofsted 'outstanding' status, the other school would still be able to lead the alliance and continue the collaborative work that they had started. This added security has been exemplified by the experience of a teaching school in the Cambridge Teaching Schools Network (CTSN), which comprised 5 'outstanding' schools in 3 alliances forming a single network and operating largely as a single unit[49]. The school was judged 'good' in its Ofsted inspection in 2014 and subsequently lost its teaching school status as a result of a review triggered by their Ofsted judgement grade. However, it is still a strategic partner school in the CTSN and contributes to the provision and development of the teaching school work.

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[49] Each teaching school alliance still needs to fulfil its own responsibility. Working in collaboration as a unit ensures a coherent approach and enables the three alliances to join up capacity and develop on a greater scale than a single alliance would otherwise have been able to do.

System leadership skills and qualities

The skills needed to be an effective leader of a teaching school alliance were perceived as being different from other system leadership roles.

In working as an executive headteacher, for example of a federation or small chain of schools, there were clear management and executive levers that could be used with tight accountability. Most headteachers in the case studies reflected that the teaching school role appeared to require more influencing, engaging, building relationships, working in partnership, potentially allowing people to take more risks.

Some also felt that negotiation skills, resilience and optimism were essential, especially when working not only with schools but a range of providers, some of whom thought they were the competition '…nothing prepares you for it' (Headteacher, Partnership TSA). Others emphasised the important qualities of managing change in a partnership and 'learning to dance on an ever moving carpet' (TSA Project Lead, everyonelearning@).

Leaders need to be 'highly organised to pin down the web of interwoven connections in the TSA' (Executive Principal, everyonelearning@ TSA), have a 'strong vision and moral purpose, sound educational philosophy and understanding and awareness of children' (TSA Project Lead). They must be 'incredibly focused, a good communicator, organised, able to juggle and react to the daily demands and be proactive to see beyond the day to day and plan towards the vision' (TSA Project Lead). … Leaders must be able to 'manage people, see the strengths and skills of individuals, build relationships, be open-minded and deal with change'. This is because there is a need for key system leaders who provide the 'vision and direction, blue skies thinking' (TSA Project Lead). The task of the TSA is thus to 'balance external demands and business with the vision and philosophy' (Headteacher).

3.2.2 Challenges

Heavy investments of time and energy

Building and leading a teaching school alliance is unanimously perceived as a worthwhile but hugely time consuming enterprise. As we have evidenced in the interim report and will also show later in this report, TSA development has the potential to open up 'exciting' and 'stimulating' capacity building opportunities at individual (micro), school (meso) and system (macro) levels.

However, to realise such potential is 'sheer hard work'. One of the most demanding, whilst at the same time most rewarding, tasks has been to build trusting relationships

and develop collaborative projects between schools and institutions. They require sustained, heavy investments of time and energy from senior leaders. In our survey almost all of the senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs (92%) reported that running the TSA on a day to day basis required a lot of resilience.

For the West Essex Teaching School Alliance, jointly led by three cohort 3 teaching schools, the strong local history of collaboration and inclusive partnerships is clearly a strength; but it is also a challenge. Securing the engagement of such a diverse range of school leaders serving a range of very different communities is difficult, not least because many of those leaders are already invested in pre-existing collaborations and partnership arrangements. The Alliance seeks to embrace this diversity, acknowledging and celebrating the work of other groups, but the Alliance's own survey indicates that so far only 33% of associated schools are regarded as having high or medium levels of engagement in the work of the Alliance.

The complexity of the work of the headteachers within teaching school alliances has also grown:

> They are leading their own school; each is also leading a multi-academy trust; they are co-leaders of a teaching school alliance that is itself a combination of three teaching schools; and one is a member of the Teaching Schools Council for this region
>
> Principal, Cambridge Teaching School Network

The challenge of running a school and a teaching school at the same time was widely shared by senior leaders of teaching school alliances in this evaluation. For example, the headteacher of the Manchester Teaching School commented:

> I had been doing two or three full-time jobs at once leading 3 schools and being called upon by the Teaching School Council to help establish new teaching school alliances, was just not sustainable for much longer.'

The headteacher leading the North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership expressed a similar view:

'From my original conception of the teaching school and what it would involve to where we are now, it involves a huge amount of my own work … while the other professional leads have taken on key roles, there has been someone who steers it and keeps the teaching school on track and that usually takes up between 1-2 days of my time each week and sometimes the same for my deputy headteacher so we've had to look at that in terms of our capacity as a nursery school.'

In TSAs led by small urban and/or rural teaching schools, the capacity to carry out the teaching school leadership roles is found to be more limited than in a large teaching school carrying out the same role[50]. For example, in the Bristol Early Years Teaching Consortium, there was so little non-contact time for staff that it fell back on the headteachers of the nursery schools to do much of the teaching school-related work.

Teaching school alliances have been encouraged by the government to develop and work to a business model that is cost efficient (see more discussion on managing finances in Section 6). However, interviews with senior leaders from almost all case studies suggest that considerable 'uncosted' leadership time was (and continued to be) invested in the TSA development – which, if considered, would make their business models even more fragile. In the Partnership TSA, for example, although the time spent in meetings during 2013 is now seen to have been a necessary part of the initial journey and important in establishing some key relationships, senior leaders of the teaching school commented that they could easily fill their diaries with teaching school-related meetings and had to constantly prioritise their time.

Monitoring impact and quality assurance

There is clear evidence from the evaluation that all case study alliances attempted to develop robust models and tools to monitor the quality and impact of their work, especially from the second and third year of their development. In the national survey of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools, 95% of senior leaders reported agreement that 'there are robust quality assurance mechanisms in our TSA which enhance the quality and impact of our work on improvement', with more than 1 in 4 in strong agreement (27%).

The example from the George Spencer TSA below illustrates good practice from individual teaching school alliances. In the third visits to our case study TSAs, we also saw examples of coordinated attempts from regional Teaching Schools Council members in developing their maturity models and impact tool kits for TSAs in the region (e.g. StSS Fund Action Plans developed in the North West by the Teaching Schools Council).

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[50] Source: internal report commissioned by the NCTL (Day et al., 2015)

In the George Spencer Teaching School Alliance, led by the George Spencer Academy (a cohort 1 teaching school), all CPD and leadership development programmes are evaluated and the process is designed to inform future practices, 'so that impact can be judged and can be built on' (senior leader, strategic partner). Lessons are regularly evaluated by lead facilitators and Head of Alliance during the delivery of CPD programmes and changes are made accordingly to meet the needs of the participants. In addition, evaluation sessions are held on completion of the programmes where all facilitators are present to review the impact of the programmes and discuss future plans. Moreover, CPD coordinators and the Head of Alliance meet once a term to undertake strategic reviews of the quality and impact of all CPD programmes and make informed decisions about the contents and pedagogy of different programmes in their future provision.

During our last two visits we also found examples of teaching schools using external input for quality assurance purposes. In the everyonelearning@ TSA the Strategic Board uses Hargreaves' maturity model to monitor the delivery of the Big 6. An external adviser is employed to validate strategic partners' views of the TSA work and its impact. The Cultivus TSA also uses an external expert to help develop a QA system and protocols for their NQT programme.

However, a considerable and continuing challenge for senior leaders of all case study alliances in being able to demonstrate the impact of their work over and above numbers of CPD courses and ITT placements persists. Efforts have been made to focus on establishing quality assurance mechanisms which will enable TSAs to enhance consistency in the quality of provision of all aspects of the teaching school work and to demonstrate evidence of impact in the longer term.

4. Developing Partnerships to Deliver

4.1 Growth and development of alliances: an overview

4.1.1 Partnership: history, size and composition

Teaching school alliances in our evaluation are developing, but in different ways. Evidence in the previous section shows that these developments are organic, driven by TSA leaders' values and visions and may take on significantly different shapes and directions as a result of change in senior leadership.

There is evidence from this evaluation which shows that these developments are also influenced by teaching school alliances' previous histories, and that they differ in size, scope and composition.

History matters

All case study teaching schools reported that their previous experience of supporting and working with other schools had been important in developing their capacity to lead and work with their alliance. Those that have used the teaching school designation and TSA to draw together and improve the linkage and drive across previously existing connections have seen their efforts bear fruit.

The Norwich TSA is a cohort 3 alliance, led by Eaton Hall Specialist Academy. Prior to Eaton Hall's designation, the school already had a well developed culture of outreach and school support with projects, mainly working to support the inclusion of vulnerable pupils. It was a National Support School which had responded to local demand by supporting primary schools and a local Pupil Referral Unit at the request of the Local Authority. There was significant social capital between primary schools and between special schools in the region. Designation as a teaching school was seen by the Executive Headteacher and Governors as an opportunity to consolidate and extend the school's existing practice, to demonstrate impact, and to create capacity for providing additional support through the formation of an Alliance.

The formation of an alliance of schools was identified as a core benefit of becoming a teaching school. Pre-existing relationships helped to cement partnerships with primary school partners that constitute the majority of the alliance. The alliance is keen to attract a greater number of secondary partners, but trust and working relationships did not pre-exist designation and have taken longer to build.

As the partnership has matured a model has emerged in which each core strand of activity is led by a partner school. This model has evolved organically and is seen to offer a sustainable approach in which responsibility for leadership is shared and partners are fully integrated into decision-making.

TSAs led by small urban and/or rural teaching schools face unique challenges of geography, culture, resourcing and leadership capacities[51]. The different individual cultures and prior histories of partnership and collaboration are key factors in the decision by schools to join and participate in TSAs led by small urban and/or rural teaching schools. The nature of these histories inevitably influences, positively or negatively, the direction, pace and even the ways in which the alliances work. For example, Harrogate TSA, with its prior history of successful collaboration, provides a model illustration of a route to success, whilst Peninsula Teaching School Partnership illustrates initial scepticism of the value of TSA membership as a result of traditional self-sufficiency.

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[51] Source: internal report (Day et al., 2015) commissioned by the NCTL

Peninsula Teaching School Partnership is a cohort 1 alliance, jointly led by two high performing secondary academies located approximately 25 miles apart: Pool Academy and Penrice Academy. The 'peninsularity' of the region dictated that the schools in the Partnership felt very isolated from the rest of the country. The rural nature of the county with no large urban centre and a high volume of very small schools, many in remote areas, also meant that travel and transport between schools was challenging. At Penrice Academy, the headteacher highlighted the challenges he faced in trying to establish and sustain working relationships with other schools pointing to the highly politicised local conditions with many headteachers and their school governors feeling suspicious of collaboration coupled with a strong sense of tribalism amongst the small communities that make up the area around the school, neither of which were conducive to partnership working.

Size matters

Increases or decreases in membership is found to be directly related to concerns about the effectiveness and impact of TSAs. Almost all case study alliances have continued to broaden and deepen the scope and depth of their partnership work and most have seen the size of their alliances grow. This is also supported by results of the national survey of senior leaders of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools. More than three quarters of the respondents (81%) reported that they had expanded the size of their TSA significantly since the designation, with close to half (44%) in strong agreement.

The Transform TSA, for example, has expanded from 30 schools in 2013 to 45 in 2014, and 53 schools in 2015, with more schools continuing to join; over one third of school partners has committed to two years' membership. Membership has 'proven resilient' and 'very stable' (Operations Director) and the TSA continues to work hard on the sustainability of the alliance membership. Over the last three years less than a handful of schools have left the Alliance. One school 'opted out' because of its reluctance to pay the newly introduced membership fees to become a member of three TSAs. For the Executive Headteachers of the Colmore TSA, the growing size of their alliance provides the necessary capacity required to manage the increasingly expanded teaching school work.

The everyonelearning@ TSA represents a small number of alliances that has seen the overall size of the alliance increase but the number of strategic partners decrease. This is seen by the TSA as a positive stage in its organic growth. The current strategic partners represent schools with a mix of Ofsted inspection grades. More importantly, they have more concrete roles and responsibilities and all 'give and take'.

There is also a small group of alliances in our evaluation that has not experienced significant changes in size. The Partnership TSA is amongst the group. In reflecting on the journey of their early development and comparing themselves with other TSAs, the headteachers of the lead teaching schools commented that it might have been "easier" for them if they had started smaller, so that the alliance could have benefited from a tighter structure and had a more focussed development.

The Ebor TSA represents one of the few case study alliances in our evaluation that has seen the size of its membership decrease. The TSA has found that **fewer and deeper partnerships are more beneficial**. The original medium sized alliance was 'honour bound' to be inclusive, but this resulted in a lack of focus in their development and a number of 'sleeping partners' who were not actively involved. It took some time for this Alliance to understand expectations from the NCTL and their strategic and alliance partners. Ebor members are pleased with the progress in establishing a more mature partnership in their alliance. The current partners are 'like-minded people' who are 'willing to commit'.

Joining forces and building individual and collective capacity through collaboration was found to have enabled small and/or rural teaching schools in an NCTL commissioned study (Day et al, 2015) to deliver the breadth and depth of teaching school work that otherwise would not have been possible.

However, inequality of size and mixed phase alliances have practical implications. Members of staff at some of the upper and secondary schools were used to operating in an environment where there was sufficient capacity to allow for relatively generous release time for staff for CPD or other teaching school related activities.

In a small rural primary school, teachers often feel that it is extremely difficult to take time out of the classroom. Releasing staff members from small schools was difficult, also, due to the high number of teaching headteachers in small schools. As one headteacher in the Peninsula Teaching School Partnership explained:
> If individuals don't get out of their schools regularly then they can become isolated professionally, which is detrimental to their development.

Composition and shape matter

Almost all TSAs in our evaluation began with a core group of schools with which they had already developed 'solid' and trusting work relationships through their previous StSS and/or ITT work. Such relationships provided important social and collaborative capital which enabled them to extend membership to a greater number of schools over time.

Also, for a majority of the case study alliances, their initial partners, especially strategic partners, tended to be 'good' and 'outstanding' schools (as judged by Ofsted inspections). It was believed that such a composition would provide alliances with sufficient capacity and appropriate expertise to broaden and deepen the scope, effectiveness and impact of their work. There also remains a strong belief amongst all senior leaders of our case study TSAs that teaching school alliances are (and should be) where outstanding teaching and leadership practice is located.

Nonetheless, over the last two to three years the majority of our case study alliances have seen **a greater mix of schools from different phases, of different types and with different Ofsted categories.** In the national survey, 80% of senior leaders of teaching schools also reported that there was now a greater mix of schools in their alliance since the designation, with more than a third (40%) in strong agreement.

The Portswood TSA, led by Portswood Primary School (a cohort 1 teaching school), strives to become a collegiate alliance. The number of alliance schools has increased from an initial 17 to 70+ in 2015. Although most members are primary schools, the alliance has also attracted 6 secondary schools and all the local special schools. There is no formal partnership agreement between them. Nor is there an 'entry fee' for schools to join the partnership as alliance members or strategic partners, with schools engaging with the alliance to different degrees over time. The Teaching School Lead stated that 'A lot of TSA work has been breaking down barriers and building social capital. We want an open, inclusive, transparent TSA. This is a challenge that takes time to achieve.' In 2015 the teaching school work in secondary schools has been further strengthened. The chair of the secondary core group spends one day a week on the teaching school work, based on Portswood Primary School premises. He is pleased to see that 'the secondary group has become increasingly cohesive.'

In alliances made up of small rural schools there can be a strong need for subject-based professional networks as subject departments can be small (Day et al 2015). Subject specialists need opportunities for wide coverage for TSAs to remain current in light of curriculum change. Subject specialist networks were a strong feature of the Pilgrim TSA, suggesting they had adapted their learning offer to respond to need of a rural context.

4.1.2 Deepening and broadening partnerships and networks for collaborative improvement

The expansion of the teaching school work has created opportunities of further collaboration within and beyond TSAs. For almost all case study

teaching school alliances in our evaluation, these opportunities enabled them to not only strengthen the relationships with their existing partners but also broaden the scope of their TSA partnerships.

ITT provision, CPD, StSS work and, in some cases, leadership training and development programmes, have played a key role in expanding partnership connections with other schools, agencies, local authorities and HEIs within and beyond the locale. These different groupings and connections are all within the overall umbrella of an alliance.

The Denbigh TSA is a cohort 1 alliance led by Denbigh School in Milton Keynes. The Alliance has a strong local Milton Keynes focus and sees itself as having a responsibility for helping to provide an excellent education for all children in Milton Keynes. It strives to do this through developing the areas of the Big 6, to achieve a whole which is greater than the sum of the parts. Strong relationships and partnerships exist with a significant number of key organisations. In many cases, these have built on a legacy that predates the Teaching School designation, but how they operate has developed and they have been able to achieve increasing impact. The leadership of the Alliance often feels that they want to work beyond the requirements of the TSA policy, and that in many areas are already doing so.

Two factors have contributed to the evident good progress that the Alliance has made. First, it is clear that a common and shared commitment to young people in Milton Keynes binds the partners together, both within and beyond the Alliance. Second, underpinning the joint work are strong relationships between the key players: they have known and worked with each other for a number of years, and high trust and productive reciprocity have emerged.

Trust has built up over time between the Teaching School Alliances in Milton Keynes and the local authority, and as a consequence 'joined-up-ness has developed' (Director of Teaching School). Only two of the twelve Secondary schools in Milton Keynes are not engaged with the Alliance. The facilitating role played by the local authority on school improvement and the pioneering approach of the Milton Keynes Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership Board (MKSSEPB) has helped to ensure that the efforts of the Teaching School Alliances are strategically co-ordinated. The development of coordination between the teaching school alliances in the city has been a key feature in 2014, and has led to what is described as a 'teaching school consortium' approach (Director of Teaching School) with a noticeable shift in tone from competition towards greater collaboration in the context of a realisation that one teaching school cannot do it all.

For example, the designation of Denbigh as the lead school in the "Enigma" Maths Hub, building on successful work in maths in the past, has developed partnership and further cemented their link with Oakgrove – a newer Teaching School and a strategic partner with Denbigh in this endeavour. The leadership development conferences are another example of productive partnership activity between and beyond Alliances. This *"gluing together"* is taking place at all levels between the different Teaching School Alliances; for example, the administrators from the different Alliances and other schools have got to know each other through the Science Learning Partnership effort, which has deepened and grown the partnership.

The alliance partnerships overlap with and benefit from the development of other school-to-school partnerships and networks.

There is clear evidence in this evaluation that teaching school alliances are only one of the many partnerships and networks in which teaching schools and their partner schools are engaged. In many cases, partnerships overlap and have grown together in an organic manner. The overlap of partnerships has given member schools access to a wider network of support, ideas and opportunities to share and disseminate good practice more widely, although at the same time, leading and becoming engaged in different partnerships also increases the challenge of time for leaders.

The South Lakes TSA is led by Queen Elizabeth School, a cohort 1 teaching school. There are established and emerging partnerships in the area in which the alliance is located. These contribute to a complex set of relationships between schools. In addition to the South Lakes TSA and three other teaching school alliances, there are also i) the Kendal Collaborative Partnership – a limited company comprising 17 schools; ii) the South Lakes Rural Partnership, comprising 34 schools in the South Lakes area; and iii) the Local Alliance of System Leaders which works under the Cumbria Alliance of System Leaders comprising representatives of the three teaching schools, the local authority, the University of Cumbria and the NCTL associate. It is felt that where there are overlapping partnerships in an area, clarity of role is essential if the TSA is to establish its place in local provision. Links with TSAs within and outside the area can help to broaden the perspective of an alliance, and this is felt to be particularly useful for rural TSAs to work together regionally on initial teacher training and school-to-school support.

From 2014 we have also seen the emergence of an inclusive 'hub' approach for cross-phase and inter-institutional partnership development. For example, the Hallam TSA, in collaboration with four other local teaching school alliances, two university partners and the South Yorkshire Local Authorities, successfully launched the South Yorkshire Maths Hub in 2014. Their vision is to build 'a collaborative mathematics educator community to help colleagues to achieve the best for our students' (South Yorkshire Maths Hub website). This is to be achieved through 'reflecting on best practice strategies both locally & worldwide and conducting school based action research to measure impact of these practices' (South Yorkshire Maths Hub website).

The experience of the Bishop Rawstorne TSA shows that the hub approach enables teaching school alliances to capitalise on trust in a structured way and through this, share capacity, resources and expertise for focussed joint practice development in pedagogy, curriculum and leadership. This is felt to be particularly important for rural-

based TSAs that work in settings where schools and resources are geographically dispersed.

> The Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy, a cohort 2 teaching school, is based in a relatively advantaged rural area to the South of Preston. Becoming a teaching school has provided Bishop Rawstorne with the opportunity to create structures that harness local resources and capacities and through these, serve as an inclusive 'hub' school for partnership development and school improvement in the region. Capacity is built through a team approach led by senior leaders – some having had the opportunity to be seconded to work with Edge Hill University. The 'hub' approach allows students access to learning experiences in partner schools Key Stage 1-5, local colleges (post-16) and Further Education at Edge Hill University. Since its designation, the Bishop Rawstorne Teaching School has worked in partnership with the Sutton Academy, Edge Hill University and other 'outstanding' schools to develop the Future Teachers' Programme which is designed to develop teaching skills and awareness amongst post-16 students with a view to their entering the teaching profession at a later date. These partners meet regularly to share good practice and engage in collaborative forums of planning and developing excellence in teaching and learning.

Since their designation, an increasing number of teaching schools in our evaluation has established or expanded **multi-academy trusts** (MATs) to drive school improvement and standards. In 2015 the teaching schools of half of the case study TSAs are also leaders of multi-academy trusts. Schools that joined these MATs were not necessarily alliance schools; but once the MATs were established, all MAT schools would have access to (and in some cases contribute to) the teaching school activity and a broad network of schools in the alliances. As we have shown earlier, MATs and TSAs interact through their governance and finance structures because of the central role that teaching schools play in both partnerships.

Experiences of the everyonelearning@ TSA show that there is a perceived connection between the teaching school and the 'teaching school world'. The latter comprises different networks and partnerships in which the teaching school is involved and which provides necessary resources, structures and opportunities that enable teaching schools to develop, broaden and deepen the remit and impact of their work. The MAT is seen as part of the teaching school world and there are opportunities to draw schools in the MAT into the business of the TSA.

However, because of the difference in governance structures and accountability arrangements and also in levels of access to resources, **there is a perception that schools need to proceed with caution when attributing school improvement outcomes within the MAT to the influence of the TSA, or vice versa**.

The headteacher of Fosse Way (one of the two teaching schools of the Partnership TSA) reflected that the work they had been able to achieve through the MAT had promoted deep relationships which were in contrast to the wider and more shallow relationships through the alliance. For example, the structure of the MAT potentially enabled staff to move between schools for their own professional development. The difficulty of achieving this within their alliance is, at least in part, related to the size of the alliance (75+ schools). In having so many schools was it inevitable that there would be shallower relationships with more schools.

The headteacher said that one of the biggest potential barriers to the effectiveness of the alliance's way of working was "the views of some individuals": for some schools, with deep-seated problems that needed action or where the head did not want to engage, "it requires a deep engagement and greater leverage than can currently be provided just through a teaching school alliance". The alliance works well for "like-minded heads".

This is a strategic challenge for the teaching school model: how can it offer potential solutions for a school in denial about its problems, a school wishing to continue to take but not give, or for headteachers who do not want to engage?

Such strategic challenge was shown to be shared by most case study TSAs in our evaluation. In the case of the George Spencer TSA, for example, the major challenges are perceived to be twofold:

i)   those in the alliance who, despite having the capacity, do not actively contribute to teaching school activities; and

ii)   schools that are in most need of support may not actively seek support; and even if they do, teaching schools cannot ensure that advice is followed effectively to ensure longer-term impact.

More analyses and discussions on the role of TSAs and MATs in the school-led self-improving system can be found in 9.3.

4.2 Working with strategic partners

In the national survey of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools, 91% of senior leaders agreed that 'strategic partners play an active role in the decision making about TSA work and development', with more than one in three (36%) in strong agreement with this statement.

Depending on the composition of an alliance, we found in this evaluation that some TSAs (especially those that are relatively smaller in size) do not distinguish

membership types in their alliances because each member is believed to be an equal partner who plays an important role in certain aspects of the teaching school work. However, the majority of the case study alliances do have **a group of 'core members'** who lead and/or make significant contributions to some aspects of the teaching school work.

When forming an alliance, strategic partners tended to be schools and institutions from existing collaborative partnerships who were 'philosophically akin' to each other (Headteacher, Salop TSA). **Over time, although the membership of these core groups is relatively stable compared with 'ordinary' and 'associated' alliance members, they may still experience considerable changes**. For example, there may be a change of senior leadership in teaching schools and/or strategic partner schools (e.g. in the cases of the Wandle and West Herts TSAs), change of the strategic direction and operational arrangements of the TSA work (e.g. ShiNE TSA), strategic partners forming their own teaching school alliances or leaving to join other alliances (e.g. examples from the Cultivus and West Essex TSAs), and new strategic partners joining forces.

With regard to strategic partners' roles and responsibilities, there was **a broad spectrum and variety in the work that they were doing**. This was, at least in part, related to the diverse and organic ways in which TSAs develop. For example:

i) Even in the same TSA, some strategic partners were core and part of a close family – leading and delivering aspects of the TSA work, whilst others were being commissioned to provide support. For example, the roles and responsibilities of HEIs, local authorities and dioceses tended to differ from those of schools in that they were rarely involved in the on-the-ground delivery of the TSA work. Rather, in most cases, they were able to provide the expertise and intelligence to broker the skills and capacity that were needed to design and deliver ITT, CPD, StSS and other related teaching school work that was responsive to the local needs. As for strategic partner schools, some were at the heart of the strategic governance and leadership arrangements of a TSA, whilst others were primarily involved in the operational management and delivery of various strands of the teaching school work.

ii) The breadth and depth of engagement within strategic partners also varied considerably. In some, engagement was limited to headteachers or senior leaders only; whilst in others engagement permeated the school. The following example of the Wandle TSA illustrates how the formation and governance of this primary school led cohort 2 alliance has benefited from strong support from a secondary strategic partner.

Chesterton Primary School (cohort 2 teaching school) had been working closely with Chestnut Grove Academy prior to the designation of the Wandle TSA. Both schools acknowledged the logical progression from much of the work they had been doing previously and felt that the alliance 'put some of our work together under a more formal umbrella and provided more of a signpost to other opportunities' (Headteacher of Chesterton).

Chestnut Grove Academy is the lead secondary school and lead strategic partner of the alliance. It jointly leads the development of the alliance work with Chesterton and is the only strategic partner school that sits on the Governing Body Group and the Steering Group.

By 2015, strategic partners said that they felt that there was a greater sense of collaboration, rather than competition between schools, as a result of the work of the Wandle Alliance. However, a further perceived risk remained around increasing the involvement from local primary schools. Apart from the work of Chesterton, much of the leadership time had come from those in the secondary schools. While the primaries had been able to engage on the CPD strand and offer ITT placements, they lacked capacity to engage in some other areas of the work of the alliance, for example in research and development.

4.3 Working with local authorities

Almost all case study TSAs perceived that their relationships and partnerships with local authorities, as brokers, have been important in broadening and deepening the impact of their work. From the second visits in early 2014 we found that more teaching school alliances in our evaluation were now working more closely and collaboratively with local authorities than was evident in our first visits. Despite the current changing education landscape in which the support capacities of many local authorities have been reduced, the sharing of data and complementary expertise and capacity that currently occurs between teaching school alliances and local authorities is perceived as positive and necessary in accompanying the continuing move towards a self-improving school system.

In our evaluation we found examples of **local authorities – irrespective of whether they had reduced capacity – learning to work with local schools in response to a 'decisive [structural and cultural] shift towards schools-led partnerships' for improvement** (Sandals and Bryant, 2014: 5). This observation aligns with the Isos' (Sandals and Bryant, 2014) conclusion that many local authorities in their study had learned to engage with local schools in new and innovative ways for improvement. The following example from the South Lakes TSA illustrates such an endeavour.

Queen Elizabeth School, serving a wide rural area in Cumbria, is a cohort 1 teaching school and leads the South Lakes TSA. Cumbria local authority covers a large geographical area, with long travelling times between the north and the south-west of the county. There were two emerging school-led partnerships in the area: the Cumbria Alliance of System Leaders (CASL) and the Local Alliance of System Leaders (LASL) – which had representatives from the LA. In April 2013, the LA staff expressed considerable anxiety at the effect of the expansion of the number of teaching school alliances in Cumbria on local authority provision for school improvement and CPD. 'We are in a huge transition', said the Chief Adviser.

On school-to-school support, the LA hoped that these two partnerships would '*bring consistency and stability'* and would enable the LA 'to work in shoulder-to-shoulder partnership with schools and [NCTL]'. The LA saw its role as helping local alliances to develop, but without defining which school should be in each partnership. 'We have been on a very fast journey from a single, tightly focussed Queen Elizabeth Teaching School to teaching school alliances that are opening up to engage more widely with schools across Cumbria' (Cumbria South Senior Adviser).

In 2014/15, the comment from a LA officer shows that a strategic approach to StSS deployments was in place and that schools and the LA were working in a climate of collaboration: 'The local authority, the South Lakes Federation Director of Quality and Development, and the LASL Chair and Vice-Chair work closely together, prioritising schools that need support and deciding where the most appropriate support lies for each deployment'.

The Sheringham TSA represents a group of case study alliances that have established positive relationships and engagement with local authorities. This has enabled them to **align their strategic developments with the priorities of the local authorities**. Sheringham regards this alignment as very important. It enables them to use the information and data to ensure that support for schools in the local area is strategically planned and sustainable. It also demonstrates that there is **unity of purpose for school improvement** between the Local Authority, the teaching school alliances and the Norfolk Primary Heads Association (see section 7.3 for details).

The experiences of the Portswood TSA show that the local authority and the TSA have built an effective partnership, **with complementary roles**, to improve schools in the area. The TSA had the StSS role; and the LA the brokerage role through which it commissions support and, where necessary, uses its statutory powers.

The Portswood TSA, led by Portswood Primary School, is a cohort 1 alliance. The LA school improvement team is very small and LA officers recognise that the expertise and capacity to deliver school improvement now lies in the Portswood TSA. Each deployment of leadership support has attracted NLE deployment funding or local authority funding. Each supported school has a single point of contact at Portswood, which promotes good communication. The LA monitors evaluation forms completed by NLEs and LLEs after their visits to supported schools. Complementing this, the LA has statutory functions and 'robust conversations' with school heads where the school is performing poorly. The LA sees the TSA as building local school improvement capacity. Where the TSA meets difficulties in implementing its improvement strategy in the supported school, it may turn to the LA to judge whether it might be necessary to use its statutory powers.

In sum, teaching schools may have different motivations for collaborating with other TSAs and local authorities. However, irrespective of the difference in motivation, it appears to have become **imperative** that TSAs form wider collaborative partnerships to deliver their teaching school work. In almost all cases, the outcomes of the extended collaborations have been perceived to be positive in that they have enabled TSAs to improve the effectiveness of their work and to achieve impact on a greater scale (see Section 7 for examples of impact).

The early development of case study teaching school alliances highlighted tensions and concerns over collaboration and competition within localities (Gu et al., 2014). Over time (especially in our third visits in 2015) there are increasing examples from almost all our case studies that point to local and regional collaborations between teaching school alliances and the emergence of more strategic and coherent approaches to school improvement within localities.

In some cases, while many new activities have been established the TSA is not the primary reason why some of the initiatives exist; TSAs have also provided an important function as an organising umbrella for activities and initiatives that were already underway (see for example the Leadership and Training Centre and the Primary Excellence Partnership in Milton Keynes in the case study of Denbigh TSA). Beyond that, we found that collaboration between TSAs and with other schools in an area can be triggered more by LA activity than by TSA activity. This accords with the wider research evidence about the world's best performing education systems (Mourshed et al, 2010) which demonstrates the important role of a 'mediating layer' in providing targeted support to schools and brokering and buffering school-to-school collaborations and school improvement in the locality and region.

In almost all cases where teaching school alliances (and other providers) meet and work together for school improvement in the region, **brokering and supporting role of local authorities** is perceived by TSA leaders to be indispensable. This is because, at least in part, they can provide an avenue and a platform for dialogue, cooperation and collaboration to take place and to embed this between teaching school alliances and other schools, whereby the teaching school work is coordinated to ensure consistency in the provision and quality of support within the locality. Where applicable, the local authorities' statutory authority for school improvement in an area is perceived to be of importance in the provision of effective school-to-school support. In other words, **there must be some reservation about whether TSAs should or ever could be the new mediating tier of school-to-school support in a local area, not least because of the 'loose' accountability arrangements for TSAs.**

4.4 Working with other teaching school alliances

Another important observation from the second and third years is that **almost all teaching school alliances in our evaluation are now reaching out and linking up with other teaching school alliances within and beyond the locality**. This is a significant change, especially taking into account the deep concerns about collaboration and competition in their first year as teaching schools (see examples in Gu et al., 2014).

This change is also evidence that successful early developments have given many case study teaching school alliances increased confidence in their capacity to broaden and deepen the teaching school activities. **They have become clearer about who they are (i.e. identity), what they are for (i.e. mission) and how to achieve it (i.e. action).** More importantly, they have learned that '*By collaborating you get much more'* (Head of Teaching School, St Chad's, Cultivus TSA).

Elmridge Primary School, a cohort 1 teaching school that jointly leads the Cultivus TSA with St Chad's CoE Primary School, has formed strong connections with its neighbouring schools and TSAs in the delivery of the teaching school work. It runs School Direct (SD) in partnership with the Gatley Teaching School Alliance. They have combined their resources and expertise to form the 'Trellium School Direct Alliance' (TSDA). TSDA comprises four Trafford schools and three Stockport schools. These seven schools will be the 'main' schools for trainees' placements. This cross-alliance structure is seen as a "unique selling point" (ITT Lead, Gatley Teaching School Alliance) because it offers the trainees a wider spread of contexts and experiences for them to learn and excel. The trusting relationships between the Executive Heads of the two alliances are the social glue for this joint partnership. In terms of capacity, both alliances felt that they needed each other to set up and deliver the SD programme. The Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) is the SD HEI partner which works with the alliances to review and benchmark quality assurance processes.

Similarly, when applying to be a cohort 1 teaching school, Notre Dame High School sensed a competition that it now no longer feels. Over time its staff have worked closely with their local partner schools to build relationships and provide high quality offers of support. Their passion, openness and commitment to school improvement for all, and their respect for the experiences of other schools were welcomed.

Hallam TSA, a cohort 1 alliance led by Notre Dame High School, is an inclusive alliance open to all. It is not in competition with other TSAs in the region. There is a clear spirit of collaboration and no sense of overlap because they believe that they have different strengths and distinctive offers.

Faith is a strong element of Hallam TSA: the Catholic mission and religious aspect are important underpinning principles. The alliance plays to its strengths (maths, RE, leadership of Catholic schools) and as such, has a distinctive offer that is claimed to support sustainability. There is a realisation that partners have a 'huge amount to offer'. The TSA passes on funding and business opportunities for others to develop.

Hallam TSA is involved at a national level in the teaching school community, mathematics education (in partnership with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics [NCETM], sending teachers and leaders to Shanghai for the DfE maths/science visit, and networking with others). In 2014 Hallam TSA was awarded Maths Hub status.

Experiences of the South Lakes TSA show that **links with teaching school alliances outside the local area are particularly useful for rural TSAs**. South Lakes TSA tends to find that recruitment to SD is difficult in rural areas. It also experienced difficulty in attracting people to attend twilight meetings and CPD sessions because of the geographical spread of schools in large rural areas. Working together with other TSAs in the region is helping to broaden the perspective of this TSA and make the ITT and SD provision more economically viable.

There have been many opportunities through ITT to work with other TSAs. The South Lakes Federation (SLF), led by Queen Elizabeth Teaching School (a cohort 1 teaching school), joined with the Queen Katherine Teaching School Alliance and Dallam School to form a South Cumbria teaching school partnership for ITT. Course planning is carried out jointly and in partnership with the University of Cumbria.

The Queen Katherine School, a member school of the SLF and a (cohort 3) teaching school in its own right, is working with other SLF schools to develop a SCITT, for which it was accredited in 2014. The first trainees will start in September 2015. These will be secondary trainees in 2015 and 2016, with primary trainees starting in 2017. In anticipation of this, Cumbria primary schools are already represented on the management board of the SCITT.

The new SCITT will make use of much of the School Direct materials developed by SLF. It has already forged links with several SCITTs and teaching school alliances outside the area, including Bishop Rawstorne in Lancashire.

Evidence suggests some teaching school alliances (although a minority) in our evaluation have begun to use other TSAs for **peer review and health checks** and through this, challenging and supporting each other for more effective delivery of the teaching school work. It is felt that this 'authentic experience' has 'encouraged professional, open and genuine dialogue' that has enabled partners to 'dig deeper into' the areas of teaching school work and co-create ways forward (Director of Ebor TSA). Experiences of the everyonelearning@ TSA also show that **joining up capacity (e.g. administrative support) and resources (e.g. sharing costs) helps to scale up the provision effectively within and beyond the locale**.

everyonelearning@ TSA is a cohort 2 alliance, led by Hawthorns School. Peer review with Elmridge (teaching school of Cultivus TSA) involving Directors of TSA and headteachers had been 'peer support, not just peer review' but had enabled sharing of 'burning issues' (partner TSA). Peer review that had been 'embraced' had made leaders 'reflect on **why** we do things' (Executive Principal).

Partnerships with other TSAs were developing very well, notably in ITT with the Prestolee TSA (ITT) and the Cultivus TSA (CPD/SLE). The TSAs felt they were 'moving forward together' in 'collaboration rather than competition'. Key enablers to developing partnership were 'capacity and time' (partner TSA). Challenges were different priorities in collaboration and leaving the classroom.

The teaching school saw further change in 2014. Experiences in year two had 'reaffirmed what [we] want to do' and leaders remained 'true to this'. The Executive Principal still felt 'in awe of other very confident teaching schools'. However, they were 'really pleased' that other teaching school alliances turned to the everyonelearning@ TSA, wanting to 'learn from each other'.

The TSA is conscious of the balance between competition and collaboration as it recognises that each local TSA has a different focus. As the Cohort 3 primary TS was designated, both everyonelearning@ and Prestolee looked to share costs, in economies of scale with shared administration, finance and business management. Such sharing had not yet materialised but is envisaged to do so with Lime Tree, a key strategic partner and now teaching school designated as part of everyonelearning@ TSA.

The increased collaborations between teaching school alliances should be considered in connection with other alliance developments that are taking place at the same time. Collectively, evidence from the second and third years of this evaluation suggests that all case study teaching school alliances have entered **a new phase of development. In this phase, there are greater, more extensive, and at the same time, more focussed collaborations between schools within a TSA. There are also increased, strategic collaborations beyond the TSA – with local authorities, HEI partners and other school networks across and beyond the locality**.

However, there are also concerns. **Irrespective of teaching schools' increasing commitment to collaborate with their peers, there are also underlying worries about the availability of resources and the limited capacity of the market. Such uncertainty adds to a sense of vulnerability hidden behind many system leaders' commitment to improve the quality of learning for all pupils.** For

example, the uneven geographical distribution of teaching schools across a region may create tensions in relationships between them; and for areas where there were few teaching schools, there may be gaps in provision of support. We have seen in our evaluation that some teaching schools were working more closely with alliances outside their locality than with those within their immediate geographical reach.

As teaching school numbers grow and the alliance work develops and broadens within and beyond localities, and as the 'marketplace' becomes increasingly competitive, it is felt that there is a need for some mechanism at local and regional levels to avoid duplication in the provision of support in order to secure commitment and effective coordination (see the examples in Section 7 on impact). There is an important co-ordination role here for the Teaching Schools Council.

4.5 Summary: evidence from the survey

Evidence from the national survey of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools summarises and supports the key characteristics of TSA partnerships that we have outlined above.

Characteristics of TSA partnerships

As provided in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 (Q3) in Appendix 5, the majority of senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs expressed strong agreement in relation to their TSAs' **close collaboration with other key stakeholders in the system including HEIs, local authorities and neighbouring TSAs.** They reported that the key characteristics of their TSAs included:

- working collaboratively with higher education institutions on *ITT* (98% in agreement)

- working collaboratively with neighbouring TSAs (89% in agreement) and TSAs outside the locality (71% in agreement)

- working collaboratively with local authorities (88% in agreement)

- integrating the TSA work with the developments of other school networks and partnerships (88% in agreement)

- joining up capacity and resources with other TSAs or school networks to scale up the provision of support (86% in agreement)

- working collaboratively with higher education institutions on *R&D* (86% in agreement)

Responses to the following statements show that around half or more senior leaders had seen their TSA's collaboration with local authorities and other TSAs deepened (Table 4.4, Figure 4.4 in Appendix 4: Q5):

- 61% reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to closer collaboration with other TSAs

- 47% reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to closer collaboration with local authorities

In addition, 76% of senior leaders agreed that their TSA's strategic developments were aligned with the school improvement priorities of the local authorities.

External engagement with other TSAs can also be seen in results relating to **peer reviews and health checks**: 66% agreed that they used other TSAs for peer reviews, with almost 1 in 5 in strong agreement with this (18.8%).

Experiences and challenges of leading and developing partnerships

Almost all (92%) reported that partnership development within their TSA essentially relied on **shared moral purpose and good will of 'like-minded' people**.

With regard to the **geographical distribution of teaching schools**, 66% of senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs[52] did not think it has caused tensions between TSAs in their locality. This reinforces the analyses on TSA reach and engagement by regional and local authorities areas (Section 2.2.2) and lends support to the above observation that there are now greater levels of collaboration between teaching school alliances within and beyond localities and that working with local authorities has helped to create more strategic and coherent approaches to school improvement within localities.

The challenges of establishing and leading teaching school alliances and enhancing the effectiveness of the teaching school work appear to be primarily related to **the availability of resources and capacity, especially within teaching schools**. Eighty per cent of senior leaders of teaching schools agreed that limited resources and capacity exist as persistent challenges to the effective delivery of TSA work, with 1 in 3 (34%) in strong agreement. It is perhaps then not surprising that 60% of survey respondents felt that **there are still considerable challenges to engaging and deepening partnerships within their TSAs**. More than 1 in 10 (14%) strongly agreed with this.

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[52] It is unlikely that urban/rural location would make a difference to the results given that only 35 cohorts 1-3 teaching school alliances are led exclusively by a teaching school in a rural location.

Evidence from the case studies suggests that partnership development depends upon individuals, especially senior leaders of schools, and their relationships. Changes in personnel can both enhance and hinder partnership relationships: gaining someone more committed and open to partnership is of benefit, whereas losing those with such commitment presents a challenge. This factor becomes even more important given the uneven geographical distribution of teaching schools in some places and the competing factors pushing towards collaboration and competition. It presents a particular challenge to sustaining TSA effectiveness and impact because, at least in part, it contributes to the turnover and fluidity of the TSA membership (see also our interim report, Gu et al., 2014) and can make medium and long-term planning of TSA activities considerably more difficult or virtually impractical.

5. Work of the Teaching School Alliance: Six Objectives

The six core responsibilities for teaching schools (i.e. the Big 6) have evolved into a clearer and more coherent articulation in our case study alliances over time. The Interim Report indicated that almost all the cohorts 1 and 2 case study teaching schools had made an initial attempt to develop all the six areas at the same time. Such attempts had generated a deep sense of anxiety in the early development of most alliances.

However, over the last two to three years we have observed increased confidence in teaching schools' ability to focus and build on their areas of strength and develop, broaden and deepen activities and aspects of the teaching school work that form the unique identities (or 'selling points') of their TSAs.

5.1 Initial Teacher Training (ITT)

This continues to be a key strand of (and an initial motivation for) teaching school work for the majority of TSAs in our evaluation.

Most alliances understand the continuum of professional development from new entrants to the profession through NQT, CPD into leadership development and appreciate the benefits of being fully involved in selecting and developing their own staff. However, as yet, few have developed structures and quality assurance mechanisms that effectively connect the developments and impacts of different strands of work on this continuum. ITT, CPD and leadership development tend to be designed, operated and monitored separately by different teams.

School Direct (SD) is perceived to have offered much more ownership of placements (e.g. reviewing applications, interviewing and selecting candidates). This has enabled schools to talk directly to applicants about what they want to achieve from their placements and advise on different routes and careers. Comments from TSAs suggest that most believed that the quality of the trainees is 'higher' than before[53]: "You know the NQTs you're getting are of a standard you want' (Buckingham TSA). The desire for a route into teaching to be 'practitioner-led' so the schools can 'grow their own teachers' with 'bespoke training' is strongly articulated by all case study alliances in this evaluation.

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[53] It is important to note that it is beyond the remit of this research to collect robust evidence which can demonstrate whether there are variations in the quality of trainee teachers on different ITT programmes. The comments presented here represent schools' own perceptions.

The programme is also perceived to have continued to provide major opportunities for teaching school alliances to work with universities in the delivery of high quality ITT. The majority of the case study teaching schools and their partners felt that there was a need nationally for continued HEI input via the established post graduate certificate in education (PGCE) award (and Masters level learning), retaining the academic rigour rather than focussing only on the technical, classroom based aspects of ITT[54]. Pairing with an ITT HEI partner is seen as important because it provides quality and expertise. For example, the Cambridge Teaching School Network is working with four universities, using the content of the PGCE programme for school subjects, as the task was too big to design *ab initio* programmes in every secondary school subject. ITT at everyonelearning@ was predicated on PGCE with Masters credits rather than QTS only, as PGCE was the 'gold standard': 'if we value education we should value working together in partnership with HEIs' (strategic partner).

However, capacity continues to be perceived by most case study TSAs as a 'massive issue' in terms of coordination, finding placements, contacting schools and arranging the placements, and interviewing prospective students. Also, the market poses challenges of efficiency. Some candidates had made multiple applications but did not attend their interview. This leads to a wastage of time for senior leaders of TSAs. Some alliances have appointed additional staff to coordinate the work and help to reduce the workload of senior teachers and leaders, but this has considerable cost implications.

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[54] Including, for example, everyonelearning@, Hallam, Ebor, Transform TSAs

In the West London TSA, a cohort 3 alliance led by Sacred Heart High School in Hammersmith, the manager of the teaching school is providing all of the administrative leadership and support for School Direct including setting up systems and operational management.

WLTSA recognises that the School Direct route is relatively new and that there remains scope to improve systems and processes (across UCAS, universities, NCTL and schools) which is evolving. Despite the challenge of working with systems that need time to embed, they have managed to grow their School Direct operation very significantly and are firm supporters of the initiative.

The teaching school manager has done the outreach work, making presentations to head teachers and prospective trainees regarding the nature and benefits of School Direct and sharing WLTSA systems with other TSAs. Although the school has a business manager, other priorities have meant that the teaching school manager has had to handle tasks such as invoicing for leadership training. She is also the head teacher's PA and the clerk to the governors.

The impression given by NCTL in 2013-14 was that to be successful through the teaching school designation review, WLTSA would need to increase the size and scope of its School Direct provision. As a result, WLTSA pushed hard for growth and has been successful in this, to the point where the teaching school is now taking on additional administrative support.

Funding is perceived by many case study TSAs as insufficient to cover the scope of work required. Low conversion rates (each candidate can have three simultaneous applications), deferrals and dropouts also affect the finances. It is widely felt that a lot of development relies on individuals' and schools' *good will'*.

Recruitment can also be a challenge both in terms of the number of applicants and their quality. The pressure to fill places needs to be balanced with a commitment to quality. Investment in candidates does not always convert. Low conversion rates are seen by some as wastage and [55]by others as the ability to choose the best candidates (for the context)[56]. In most cases, SD primary appears to recruit and retain well, with high quality candidates. However, a small number of TSAs[57] experienced a significant fall in terms of both number and quality of applicants in 2014. The ITT lead of the Portswood TSA felt that 'some people are applying who don't know enough about teaching.' Recruitment continues to be

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[55] Including, for example, Ebor, everyonelearning@ and Salop TSAs

[56] For example, Hallam and Transform TSAs

[57] For example, Portswood and Wandle TSAs

challenging in secondaries, particularly in priority subjects. The allocations methodology[58] results in places allocated not always reflecting the local need, and there are some fears about a lack of recruitment to the national workforce.

It is also felt that there is some reinventing the wheel by different teaching school alliances. It was felt that central advice and mechanisms to promote the sharing of experiences amongst TSAs would help with this and could also help to improve the inefficiencies identified in the SD model. Experiences of some case study TSAs[59] suggest that working together with neighbouring TSAs on SD can provide economies of scale and improve efficiency.

There are also worries that SD will not meet the needs of small rural schools unless TSAs cover a wide area of the county. The SD link to post-training employment is also perceived as a disincentive in rural areas to TSAs that take on large numbers of SD trainees. This is because, at least in part, the offer of employment in small villages is not usually perceived to be very appealing to prospective trainees when large TSAs can offer a broader range of employment opportunities in urban areas.

There had been greater investment in the development of SCITTs in the majority of case study TSAs in 2014/15. A SCITT is commonly seen as an opportunity to bridge the theory-practice divide through investigation of issues in live classrooms. The programme also enables teaching schools to access grants for specialised training (e.g. SEND, EAL). For the Hallam TSA, for example, the SCITT brings the opportunity to work with several HEIs, each with their particular expertise, to tailor a Master's level qualification with M level modules from neighbouring universities. In order to enhance QA, Hallam has decided to focus on a reduced range of subjects in which the alliance has specific expertise.

However, evidence from our case studies suggests that, as yet, this new programme is not well understood amongst some candidates and even placement schools. The quality of mentors is also seen by many case study alliances as an area that requires immediate attention and improvement.

Flexibility of different placements has enabled case study TSAs to meet the needs of the trainees more effectively. An important advantage of alliances as networks of schools is that they can offer placements in schools in different phases and contexts, with different improvement profiles and of different faiths. Other perceived benefits identified for trainees include the quality of the classroom experiences, opportunities to see high quality teaching being modelled in live

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[58] 2015 allocation methodology

[59] Including, for example, Cambridge Teaching School Network, everyonelearning@, Cultivus and Salop TSAs.

classrooms of learning, opportunities to plan and work as a team, and 'more personal' relationships with their mentors and school teachers developed over time.

Success in the ITT endeavour is perceived to have supported improvement in NQT recruitment in the case study TSAs. This is of particular importance for schools that usually struggle to recruit given the nature of their challenges. However, this may disproportionately be beneficial for schools in more advantaged areas which are better represented among teaching schools.

Some case study TSAs continue to express concern that TSA ITT practice may lack depth and scholarship, especially in terms of lack of engagement in challenging reflective practice and supporting inspiration. 'My fear is that when school people no longer have knowledge of university PGCE course content, there will be a master/apprentice model of training' (Vice-Principal, Cambridge Teaching School Network).

5.2 CPD and leadership development

CPD offers continue to be perceived as a real strength by most case study TSAs. There have been developments in the provision of new courses and programmes to meet the local and/or regional needs. The developments are driven by experience of poor quality CPD offered elsewhere, and/or gaps in provision (e.g. the Wave 7 aspiring leaders course for headteachers as a targeted leadership supply project), as well as the imperative that this is one of the Big 6 requirements placed on teaching schools. Many alliances have taken on 'licensed' provision of pre-existing courses such as the Olevi Improving Teacher Programme and Outstanding Teacher Programme. Some have already moved on from these, deciding to replace them with courses of their own design. In addition, an increasing number of alliances are now working collaboratively with TSAs within and beyond the locale to offer joint professional development programmes for teachers and school leaders.

The Lincolnshire TSA is a cohort 3 alliance, led by The Priory Academy LSST. Working with alliance schools to attract, develop and retain quality teachers and leaders within the rural areas of Lincolnshire is seen as a main priority for the Lincolnshire TSA. Evaluations of the Improving Teacher Programme (ITP) and Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP) suggested that these programmes did not cater for local needs. In 2014/15 the alliance has begun to develop its own equivalent programmes for schools and teachers which has a specific focus on 'beyond Outstanding'. They have also designed their own Embedding Quality Leadership programme for leaders and managers from schools across Lincolnshire. The programme's focus is to enable leadership practices to secure outstanding achievement of students. The five twilight sessions are written to stimulate reflection and an evaluation of current practice, with practical ideas being offered as a means of development. Feedback suggests that this programme, especially the element of bridging theory into practice through reflection, is highly valued by participants.

In order to keep subject leaders informed of local and national curriculum developments, the alliance has created Subject Collaborative Networks through their SLEs and subject experts. The Networks meet twice a year with a view to share knowledge, expertise and resources. This is proven to be a popular professional development event for middle leaders.

Providing bespoke CPD and leadership development programmes for schools and clusters of schools is seen as the main strength of the TSA offer. For example, bespoke CPD programmes, co-designed by participants, are perceived as a strength by everyonelearning@. The perception is that these are in contrast to a perceived 'off-the-shelf' model offered by local authorities. Coaching is considered to be a critical part of teacher professional development and leadership development. Feedback from participating schools and individuals also suggest that they welcomed the input from colleague practitioners.

The Wandle Alliance, led by a cohort 2 teaching school Chesterton Primary School, observed that they had seen a greater movement in CPD towards a coaching culture. The alliance has been asked to put together bespoke and whole team coaching programmes for schools. Several schools have undertaken whole Senior Leadership Team (SLT) training. The alliance has also developed a coaching and mentoring programme with the Institute of Education. The Wandle Alliance is already delivering an NQT programme to 60/70 NQTs working in collaboration with the LA, and is now planning an NQT +1 programme.

Most TSAs are actively developing new approaches to market and deliver their CPD and leadership development programmes.

The Buckingham TSA, for example, offered staff from other schools free opportunities to attend their own staff CPD. "We wanted to hook people in by offering them free attendance at things like our own staff meetings and other professional development. We then gave people flyers about future CPD when they came along. When people came, they found it was really good quality. We also then asked them directly what professional development they needed" (Headteacher).

Experiences of the Denbigh TSA demonstrate the benefits of sourcing CPD from a wide range of providers, in addition to developing new local programmes. It is felt that this approach has enabled them to provide programmes that are of 'best quality' and 'fit'.

Aware that the senior leadership team (SLT) do not always target CPD courses well with colleagues they enrol, Hallam TSA targeted the OTP in 2014 at SLT (without the coaching element and therefore at a reduced rate) so they could experience the course and improve their selection of participants.

The experience of working in a TSA gives staff more opportunity to develop their leadership roles. One of the perceived benefits of Teaching School status is the increased potential to retain and stimulate future leaders through opportunities to work beyond their own school. The provision of CPD draws on specific strengths to meet perceived needs in TSAs, for example, aspiring church school leaders in the Ebor and Hallam TSAs; Recently Qualified Teachers (RQTs), post 16, and maths in the Salop TSA, and leadership in the Ebor and Transform TSAs. Existing headteachers and the SLT have also enjoyed opportunities to develop through, for example, designing and delivering professional development programmes, being on secondment in other schools, involvement in SLE recruitment and senior leadership appointments, and providing school-based bespoke leadership training and school improvement support.

There are innovative talent spotting approaches to leadership development in the Hallam TSA (a cohort 1 alliance) which are seen to have helped to address the specific leadership shortage in Roman Catholic schools. For example, the Hallam TSA supported a recruitment event and appointed an assistant headteacher, with a development programme to support deputy headship within 12 months. This was achieved within 9 months. By 2015 this deputy headteacher is Head of School and the school has achieved Teaching School status with the support of Hallam, building on their role of strategic partner in the Hallam TSA. This school's experience provides a successful example of capacity building and fast tracking the talented into leadership roles. This bespoke programme of support is now facilitating the development of five others working with headteachers, rapid promotion of a deputy to headteacher and an acting headteacher to a permanent position.

As yet, however, much of the CPD and leadership development offer continues to be courses. Although evidence suggests that efforts to create more collaborative, school-based blended CPD models have begun to emerge, most of the CPD provision is not yet 'joined up' with the research and development work or joint practice development (JPD)[60] across the TSA. However, the following comment from the North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership (NLTSP) suggests a growing intention to shift resources from providing CPD courses to facilitating JPD across an alliance.

The North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership is a cohort 3 alliance. Going forward, the alliance is hoping to build on the successful and well embedded CPD programme to develop its joint practice development (JPD) as a means of strengthening collaboration and sharing good practice that is seen as more sustainable than the current CPD model: 'CPD is certainly continuing to grow and we have excellent attendance on the programme … we still have a place for CPD but we would like to create more opportunities for joint practice development and that will then foster collaboration. So rather than people being parachuted in to a three hour session on early reading or early phonics we would look at collaborative work and projects for joint practice development which are far more sustainable.' (Deputy headteacher, NLTSP)

Rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluating the impact of CPD and leadership development programmes are yet to be fully developed. This is

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[60] It is worth noting that Joint Practice Development (JPD) is a term that in practice has been perceived, interpreted and used to mean a wide variety of activities. Some 'truly' involve teachers and school leaders designing, implementing and monitoring innovative practices between schools and across alliances whilst others do not.

because, at least in part, there are inherent practical difficulties of baselining, tracking and understanding the impact from CPD on the quality and outcomes of teaching and learning and participants' career trajectories.

Strategic planning, informed by regional and local data, is perceived to be necessary to help improve the economies, efficiencies and impact of the provision of CPD and leadership development programmes. Our second and third visits appear to suggest that the supply of courses has exceeded the demand in some cases. In some cases, cancellation rates by individuals and of whole courses have been high. Some TSAs have begun to consider charging fees for course cancellations. We have also found that in some alliances, CPD programmes are not necessarily bringing sufficient resources to the schools to be used for other teaching school projects.

It is felt that there may be a variety of reasons that have contributed to the lack of appetite for CPD courses. First, there is some suggestion that schools may have become more reluctant to send people on external CPD courses due to the pressures from the accountability framework (mainly Ofsted). Second, the costs of covering staff to be out on CPD courses have become significant at a time of reduced school finances. Third, there is also more exchanging of good practice within schools. Last but not least, with more providers offering CPD courses, the CPD market seems to have become overcrowded and schools are finding it more difficult to sift the options. This has particular implications for the teaching school movement given that the provision of a chargeable CPD offer has been key to the business model of most alliances.

There is a concern, also, that TSA CPD provision can be undercut by bigger organisations that have won NCTL contracts to deliver NPQH modules. For example, the funding of leadership courses by the National College and others makes training opportunities offered by these providers much more financially attractive to schools, and difficult for the teaching schools to compete on price. It remains to be seen what the consequences of the expiration of the NCTL licenses will be, something that a number of un-licensed alliances are already considering.

5.3   Talent management and succession planning

Succession planning is seen to be embedded within CPD and is not, therefore, managed as a separate element of the Big 6, but as an integrated part of the CPD strand. In a small number of case study alliances, promotions through CPD are being tracked. For example, in Hallam and Ebor TSAs there is considerable evidence of promotion of school leaders through the Doulos programme (Aspiring Leaders in Church Schools). School Direct, SLE and StSS are also seen as ways of

identifying future talent for the TSA. Some TSAs have mapped pathways that are beginning to be actively used.

> In the Transform TSA, for example, one SLE has gained promotion to headship. There are local challenges of capacity with middle and senior leaders and Transform is pro-active in ensuring succession. The heads of schools created through the TSA meet, as do networks of middle leaders and senior leaders, supported by a learning platform. The Transform Progression Pathway supports progression in that colleagues are moving on and young leaders are 'encouraged to develop' (LA). Examples of leadership progression include a cohort 1 SLE promoted to Deputy Headteacher, and an Assistant Headteacher promoted to headteacher. An NLE supports new heads of school. The positions created through the TSA (for example a headteacher leading on middle leader development, with eight headteachers developing the course) provide development opportunities at all levels, including headship. Two headteachers are now joint Directors of Education.

Some TSAs (although a minority) are now working with local authorities to share data and intelligence. Others have conducted audits to identify talent.[61] Denbigh TSA has run a number of leadership conferences, gathered information from partner schools about what they need and can provide, and is working with their strategic partners to identify individuals for talent management opportunities, such as shadowing, visits and secondments. Data provided at a sub-regional level and by the local authority is helping to inform allocations of leadership scholarships for NCTL programmes, and a leadership development network has been established to drive this work forward across Denbigh's alliance.

However, for almost all case study alliances, this is an area that is yet to be developed. There are few examples of formal strategies for succession planning across TSAs. The perceived uneven geographical distribution of teaching schools within an area was seen by some local authorities to have exacerbated the problem of having a coherent succession planning strategy across the county.

5.4 Specialist leaders of education (SLE)

SLE work is generally seen as embedded within school-to-school support (StSS) and not as a separate strand. In some case study TSAs, there are examples of SLEs working in mixed teams (with other SLEs, NLEs and LLEs)

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[61] For the last 18 months NCTL have been proactively helping teaching schools to conduct succession planning beyond the remit of their alliances so that they contribute to the promotion of teachers and leaders across a whole region. This is a new direction of travel.

contributing to a wide range of StSS work. Where SLEs are deployed in teams, there appears to be more evidence relating to the effectiveness and impact of support. There are also examples which demonstrate the sharing of SLEs and greater collaborations across TSAs.

In the Bishop Rawstorne TSA, a cohort 2 alliance led by the Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy, a key success for this element of the Big 6 has been embedding SLE support in the work of StSS. All requests for StSS are now reviewed by the SLE lead and Director of the teaching school. Following an initial half-day visit from the teaching school, the focus, schedule and outcomes of the support are discussed and agreed with the supported school. A mixed team will then be put together to provide advice and support that is bespoke and systematically planned and evaluated. The SLE lead emphasised that supporting schools in mixed teams provides the opportunity for new SLEs to shadow their peers and work with other system leaders – which is itself an excellent professional development opportunity for them.

However, in some case study TSAs SLEs continue to work in isolation. Their roles are not yet embedded in the provision of school-to-school support across the TSA.

SLE deployment continues to be a challenge for most case study TSAs. A number of alliances have decided not to designate additional SLEs because they have not been able to deploy all the existing SLEs. This begs the question of whether the identification and designation of SLEs are driven by needs (or change in needs) and capacity building; and also, whether the deployment of SLEs follows a systemic approach which utilises, coordinates and brokers SLEs from across the alliance so that they work in mixed teams with other system leaders from different schools.

> There were times when schools did not have the capacity to deploy their SLEs. There were also times when SLEs felt reluctant to miss their own classes.

> Sharing the information about SLEs and getting the offer known to schools remain key challenges for many case study TSAs. The deployment of SLEs tends to rely on "word of mouth" recommendation in some alliances. There are also cases where the provision of SLE support was a response to requests from schools that were actively seeking out support from 'outstanding' schools (rather than knowledge about SLEs).

'The bigger issue has been that the schools that need support are not sure what SLE is about. This has been our biggest frustration. There is a general lack of understanding in schools. Schools are at different stages of understanding what teaching schools are for generally and more specially SLEs. We would like to deploy our SLEs, but there has to be a demand. … It's a broader issue as well which is the marketing of the SLE role on a national basis. It's definitely a challenge. Not all schools know who they are, what they do etc.' (Teaching School Lead, Cultivus TSA)

There were also examples where other services and providers were felt to be competing in the same space. SLEs were not widely seen to be part of a supportive solution. For example, in the case of the West Herts Teaching School Partnership, many schools were continuing to use the LA's Leading Teachers programme for support in areas that the alliance's SLEs could and do cover.

Good relationships with the LA help to signpost and broker SLE and StSS. Evidence suggests that where relations are strong, LAs can have a proactive role in signposting and brokering deployment of SLEs based upon their knowledge of school needs.

Other challenges are related to quality assurance and evidence gathering on the impact of SLE support work. Although evaluation forms are used to document feedback, how such feedback may be reviewed strategically to inform future brokering and deployment is still work in progress.

In the final year of the evaluation, we observed **more creative ways of deploying SLEs** in the majority of the case study alliances. For example, the Colmore TSA has been using its expertise for the design and delivery of ITT, CPD and leadership development courses and programmes. Its expertise was also used in a recently completed research project on Beyond Levels which involved a committed team made up from partner schools across the Alliance.

There are clear benefits to the SLE work identified by staff working as SLEs:

- the opportunity to share practice with other schools

- good opportunities to develop leadership skills of the staff and help build their confidence

- considerable expertise on offer from SLEs in terms of experience and working in other phases and across year groups

- excellent professional development opportunities for SLEs, especially when TSAs actively provide ongoing targeted CPD for SLEs

For example, in the Cultivus TSA (a cohort 1 alliance), despite the challenges, SLEs themselves have been highly positive about the experience of becoming and being an SLE. It is perceived as having been a thought-provoking professional learning and development experience for them. The training they have received had caused them to think beyond their subject knowledge:

> "It has made me much more self-assured about my own skills and abilities. It has made me look beyond in an open door; it has made me respect the skills of others, to be able to help other people questioning and to be able to see that you can have an impact on how other people perceive themselves. It is very rewarding. It ultimately gave the chance to reflect on my own practice, on my own leadership skills." *(SLE, Cultivus TSA)*

There is also evidence which suggests that the experience of working with other schools has enabled SLEs to bring back new experiences and expertise that would benefit the staff and the children in their own schools:

> "I feel particularly honoured to be asked to do that but it enabled me not only to share my own expertise but also to be able to bring it back into school strategies and other areas of excellence that I have recognised that could benefit our own school. I have been able to bring that back and share it with Peter, with the staff and with the children in the class and with my teachers as well. So the impact has been twofold: not only for the school in which I have supported so far, but also back into our own school here." (SLE, Cultivus TSA)

Identification and designation of SLEs have worked well in the majority of case study teaching school alliances. There is evidence which shows that SLE recruitment employs a strategic, targeted approach. Detailed information materials about SLEs are provided to schools; and coordinators work closely with schools within and outside the alliance to identify and develop talent in priority areas for the TSA. Only a small number of TSAs have reported a lack of SLE applications. A small number of case study alliances are creating and building a pool of 'Lead Practitioners' who have the potential to develop into SLEs (e.g. Portswood TSA) or 'Consultants' who share the same calibre as SLEs (Lincolnshire TSA). They are contracted to be deployed for a small number of days per year (so that schools may feel more willing to deploy them) and their expertise covers a wide range of areas that are perceived by individual TSAs to be particularly important and relevant to the needs of their partner schools.

Support for SLEs to share experiences and best practice is yet to be developed in many case study TSAs. In some cases, regular CPD sessions were organised by teaching schools to promote a community of learning among SLEs (though these sessions were not always well attended).

5.5 School-to-school support (StSS)

There is evidence suggesting that school-to-school support can lead to a marked improvement in supported schools, with promising signs of sustainable change. Some impact has been recognised by Ofsted inspectors and recorded in inspection reports. In most case study TSAs, we have found examples of schools being supported out of 'special measures' and TSAs having positive impact on school improvement through supporting planning, joint lesson observations, leadership development, targeted interventions, and staff training.

However, it can be difficult to attribute impact to the TSA StSS only, especially when the supported schools are also part of the multi-academy trusts or other forms of partnerships led by teaching schools (e.g. federations). The following example from the George Spencer TSA (a cohort 1 alliance led by George Spencer Academy) illustrates how the supported schools may benefit from the expertise, capacity and opportunities from both the teaching school alliance and the multi-academy trust. The example also supports the observations in the research literature, outlined in Part One, that school improvement benefits from the impact of a combination of factors, activities and practices that different interventions offer.

This inner city smaller than average primary school serves a socio-economically highly deprived community. When the headteacher was appointed three years ago, its performance was amongst the bottom 200 underperforming schools nationally. George Spencer Academy (GSA) sponsored the academisation of her school in the second year of her headship. Becoming part of The Spencer Academies Trust and being involved in the teaching school work have made significant contributions to the progress and improvement of the school.

First and foremost, the headteacher experienced a steep learning curve and saw her leadership vision, confidence and capacity grow and mature within a short frame of time. Second, the additional financial and human resources associated with academisation enabled her to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Third, the process of capacity building led to a shift in culture where the expectations and aspirations for learning and achievement became higher and where "everyone wants to be on the show all the time" (Headteacher). The school is involved more deeply in the teaching school work because "we now have something to offer". The headteacher has now been brokered by the alliance to support senior leaders in other schools. The Vice-Principal has also been approached to provide leadership support in other local schools and to facilitate on senior and middle leader courses.

In 2014, 90% of pupils achieved Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths and the percentages of children who made expected progress in these three subjects were 100%, 90% and 100% respectively. The results meant that the school was in the top quintile of performers for both attainment and progress when benchmarked against similar schools. In May 2014 the school was judged to be "outstanding" by Ofsted inspectors who highly commended the important contribution of partnerships to the school's achievements, especially in terms of leadership and governance support:

> The academy works very effectively in partnership with the sponsor academy trust and with other local schools to improve the quality of education. Senior staff increasingly take a lead role in training and development initiatives across the partnership. … They are well supported by … the supportive academy trust.

> The governing body manages finances very well and receive excellent support from the academy trust in securing additional funds. (Ofsted, 2014)

Relationships with the LA are perceived as important in sharing data and intelligence for maintained schools and also commissioning support. Where this is working well, as the example of Sheringham TSA shows, there is evidence of more sustainable impact on school improvement. There is also evidence suggesting that brokerage with other TSAs across localities is emerging.

In Sheringham TSA, for example, a strategic steering group was established involving the local authority and teaching schools to review a data dashboard of all 420 primary schools across the authority. The steering group has been meeting DfE representatives regularly. Alongside the meetings of the steering group, the Primary Heads Association – 22 representatives, four from each of five regions and two country-wide representatives – has linked its work with the teaching school alliance priorities.

Of the schools supported in 2013/14, LA data (February 2015) suggests that 68 schools have so far been inspected. Over 50% of the inspected schools have made a grade improvement. A further quarter retained their prior grading (including schools that had previously been judged 'good' but had been risk-assessed by the LA to be likely to be judged to 'require improvement').

Sheringham is currently supporting 48 schools during 2014/15, with 10 new schools in January 2015.

Data is perceived to be critical to enhance the impact of StSS work. Some TSAs have begun to use their own data template to audit and target need, monitor vulnerable schools, and track the impact of support in schools. Experiences of the Bishop Rawstorne, South Lakes and Transform TSAs show that it helps to improve the rigour and impact of StSS work if the intervention strategies and success indicators have been agreed in advance.

However, for the majority of case study TSAs, more systematic QA mechanisms and evidence of progress outcomes and sustainable impact are yet to be developed.

In-depth support which involves secondment of senior and middle leaders is perceived to have generated 'powerful' impact. There are some creative StSS responses to appointing hard to staff subjects, continuing to develop teachers and leaders in closing schools, and appointments that are long term developments towards identified senior leadership gaps.

The Ebor TSA is a cohort 2 alliance led by Manor Church of England Academy Trust and Robert Wilkinson Primary School. Two SLEs from the alliance were deployed on a permanent secondment. The intense deployment of SLEs at two primary schools was a 'great success' with 'real impact', primarily in terms of developing leadership in phases, team leaders, literacy and numeracy, teaching and learning through SLE coaching, thus developing classroom practice. 'Intensive school-to-school support can have a dramatic effect' (TS lead), as evidenced in coaching and developing staff.

School-to-school support work provides opportunities for leadership development. Some TSAs have been undertaking work to co-ordinate the training and deployment of the local leaders of education across the authority. Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) have been deployed by the alliances to support schools, for example, in the case of the Transform TSA, to help close gaps in attainment between different pupil groups.

The Transform TSA is a cohort 2 alliance led by Sneinton St Stephen's Church of England Primary School. The LA views Transform as a key player in an NLE deployment project which involves three TSAs and four LAs to build capacity in the area. Deployments of LLEs/NLES into leadership in other schools, heads of schools, aspiring leaders programmes and Transform Leaders of Education (TLEs) are shared as innovative approaches to StSS that build capacity. The impact of the alliance's StSS work can be seen in the case of a school which moved from 'requires improvement' in 2013 to 'good' in 2015: 'The school has built strong links with the University of Nottingham and the Transform Teaching Schools Alliance to extend the skills of leaders and teachers, and to maintain its drive for improvement' (Ofsted, 2015). The headteacher of this school is now shadowing others to become an LLE.

Support from a TSA is seen by supported schools as being much more flexible and less judgemental than support from the LA. Coaching is perceived to be critical to StSS work and is welcomed by supported schools.

5.6   Research and development (R&D)

Evidence from the second and third visits suggests that **although some alliances (both primary-led and secondary-led) are still yet to develop this strand of work, others (an increasing majority) have been proactively promoting R&D in their schools. Inquiry-led joint practice development across schools is thus emerging and/or developing.** The Lincolnshire and Manchester TSAs, for example,

are currently conducting a research audit across member schools to identify and collate the work that is being undertaken across the Alliance, pool ideas and create a repository of good practice that they can utilise to develop and embed inquiry-based research cultures across all the partner schools.

The Portswood TSA, a cohort 1 alliance, is led by Portswood Primary School. In autumn 2014, the NCTL published 'Developing research clubs in teaching schools' by Dr Keith Watson, Director of Teaching and Learning at Portswood and St Mary's, in which he set out how research work has grown in the Portswood TSA where he has developed a Research Club, participating in large-scale national projects, developing and sharing research across the alliance, and leading and coordinating small-scale action research projects. Much of the larger scale research is in the field of coaching (which started before the designation of the Teaching School status) and the impact is described by Ofsted (March 2012):

> 'The programme of coaching is starting to improve the quality of teaching. One significant initiative has been the appointment of a member of staff to act as a coach, supported through the local teaching school alliance, to make possible the professional development of other teachers. The improvement is beginning to have a positive impact.'

Some alliances found that embedding R&D in all aspects of the TSA work enables them to develop teachers and pupils as researchers. In some alliances School Development Plans are increasingly being influenced by research. This is, at least in part, a response to the recent government promotion of evidence-based teaching (e.g. Education Endowment Fund (EEF) Toolkit, provision of a range of grants, NCTL's national R&D network). Teacher-led inquiries increasingly underpin CPD. Moreover, R&D is also seen as a springboard to Masters level study.

Sacred Heart High School, teaching school of the West London TSA (WLTSA), recognises that a sustained approach to CPD is more effective than a one off course or workshop. The WLTSA has worked very closely with the Tri-borough and two other teaching schools to produce an overarching framework that looks at CPD opportunities for all staff from NQT through to aspiring and experienced heads.

The school has engaged with a consultant to deliver a number of training sessions looking at 'intellectual curiosity' as a theme. They have also been accepted onto the Leading Edge R&D programme for assessment for learning. In addition, the school is developing an approach to research that is embedded in the alliance's provision of professional development activities. As a starting point, a number of Innovation Streams have been launched, including Lesson Study and Assessment without Levels. A number of speakers on the issues that the streams are examining will then be brought in to support their work. The aim is to start to publish and share the results of research output activity, although it is recognised that it will take some time to realise this.

HEI partnerships are perceived by the majority of the case study teaching schools to have provided promising R&D opportunities. The large majority of the R&D projects reported by our case study TSAs involved HEI partners. Schools were highly positive and appreciative of the roles that their HEI partners played in the design and development of their R&D activities – not least because of the research knowledge, skills and expertise as well as resources and networks that their university partners could offer. There are also examples of HEI qualifications being moulded more closely to the schools' development priorities, and even to delivery taking place on school sites. However, relationships with HEI partners are not always stable. Changing partnerships through ITT, for example, can pose challenges to existing R&D projects.

The **challenges** so far have been securing the time and involvement from other schools (including the active involvement of class teachers), accessing academic journals and papers, accessing materials about what other teaching schools are doing and getting involved in national R&D activity. Senior leaders in some schools still find it difficult to engage with the R&D agenda. Achieving a school-wide and alliance-wide understanding of research in a school context is still to be developed in the majority of case study alliances.

6. Managing finances

6.1 Growth and development

6.1.1 The emergence of different business models

Separate companies

The large majority of the case study teaching school alliances in this evaluation have not set up a separate company. The most common practice has been to establish a Teaching School budget so that the schools are able to keep their teaching school funds separate from the main school budget. Teaching schools then monitor income and expenditure on a regular basis using a separate cost centre and a forecasting spreadsheet, following the structures and approaches that the schools already have in place. As the business model and approach have evolved and been refined over time, it becomes easier for schools to track the income and expenditure streams. In some TSAs additional committee arrangements have been established to scrutinise the TSA. For example, Denbigh TSA has created a sub-committee of their Finance Committee which has allowed for more discussion and made the initiative more open to the Governing Body. All case studies commented on the importance of having a competent Business Manager.

However, two years on since their designation as teaching schools, a small number of cohorts 1 and 2 case study alliances have established or are in the process of establishing **separate, not-for-profit companies** or some other mechanism for separating out the management of funding for the teaching school[62].

Multi-academy trusts

In half of the case study alliances where the teaching schools are also leaders of multi-academy trusts, the development of MATs is interacting with that of teaching school alliances through their financial structures in ways which ensure that **the teaching school business model benefits from the expert input and financial security of the MAT**[63].

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[62] Including Elmridge Teaching School (of Cultivus TSA), Ebor, Partnership, Salop, Transform and West Hertfordshire TSAs.

[63] There are different types of relationships between MAT and TSA nationally. There are cases where the whole TSA is one whole MAT. In other TSAs, there is representation from one or a number of MATs. In this evaluation, we have identified examples in the latter case. However, because we have limited first-hand data from MATs that are 'alliance members' of our case study TSAs, the focus of our analysis has been placed on MATs that are led by our case study teaching schools.

The Aspire Academies Trust that has been created at the heart of the West Herts Teaching School Partnership (WHTSP) includes the two cohort 1 teaching schools and a third sponsored academy. The three schools were independent of each other when the TSA was set up. When the headteachers of the two teaching schools announced their retirement, the TSA was a key factor in considering what to do next. The governors were clear that they wanted the alliance to continue, and felt that the creation of a MAT for the three academies would maximise their chances of recruiting a high-quality headteacher who could also run the TSA. WHTSP is now described by the Chair of the Board of Trustees as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Aspire MAT for which the Board feels accountable.

A Subsidiary Board has been set up that includes the new Executive Headteacher, the headteachers of the three academies, and two trustees. A Chief Finance Officer was appointed in 2014. The new approach will allow the three academies, the TSA and the MAT to be tracked as separate entities. A key consideration is that the TSA should not have a detrimental impact on any of the academies, financially or otherwise. The cost and impact balance of the TSA still 'feels a bit mixed ... we have gone through all the pain and are only just beginning to see the benefits. It will take time, we are still in early formation' (Chair of the Board of Trustees). The Trustees have so far spent much longer dealing with establishing the MAT than on the development of the TSA and communicating outwards to others. The feeling is that there is better capacity now that they have the Chief Finance Officer and School Business Managers, which has improved efficiency and effectiveness – for example, in discharging oversight of contracts, and removing the inefficiency that was resulting from three academies using different banks with different charges. An external procurement consultancy has been engaged, with the intent of delivering specific financial benefits.

Membership fees

The 26 case study teaching school alliances have divided views on the charging of membership fees. Although the majority do not charge fees, a small number have begun to consider this option. TSAs such as Denbigh that do not charge membership fee tend to stress that the decision is driven by moral commitments rather than financial interests, and by their desire to work with a number of partners and to avoid exclusive relationships. They tend to use a 'pay as you go' system to cover costs.

For the George Spencer TSA, the reasons for not charging membership fees are threefold:

First, it was believed that every school should have the right to become a member of more than one teaching school alliance so that they are able to benefit from working with different alliances in different ways.

Second, it was felt that membership fees could pose additional financial pressure on small primary schools and thus restrict their opportunities for improvement.

Last but not least, the alliance would not want their member schools to feel duty bound by financial arrangements. Rather, they would like to attract and retain member schools with which they have developed good trusting relationships and which feel genuinely 'loyal' to the Alliance because of their shared moral purpose.

George Spencer generates income by making a charge for participation in its CPD and leadership programmes. For others[64], charging variable membership fees is seen as a way of securing the financial sustainability of the TSA and addressing partners' varied levels of need through the deployment and specific focus of a central team. The membership fees usually vary according to the size of the partner school and can be renegotiated. A standard membership allows the partner to access development opportunities and courses at reduced (or no) cost.

In everyonelearning@ TSA (a cohort 2 alliance led by Hawthorns School), three levels of membership are based upon individual schools' contributions to the teaching school work: beneficiary, contributor and engager. The Alliance is planning to charge membership fees in the near future and it is expected that the scale of membership fee may relate to these three levels.

Irrespective of their decision on membership fees, all TSAs in our evaluation emphasised that income and margins from teaching school activities are reinvested in the teaching school and the alliance to build and expand capacity and secure the administrative infrastructure for further development of the teaching school work.

6.1.2 Marketing

An important change identified in our second and third visits is that **marketing has become a growing area of expertise** in some teaching school alliances[65]. They have learned to use the media and other communication and network channels (e.g. social media, through local authorities) to proactively market and publicise their activities and programmes. Understanding how to position themselves in what is becoming an increasingly competitive market is **a major change** for some.

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[64] For example, Lincolnshire, Transform and West Herts TSAs

[65] For example, Bishop Rawstorne, Denbigh, George Spencer, Portswood, West Herts and West London TSAs

6.2 Challenges to financial sustainability: a sense of vulnerability

Financial sustainability is seen as a persistent and continuing challenge by almost all the teaching school alliances in our evaluation.

Over time there has been sharper understanding of the '*true cost*' of running a TSA to the teaching school. As we have previously stated in this report, the missing link in the calculation of costs is the uncosted leadership time, especially the time that headteachers and other senior leaders have invested in building and developing their alliances. Time taken for meetings is not costed either, and this is usually substantial. Although most teaching schools have now learned to charge a percentage of income from course income, room hires and brokerage of support to the TSA, the idea of a financially self-sustaining model still does not appear viable.

Qualitative evidence from the survey supports the above observations. In Question 9 participants were asked to list leadership challenges to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their TSAs. As noted by one of the respondents,

> The current system[66] for allocating ITT places (both School Direct and PGCE) is a huge drain on staff time and resources with no guarantee of a place at the end of the process. There seems to have been little or no consideration by [NCTL] or the DFE of the amount of admin time that running an effective Teaching School requires.

And by another,

> The most significant challenge of all is capacity. We often get requests for work we simply cannot fulfil due to the lack of teachers able to be released from the classroom. Also, there is a delicate balance to be created between supporting other schools and protecting your own provision.

The biggest concern here, as captured in the quotation above, is in maintaining what the respondent describes as 'the delicate balance' between protecting the needs of one's own school whilst simultaneously supporting the needs of other schools. Another respondent captures this well when noting that,

> Capacity, capacity, capacity! I find there is a conflict in our core business of teaching and learning for pupils in our school to meeting all the expectations of being a Teaching School.

The respondent below indicates that 'a constant challenge' is that 'using great staff for TSA work takes them out of the classroom':

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[66] 2015 allocation model

For example for the last 2 years of my 3 years, six teachers have had extensive BIG 6 duties and therefore only 50% teaching duties which we have remedied as from Sept'14.

Four other factors are perceived to have also contributed to teaching schools' concern over financial sustainability:

First, budget planning for demand-led activity such as the CPD offer and StSS has proved to be difficult because of the unpredictability of future demand. The Partnership TSA, for example, experienced a significant reduction in their CPD income in 2013-14 (down to 25% of previous year's figure). The Salop TSA recognises the challenge that the 'market gets exhausted' in a rural area with low teacher mobility.

Second, core funding split between teaching schools in job-share or multiple alliances can be a significant issue in terms of reduced resources. The adverse effects of this have become more perceptible over time, despite that the expected scale of TSA development is equivalent to a single alliance.

Third, although schools are perhaps beginning to understand the need to pay for the services that alliances provide, there remains a feeling in some case study teaching schools that becoming a provider in an increasingly competitive market is not compatible with the moral purpose of the alliance, especially in situations where schools that are in most need of support cannot afford to pay for it.

The Norwich TSA is a cohort 3 alliance, led by Eaton Hall Specialist Academy. The executive headteacher of the teaching school reported that the local culture of schools buying support is relatively new and not common practice; consequently some schools are reluctant to pay directly for services or training provided by teaching schools, particularly when school budgets become tighter and for schools in challenging circumstances who are often financially challenged. Leaders of the alliance felt that the teaching school model nationally was likely to continue to require subsidy and reflected that more could be done to positively promote the teaching school model and develop a better understanding of the role of system leaders.

Last but not least, the reduction and the potential eventual end of core funding to teaching schools is perceived by the large majority of the case study teaching schools as the most significant risk to sustainability. Whilst such a concern can be seen in teaching schools across all phases, alliances led by infant, special and primary schools appear to have expressed a greater sense of financial vulnerability.

The Portswood TSA, a primary-led cohort 1 alliance, sees in the teaching school model that there is a danger that it could be viewed as 'school improvement on the cheap'. Leaders of the TSA said that they wanted to offer more training to SLEs, NQTs and NPQH candidates, but 'we would soon be out of pocket if we extend this to too many staff.' SLEs commented that the TSA work gives them extra responsibility, but no extra pay.

The challenge for the TSA is seen to be sustainability, with scarce resources of time and money being used by Portswood and St Mary's, as well as the other strategic partners. 'Core schools put in lots of time and effort. A continuing grant may be needed to sustain our current level of TSA work.'

6.3 Summary

In sum, financial sustainability remains a serious and persisting challenge for all TSAs. The current central funding is important in maintaining the administrative and governance infrastructure for the TSA work. It is also of critical importance in enabling them to broaden and deepen the impact of their work on improvement.

Results from the national survey of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools support this observation. Almost all (91%) of the senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs reported that financial sustainability is a persistent and continuing challenge for their alliances, with more than half (55%) in strong agreement with this. The vast majority (87%) also agreed that the financial models of their TSAs are not sustainable without central funding. Qualitative data from the survey offer some explanation of these results. As noted by one of the respondents,

> The lack of a sustained funding stream from central government makes strategic planning impossible. The constant need to 'bid' for money is time consuming and may not address local issues. It puts a constraint on our ability to innovate.

One argument, illustrated by the quoted extract provided below, is that core funding is 'a minimum requirement' for the sustainability and long term success of the teaching schools.

> Capacity and sustainability are issues. This is an exciting initiative that produces some outstanding work. However, it requires a great deal of time and commitment from the teaching school. Capacity and sustainability are ongoing issues and core funding is a minimum

requirement. Whilst we have the start of a school led system, it is still a long way to go.

Taken together, evidence from the case studies and the survey strongly suggests that after a couple of years' exploration and reflection, our case study TSAs have become clearer about the shape and identity of their alliances (i.e. who they are, whom they would like to recruit in their alliances and why), what they are for (i.e. their mission) and what they can and should do to enact their values and achieve their missions.

Almost all case study TSAs have extended their collaborations with other (neighbouring and occasionally more distant) TSAs, local authorities and HEI partners so that they are able to create and build a collective pool of expertise, intelligence and capacity for more effective delivery of their TSA work. To create and sustain the partnerships and their associated infrastructures is a time consuming but worthwhile task.

Given that most of these developments are still in their infancy but have begun to show promising impact (more details in Section 7 in Part 3), it is felt that it has become even more important that the government continues to invest in TSAs so that the partnerships and infrastructures can be embedded to support greater and more sustained and sustainable impact on improvement.

Part 3: The Past, Present and Future of the Teaching School Programme: Challenges for Quality and Sustainability

The purpose of Part 3 is to synthesise the findings from this evaluation and discuss issues relating to the impact, quality and sustainability of the teaching school initiative and its role in the development towards a school-led self-improving system in England by bringing together different strands of qualitative and quantitative data.

Discussion will be based on evidence from the 26 case study teaching school alliances and the national survey of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools. It will also take into account the secondary analysis which used propensity score matching (PSM) and multilevel modelling techniques to analyse the National Pupil Database and explore the relationship between being part of a Teaching School Alliance and pupil outcomes at Key Stages 2 and 4.

We will analyse issues related to sustaining the quality and momentum of the teaching school programme at local, regional and national levels. We will also examine implications for accountability and systemic support and make recommendations on ways to enable, improve and sustain the potential of teaching schools and their activity to support the aims of promoting an educational system that is intended to be school-led and self-improving.

7. Impact on improvement

A key area of our investigation was to understand the extent to which, and how, teaching schools and their activity have made a difference to the processes of school improvement and supported improved student outcomes.

In order to have a more nuanced understanding of the major influences that the teaching school work has (or has not) made on improvement within and across schools, we have adopted a broad view of 'impact' in this evaluation.

- At the **individual school level** (especially teaching schools where most data were available), we examined not only the measured impac*t* in terms of student outcomes but also the perceived impact on a range of key intermediate outcomes of school improvement processes.

  There is robust research evidence (e.g. Leithwood et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2009; Day et al., 2011) which suggests that key intermediate outcomes such as teacher commitment and professional development can promote improved pupil behaviour and motivation for learning – which in turn may have effects on pupil academic outcomes. Exploring the perceived differences that the teaching school work has made to such school improvement indicators has enabled us to present evidence of impact that does not solely focus on the measurable outcomes, but also examines the process outcomes that are likely to support better outcomes for students in the longer term.

- At the **TSA level**, we focussed on the extent of reported changes and improvement that teaching school alliances had experienced over time. Key aspects of changes included collaboration and sharing of practice within the TSA, leadership development, teacher practice and supply, and research and development. We also reviewed 'impact' in terms of improvement in pupil academic outcomes in strategic partner schools and alliance schools.

- At the **system level**, we examined the organisational and partnership mechanisms and systems that teaching school alliances had developed and established with other school improvement stakeholders within the locality and the ways and extent to which they were (or were not) able to influence and improve the social and collaborative capital and standards of teaching and learning in schools locally, regionally and/or beyond.

7.1 Impact on teaching schools

7.1.1 The perceptions of teaching school leaders of the impact on teachers and teaching within their own teaching schools

In the survey we sought to explore the extent to which involvement in the teaching school work was perceived by senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs as having helped to improve aspects of teaching and learning in their own teaching schools (Q7). Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 in Appendix 5 provide the results of descriptive analyses.

Six areas – mostly related to **teachers and teaching** – were perceived by at least half of the participants as having improved 'a lot' and 'very significantly'. Given that a primary focus of the teaching school initiative is to develop teachers and school leaders, this is not a surprising finding. However, it is notable that in almost half the cases respondents did not report such strong effects – which also points to variations in such perceived impacts on teachers and teaching.

- 68% reported that their schools' involvement in the TSA had helped to improve **teachers' commitment to professional development** in their own schools 'a lot' and 'significantly'. Almost 1 in 4 (24%) felt that such benefit was 'very significant'. One in 4 reported 'partial' effects and only 2 respondents felt that involvement in the TSA work had not helped to improve teachers' commitment to professional development.

- 54% reported that the contribution to the **leadership of teaching and learning** in their own schools was 'a lot' and 'very significant'. More than 1 in 5 (22%) reported a 'very significant' contribution.

- 53% reported that the benefit to the **climate and culture of the school** was 'a lot' and 'very significant'. Again, more than 1 in 5 (21%) reported 'very significant' contributions.

- 52% reported that their schools' involvement in the TSA had helped to improve **the ways in which teachers teach** as well as the **quality of teacher recruitment** in their own schools 'a lot' and 'significantly'.

- 50% reported that the TSA work had also helped to **improve teachers' commitment to their own schools** 'a lot' and 'very significantly'.

The majority of participants (59%) felt that the TSA work had *not* or had only *partially* helped to improve **reduction in teacher turnover** in their schools, with 1 in 5 (21%) reporting that it made no difference at all. Only a small minority of senior leaders (10%) thought the influence was 'very significant'. The reasons may be twofold. First,

we know from the literature that a key characteristic of 'successful' school leadership is to support teachers' professional learning and development and through this, enhance their motivation and commitment needed to foster improvement (e.g. Day & Sammons, 2013; Matthews, Rea, Hill & Gu, 2014). Such leadership actions and strategies can influence teacher retention and attendance. Thus, a key characteristic of effective, high performing schools (key eligibility criteria for Teaching Schools), is a *relatively* stable and able staff (i.e. low rates of teacher attrition) and its collective capacity for managing and engaging in change (Hopkins, 2001; Sammons, 2008). Evidence from the vast majority of the case study teaching schools also supports this, illustrating what we have seen in the literature that 'schools must seek to retain teachers who demonstrate that they are skilled and effective in the classroom, are committed to student learning, and are ready and able to contribute to the improvement of their school' (Johnson et al., 2005: 2). In summary, teacher supply and retention remain areas of concern in many schools.

Second, as presented in Part 2 of this report, there is ample evidence from the case studies which shows that the development of TSAs can create 'powerful' professional development and career progression opportunities for teachers and school leaders. These opportunities may motivate staff and help to retain them. In other cases staff may be motivated to then move schools for further career progression.

The Salop TSA is a cohort 2 alliance led by The Priory School. The TSA link was seen as 'very advantageous' by a strategic partner school which 'jumped wholesale' into ITP and OTP in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. One of the two SLEs in this school has been retained through the development opportunities afforded by this route. Engaging in the TSA's StSS work had also helped to develop the senior leadership capacity in the school: 'working in the TSA opens doors to push SLT to take opportunities and be part of it'. They had been 'empowered, and given experience and confidence'. The school saw impact in improved teaching and learning and especially in the high calibre teachers coming to the school through ITT. Another strategic partner school reported that the 'particularly rewarding' benefits for their senior leaders and colleagues had been having 'out of school opportunity without moving schools'.

7.1.2 The perceptions of teaching school leaders of the impact on pupils and pupil achievement within their own teaching schools

The results of the national survey of teaching schools' senior leaders suggests that they perceive less tangible improvement in pupil-related outcomes so far. This is in line with findings from the statistical analyses of pupil outcomes (see 7.1.3 below).

- Only 1 in 5 (21%) of senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of alliances reported that the TSA work had helped to improve **pupil behaviour** in their schools 'a lot' and 'very significantly'. In contrast, slightly more than 1 in 4 (29%) reported *no* impact on pupil behaviour in their schools.

- Close to half (47%) reported that the influence on the **engagement of pupils in learning** was 'partial' and another 7% reported no influence at all. In contrast, only 1 in 10 (13%) reported that their school's involvement in the TSA work had helped to improve pupils' engagement in learning 'very significantly'.

- Less than a third reported that the TSA work had helped to improve **pupil attainment** (26%) and **pupil progress** (29%) 'a lot' and 'very significantly' in their schools. The majority reported that the contribution was 'partial' (55% for pupil attainment; 48% for pupil progress).

- Only 1 in 4 (25%) reported that the TSA work had helped to improve **the attainment gap** between FSM pupils and their peers in their schools 'a lot' and 'very significantly'. Almost 1 in 5 (19%) reported *no* impact on the closing of the attainment gap in their schools.

One possible interpretation of the above results is that in these high performing (which is a key eligibility criterion for this initiative) teaching schools, issues related to pupil behaviour, attainment and progress are no longer a challenge. Rather, they feature as strengths of these schools. This is supported by evidence from the school improvement and school effectiveness literature which shows that orderly pupil behaviour, motivation and engagement in learning are key characteristics of 'effective schools' and have a direct impact on pupil academic outcomes (e.g. Sammons, 2008).[67] In addition, as a school-level intervention which has a specific focus on developing teachers and school leaders, the effect of the initiative on pupil-related outcomes is likely to be indirect and less tangible. The evaluation of the impact of Network Learning Communities in the mid 2000s similarly found that only a minority of their participating teachers and leaders believed that networking had an

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[67] The original intention was to identify whether strategic partner schools, as well as teaching schools, had experienced changes in these key intermediate indicators of school improvement – which would help to shed light on the direct and indirect impact of the initiative on achievement. Unfortunately, we were not able to develop the analysis on strategic partner schools because of their low response rates.

important direct impact on improving pupil attainment or behaviour outcomes (Sammons et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, there is evidence from the case studies which suggests that the activities related to 'being a teaching school' may have other positive impacts on pupils. As the example from the Cultivus TSA illustrates, the sense of ownership and pride of success that the staff of the two teaching schools have experienced has also influenced their pupils.

> The cultures of the two cohort 1 teaching schools were perceived by their staff as having become 'more open', 'more reflective' (Middle Leader, Elmridge), and 'more forward thinking' (Middle Leader, St Chad's). There was a stronger sense of collegiality and a greater level of trust and collaboration amongst the staff. Learning focussed communities are seen to have taken root in the two schools.
>
> Such a strong sense of ownership of the expansion of their 'horizons' was also found to be shared by the children. At Elmridge, children are seen to have become more reflective in their own learning. They enjoy showing visitors around their school. At St Chad's, children see themselves as 'being very lucky' because 'we are in a protective bubble': 'We have very good teachers in our school. We are very lucky. Children in other schools also deserve good teachers. We don't mind sharing our teachers with them.' (Year 6 pupils, St Chad's)

Four areas of change that were cited by participating leaders as having had the most positive impact on pupil achievement in their teaching schools.

Senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs were asked to provide up to four areas of change relating to their and their schools' involvement in the teaching school initiative which, in their view, had the most positive impact on pupil achievement in their teaching schools.

Responses to this question are broadly in line with the evidence from the case studies and the survey results reported above on teachers and teaching. They reaffirm our observation that the direct influence of the teaching school work is on improvement of the quality of teaching and school leadership – which is achieved through the various professional learning and development opportunities and mechanisms that this creates.

Opportunities for high quality professional development were reported by 112 participating senior leaders (75%) as having made significant contributions to the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. The following points were raised:

Professional learning on our door step – we offer a wide range of events and ongoing professional learning within our school that colleagues here can access.

Teachers reflect on their practice and thus focus even more on the learning and progress of pupils as a result of being mentors for trainees on ITT programmes.

Raising the profile of teachers and [Teaching Assistants] (TAs) in the development of practice to support other schools, by its nature, raises achievement in our school.

We believe that teachers who have experience at delivering outward facing support become better teachers and that this benefits our own pupils.

More detailed examples can be found in all lead teaching schools of the case study TSAs. The following accounts from senior leaders of the Cultivus and Manchester TSAs clearly show that the development of the alliance work relies on a 'collective commitment' from the staff in the lead teaching schools which in turn provides 'the best career development opportunities for all' (Executive Head, Elmridge Teaching School):

> The Manchester TSA is a cohort 3 alliance jointly by Chorlton Park Primary School and Brookburn Primary School. Reflecting on the successes of the teaching school to date, colleagues in the alliance underscored the opportunities that had arisen as a result of the CPD on offer, as this senior leader explains: 'from my perspective, having an eye on the ground, the opportunities for staff within our own schools have been fantastic. They've had the opportunity to train as mentors or facilitators, to attend CPD that we have provided ourselves and to visit other schools either in a supportive capacity or to develop their own skills.'

Opportunities for senior and middle leader development were reported by a minority of 33 participants (22%) as having made a difference to leadership quality and retention in their schools. This finding lends supports to our observation on the growth and development of TSA leadership reported in 3.2.1. Evidence from all case studies shows how leading and engaging in the design and provision of ITT and CPD programmes and school-to-school support (including SLE support) had helped to 'empower schools from the middle up'. As indicated by one respondent,

There are opportunities for middle leaders to extend their experience within our school instead of leaving – opportunities for growth mean that we keep excellent teachers.

Sharing of good and outstanding teaching practice and collaborative working through networks and partnerships was the second most frequently reported factor by over a quarter (42 survey participants, 28%) as having made a difference to pupil achievement in their teaching schools. These activities were perceived to have helped to keep teaching schools abreast of 'current national expectations' and 'educational thinking around the world', and to create opportunities to work with outstanding providers of different phase and nature and in different contexts.

There is further evidence from the survey that supports this. Correlation analysis was used to explore the extent to which the characteristics of TSAs (Qs2-4) may have contributed to the perceived changes (or no change) in participating senior leaders' own schools (Q7). Again, because of the limited number of responses from strategic partner schools (n=22), we were only able to analyse and report results related to teaching schools. It is important to emphasise that correlation indicates an association (in this case two-tailed) between two aspects (i.e. characteristics of TSAs and perceived changes in teaching schools) and this should not be interpreted as implying causality in either direction.

Increasing dialogue and communication about standards and improvement within the alliance was found to have positive, though modest statistically significant associations with almost all the areas relating to **teachers and teaching** (as well as pupil progress):

1) Teachers' commitment to your school (r=0.37, p<0.001)

2) The way teachers teach (r=0.35, p<0.001)

3) The climate and culture of the school (r=0.35, p<0.001)

4) Teachers' commitment to their work (r=0.35, p<0.001)

5) The school's approach to learning (r=0.34, p<0.001)

6) Reduction in teacher turnover (r=0.34, p<0.001)

7) Leadership of teaching and learning (r=0.34, p<0.001)

8) Pupil progress (r=0.33, p<0.001)

9) The quality of teacher recruitment (r=0.30, p<0.001)

In addition, collaborating with neighbouring TSAs was found to have positive, moderate and statistically highly significant associations with i) the way teachers

teach (r=0.32, p<0.001) and ii) the school's approach to learning (r=0.32, p<0.001) in respondents' teaching schools.

The third most frequently reported area of change was **recruitment and retention of 'better quality' and 'excellent' trainees and NQTs.** Twenty-seven (18%) participants felt that improvement in the quality of trainees and NQTs had impacted positively on performance in their schools. One respondent made this point passionately when s/he indicated that it ensured that the teaching school was,

> … able to prepare School Direct trainees in school so that they are aware of the needs of the pupils and the policies and procedures of the school. Thus, when they start as NQTs they are ready to teach the pupils and ensure that they make continual progress.

The extent to which this has encouraged and excited staff was noted by another respondent,

> School Direct and the opportunity to develop others with full responsibility has really fired up teachers and has created an additional resource from which pupils benefit.

In all the case study alliances, there was an unsurprising clear preference for school-led ITT provision which was allied with a greater sense of ownership and confidence in schools in terms of recruiting and producing high quality teachers for the profession. Whilst teaching schools tended to emphasise their focus on quality over quantity in the ITT provision, their university partners tended to stress the importance of focussing on developing individual trainees' potential for a career in the wider teaching profession. The difference in viewpoints and practice may be related to the ways in which trainees' quality and suitability is evaluated, and how soon they could be expected to be held accountable for a significant teaching load and a good performance in the classroom. For schools, the criteria appeared to be firmly driven by a decision as to whether they would offer this person a job in their own schools immediately after the initial training year[68].

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[68] Because ITT was not a specific focus of this study, we did not examine HEI practice in the selection and training of trainees. We are, therefore, not in a position to comment on these perceived differences.

In the North Liverpool Alliance (a cohort 3 alliance), while they appreciate the important role of universities as the accrediting body, they believe they can ensure a higher level of quality from their position in the system by developing their own accountability and monitoring structures, as this deputy headteacher explains: 'something we've added in as an additional accountability measure for the mentoring of the trainee teachers is to add in an additional layer of quality assurance which has meant that the schools are very much leading the system rather than it being top-down and university led. Yes, we know that universities are there as the accrediting provider. However, the decisions are being triangulated with school and trainee and quality assured by us as the lead school then passed on to the university.' For example, the alliance schools have regular mentor moderation meetings where trainee mentors discuss the mentoring process, any issues they might have and share ideas, which the deputy headteacher of the lead school describes as 'incredibly powerful.' Furthermore, the salaried route enables a consistency of practice across the alliance schools in terms of ITT, as the Professional Lead for ITT explains; 'the schools that are involved are all sending out the same messages about teacher training … I really value it very highly.'

The fourth area of change that was also reported by a minority of 18% (n=27) of the survey respondents was the **development of enquiry-based approaches to teacher learning**. Evidence-based practitioner research was perceived to be an effective approach to improving teachers' understanding of learning and practice of teaching – which would subsequently have a positive impact on pupil achievement. As indicated by the following respondents,

> Staff development through R and D especially has made teachers more confident, creative and evaluative.

> CPD opportunities which involve evidence-based practitioner research, focused on facilitating pupil progress.

As we have reported in Section 5.6, for an increasing majority of the case study teaching schools, research and development activity is seen as an approach to improving pedagogy and standards of teaching and learning. Funding remains a challenge to the development and expansion of school-based enquiry, 'as does the capacity to support more projects' (Director of Teaching and Learning, Portswood TSA).

The following example from the George Spencer Teaching School illustrates how practitioner enquiry has been developed as a whole school model for improving practice and standards of teaching and learning.

The George Spencer Academy has implemented a school-wide model that integrates practitioner enquiry into our appraisal process. The model hinges around the use of teacher learning communities (TLC) and a minimum of 50 per cent of timetabled CPD time is given to the functioning of TLCs to include an INSET day for 'best practice' visits. Each TLC is led by an enquiry leader who supports and challenges the group to achieve its goals.

This model was introduced in 2012/13. Since then, it has contributed to a culture in the school where improvements in professional practice are informed by evidence. Teachers' key enquiry questions are related directly to school improvement priorities for teaching and learning. In 2013/14 they were aligned to the concept of meta-analyses, using the top 10 interventions from Hattie's Visible Learning (2009). The school used the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) DIY evaluation toolkit to develop enquiry templates. Efforts were made to ensure that the templates were an integral part of the appraisal system so that staff did not see enquiries as an add-on to the process and that enquiry outcomes and outputs could be circumvented at the final review by appraisers and appraisees.

The school recognises the important role of enquiry leaders in monitoring the quality of practitioner enquiries. In order to improve their competence to plan and conduct practitioner enquiries and effectively support and challenge staff in their TLCs, training workshops which focussed on designing and reviewing enquiry action plans were organised. Senior leaders from other alliance schools were also invited to be involved in the workshops. The intention was to engage them in a dialogue about practitioner enquiries. An enquiry leader handbook was created to set out the expectations for enquiry leaders at George Spencer Academy and for use as a reference and a guide.

The school's virtual learning environment hosts a wealth of materials associated with the Sutton Trust, Evidence for Policy and Practice (EPPI) Centre, EEF toolkit and summaries of Hattie's interventions. These materials were extended as a repository for professionals across that alliance.

Staff surveys are carried out at the end of each annual cycle to review the impact of practitioner enquiries on teachers' professional practices and the learning of pupils. Almost 1 in 4 (n=19, 24 per cent) reported that their enquiries helped them to **improve their practice as a teacher and/or leader** 'very significantly'/ 'a lot'. More specifically, undertaking practitioner enquiries was seen by

- 62 per cent (n=51) as having helped to improve a shared commitment to high standards of teaching and learning in the school;

- almost 1 in 5 (n=16, 19 per cent) as having 'very significantly' improved the school's approach to learning;

- more than 1 in 5 (n=18, 22 per cent) as having 'very significantly' improved a shared commitment to collaboration with colleagues to improve their professional practice.

7.1.3 Relationship between pupil academic outcomes and teaching school status

The analysis of the National Pupil Database, led by Professor Daniel Muijs, used propensity score matching (PSM)[69] and multilevel modelling techniques to explore the relationship between being part of a teaching school alliance (as teaching schools, strategic partner schools and alliance schools) and pupil outcomes at Key Stages 2 and 4. The study used the following outcome variables:

- Headline performance indicators, i.e. Average Points Score and attaining level 4 or above in mathematics, reading and writing for Key Stage 2; and Total Points Score and attaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grade A* to C, including English and mathematics GCSEs for Key Stage 4

- Progress from KS1 to KS2 in mathematics, reading and writing

- Headline attainment measures for disadvantaged pupils.

The findings show that **teaching schools significantly outperformed comparator schools on both key measures and in all three cohorts (cohorts 1-3)**. Effect sizes varied but reached up to 5% of total variance at Key Stage 2 and up to 4% of total variance at Key Stage 4, and a third of school level variance in some cases at both Key Stages. The effect size is large enough at the school level to be notable.

These results show that teaching schools are indeed high performing (as they are intended to be by their selection). It provides reassuring evidence that being leaders of TSAs had no detrimental impact on their own schools' results. This is important for leaders and governors of teaching schools who, as we have learned from the case studies, were concerned about the potential negative impact on the learning and performance of their own pupils of taking their best teachers out of the classrooms, and the perceived danger of them possibly being distracted from the core business of their own school by teaching school work. It suggests that the strategies that teaching schools have used (e.g. building capacity; overstaffing the school; using high quality, stable support staff) to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching and

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[69] This analysis is to be published separately by the DfE.

learning when their outstanding teachers are doing support work somewhere else have been successful. As the Executive Headteacher of the Elmridge Teaching School (Cultivus TSA) puts it,

'As long as we break even, I'd build capacity within the school. … We can't do this without additional resources because Elmridge is the most important thing and Elmridge has to keep, maintain and improve our standards. Because if we do not do that, we lose everything. This is what parents send their children to our school for. It is about getting that delicate balance correct.'

This result is in accord with evidence on the perceived positive impact of the teaching school work on teachers and teaching that we identified in the survey. It also lends support to the qualitative evidence from the case studies which demonstrates in detail how involvement in the design and delivery of a wide range of teaching school work has helped to broaden the staff's horizons and contribute to their increased individual as well as collective professionalism, morale, commitment and capability in the teaching schools – all of which, as the research tells us, contribute to improvement in pupil learning and achievement. For example,

Many staff (at all levels) in the Hawthorns School (teaching school of everyonelearning@ TSA) are directly involved in the alliance work. They are 'committed and like-minded people who want to be involved in the bigger national picture' (Executive Principal). There is an altruism about the involvement with other schools and leadership of the TSA work is distributed within the school.

Over time the Executive Principal has seen changes in her teaching school leaders who are now 'more secure in what we want to achieve.' There is a widely held view that visitors in school via ITT and CPD courses improves the quality of teaching and learning in the teaching school because 'it puts our own colleagues' practice under the microscope' and encourages them to explain and articulate their practices and actions in a reflective manner. They also 'feel valued'. Those colleagues who support other schools have gained 'greater confidence' in themselves as teachers and/or leaders, and 'have learned a lot' of new experiences and expertise that would benefit the staff and the children in the teaching school (Executive Principal).

In sum, evidence from the case studies and the survey results suggest that as a school-level initiative, the teaching school programme is likely to have had positive effects on the professional learning and development of teachers and school leaders within teaching schools.

A number of inter-connected factors that we have identified in the case studies may be relevant and help to provide some plausible explanations for the significant and tangible effects of the teaching school initiative on pupil outcomes within *teaching schools.*

- First, almost all case study teaching schools have invested additional resources to develop and expand **teacher and leadership capacity** to manage the additional workload and secure the quality and standards of teaching and learning in their own schools whilst developing and expanding the breadth and depth of the outward-facing teaching school work.

- Second, in all case study teaching schools the delivery of the alliance work relies on **a collective commitment from the staff** (although some may be more deeply involved than others). There is a widely held view that becoming a teaching school has meant that the school itself becomes an open book for visitors via ITT and CPD courses, leadership development programmes and school-to-school support projects. As a survey respondent put it, 'the opening up of our school as a centre of good practice keeps the bar high and improves accountability.'

- Related to the above is the third observation that developing and delivering the teaching school work is seen by senior leaders of almost all case study teaching schools as an appealing professional development opportunity for their staff which has made a major contribution to the improved **collective capacity** in their schools. There is evidence of greater levels of leadership distribution in almost all case study teaching schools. In the national survey of cohorts 1 to 3 TSAs, the majority of the teaching school leaders also reported that they believe that the training and support work had helped to improve the ways in which teachers teach and the leadership of teaching and learning – which, as research suggests, have significant effects on pupil achievement.

Taken together, this new evidence points to a need to review the nature and leadership of inter-school partnerships when analysing their impact, and to examine how and the extent to which the monitoring and accountability mechanisms of the partnership work are fit for purpose – so that, as we have observed in the vast majority of the case study teaching schools, they promote leadership growth and development, value and embed the ownership of collaborative professional learning, enhance consistency in the quality of the delivery of the partnership activity, and contribute to organisational change and improvement in teaching and learning.

7.2 Impact on teaching school alliances

7.2.1 The perceptions of teaching school leaders of the impact on leadership, teachers and teaching within alliance schools

There is evidence of perceived change and improvement within teaching school alliances from the national survey of teaching school leaders, especially in relation to **collaboration and sharing of practice**, **leadership development**, **teacher supply and quality**, and **research and development**. Evidence from the case studies supports the survey results.

(1)Collaboration and sharing of practice

The most substantial changes reported by senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs are related to **extended collaborations and sharing of best practice within their alliance**:

- 79% reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in shared commitment to sharing best practice within the alliance, with more than 1 in 3 having reported 'very significant' changes (36%)

- 76% reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to extended collaboration beyond senior leaders (involving middle leaders, teachers and students) within the alliance, with 1 in 3 having observed 'very significant' changes (34%)

- 73% reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to more effective use of outstanding teachers for professional development across partner schools, with close to 1 in 3 having reported 'very significant' changes (33%)

- 69% reported that there were 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to enhanced reciprocal trust across the alliance and 68% reported the same levels of change relating to enhanced collective (shared) moral purpose across partner schools

- 60% reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to increased collective capacity for school improvement across partner schools, with 1 in 4 (25%) having reported 'very significant' changes in this area.

Evidence also points to positive changes relating to **shared commitment and views about standards and quality relating to teaching and learning** across partner schools:

- 68% reported that there were 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to a shared commitment to high standards for academic performance across

partner schools, with slightly more than 1 in 5 (23%) in agreement that these changes were 'very significant' in their TSAs.

- 66% reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to a shared view about what constitutes outstanding teaching and learning across partner schools. However, among these, only slightly more than 1 in 10 (15%) reported that these changes in their TSAs were 'very significant'.

Moreover, **joint practice development** across partner schools was rated by the majority of survey respondents as being beneficial to the improvement of teaching and learning in their schools. A total of 61% indicated 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to improved expertise amongst teachers to design, implement and monitor innovative practices across the alliance (i.e. "joint practice development across partner schools") and 58% indicated the same levels of changes in relation to increased collaborative planning of JPD projects across partner schools.

The qualitative evidence from the survey (Q9a) provides examples that illustrate how involvement in joint practice development across partner schools had helped to improve teaching and teacher practice.

> More staff have been given opportunities to lead in areas outside the school. This has enhanced their confidence and raised personal career ambitions.

> Appointment of "Peer Support Teachers" - outstanding teachers who are willing to share their practice with other teachers in their own classrooms, being observed by others. This has proved to be a really valuable resource both for schools wishing to view quality teaching/learning and as an aid to our CPD programmes.

> Further training for our teachers to train others - improving their own practice, giving teachers natural working partners through the Alliance which has taken away boundaries and teachers work together and network regularly.

> Ensuring the best people (SLEs) are mobilised to drive school improvement. School led is at the heart of our work.

Possibly related to the above, nearly 70% reported that there had been 'a lot' (41%) or 'very significant' (28%) change in relation to their **enhanced local reputation for the quality of its innovation and/or provision of support**. The qualitative evidence from the survey (Q9-a) provides examples as to how and why changes relating to collaboration were perceived by senior leaders as having helped to improve the quality teaching and learning in TSAs.

Commitment of a small group of [headteachers] to working together in pursuit of outstanding practice and outcomes cuts across LAs. Collaborative working on recruitment to School Direct, identifying SLEs and developing them. Contextualizing data, and seeing where excellence exits, and where there are common challenges. Cross-phase working.

Development of support programmes and coaching that develop vision and the ability to plan strategically to develop leadership, learning and teaching for improved outcomes. This collaborative approach includes the deployment of SLE to R and D programmes to developing pedagogy and internal review. The alliance has a comprehensive and detailed offer.

The example from the rural South Lakes TSA (a cohort 1 alliance) below shows that teaching school status had increased the opportunities for CPD across the alliance which is now more needs-led and is perceived to be of more consistently high quality.

The South Lakes Federation (SLF) subject groups are a key element in providing professional development and networking opportunities for the SLF staff. All these groups meet termly – one full day and two half days – and report to the SLF curriculum group. Groups identify key issues for discussion. For example, the maths group identified bridging the gap and numeracy and, subsequently, future reforms to the maths curriculum and examinations. The group aims to create an SLF maths curriculum and materials for non-specialists. The modern foreign languages group discussed key stage 3 and then the new GCSE. 'The growth of subject groups has been a hugely important development in 2014.' (SLF leader)

The experiences of the Transform Teaching School Alliance (a cohort 2 alliance led by Sneinton St Stephen's Church of England Primary School) provide a detailed account of how the values and visions of the TSA and the maturity of the partnership have enabled the sharing of practice and enhanced shared commitment to quality between schools in the alliance.

A collective moral purpose is a key principle for Transform which drives the development of an 'inspirational' partnership. Because of the shared values, openness and sharing of vulnerabilities, a healthy transition from competition to collaboration between schools became possible in the earlier development of the TSA. As an SLE from a partner school maintains, '*we are genuinely trying to be better*.' It is felt that 'the values that underpin the spirit on which the partnership is built' has enabled the alliance to 'manage the hard edge of challenge' (Strategic Partner).

There is a shared view that the infrastructure of the partnership is 'very professionally organised': 'Transform has the capacity to support, challenge and allow schools to make a contribution.' (Strategic Partner) A school that has been receiving support from the Alliance remains a member of the Strategic Development Board and its headteacher commented, 'we work very collaboratively. I feel part of a team. It is not done to you. … You feel you are not on your own and you are valued for what you bring.'

As trust develops and embeds in the TSA over time, there is a sense of greater maturity in the partnerships. The alliance is developing a culture of annual peer health checks which is seen by partner schools as an opportunity to 'act as critical friends in triads' (Director of TSA). This 'development opportunity' will not be '*just data related*' but will involve developing an understanding of the context, beginning with a tour of the school. A strategic partner regards the support of the TSA for one supported school as 'Transform's Midas Touch' which has 'raised levels of attainment and outcomes for vulnerable groups'.

Areas for further improvement

Evidence from the survey indicates that the most common area for development is **sharing of data and talent management** between alliance schools. Close to half (49%) of senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs reported no (5%) or only partial (44%) change in relation to improved knowledge of where best practice in every subject in across the alliance. Moreover, 1 in 5 (20%) reported that there was no change ('not at all') in their alliances in relation to:

- Regular discussion and monitoring of targets for improvement across partner schools

- A collective focus on using data in planning for individual pupil needs within the alliance

Leadership development

The majority of the survey respondents were positive about the improvement in **their ability** to diagnose and make decisions about changes needed for improvement **in their own schools** as well as **in other schools** (see Appendix 5 for outputs for Question 6 as table and graphs).

- 64% of senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSA reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to their improved leadership abilities to diagnose and make decisions about changes needed for improvement in other schools. More than 1 in 4 (27%) reported 'very significant' changes in this area.

- 58% reported the same levels of ('a lot' and 'very significant') changes in relation to making decisions within their own schools. About 1 in 4 (26%) reported 'very significant' changes in this area.

We have reported earlier in this report (3.2.1) that more than half of the survey respondents also claimed **increased leadership ability and capacity within their alliances** to meet partner schools' improvement needs.

The qualitative evidence from the survey and the case studies also shows that **the opportunity to develop senior and middle leaders in the TSA** was seen to have been 'the most impactful' development (see 3.2.1 for details). However, the survey results suggest that such development may not necessarily be translated into immediate career promotions. More than half of senior leaders (52%) and an additional 10% reported that there were 'partial' or 'no' change in relation to increased numbers of staff moving on to senior leadership posts within and outside the alliance.

The large majority of the senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs were highly positive about improvement through **a coherent provision of professional development**. Seventy-five percent reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to a more coherent professional development that integrates ITT, CPD, leadership development and succession planning for the alliance. More than 1 in 3 (38%) reported that the changes were 'very significant'.

Examples from the case studies show that common leadership development opportunities include formal leadership training (including SLE or Lead Practitioner training and deployment), opportunities for leaders to visit other schools and shadow their leaders, experience of short-term assignments or secondments in another school so as to meet specific sets of opportunities as they are identified, and taking part in school to school support work. These opportunities, especially the formal

leadership training courses, have also enabled teaching school alliances to **identify talent with leadership potential**, build leadership capacity and develop strategies for **succession planning**.

For example, one of the main priorities for the Wandle Alliance (a cohort 2 alliance led by Chesterton Primary School) has been the development of leadership capacity across the TSA. All schools have become involved, and the evaluations from the range of professional development opportunities have been positive. The three most popular courses have been the Wandle's own leadership programme for aspiring and new senior leaders 'Stepping up to Leadership' (replacing the former middle leadership development programme (MLDP) course), and the National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML) and the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL). The teaching school believes that the interest in these opportunities has demonstrated an increased focus from schools on leadership development. The alliance has increased the number of facilitators who are able to deliver leadership courses.

Nonetheless, as we have discussed in 3.2.1, for the majority of the TSAs in this evaluation, talent management and succession planning across the TSA remains 'the most difficult part of the job.' This requires a culture change, as, understandably, headteachers are often reluctant to lose their best teachers to other schools. This situation appears to be of particular relevance to schools in rural areas where there tend to be particular teacher recruitment and retention pressures. Although there are examples of teaching school alliances conducting audits to collect their own data relating to leadership talent (e.g. Denbigh TSA), there remains a lack of strong evidence to show that such knowledge and intelligence are systematically gathered and managed to support a coherent approach to leadership succession planning within teaching school alliances or across localities.

Teacher supply and quality

Evidence from the survey suggests that involvement in the TSA work has helped to improve the **supply of good quality NQTs.** The majority of the survey respondents (61%) reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to an improved *supply of good quality NQTs* in the alliance, with almost 1 in 3 (32%) having experienced 'very significant' changes in this area. Although it is difficult to establish objective evidence of the relative quality of teachers trained through different ITT routes at this early stage, and a longitudinal tracking of teacher performance and career progression would be needed, evidence from the majority of the case study alliances supports this perception. For example,

In the Ebor TSA, a cohort 2 alliance jointly led by Manor Church of England Academy Trust and Robert Wilkinson Primary School, the outcomes for School Direct in 2013-14 were perceived to be good. A TS leader/strategic partner sees this programme as the biggest success of the TSA work: 'a very powerful tool'.

Key evidence of success is as follows:
- All secondary NQTs gained employment, most locally and one returned to a neighbouring city.
- Four trainees were appointed at the lead teaching school: two salaried trainees were retained and one teacher each for English and Science were appointed to temporary contracts that have become permanent.
- All are doing really well as NQTs (Director of TSA). All but one trainees were rated outstanding (one was good).
- In one local MAT of three schools, six teachers have been appointed from SD 2013-14; the Executive Headteacher judges them 'a lot more confident and experienced' than PGCE counterparts.
- In 2014-15 a mathematician has already been appointed at the teaching school and a scientist offered a package of incentives to accept the offer of appointment at a partner school in challenging circumstances that struggles to recruit. The package builds in rewards for staying in post for 3 years.

The success of the SD primary programme is also evidenced in the overall award winner for the PGCE cohort at the HEI being an Ebor TSA SD trainee.

The ITT lead feels there are benefits for the children in having a trainee and a class teacher in the classroom and also trainees are now more solid in their judgements of children's progress.

A recent Ofsted inspection of behaviour management training was judged by the inspector as 'very favourable, enlightening'. As a result, more schools want to be involved, and more staff across schools want the development opportunity of inputting their expertise to the programme.

As we have reported in 5.1, almost all the case study teaching schools have a strong track record in initial teacher training, and it would be important to take this into account when analysing the impact of the TSA work on the supply and quality of new teachers in the profession. Even where this has been their first engagement in leading the delivery of their own ITT provision, the designation as teaching schools and the creation of an Alliance were perceived by most as having created a framework within which the necessary capacity, capability and experience could be developed and expanded.

Caution also needs to be exercised when assessing the impact of School Direct and the newly established SCITTs. Because of the short life span of these programmes, there is still a lack of systematic and robust evidence to warrant a conclusive assessment of impact. Nationally, the number of applicants into teaching has fallen in recent years, and there is some evidence of confusion being caused by the number of different routes into teacher training that now exist. These national factors need to be taken into account when judging the success of Teaching Schools' teacher training efforts. Yet teaching schools have seized the opportunity to engage with School Direct. Without them, it is perhaps unlikely such significant changes in the ITT sector would have taken place so quickly. The tensions and challenges that we have reported in 5.1 also suggest that some high-level, systemic interventions would be useful to improve the coordination of different ITT programmes and to enable teaching school alliances and their ITT partners to maximise the strengths of different programmes and through these, improve the effectiveness and impact of their work on attracting, recruiting and retaining high quality teachers.

Research and development

The survey results suggest that compared with the above three areas, there is a much lesser degree of change in activities relating to research and development. This is broadly in line with the findings from the case studies.

Less than half of senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs (48%) reported 'a lot' and 'very significant' changes in relation to **increased staff ability and expertise** to undertake research and development activity to improve teaching and learning within the alliance. A similar proportion of respondents reported the same degrees of change relating to **increased use of research evidence** to inform and improve teaching and learning within the alliance (47%).

However, in response to Q9a, some senior leaders of TSAs commented on the importance of Research and Development activities in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. It was reported that these activities 'added to our professional knowledge and practice' and 'helped to sustain and nurture school leaders who are then more able to support their teaching colleagues'.

We have reported in section 5.6 that R&D remains an area for further development in a vast minority of case study TSAs. In the alliances where senior leaders are committed to using R&D to develop pedagogy and joint practice development in teaching schools and across partner schools, the breadth and depth of engagement from schools vary considerably. Again, only in a minority of case study TSAs has the engagement in R&D activities become widely spread across partner schools. In other words, the culture of R&D is still emerging and developing in most TSAs in this evaluation.

Nonetheless, despite the fact that many R&D projects and activities are still under way in our case study TSAs (and thus it is still too early to expect to be able to identify any definitive patterns of impact), there are promising examples which illustrate how participating teachers and leaders claim that involvement in research projects and practice-based enquiries has enabled them to improve their understandings of learning and practice of teaching. As the Professional Lead for Research and Development from the Liverpool North TSA explained, 'people get a bit hung up about numbers and quantifying things but a lot of work that goes on in the classroom can be around a case study or the impact of a particular process on their children and on themselves as practitioners. … I think it's look at research in a different way and getting teachers and leaders to believe that they have a role to play in research and that it can have a real impact on the work they do with their own children.' The example from the Portswood TSA in particular illustrates the impact of a research-based mentality which has enabled the teaching school to lead, develop and embed a successful culture of coaching within the TSA.

In the Manchester TSA (a cohort 3 alliance), the R&D work is driven by a commitment to improve the learning experiences of the children: 'We are open to new pedagogical approaches and relish the opportunity to talk about latest research and how this relates to our own setting.' (MTSA website, 2015).

The TSA is currently involved in a project 'Maths-Reflective Inquiry'. Using an action research model in which teachers and leaders examine their own educational practice systematically the project is set to promote the professional development of teachers and through this, enhance student learning.

The first year of this programme is focusing on Maths with a strategic partner school leading the initiative that currently involves three primary schools across which outcomes and learning will be shared. The project is being run in partnership with the University of Manchester's Coalition of Research Schools that is managed from the Manchester Institute of Education (MIE). The coaches from all three schools meet regularly to share outcomes and revise thinking about best practice.

The results of this inquiry indicate that 100% of focus pupils are making expected progress and 56% are making more than expected progress. MTSA has also recently become a strategic partner for the National Maths Hub, an £11 million government initiative involving 30 hubs across the country that will provide strategic local leadership to support tailored maths education support for participating schools. The idea is to harness expertise and knowledge in maths across an area and spread good practice more widely. There are three hubs in the Northwest of England (MTSA, 2014).

7.2.2 Relationship between pupil academic outcomes and membership in teaching school alliances

Associations between TSA membership (inclusive of teaching schools, strategic partner schools and alliance schools) and pupil academic outcomes at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4

The multilevel modelling analysis of the National Pupil Database shows that being part of a TSA (inclusive of all members) was **not generally significantly related to Key Stage 2 outcomes**, except for a few analyses for cohort 1 in 2013. In the latter cases the effect size was always very small, however. It is, therefore, not possible to state that there was any positive relationship between being part of a TSA on the measures investigated. Neither was there a negative relationship, however. It cannot be concluded, therefore, that there is any firm evidence either way that TSA had a direct impact in supporting better students attainment or progress.

For Key Stage 4, the analysis shows that TSA membership (inclusive of all members) was found to be **significantly positively related to outcomes for cohort 1 on attaining 5A*-C for both the whole sample and disadvantaged pupils in all three years studied**, and **for progress in mathematics and English in 2013 and 2014**. The effect size (variance explained) was small to very small, however. No significant relationships were found for the other two cohorts. It is not possible to identify any reasons for this difference from the measures in the dataset.

Associations between types of TSA membership (i.e. strategic partner schools and alliance schools) and pupil academic outcomes at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4

The analyses of Key Stage 2 outcome measures show that:

- There were **rarely significant differences between alliance members and comparator schools in attainment**. Where these did occur, comparator schools marginally outperform alliance members, but differences were so small as to be negligible.

- **Strategic partners did significantly better** than comparator schools in a number of analyses, but the differences were small and negligible.

For Key Stage 4, the results show that:

- There were **no** significant differences between **alliance members** and comparator schools in attainment.

- **Strategic partners** did not differ significantly from comparator schools.

Taken together, it appears that teaching schools do significantly better than comparator schools at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, and that the effect size is large enough at the school level to be notable. However, this is not the case for alliance members and strategic partners. There may be a number of plausible interrelated factors that have contributed to these different associations[70]:

First, evidence from the case studies shows that setting up effective alliance partnership structures and cultures which can harness collective capacity and commitment from member schools for a shared mission takes time. The key challenges, as perceived by all in the first year or 18 months, were building capacity, confidence and trust within their alliances. Research evidence also suggests that it may take several years before actual partnership activities are fully developed and embedded. The time that the programme has been running is relatively short and this may explain the lack of relationship or small size effects on the performance of alliance members and strategic partners.

Second, as a school-level intervention, the impact of TSA activity on pupil outcomes can only operate indirectly, with improvements in teaching quality expected to follow from successful alliance-wide implementation of, for example, CPD, leadership development, research and ITT[71]. As we have reported in detail in 7.2.1, there is evidence from both the surveys and the case studies which suggests that the teaching school activity has impacted, to various degrees, on leadership development (especially middle leadership), teacher supply and quality, and research capabilities in TSA member schools. These are important intermediate outcomes which may in time result in improvement in pupil outcomes.

The lack of measured overall effect on the performance of strategic partner schools and alliance schools broadly aligns with the conclusions from previous research on school network effects which suggest that 'the main benefit of networked learning has been to enhance professional practice but that caution should be exercised in making claims concerning the potential role of networked activity in raising attainment' in schools across the network (Sammons et al., 2007: 213; see also Fruchter et al., 2015).

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[70] The discussion takes into account Professor Daniel Muijs's hypotheses.

[71] Cited from Professor Daniel Muijs's report.

Third, as we have learned from the case studies, there is likely to be significant variability in the performance of TSAs, and the extent to which member schools engage in TSA activities. Moreover, as we have reported in 2.2.1, the NCTL's additional data collection on TSA engagement shows that 36% of 'actively' engaged schools were not identified in the Key Information Forms (KIF) that were submitted to the NCTL by cohorts 1 and 2 teaching schools in the same year. This suggests that engagement in the teaching school activity has a wider meaning than alliance membership. Taken together, these make overall programme effects on pupil attainment hard to achieve and measure.

Last but not least, with so many changes taking place in education policy, and schools generally being involved in many different partnerships, it would be difficult for many alliance schools and evaluations to tease out which change, and which partnership, makes the most difference, and thus be able to identify being part of a teaching school as 'THE thing' that may have had an impact.

Difference in association between teaching school initiative and improved outcomes

With regard to the observed difference between teaching schools (where significant associations between participation in the teaching school initiative and improved pupil outcomes were found) and the TSA members (where no significant effects were found), one plausible explanation is that the benefits of professional and leadership development may have reached more staff and in a more intensive manner in teaching schools than in many strategic partner and alliance schools within the same time frame.

Evidence from the case studies shows that the development and delivery of the teaching school activity is primarily led by teaching schools – especially in the early phases of TSA development. Staff at teaching schools, through a variety of means, have greater access to and opportunities from the increased professional development that is available, have increased opportunities to work with other schools (to share effective practice or act as an SLE, for example). Their professional confidence and horizons have been enhanced through being involved in leading, designing, developing and/or delivering different strands of the teaching school activity. The impact on capacity building and staff development is, therefore, likely to permeate more widely and deeply across the whole school. All of this seems to have translated into better pupil outcomes at the teaching school, rather than a dip in standards due to being out of the classroom or being distracted.

In contrast, we found considerable variability in the extent to which strategic schools or member schools engage in TSA activities. In some, engagement was limited to headteachers or senior leaders only; whilst in others engagement permeated the

school. This contributes to the difficulty in measuring significant overall programme effects on pupil attainment.

7.3   Impact on the system at local and regional levels

Working collaboratively with neighbouring teaching school alliances, local authorities, higher education institutions and other system leaders (NLEs and LLEs) and service providers to support teachers and schools within and beyond the locality is one of the most celebrated achievements reported by the vast majority of our case study teaching school alliances. Over the course of the evaluation their initial concern about increased competition rather than collaboration has been gradually replaced with a greater sense of confidence to work together with other key stakeholders in the system so that 'together, we are stronger' (Director of St Chad's Teaching School; Cultivus TSA). As some senior leaders stated, it has become 'imperative' to collaborate with others in the system. We have presented ample evidence from the case studies and the national survey in Parts 2 and 3 of this final report on how this was achieved.

We found from our case studies that collaborations often resulted in the building and development of a partnership structure in a locality which allowed a group of individuals, schools and organisations to formally share intelligence, resources, capacity and expertise so that the provision of training and support was coordinated and competition was minimised. As importantly, it allowed different alliances and partners to develop and work to their strengths.

In some cases (e.g. South Lakes TSA, everyonelearning@, Hallam, Transform), such partnership structures built on and extended already established and emerging partnerships in the area which brought added value to school-to-school improvement in the locality.

In other cases, the partnership structures are centred upon a group of teaching school alliances and the local authority to provide strategic leadership and direction for the school improvement agenda across the region. The Colmore TSA, for example, has led and worked closely with other teaching school alliances and a diminishing local authority in Birmingham to create a city-wide, layered partnership structure and mechanism for school improvement (see Appendix 6). A sense of collective moral purpose has been the main driving force for this regional layer of school improvement partnership to take root in Birmingham.

However, it is important to note that a minority of case examples in this evaluation continue to experience tensions with local authorities who have been reluctant to share intelligence about areas of need with TSAs. In such cases, there are

frustrations and also a recognition that this is an aspect of the collaboration which needs to improve as the system matures and trust develops.

Thus, although the local and regional partnership structures have developed at different paces and to different maturity levels, where they are becoming established there is clear evidence of impact – through the provision of CPD, but mostly, school-to-school support work.

An example in Norfolk: The experiences of the Sheringham TSA working in collaboration with four other teaching school alliances[72], the Norfolk Local Authority and Headteacher Associations provide a good example of how such a **regional collaborative infrastructure** has allowed each teaching school alliance to retain its autonomy and distinctiveness, whilst at the same time to work together to make best use of the limited resources and capacity for the widest possible access to and greatest participation in the teaching school provision of training and support.

Such structured and coordinated collaboration has also served to raise the school-to-school support profile of the five teaching school alliances in Norfolk. Over time the understanding of teaching schools among the wider school community has grown; and by 2015, the Executive Officer for the Primary and Secondary Headteachers' Networks estimated that approximately 70% of Norfolk schools were engaged in some form with the work of teaching schools.

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[72] Including the Norwich TSA which was reported earlier.

Establishing a collaborative infrastructure in the region

The work of the teaching school alliance has been closely connected with the work of Norfolk LA since its establishment. From 2014, this regional co-ordination and collective endeavour developed a new phase. A Strategic Group has been established ('Norfolk Schools Supporting Norfolk Schools' (NSSNS)) that involves all five TSAs that have been designated across the County, LA representatives, and the chairs of Norfolk's three headteacher associations. The Group has an independent chair funded by the LA.

Jointly leading the regional partnership

The Strategic Group (SG) reviews the Norfolk school level data brought by the LA, monitors progress and improvements, determines the improvements needed, the support required, and the accountability mechanisms to demonstrate progress, and organises the work of the separate working groups. This has been an important step in ensuring complete transparency of LA data across the teaching school alliances.

In between the SG meetings the work is carried forward by the four working groups on: SLEs, school-to-school support (StSS), CPD, and ITT. The headteacher of the teaching school currently attends the Strategic Group, and Sheringham SLT members are members of or leading the work of the working groups.

Examples of systematic joint planning include:
- The Strategic Group holds a central register of system leaders showing school, deployments, records of visits, and dates of support. This register enables each teaching school to approach another to add capacity or fill gaps in expertise when delivering school-to-school support.
- The StSS working group is putting in place contracts between the TSAs, LA, and supported schools. The working group also reviews and updates the spreadsheet of all the system leaders across all five TSAs.
- Applications for funding from the NCTL School-to-school Support Fund have been coordinated by the Strategy Group to agree which Norfolk schools would be prioritised and which teaching school was best placed to apply for the funds and lead the work .
- The CPD working group maps supply and demand, ensuring geographical coverage and avoiding duplication of provision. This has included examples of a teaching school with particular expertise leading on the development of CPD to be made available across the county.

<u>Impact on improvement</u>
The Sheringham TSA self-evaluation in 2013 recognised the importance of understanding the effectiveness of the support given to the 47 schools '...to further improve future school-to-school support structures and input for 2013/14' (STSA action plan). Analysis undertaken by the LA and Sheringham of the support provided in 2012/13 suggests that '…of the 50 schools we have worked with, 80% have improved either Ofsted grading or KS2 attainments and 80% of the 478 pupils made an extra term's progress (0.8 APS) compared with previous year' (Sheringham TS Alliance 2013/14 self evaluation in 2014 action plan). Sheringham's analysis of their school-to-school support suggests that 80% of the schools that have been supported have improved their Ofsted grading and have been judged Good or better.

<u>Impact on system leadership</u>
New TSAs in Norfolk automatically join the Strategic Group. 'Not all teaching schools expected this' noted one member of the strategic group, 'and even TSA leaders aren't always natural partnership workers; this helps them to see the wider picture.' It has made a significant difference in co-ordinating the work of all the TSAs and ensuring their work is mutually reinforcing.

<u>Expanding influences beyond the locale</u>
To expand capacity and to reach schools widely across the whole county a number of Norfolk Teaching School Alliances have developed significant collaborative arrangements with teaching schools in Suffolk to the south and Lincolnshire to the north and west. For example, Sheringham Primary School has developed a 'hub' with a school in the West of Norfolk to extend reach into that part of the county and a representative of the partner school now attends the NSSNS group to facilitate these links.

The Steering Group has been meeting DfE representatives regularly. Alongside the meetings of the Steering Group, the Norfolk Primary Heads Association (NPHA) – 22 representatives, four from each of five regions and two country-wide representatives – has linked its work with the teaching school alliance priorities. Sheringham regard this alignment as very important – to demonstrate there is unity of purpose between the Local Authority, the teaching school alliances, and the NPHA.

In sum, in this alliance there is evidence of impact on improvement at individual, school and regional levels. There are examples relating to the employability of ITT trainees, the supply of good quality NQTs, the availability of professional development and capacity building opportunities for teachers and leaders in different stages of their careers, and leadership succession planning and supply within and beyond teaching school alliances. Nonetheless there is much variation in activity within and between TSA and the extent to which schools are engaged. As yet, there is no hard evidence that TSA membership predicts better pupil attainment. It is not possible to claim that TSAs have, as yet, direct impact on driving up standards in other members of teaching school alliances.

The data suggest that TSAs' impact in supporting other schools can only be sustained if the effort is jointly made with neighbouring teaching school alliances, local authorities, dioceses, and other organisations and professional associations to produce a coherent and systemic approach to school to school support in the locality. The role of local authorities in sharing intelligence and data, brokering relationships and support, facilitating leverage of support through their statutory accountability, and in some cases, quality assuring the provision of support was widely perceived to be essential in enabling many teaching school alliances to make a more systematic and systemic difference to teaching.

Evidence also suggests that the functionality of partnership infrastructures relies on system leaders who are outward looking and forward looking and who have the ability to influence and lead the system through collaboration.

8. Challenges for Sustainability and Quality

8.1 Challenges for sustaining quality

This evaluation has identified four major issues that are perceived to influence the sustainability (in terms of the delivery of the teaching school activity), effectiveness and impact of teaching school alliances.

Although partnerships have evolved significantly in almost all teaching school alliances, close and deep relationships are usually to be seen within a small core group of strategic partners. There are still considerable challenges to engaging and deepening partnerships.

As we reported earlier, in the national survey of senior leaders of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools, 60% of the respondents reported that there were still considerable challenges to engaging and deepening partnerships within their TSAs. More than 1 in 10 (14%) strongly agreed with this.

It appears that some schools still have limited knowledge of the purpose of teaching schools. There are examples of schools that are suspicious of receiving support from a teaching school because of the fear of a 'takeover' or the feeling that the alliances are owned by and exist to serve the needs of an elite group of 'outstanding' schools that are 'the centralised machinery of government'.

There are also examples of schools that take services from a teaching school alliance but do not feel part of the partnership, as evidenced in an 'us and them' attitude. The support and services can pre-date a TSA which again raises questions about what defines 'being part of' or 'a member of' an alliance, and indeed what defines an alliance at all; and by extension, whether and how alliances can come to be accepted by the system as a support function for all.

For example, some leaders within one case study alliance feel that many headteachers do not yet understand academisation or TSAs well, and that there is great suspicion. One headteacher stated that she has had to work harder on relationships since becoming the leader of an academy. There was also a suggestion, dating from the early days of the alliance, that 'outstanding' schools can sometimes be protective of their own practice, which can hamper sharing and collaboration, and that the pressure on school leaders has led to risk aversion which makes it harder to persuade them to sign up to new approaches.

Evidence suggests that focussing on the quality of provision of support and training is key to attracting and engaging the 'hearts and minds' of partners and schools.

Senior leaders of almost all case study TSAs reported that in many cases a school may engage in one element of the teaching school offer and as they see the impact of that work, begin to become more widely engaged and request support in different areas. For example, we learned from the Norwich TSA that a school began to engage by hosting a School Direct trainee and, following mentoring support from the lead teaching school, has now approached with a request for a package of school-to-school support. There are also numerous cases across all TSAs in this evaluation where schools start by receiving support and then gradually develop to offer support. Senior leaders in our case studies saw this gradual increase in engagement as being a consequence of a clear focus from the outset on quality and felt that their effort had paid dividends in terms of building trust and momentum and leading to greater participation.

The new Ofsted inspection framework and the potential loss of 'outstanding' status are seen as threats by many teaching school alliances.

Although Ofsted is seen to have begun to consider evidence of the effect of school-to-school support in its inspections of supported schools, it is perceived as not always giving schools or their partners sufficient credit. For example, leaders of the Portswood TSA (PTSA) noted that the report on the PGCE at Southampton University made no mention of the significant contribution made by PTSA, a regret echoed by colleagues of the University of Southampton, who had invited PTSA leaders to be involved in the PGCE inspection.

It is felt that Ofsted's accountability framework is still not conversant with the teaching school development, and is not yet able to serve the continuing move towards a self-improving school system.

In the national survey of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools, close to half (48%) disagreed that Ofsted's accountability framework is conversant with the move towards a self-improving school system, with 1 in 10 (11%) in strong disagreement with this[73]. In contrast, only a third (39%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Moreover, 63% of senior leaders reported that maintaining the teaching school status is a constant cause of concern for them.

Three case study teaching schools in our evaluation were inspected and judged to be 'good' rather than 'outstanding'. Two were the only teaching school in their respective alliances: one was successful in retaining its teaching school status whilst the other was de-designated. The third school had its teaching school designation

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[73] Strongly Disagree: 11%; Disagree: 37%; Agree: 34%; Strongly Agree: 5%; I don't know/Not Applicable: 13%.

removed but remains a strategic partner school in the TSA and contributes to the provision and development of the teaching school work.

Their experiences are testimonies to the widely-shared deep, ongoing concerns over accountability and the ways in which a single Ofsted judgement can impede the movement towards a self-improving system in an area. All case study teaching schools know that losing their 'outstanding' status would have considerable detrimental implications for the time, energy and organisational capacity that they have invested[74]. A widely shared concern in the case study TSAs is that the teaching school initiative is too vulnerable to Ofsted inspections, which are based on factors other than the quality of its teaching school work. This begs the question of the extent to which the Ofsted grading of the performance of a teaching school should affect the work of a TSA. It also begs the question as to whether a joint, multiple teaching school alliance model might offer a greater sense of security and stability to the alliances' development (see examples in Section 3.2.1).

Senior leaders of the Wandle TSA considered that the new Ofsted framework increased the fragility of teaching school alliances. The loss of 'outstanding' status would have an even more dramatic impact on schools that were now taking on this system leadership role. In turn, alliances that had been developed with considerable effort might not be sustainable should the lead schools lose their status. One potential solution has been to actively succession plan and look for other schools that could be designated to support the work of the alliance.

Like Wandle, everyonelearning@ and Transform TSAs are also actively encouraging other 'outstanding' schools to play an active role in the TSA. De-designation of neighbouring TSAs causes 'real concern' and makes leaders 'conscious about sustainability'. It is hoped that teaching school (re)designation can be mitigated by other 'outstanding' schools that are active in the TSA.

Lime Tree's (previously a strategic partner school) designation as a teaching school as part of the everyonelearning@ TSA is welcomed by the teaching school leaders and strategic partners as a key development to build capacity, increase stability and protect against de-designation. It is felt that the 'fallout' from the de-designation of a local teaching school and the 'crushing effects on the school and the SLT' are to be avoided. The TSA took over the SD allocation of the de-designated teaching school and now Lime Tree is leading this ITT strand.

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[74] This is felt particularly challenging for them as revised inspection frameworks are introduced, with the consequent inevitable changes in judgement grades that this signals.

Tensions exist for the teaching schools in managing to sustain standards and capacity in their own schools whilst also working to support others across and/or beyond their alliances. This is despite pupils in teaching schools being judged to have performed better than their peers in comparator schools.

In most cases the challenges and tensions are related to the limited resources available to deal with issues relating to the amount of time required for outstanding practitioners and/or senior leaders to be out of class. There are examples of teaching schools that have constantly to manage the potential conflict between taking teachers away from their own classes and the professional benefits that staff gain from observing and working with colleagues in other schools through the work of the TSA. Such tensions appear to be more keenly felt in small primary teaching schools than in their secondary peers. In section 3.2.2 we reported specific concerns over the sustainability of leadership capacity in leading and developing the TSA work.

Evidence suggests that almost all teaching schools in our evaluation have increased their capacity, thereby ensuring that the learning and performance of their children will not be affected by the development of the teaching school work. However, the prospect of the end of central funding adds to the overall concern over resources and capacity.

For example, in the North Liverpool TSA, led by Everton Nursery and Family Centre (a cohort 3 teaching school), the key lessons learnt have been associated with sustainability in terms of staff capacity and the considerable impact of the Teaching School on the workload of senior leaders and other staff members and stakeholders that have been involved in the initiative. According to the headteacher of the lead school, running the Teaching School: 'is very tiring, it takes up 1-2 days a week, some evenings and it's being able to sustain that because it's a capacity build but also in terms of infrastructure looking at what I can do as a head, what my deputy can do, what the other staff members can do and what the staff teams in the other schools can do … it's throwing a lot of balls into the air and then trying to ensure they come down at the appropriate rate and not all at the same time.'

Similarly, they have also had to think carefully about their financial sustainability and consider creative and innovative means of operating in order to ensure that they can survive and flourish over the longer term after the core funding stops. This has required a significant change of mindset for the senior leadership of the alliance who are thinking much more in business terms and adopting business models and practices as they develop their organisational structure.

However, despite these challenges, as we have reported earlier, the senior and middle leaders to whom we have spoken in all our case study teaching schools were

overwhelmingly positive about the professional benefits of their involvement in, and often leadership of, the provision of the support and training work within and outside their own schools. Such benefits were perceived as being of paramount importance in enabling them to continue to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in their own schools, so that they are able to secure the ('Outstanding') status which provides them the access and opportunity to be engaged with the kinds of work that they believe will make a difference to *all* children.

For almost all TSAs in this evaluation, one of the key challenges in the next phase of their work will be the further development of quality assurance and evaluation processes and procedures to enable them to understand, monitor and evaluate how improvements are being made (not only through Ofsted judgements and end of key stage outcomes) and how leadership capacity is being built in the schools that are being supported. Having regular quality assurance evidence could help to make the case for retaining teaching school status in the event of a review process being triggered by the school's Ofsted grade being reduced to 'good'.

At present quality assurance tends to be undertaken primarily using self-reported evaluation forms. It has been widely acknowledged by case study TSAs that follow-up visits are essential for understanding the scale, depth and longer-term impacts of support and provision at individual and school levels. Working with an external partner and health check triads can offer economies of scale, giving access to externally benchmarked quality assurance. This development is in most cases, however, work in progress.

8.2 Systemic and strategic support: the role of government

The nature of support that teaching schools would like to have from the government reflects the challenges that they have experienced in developing their TSAs and the TSA work. Some are related to the conditions required to improve the effectiveness and quality of the teaching school activity, whilst others are related more closely to the purpose of the initiative.

First, it is felt that the concept of 'teaching schools' has never been clearly defined in policy terms but that it continues to evolve and change. The introduction of the 'Big 6' – or currently, the 'six core areas of responsibility' – has helped to clarify the avenue of activities that have emerged as expectations of teaching schools by the government. The most fundamental question of what teaching schools and teaching school alliances are for (i.e. **core purposes** versus **activity**) is still left to those on the ground to explore.

Evidence suggests that the purpose of 'teaching schools' and 'teaching school alliances' can vary considerably in the minds of the people who are leading them. The roles of leaders also vary, ranging from headteachers of a single school to system leaders of multi-academy trusts and academy chains. The lack of central guidance and TSAs' different interpretations of the teaching school model have resulted in teaching schools and their alliances growing and developing **organically**. This has, at least to some extent, led to considerable variations in the pace, effectiveness and impact of their developments (and may have reinforced other schools' lack of clarity about the purpose of teaching schools). For almost all teaching schools in this evaluation, a key aspect of their work in the first year was 'concept creation'. In operational terms different teaching schools then organised the delivery of the six core areas of responsibility in different ways. For example, some were thinking of the six strands as the Big 4 by incorporating SLEs into the work of StSS and succession planning and talent management into CPD. The shift in focus to developing quality assurance mechanisms has become more evident in their more recent developments.

Second, there is strong evidence in this evaluation which points to a fundamental concern over the **financial sustainability** of teaching school alliances. Many alliance leaders have voiced their concern about the potential loss of core funding in their interviews with the research team. It is felt that the government has significantly over-estimated the capacity of alliances to absorb or reduce the costs that their activity incurs. The growth and development of TSAs will depend on appropriate investment in infrastructure. At a time when evidence suggests that an increasing number of teaching school alliances have started to work together with local authorities, dioceses, higher education institutions and other stakeholders to create a 'mediating layer' for school improvement within their locality, it has become even more important that sustained funding and support are provided to enable the emerging local infrastructure to take effect.

Third, it is felt that there is a role for central government and possibly the Teaching Schools Council in **publicising and raising the profile of Teaching Schools** and the kind of provision that they can offer. The experiences of some case study teaching schools in making an effort to engage the 'non-engaged' schools suggest that there remains a lack of understanding of the exact nature of Teaching Schools from those who are not involved with an alliance. This also applies to the kind of collaborative and school improvement related activity that is being undertaken by many Teaching Schools.

The Manchester TSA is a cohort 3 alliance jointly by Chorlton Park Primary School and Brookburn Primary School. In relation to government support, and aside from providing more funding, there is a collective agreement amongst the senior leaders at the Manchester TSA that teaching schools should be given more influence over the future direction of the system particularly given the decline of the LA and the lack of resource it now has to support schools. They also believe the department could be doing more to publicise the work and impact of Teaching Schools, as this headteacher asserts: 'if we were supported by a national campaign of "this is what Teaching Schools are"… because the number of times we speak to other schools and they've never heard of Teaching Schools, they don't know what they are and what they do and therefore might not see it as an alternative to getting help from their Local Authority.'

Finally, the sense of uncertainty related to possible **re-designation** was largely associated with the uncertainty about how to perceive and measure the 'impact' of the teaching school work on improvement in a system which, to date, is only three years old. The experience of a **de-designated** case study teaching school shows that the de-designation process can be highly emotional and de-stabilising. Although Ofsted inspection results are not the cause for de-designation, the reflection of the TSA's de-designation journey points, again, to an urgent need to connect the evaluation and accountability framework for the TSA work and the accountability framework for the work and performance of individual schools (in this case, teaching schools).

8.3 A school-led self-improving system: role of teaching schools

Almost all (98%) the participating senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs agreed that teaching schools and their alliances play a central role in the development of a self-improving school system, with 1 in 4 in strong agreement with this (25%). Seventy-seven per cent reported agreement that teaching schools and their alliances alone cannot achieve the self-improving system.

The case study data suggest that the majority of teaching schools can play and are playing an active role in building and developing a school-led, self-improving system. Yet there are many different, dynamic and complex relationships and partnerships in the system. 'The sustainability of the system is very difficult because it depends on how well established any teaching school alliance is going to be' (NCTL Regional Associate). Success depends on how well the different partnerships and relationships are joined up locally and regionally; and how well established the

accountability infrastructure is that supports the development of the school-led system – 'provided that all schools want to have such a system in the first place' (NCTL Regional Associate).

A self-improving system requires clearly defined accountability measures. The present measurements for school improvement are 'one-dimensional' and limited to the individual school level. There is a lack of clarity as to how teaching schools and teaching school alliances are judged to be effective and how the teaching school concept should be defined.

The reliance on single teaching schools and single alliances adds to a sense of vulnerability. More thinking and support from the centre, and perhaps from the Teaching Schools Council, is required as to how and to what extent schools and alliances need to be held to account. The majority of the teaching schools in this evaluation believes that working in collaboration with local authorities on school improvement is crucial because they have not only the data and intelligence about where the vulnerable schools are, but also the leverage in school improvement provided by their statutory accountability for school performance that teaching schools do not have in school-to-school support. However, as we have observed in this evaluation, increasingly many teaching schools are also leading MATs, which have much tighter lines of accountability. It would be important that any new forms of accountability for teaching school activity complemented, and did not conflict with, MAT accountability, or become too great an accountability burden in total.

A self-improving system requires a broker that is able to provide and/or commission targeted hands-on support to schools; a buffer between the school and the centre; and a channel to share and integrate improvements across schools (Mourshed et al., 2010: 22) and identify areas in which support is required, especially in cases where the school in difficulty does not recognise them.

We found in this evaluation that, although in some areas the provision of TSA support and training is coordinated by local authorities, dioceses, headteacher associations and other organisations and partnerships, in other places the development of TSAs and their provision of activities are uneven and patchy. Where local authorities have played a role to stimulate and broker collaborations between teaching school alliances, there appears to be a coherent and coordinated regional approach to support and training. Otherwise, it is felt that inadequate coordination and collaboration at local and regional levels can lead to unproductive duplication, some unused capacity and missed opportunity for intervention.

In this evaluation we have analysed the experiences of multi-academy trusts that are led by some of our case study teaching schools. These teaching schools reported

that there are overlaps of development between multi-academy trusts and their alliances. Both are perceived to be important in promoting school improvement and benefit from each other's development. Because of the fundamental difference in their organisational structures and accountability arrangements, they serve different purposes.

MATs were perceived by our case study TSAs to rest upon *tight* partnerships and deep relationships. It is felt that their work on school improvement across trust schools benefits from a clearly defined governance and accountability structure. The current system and policy movement gives the lead school the confidence to have medium- and long-term plans for improvement within a MAT. It also enables them to foster consistency in approaches to pedagogy and standards.

In contrast, TSAs are thought to be built on *loose* partnerships. They are seen as a vehicle for professional relationships across a range of settings and have opened doorways to further development and improvement opportunities. The development of TSAs relies on 'like-minded people' working together to develop collective and collaborative intellectual and social capital for improvement. TSAs represent **a diverse pool of expertise** where partner schools 'give and take' for the improvement in their own schools and work together to support and improve standards within and/or beyond the alliance. The development of MATs benefits from the wider pool of expertise as well as the provision of CPD and R&D opportunities in TSAs.

In addition, it is widely acknowledged that TSA partnerships help to break down the barriers of isolation between schools and that the collective expertise within TSAs enables schools to respond to change and reform more confidently. Moreover, relationships within a TSA are often **project-based**. They may be short-term and stop with the end of the project.

In sum, there is significant evidence throughout our case studies that teaching schools have been at the forefront of exploring the reality of what David Hargreaves described as 'competitive collaboration'. In many cases, the drive to establish an alliance and its initial offer and capacity in the first instance did of course consume much of the attention of teaching school leaders. As the movement has evolved, attention has increasingly turned to developing links between alliances and with other stakeholders, such as local authorities. While this is not simple to achieve, the results so far are patchy, and there is a long way to go. The best examples of this suggest that teaching schools may hold a key to the organic emergence of a coordinated collaboration between partnerships across localities and regions. Continuing systemic support in terms of resources, funding and accountability infrastructure are necessary to incentivise collaborations at different levels and move the teaching school concept forward effectively and sustainably.

Part 4: Conclusions

This is the final report from a two-year study (2013-15) into the work of teaching schools and their alliances commissioned by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). The broad aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness and impact of teaching schools on improvement, and identify the quality and scope of external support that are required to enhance these. This was achieved through combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis derived from three research activities: case studies of 26 teaching schools alliances (TSAs), a national survey of the first three cohorts of 345 teaching school alliances, and secondary research and analysis of national performance and inspection results.

The evidence suggests that there are considerable variations in how TSA membership is defined and perceived, what participation in an alliance means in terms of extent of engagement, how each TSA partnership operates, and how each TSA seeks to fulfil the assigned teaching school priorities. However, irrespective of these variations, almost all TSAs in this evaluation reported their continuing commitment to develop and deepen the scope and impact of their partnership work aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning. Commitment, educational values, passion, resilience, hope and vision were identified as key qualities that drive leaders in partnership development. The evidence also points to a range of shared challenges, most of which are related to the sustainability of teaching schools, level of engagement of other schools and agencies engage in the alliance, and tensions between competition, autonomy and collaboration.

The concept of teaching schools has benefited from and contributed to a much wider educational debate about the nature of collaboration between schools as a means of providing effective professional development to teachers and as a mechanism for improving schools. In this report teaching schools' impact in improving schools is drawn from two sources of evidence: perceived impact reported by participants of case studies and surveys, and *association between educational outcomes and participation in the teaching schools initiative as* identified in the secondary analysis led by Professor Daniel Muijs.

The findings on impact are twofold. First, there is compelling evidence of the strides that teaching schools and their alliances have made in developing the necessary relationships, social and intellectual capital and collaborative activities to improve the professional practice of teachers and schools leaders within and beyond TSA partnerships. Second, as yet, the quantitative evidence of the success of TSAs in driving improvement in terms of raising pupils' academic outcomes in individual schools across the alliance partnership remains limited.

The report concludes with nine key evidence based observations:

1. **There is a sustained appetite from eligible schools to apply to become a teaching school and be part of this national initiative. However, there continue to be variations in teaching school representation across geographical regions and school sectors.**

   Secondary and academy schools are over-represented among teaching schools compared with primary and special schools. Although primary and nursery schools' participation remains lower proportionally, both have seen a relatively higher increase in the last two years. Special schools have been consistently well represented in the national population of teaching schools since 2012.

   Schools in areas away from major cities remain less well covered by alliances. Although proportionally schools in rural settings have seen the highest growth in gaining teaching school status since 2013, alliances led by rural schools were relatively fewer. Geographical separation and individual schools' cultures of self-sufficiency in particular were perceived to be barriers to school to school collaboration in these settings.

   There are considerable variations in the numbers of teaching schools in different local authorities. Some areas have no, or very few, teaching schools, despite the existence of relatively high numbers of schools judged to be 'outstanding'. In contrast, in other areas the low representation is related to a limited number of 'outstanding' schools in the locality.

 Taken together, the data raise issues about

   i)   the preferred optimal number and distribution of teaching schools nationally and within different regional areas; and

   ii) the strategies that should be in place to promote school improvement effectively in areas where there is an urgent need but where there are few 'outstanding' schools that are eligible or willing to become teaching schools.

2. **Leadership credibility, trustworthiness and resilience are paramount in building and leading a teaching school alliance. Leading a TSA is perceived unanimously as a worthwhile but hugely time-consuming enterprise.**

   Almost all of the senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs (92%) reported in the survey that running the TSA on a day to day basis required a lot of resilience. However, a strong altruistic mission and a commitment to make a difference to the learning and life chances of all children played a key role in their decisions to lead a TSA.

The capacity to carry out the teaching school leadership roles after designation is perceived to be particularly challenging by leaders of small urban and rural teaching schools.

In order to meet the demands of TSA development, all case study teaching schools have invested in expanding staffing capacity. However, many continue to find capacity a significant challenge. Eighty percent of senior leaders of teaching schools reported in the survey that limited resources and capacity are persistent challenges to the effective delivery of TSA work.

The skills needed to be an effective leader of a TSA are perceived as being different to those required by other system leadership roles. In working as an executive headteacher for example, it was felt that there are clear management and executive levers that can be used with tight accountability. However, in contrast, leading a TSA requires more capacity for influencing, engaging, building relationships, working in partnership, and potentially facilitating people to take more risks.

3. **Specific governance and accountability arrangements vary across alliances and most have experienced considerable changes over time.**

   Almost all case study TSAs had established layered governance structures. The most common form involved a single core steering group that provided the overall strategic direction and decision making for the TSA, supported by a strategic group which reported to the steering group and a small number of operational working groups responsible for specific streams of work relating to the six core areas of responsibility for teaching schools.

   Although there has been greater involvement over time from strategic partner schools, local authorities and higher education institutions (HEIs) in the strategic and operational management of some case study TSAs, the majority still continue to be primarily driven by the teaching schools themselves.

4. **There is no single concept of a teaching school or an alliance. The nature, forms, operating structures and priorities of partnerships vary considerably. They are influenced by TSA leaders' values and visions, different individual cultures and prior histories of partnership and collaboration between schools within and across regions.**

   The extent to which teaching schools were able to engage and develop new partnerships was shown to be influenced by their previous partnership histories. When forming an alliance, strategic partners tended to be schools and institutions from existing collaborative partnerships who shared similar educational values and philosophies. Overall, the membership of these core

groups remained relatively stable compared with the 'ordinary' and 'associated' alliance members.

Teaching school alliances in our evaluation differed in size, scope and composition. Since designation, in the majority of case studies there had been a greater mix of schools joining their alliances from different phases, of different types and with different Ofsted categories. About 80% of the TSA leaders in the national survey also reported this greater mix over time, with more than a third (40%) in strong agreement.

Membership continues to be a fluid concept in almost all alliances, and therefore developing mature and effective partnerships remains an evolutionary and dynamic journey. Most of the case study TSAs could be described as loosely connected and overlapping sets of different partnerships (or groups of schools and institutions) that focus on different aspects of the teaching school work.

Over time most case study alliances have become less concerned about partners leaving the TSA and more focussed upon retaining the commitment of those who share the same values, who have complementary expertise and capacity and, more importantly, who are willing to work together in the partnership to achieve the shared visions, values and goals. This has implications for the use of TSAs to drive school improvement across the system as it seems that forming and developing alliance partnerships require participant schools to have a willingness to engage and embrace similar values.

5. **The alliance partnerships benefit from the development of other school-to-school partnerships and institutional networks. Almost all teaching school alliances in our evaluation are now reaching out and linking up with local authorities and other TSAs within and beyond the locality.**

Teaching schools had different motivations for collaborating with other TSAs and local authorities. However, irrespective of the differences, it was perceived to have become imperative that they form wider collaborative partnerships in order to join up capacity and thus increase resources to improve the effectiveness of their work and to achieve impact on a greater scale. Close to 90% of the TSA leaders reported working collaboratively with neighbouring TSAs, local authorities and other school networks and partnerships in the national survey. They did not see their role as leading the system in isolation from other partners. Seventy-seven per cent of survey respondents reported agreement that 'teaching schools and their alliances alone could not achieve a self-improving system.'

While many set out on a competitive footing in their first year as a teaching school, in part perhaps fuelled by eagerness to set out their own offers and in

part the competition posed by other alliances and providers in the locality, this has been gradually replaced by a greater confidence in the benefits of collaboration. In the national survey, 86% of the TSA leaders reported joining up capacity and resources with other TSAs or school networks in order to scale up the provision of support.

This change is also evidence that successes and challenges in early developments had enabled TSAs to become clearer about their **identity**, their **mission,** and **strategies** to improve practice and standards.

6. **Teaching school alliances and multi-academy trusts[75] (MATs) serve different purposes, and their organisational structures and accountability arrangements differ. However, both are perceived to be important in promoting school improvement.**

MATs were perceived by case study TSAs to rest upon *tight* partnerships. Their work on school improvement across trust schools benefits from clearly defined governance and accountability structures. These enable them to foster consistency in approaches to pedagogy and standards. The current policy movement gives the lead schools the confidence to have medium- and long-term plans for improvement within MATs.

In contrast, TSAs are perceived by case study schools to be built on *more fluid* partnership governance and accountability. They represent a diverse pool of expertise where partner schools 'give and take' for the improvement in their own schools. Their development relies on 'like-minded people' working together to develop collective and collaborative intellectual and social capital through working together to support and improve standards within and/or beyond the alliance. They are seen as a vehicle for professional relationships across a range of settings and as having opened doors to further development and improvement opportunities.

Evidence from the case studies shows that TSA partnerships are perceived to help to break down the barriers of isolation between schools. Their collective expertise enables individual schools to respond to change and reform more confidently. MATs can work alongside TSAs and benefit from the wider pool of expertise and teacher and leadership development opportunities provided by TSAs. In the national survey, more than half of the senior leaders of teaching schools and Directors of TSAs (58%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that 'multi-

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[75] There are different types of relationships between MAT and TSA nationally. There are cases where the whole TSA is one whole MAT. In other TSAs, there is representation from one or a number of MATs. In this evaluation, we have identified examples in the latter case. However, because we have limited first-hand data from MATs that are 'alliance members' of our case study TSAs, the focus of our analysis has been placed on MATs that are led by our case study teaching schools.

academy trusts have a greater impact on school improvement than teaching school alliances.'

7. **Teaching schools have become increasingly confident in their strengths in developing, broadening and deepening activities and aspects of the six core responsibilities (i.e. the 'Big 6') that have formed the unique identities (or 'selling points') of their TSAs.**

Initial Teacher Training (ITT), followed by CPD and school-to-school support (StSS), continue to be the key strands of teaching school work for the majority of TSAs in our evaluation.

Initial Teacher Training (ITT)

School Direct (SD) is perceived to have provided major opportunities for TSAs to work with universities in the delivery of high quality ITT. However, capacity continues to be perceived by case study TSAs as a significant challenge in terms of coordination, finding training placements with effective mentoring, contacting schools and arranging the placements, and interviewing prospective students. Recruitment can also be a challenge both in terms of the number of applicants and their qualities. The pressure to fill places needs to be balanced with a commitment to quality. Investment in candidates does not always convert into successful trainees.

Success in ITT is perceived to support improvement in newly qualified teacher (NQT) recruitment. Almost a third of the TSA leaders reported 'very significant' changes relating to an improved supply of good quality NQTs in the survey. Results of the case studies show that this is of particular importance for schools that can often struggle to recruit teachers given the nature of their challenges.

The majority of the case study TSAs continue to emphasise the importance of working with universities in the delivery of high quality ITT. Some expressed concern that, otherwise, TSA ITT practice might lack depth, especially in terms of lack of engagement in challenging reflective practice and supporting inspiration and innovation.

Continuing professional and leadership development

Providing bespoke continuing professional development (CPD) and leadership development programmes for schools and clusters of schools is seen as the main strength of the TSA offer. Most TSAs in this evaluation are actively developing new approaches to market and deliver their CPD and leadership development programmes. Although coaching was considered by the majority of the case study TSAs to be a critical part of teacher and leadership professional

development, clear evidence of bespoke leadership coaching was found only in a small number of case studies.

The experience of working in a TSA gives staff more opportunity to develop their leadership roles by having increased opportunities to work beyond their own school. As yet, however, much of the CPD and leadership development offer continues to be in the form of short courses. Most of the CPD provision is not yet joined up with the research and development work or joint practice development (JPD) across the TSAs.

Strategic planning, informed by regional and local data, is perceived to be necessary to help improve the economies, efficiencies and impact of the provision of CPD and leadership development programmes. With more providers offering CPD courses, the CPD market seems to have become overcrowded and schools are finding it more difficult to sift the options. This has particular implications for teaching schools' future development given that the provision of a chargeable CPD offer has been key to the business model of most alliances.

The results of the case studies and the national survey show that most alliances understand the continuum of professional development from new entrants to the profession into NQTs, through CPD for serving teachers, and on into leadership development, and that they appreciate the benefits of being fully involved in selecting and developing their own staff.

Rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluating the impact of CPD and leadership development programmes are yet to be fully developed. The results of the case studies show that this is because, at least in part, there are inherent practical difficulties in baselining, tracking and understanding the impact of CPD on the quality and outcomes of teaching and learning and participants' career trajectories. As yet, few have developed structures and quality assurance mechanisms that effectively connect the developments and impacts of different strands of work on this continuum. ITT, CPD and leadership development tend to be designed, operated and monitored separately by different teams in the case study TSAs.

Talent management and succession planning

Succession planning is seen to be embedded within CPD and/or the Leadership Development strand and is not, therefore, managed as a separate element of the Big 6.

A minority of the case study TSAs are now working with local authorities to share data and intelligence. Others have conducted audits to identify talent. However, for almost all case study alliances, this is an area needing further development.

There are few examples of formal strategies for succession planning across TSAs, and little evidence yet of successful approaches to workforce planning within and across alliances.

<u>Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs)</u>

SLE work is generally seen as embedded within StSS and not as a separate strand. In some TSAs, there are examples of SLEs working in mixed teams (with other SLEs, National Leaders of Education and Local Leaders of Education) contributing to a wide range of StSS work. Where SLEs are deployed in teams, there is more evidence relating to the effectiveness and impact of support.

However, in some TSAs SLEs continue to work in isolation. Their roles are not yet embedded in the provision of StSS across the TSA.

In the final year of the study, more creative ways of deploying SLEs were observed in the majority of the case study alliances: their expertise was used to support the development of ITT and CPD programmes. However, as yet, SLE deployment directly addressing StSS work continues to be a challenge for most case study TSAs. This raises the question of whether the identification and designation of SLEs are driven by capacity building needs; and also, whether the deployment of SLEs follows a systemic approach which utilises, coordinates and brokers SLEs from across the alliance so that they work in mixed teams with other system leaders from different schools.

<u>School-to-school support</u>

Every case study TSA in this evaluation has examples of effective StSS work that have led to improvements in a supported school. There is also evidence from the case studies which shows that StSS work provides opportunities for leadership development.

Positive relationships with local authorities are perceived by most case study TSAs as important, particularly in relation to sharing data and intelligence for maintained schools and to commissioning support. Seventy-six percent of the TSA leaders reported in the survey that their TSA's strategic developments were aligned with the school improvement priorities of the local authorities. The results of the case studies show that where this is working well, there is evidence of more sustainable impact. There is also evidence suggesting that brokerage with other TSAs across localities is emerging.

Data are perceived to be critical to enhance the impact of StSS work, in terms of both enabling the support work to be brokered and demonstrating the impact of the support that has been provided. For the majority of case study TSAs, more

systematic quality assurance mechanisms and evidence of progress outcomes and sustainable impact are yet to be developed.

Caution needs to be exercised in attributing impact of improvement to the TSA StSS only, especially when the supported schools are also part of MATs, federations or other forms of partnerships and benefit from other sources of support.

<u>Research and development</u>

Some case study alliances (both primary-led and secondary-led) are yet to develop this strand of work, whilst others (an increasing majority) have been proactively promoting R&D in schools within and beyond their alliances. Less than half of the surveyed TSA leaders (47%) reported substantial changes relating to increased use of research evidence to inform and improve teaching and learning within their alliances. Inquiry-led joint practice development across schools at this stage is emerging and/or developing.

HEI partnerships are perceived by the majority of the case studies and surveyed teaching schools to have provided promising R&D opportunities.

A major challenge continues to be securing the time and active involvement from class teachers and other schools. Achieving a school-wide and alliance-wide understanding of research in a school context is still to be developed in the majority of case study alliances.

8. **The sustainability of the Teaching School initiative is seen as a continuing challenge by almost all teaching school alliances in our evaluation. Ongoing funding support and clearly defined accountability measures are perceived to be essential for capacity and infrastructure to be sustainable.**

Almost all the senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs in this evaluation believe that teaching schools *can* play and *are* playing an active role in building and developing a school-led self-improving system. However, the reliance on single teaching schools and single alliances adds to a perceived sense of vulnerability.

The majority of the TSA leaders lamented that the current accountability framework for individual schools, in particular Ofsted inspections, took very little account of their work as TSAs. Although an Ofsted judgement was not the sole reason for de-designation as a teaching school, a failure to sustain an 'outstanding' outcome did trigger a designation review. The potential impact of a negative Ofsted inspection of the teaching school on the whole alliance was cited

as further evidence of the vulnerability of the current teaching school model. As of October 2014, around 5% of teaching schools have been de-designated.

Over time there has been sharper understanding of the '*true cost*' to the teaching school of running a TSA. The reduction and the potential eventual end of core funding is perceived by the large majority of teaching schools as the most significant risk to their sustainability. In the national survey 87% of the TSA leaders reported that the financial models of their TSAs are not sustainable without central funding. Whilst such a concern can be seen in teaching schools across all phases, alliances led by infant, special and primary teaching schools, because of their limited capacity, appear to have faced a greater sense of financial vulnerability.

Given that most of these developments of the teaching school initiative are still in their infancy but have begun to show promising impact on teacher and leadership development, it is felt that it has become even more important that the government continues to invest in TSAs so that the partnerships and infrastructures can be embedded to support greater and more sustained and sustainable impact on improvement.

The large majority of the case study TSAs have not set up a separate company. The most common practice has been to establish a teaching school budget so that the schools are able to keep their teaching school funds separate from the main school budget.

There are a few case study alliances that have established or are in the process of establishing separate, not-for-profit companies to manage the funding for the teaching school.

Teaching school alliances have divided views on the charging of membership fees. Although the majority do not charge fees, a small number do and others have begun to consider a variety of membership options.

9. **As a school-level initiative, there is evidence from those responding to the surveys and interviews of perceived positive impact on standards and improvement at individual, school, and local and regional levels. However, the levels of impact vary and the measured overall effects on pupil outcomes are more evident in teaching schools themselves than in alliance schools.**

There is clear evidence from the case studies and the national survey that engagement in the teaching school programme is perceived to have made important contributions to teacher and school leader growth and development in both teaching schools and many schools in their alliances.

For **teaching schools**, six areas – mostly related to *teachers and teaching* – were perceived by a majority of teaching school leaders responding in the national survey as having improved 'a lot' and 'very significantly':

- teachers' commitment to professional development in their own schools (68%)

- leadership of teaching and learning in their own schools (54%)

- the school's climate and culture of the school (53%)

- the ways in which teachers teach (52%)

- quality of teacher recruitment in their own schools (52%)

- teachers' commitment to their own schools (50%)

These results provide promising evidence that supports the primary focus of the teaching school initiative on developing teachers and school leaders. However, it is notable that in almost half the cases respondents did not report such strong effects – which also points to variations in such perceived impacts on teachers and teaching within and across TSA.

Four areas of change that were identified[76] by participating senior leaders as having had the most positive impact on pupil achievement in their teaching schools were:

- Opportunities for high quality professional development (75%) and senior and middle leadership development especially (22%)

- Sharing of good and outstanding teaching practice and collaborative working through networks and partnerships (28%)

- Recruitment and retention of 'better quality' and 'excellent' trainees and NQTs (18%)

- Development of enquiry-based approaches to teacher learning (18%)

For **schools in alliances**, a majority of the leaders of the teaching schools responding in the national survey identified three areas of change and improvement:

i) extended collaborations and sharing of best practice within their alliance, including:

- shared commitment to sharing best practice (79%)

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[76] Responses to an open-ended question: "List **up to three** areas of change relating to you and your school's involvement in the TSA that you consider have had the most positive impact on pupil achievement in *__your school"__* in the survey

- extended collaboration beyond senior leaders (involving middle leaders, teachers and students) (76%)

- more effective use of outstanding teachers for professional development across partner schools (69%)

- a shared commitment to high standards for academic performance across partner schools (68%)

- improved expertise amongst teachers to design, implement and monitor innovative practices across the alliance (i.e. "joint practice development across partner schools") (61%)

- increased collective capacity for school improvement across partner schools (60%)

ii) leadership development in terms of the improvement in responding senior leaders' ability to diagnose and make decisions about changes needed for improvement in their own schools (58%) as well as in other schools (64%). However, more than half (62%) reported that there were 'partial' or 'no' change in relation to 'increased numbers of staff moving on to senior leadership posts within and outside the alliance.'

iii) supply of good quality NQTs (61%). Although there is no objective evidence of differences in the relative quality of teachers trained through different ITT routes at this early stage, and a longitudinal tracking of teacher performance and career progression would be needed for this, the perceptions of the majority of the case study alliances are that school-led ITT works well.

Working collaboratively with neighbouring TSAs, local authorities, higher education institutions and other system leaders (NLEs and LLEs) and service providers to support teachers and schools within and beyond the locality was one of the most celebrated achievements reported by the vast majority of the TSAs in the case studies and the national survey. Although the local and regional partnership structures have developed at different paces and to different maturity levels, where they are becoming established there is clear evidence of impact – through the provision of CPD, but mostly, school-to-school support work.

The research suggests that the effective operation of partnerships relies on system leaders who are outward-facing and forward-looking and who have the ability to influence and lead the system through collaboration.

Evidence from Daniel Muijs' (2016) independent statistical analysis of pupil outcome data during the three year period studied from 2012 to 2014 shows that teaching schools significantly outperformed comparator schools at both Key

Stages 2 and 4 and in all three cohorts (cohorts 1-3). Effect sizes varied but reached up to 5% of total variance at Key Stage 2 and up to 4% of total variance at Key Stage 4, and a third of school level variance in some cases at both Key Stages. The effect size is large enough at the school level to be notable. This important finding counters a common misconception that being a teaching school has a detrimental impact on that schools' results.

However, Muijs' independent analysis shows that this is not the case for alliance schools or strategic partner schools overall. The analysis of pupil performance data at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 provides no clear evidence that engagement with teaching schools as alliance members or strategic partners was associated with greater improvement in pupil outcomes compared with other similar schools that did not engage with TSAs. Nonetheless, the time that the teaching school programme has been running is relatively short and this may also explain the lack of any notable statistical effects on the performance of alliance members and strategic partners. In addition, evidence from the current evaluation and elsewhere suggests that level of engagement of both strategic partners and alliance members varies considerably between and within alliances. The data used for Muijs' (2016) statistical analysis did not distinguish level of engagement so any impact on highly engaged schools could be diluted in overall programme assessment by more shallow school partnerships.

To date, the evaluation suggests that as a school-level initiative, it is teaching schools (with most exposure to and most experience of activities of a TSA) that show the most positive impact of being involved in an alliance TSA, both in terms of ability to continue to promote improved pupil outcomes (as shown in the analysis of pupil outcome data) and in perceptions of impact on school improvement processes (as shown in case studies and the national survey).

Summary

Taken together, the analysis shows that almost all teaching school alliances had entered a new phase of development towards the end of the period of this study. In this phase, there are greater, more extensive, more focussed collaborations emerging between schools within a TSA. There are also increased strategic collaborations beyond the TSA – with local authorities, HEI partners and other school networks across and beyond the locale.

We have learned from this evaluation that leading inter-school partnerships requires cognitive and emotional leadership and management qualities and skills, integrity, commitment and resilience. The level of inter-personal relationships and trust

between leaders of partner schools are likely to be paramount in determining the extent to which relationships between schools grow, develop or fail. In short, it is about the **individual and strategic alignment** of organisational priorities, needs and interests as well as their expertise, skills, resources and capacity to **pursue a shared moral purpose**. Evidence from our case studies shows, it has taken almost all teaching school alliances one to two years to become clearer about who they are (i.e. identity), what they are for (i.e. mission) and how to achieve their aims (i.e. action).

However, the picture is variable and fluid. First, irrespective of teaching schools' increasing commitment to collaborate with their peers, there remain underlying concerns about the availability of resources and the limited capacity of the market. There are also concerns about supporting schools that are in most need of support but do not or are unable to access the TSA offer. The reliance on single teaching schools and single alliances seems to have added to a sense of vulnerability that underlies many system leaders' passion and commitment to continue to improve the life chances of children.

Second, as yet, there is a lack of clarity as to how the teaching school concept should be defined and how teaching schools and teaching school alliances are judged to be *effective*. More thinking is required about how and to what extent schools within alliances need to hold each other to account. A fundamental question related to this is 'What is the purpose of being involved in an alliance?'

Third, effective TSA partnerships are not about comfortable collaboration. A key challenge is to develop and establish quality assurance and internal accountability mechanisms that enable TSAs to understand, monitor and evaluate how teacher and leadership capacity is being built in all schools involved and whether and the extent to which improvement in the quality of teaching and learning is being made (not only through Ofsted judgements and end of key stage outcomes) in these schools.

Finally, as one of a number of government initiated innovations, designed to achieve a 'self-improving' school system, teaching schools and their alliances have taken on a challenging role. It is clear that, within the system, there are many different, dynamic and complex relationships and partnership infrastructures. There is a widely perceived need to join up relationships, resources and capacity to produce a coherent and systemic approach to school-to-school support, and through this, enhance sustained and sustainable impact on school improvement within a locale or region. Our analysis suggests that effective accountability structures that promote improvement and collaboration are a must condition to support teaching school alliances in their endeavours to grow. Success also requires social and collaborative capital that harnesses local knowledge and expertise in order to make a systematic and systemic difference to the quality of teaching, learning and achievement.

Thus, teaching schools and their alliances can make and have made a marked difference to the sharing of good practice among schools and to enhancing the professional practice of many teachers and school leaders within and beyond alliance partnerships. In this sense, the teaching school model clearly has an important role to play in driving forward a school-led 'self-improving' system. However, as yet, the lack of measured overall effect on pupils' academic outcomes within TSAs suggests that caution should be exercised in making claims concerning the potential contribution of the teaching school model to raising attainment in schools across the partnership. With so many changes taking place in education policy, and schools generally being involved in many different partnerships, it would be difficult for many alliance schools and evaluations to tease out which change, and which partnership, makes the most difference, and thus be able to consider being part of a teaching school as the only or primary factor that determines impact.

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Appendix 1: Summary of case study teaching school alliances (from the NCTL database of key information 2014)[77]

Alliance Name (Cohort 1)	Region	Teaching School Name (funded)	Number of members inc HEIs and others	Teaching School Phase	Teaching School Second Phase	Teaching School Rural
South Lakes Teaching School Alliance	North West	Queen Elizabeth School	15	Secondary		1
Portswood Teaching School Alliance	South East	Portswood Primary School	46	N&P		0
Hallam Teaching School Alliance	Yorkshire and the Humber	Notre Dame High School	69	Secondary		0
George Spencer Academy Teaching School Alliance	East Midlands	George Spencer Academy and Technology College	36	Secondary		0
ShiNE Teaching School Alliance	North East	Shiremoor Primary School	31	N&P		0
Cultivus	North West	Elmridge Primary School St Chads CoE Primary School	58	N&P	N&P	1
West Hertfordshire Teaching School Partnership	East of England	The Hammond Academy and Bovingdon Primary Academy	41	N&P	N&P	1
Denbigh Teaching School Alliance	South East	Denbigh School	12	Secondary	Secondary	1

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[77] The data listed here do not represent how the case study teaching school alliances started. Details of their earlier information were reported in the first interim report (Gu et al., 2014). The size and composition of these TSAs have changed considerably since then.

Alliance Name (Cohort 1)	Region	Teaching School Name (funded)	Number of members inc HEIs and others	Teaching School Phase	Teaching School Second Phase	Teaching School Rural
The Partnership Teaching School	South West	Fiveways Special School	79	Special	Special	0

Alliance Name (Cohort 2)	Region	Teaching School Name (funded)	Number of members inc HEIs and others	Teaching School Phase	Teaching School Second Phase	Teaching School Rural
Cambridge All Through Teaching School Alliance (CATTSA)	East of England	Swavesey Village College	31	Secondary	N&P	2
Transform Teaching School Alliance	East Midlands	Sneinton St Stephen's CofE Primary School	38	N&P		0
everyonelearning@	North West	Hawthorns Community School	81	Special		0
The Salop Teaching School Alliance	West Midlands	The Priory School A Business and Enterprise College	98	Secondary		0
Ebor Teaching Schools Alliance	Yorkshire and the Humber	Manor Church of England Academy Trust	22	Secondary	N&P	1
Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy Teaching School Alliance	North West	Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy	36	Secondary		1
Wandle Teaching Alliance	London	Chesterton Primary School	52	N&P		0
Buckinghamshire Teaching School	South East	Turnfurlong Infant School (de-designated in autumn	17	N&P		0

Alliance Name (Cohort 2)	Region	Teaching School Name (funded)	Number of members inc HEIs and others	Teaching School Phase	Teaching School Second Phase	Teaching School Rural
Partnership		2014)				
Sheringham Primary National Teaching School Alliance	East of England	Sheringham Community Primary School	38	N&P		1

Alliance Name (Cohort 3)	Region	Teaching School Name (funded)	Number of members inc HEIs and others	Teaching School Phase	Teaching School 2nd Phase	Teaching School 3rd Phase
Eaton Hall Education Trust	East of England	Eaton Hall School Norwich	9	Not applicable		
West London Teaching School Alliance	London	Sacred Heart High School	18	Secondary		
The Manchester Teaching School Alliance	North West	Chorlton Park Primary School	13	Primary	Primary	
Odyssey Teaching School Alliance	South West	Pate's Grammar School	5	Secondary		
The Colmore Partnership Teaching School Alliance	West Midlands	Colmore Junior School	36	Primary	Primary	
The Lincolnshire Teaching School Alliance	East Midlands	The Priory Academy LSST	20	Secondary		

Alliance Name (Cohort 3)	Region	Teaching School Name (funded)	Number of members inc HEIs and others	Teaching School Phase	Teaching School 2nd Phase	Teaching School 3rd Phase
West Essex Teaching School Alliance	East of England	St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School Buckhurst Hill	85	Primary	Secondary	Secondary
North Liverpool Teaching School Partnership	North West	Everton Nursery School and Family Centre	23	Nursery		

Appendix 2: Senior leader survey questionnaire

Teaching Schools Evaluation

Senior Leader Questionnaire (Cohorts 1-3 Teaching School Alliances ONLY)

This questionnaire is for senior leaders of teaching schools (Cohorts 1-3 only) and their strategic partner schools. Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. This questionnaire is part of a two-year study on the evaluation of teaching schools commissioned by the National College for Teaching and Leadership. Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and all findings will be anonymised so that responses cannot be traced back to individual people or schools. It should take about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. If you have any queries about this questionnaire, please contact Professor Qing Gu, School of Education, University of Nottingham (Qing.Gu@nottingham.ac.uk).

1. Are you...? (Please select all that apply.)

Director of Alliance	☐	Executive Headteacher of Teaching School	☐	Headteacher of Teaching School	☐
SLT of Teaching School	☐	SLT of Strategic Partner School	☐	Headteacher of Strategic Partner School	☐
Other (Please specify):		_____			

Please tick only one box for each item throughout

2. Please indicate the extent to which you agree that each statement characterises your teaching school alliance (TSA).

		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Not applicable	I don't know.
a)	We have expanded the size of our TSA significantly since the designation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b)	There is now a greater mix of schools in our alliance since the designation (e.g. from different phases, of different types and/or with different Ofsted judgements).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c)	Strategic partners play an active role in decision making about TSA work and development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d)	Senior leaders and governors of the lead teaching school(s) are part of the governance body for our TSA.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	There are no external representations in our governance arrangements to provide support and challenge.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	Financial sustainability is a persistent and continuing challenge for our alliance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g)	The financial models of our TSA are sustainable *without* central funding.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h)	There are no considerable challenges to engaging and deepening partnerships within our TSA.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i)	There are robust quality assurance mechanisms in our TSA which enhance the quality and impact of our work on improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j)	It is important that we establish a mechanism which holds all schools to account for their performance in our TSA.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k)	Establishing a mechanism which holds all schools to account for their performance is no longer an ongoing challenge in our TSA.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree that each statement characterises your teaching school alliance (TSA).

		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Not applicable	I don't know.
a)	Working collaboratively with neighbouring TSAs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b)	Working collaboratively with TSAs outside the locality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c)	Working collaboratively with local authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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d)	Working collaboratively with higher education institutions on ITT	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	Working collaboratively with higher education institutions on Research and Development (R&D) activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	Integrating the TSA work with the developments of other school networks and partnerships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g)	Aligning TSA's strategic developments with the school improvement priorities of the local authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h)	Using other TSA(s) for peer review and health checks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i)	Joining up capacity and/or resources with other TSAs or school networks to scale up the provision of support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j)	Increasing dialogue and communication about standards and improvement within the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k)	Planning leadership succession arrangements within the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	Not applicable	I don't know.
a)	Partnership development in our TSA essentially relies upon shared moral purpose and good will of 'like-minded people'.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b)	The uneven geographical distribution of teaching schools has caused tensions between TSAs in our locality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c)	Maintaining the teaching school status is a constant cause for concern for senior leaders of our TSA.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d)	Running the TSA work on a daily basis requires a lot of resilience.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	Our work on establishing a teaching school alliance is not recognised in the Ofsted accountability framework.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	Ofsted's accountability framework is conversant with the move towards a self-improving school system.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g)	Limited resources and capacity are persistent challenges to the effective delivery of our TSA work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h)	Teaching schools and their alliances play a central role in the development of a self-improving school system.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i)	Teaching schools and their alliances alone cannot achieve the self-improving system.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j)	Multi-academy trusts have a greater impact on school improvement than teaching school alliances.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. To what extent has your teaching school alliance (TSA) experienced change in the following areas since it was formed?

		Not at all	Partially	A lot	Very significantly	Not applicable	I don't know.
a)	Enhanced reciprocal trust across the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b)	Fewer strategic partner schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c)	Increased collective capacity for school improvement across partner schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d)	Enhanced collective (shared) moral purpose across partner schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	Extended collaboration beyond senior leaders (involving middle leaders, teachers and students) within the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	Increased leadership ability to diagnose the improvement needs of partner schools within the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g)	Increased leadership ability to mobilise resources to meet the improvement needs of partner schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h)	Closer collaboration with local authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

		Not at all	Partially	A lot	Very significantly	Not applicable	I don't know.
i)	Closer collaboration with other TSAs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j)	Enhanced local reputation for the quality of its innovation and/or provision of support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k)	Enhanced national reputation for the quality of its innovation and/or provision of support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. *To what extent has you and your teaching school alliance (TSA) experienced change in the following areas since it was formed?*

		Not at all	Partially	A lot	Very significantly	Not applicable	I don't know.
a)	My improved leadership abilities to diagnose and make decisions about changes needed for improvement *within my own school*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b)	My improved leadership abilities to diagnose and make decisions about changes needed for improvement *in other schools*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c)	Increased numbers of staff moving on to senior leadership posts within and outside the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d)	An improved supply of good quality NQTs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	A more coherent professional development model that integrates ITT, CPD, leadership development and succession planning for the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	Improved expertise amongst teachers to design, implement and monitor innovative practices across the alliance (i.e. *joint practice development across partner schools*)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g)	Increased collaborative planning of joint practice development (JPD) among teachers to improve their practice within the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h)	A shared view about what constitutes outstanding teaching and learning across partner schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i)	A shared commitment to high standards for academic performance across partner schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j)	A shared commitment to sharing best practice within the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k)	Regular discussion and monitoring of targets for improvement across partner schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l)	A collective focus on using data in planning for individual pupil needs within the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m)	Increased staff ability and expertise to undertake R&D activity to improve teaching and learning within the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n)	Increased use of research evidence to inform and improve teaching and learning within the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
o)	Improved knowledge of where best practice in every subject is across the alliance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
p)	More effective use of outstanding teachers for professional development across partners schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. *To what extent has your school's involvement in the TSA helped to improve the following in your school:*

		Not at all	Partially	A lot	Very significantly	Not applicable	I don't know.
a)	The climate and culture of the school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b)	The way in which teachers teach	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c)	The school's approach to learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d)	The engagement of pupils in learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	Pupil attainment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	Pupil progress (value added)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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g)	Pupil behaviour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h)	The attainment gap between FSM pupils and their peers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i)	Teachers' commitment to their work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j)	Teachers' commitment to your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k)	Teachers' commitment to professional development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l)	The quality of teacher recruitment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m)	Reduction in teacher turnover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n)	Leadership of teaching and learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. List **up to three** areas of change relating to you and your school's involvement in the TSA that you consider have had the most positive impact on pupil achievement in *your school*:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

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9. Please add any other comments you wish to make about:

    a) leadership practices and actions which have improved teaching and learning within your TSA:

    b) leadership challenges to improve the quality of teaching and learning within your TSA:

Background Information

10. Is your school (please √):   Primary ☐   Secondary ☐   Special ☐
                              Other (please specify): _____

11. Is your teaching school alliance (TSA) a (please √):   Cohort 1 TSA ☐   Cohort 2 TSA ☐
                                                 Cohort 3 TSA ☐

12. Name of your teaching school alliance: _____

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Appendix 3: Proportion of each alliance role from each major phase or type of education

Phase	Teaching schools			Strategic partners		
	2014	**2013**	**2012**	**2014**	**2013**	**2012**
Primary	276 (46%)	154 (44%)	84 (39%)	1,878 (58%)	1,116 (53%)	606 (49%)
Secondary	237 (40%)	150 (43%)	105 (49%)	957 (30%)	732 (35%)	471 (38%)
Special	60 (10%)	38 (11%)	25 (12%)	249 (8%)	173 (8%)	119 (10%)
Nursery	19 (3%)	7 (2%)	0	62 (2%)	25 (1%)	16 (1%)
Other schools	7 (1%)	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	91 (3%)	49 (2%)	34 (3%)
	599 (100%)	**351 (100%)**	**216 (100%)**	**3,237 (100%)**	**2,095 (100%)**	**1,246 (100%)**

Phase	Alliance members			All schools		
	2014	**2013**	**2012**	**2014**	**2013**	**2012**
Primary	2,454 (74%)	1,567 (71%)	613 (69%)	16,790 (75%)	16,796 (75%)	16,835 (75%)
Secondary	655 (20%)	504 (23%)	235 (26)	3,316 (15%)	3,331 (15%)	3,287 (15%)
Special	126 (4%)	93 (4%)	28 (3%)	1,033 (5%)	1,034 (5%)	1,089 (5%)
Nursery	31 (1%)	25 (1%)	9 (1%)	415 (2%)	418 (2%)	418 (2%)
Other schools	42 (1%)	24 (1%)	8 (1%)	918 (4%)	851 (4%)	881 (4%)
	3,308 (100%)	**2,213 (100%)**	**893 (100%)**	**22,472 (100%)**	**22,430 (100%)**	**22,510 (100%)**

Source: TSA database 2012-2014

Appendix 4: Reach by local authority[78]

LA	Total No. Schools	Total No. of Outstanding Schools in 2014	Number of TSs 2014	% of TSs against all schools (average 3%)	% of TSs against Outstanding schools (average 17%)	TSA participation 2014 (average 32%)	TSA participation 2013 (average 21%)
East Midlands							
Derby	106	20	6	6%	30%	45%	7%
Derbyshire	420	62	5	1%	8%	9%	3%
Leicester	115	13	3	3%	23%	23%	39%
Leicestershire	293	52	7	2%	13%	53%	38%
Lincolnshire	365	54	5	1%	9%	22%	16%
Northamptonshire	325	46	10	3%	22%	30%	16%
Nottingham	103	21	3	3%	14%	57%	35%
Nottinghamshire	349	56	6	2%	11%	40%	33%
Rutland	21	6	2	10%	33%	38%	24%
East of England							
Bedford	84	16	3	4%	19%	36%	18%
Cambridgeshire	257	35	14	5%	40%	22%	8%
Central Bedfordshire	139	36	2	1%	6%	23%	13%
Essex	568	82	23	4%	28%	55%	42%
Hertfordshire	537	123	9	2%	7%	33%	26%
Luton	74	13	3	4%	23%	47%	39%
Norfolk	439	45	5	1%	11%	14%	16%
Peterborough	79	8	1	1%	13%	8%	4%
Southend-on-Sea	56	9	1	2%	11%	80%	73%
Suffolk	342	51	5	1%	10%	21%	8%
Thurrock	54	6	4	7%	67%	63%	31%
London							
Barking and Dagenham	56	5	3	5%	60%	32%	12%
Barnet	130	45	2	2%	4%	22%	18%
Bexley	80	7	1	1%	14%	56%	30%
Brent	87	17	2	2%	12%	20%	15%
Bromley	99	23	5	5%	22%	28%	23%
Camden	67	19	2	3%	11%	34%	24%
City of London	1	1	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Croydon	124	21	4	3%	19%	21%	8%
Ealing	93	19	1	1%	5%	16%	8%
Enfield	96	21	6	6%	29%	29%	14%

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[78] Data source: TSA database 2013 and 2014. The data presented here is correct as of January 2015.

LA	Total No. Schools	Total No. of Outstanding Schools in 2014	Number of TSs 2014	% of TSs against all schools (average 3%)	% of TSs against Outstanding schools (average 17%)	TSA participation 2014 (average 32%)	TSA participation 2013 (average 21%)
Greenwich	90	20	2	2%	10%	24%	6%
Hackney	78	23	7	9%	30%	40%	24%
Hammersmith and Fulham	61	22	3	5%	14%	25%	3%
Haringey	88	17	2	2%	12%	22%	9%
Harrow	66	32	5	8%	16%	39%	19%
Havering	83	11	2	2%	18%	5%	5%
Hillingdon	98	20	4	4%	20%	31%	18%
Hounslow	76	16	2	3%	13%	30%	15%
Islington	67	16	2	3%	13%	28%	19%
Kensington and Chelsea	40	22	0	0%	0%	10%	3%
Kingston upon Thames	52	21	2	4%	10%	48%	12%
Lambeth	92	27	3	3%	11%	18%	75%
Lewisham	92	24	4	4%	17%	38%	16%
Merton	57	11	3	5%	27%	81%	65%
Newham	100	24	5	5%	21%	67%	51%
Redbridge	80	23	5	6%	22%	49%	43%
Richmond upon Thames	57	23	3	5%	13%	40%	35%
Southwark	108	33	1	1%	3%	7%	6%
Sutton	67	18	3	4%	17%	51%	36%
Tower Hamlets	103	26	6	6%	23%	40%	30%
Waltham Forest	81	13	2	2%	15%	77%	26%
Wandsworth	85	34	3	4%	9%	59%	40%
Westminster	63	21	1	2%	5%	29%	18%
North East							
Darlington	43	9	1	2%	11%	16%	7%
Durham	288	64	6	2%	9%	27%	12%
Gateshead	86	28	5	6%	18%	21%	16%
Hartlepool	41	5	2	5%	40%	93%	39%
Middlesbrough	57	6	2	4%	33%	47%	39%
Newcastle upon Tyne	102	24	2	2%	8%	43%	26%
North Tyneside	80	24	5	6%	21%	45%	35%
Northumberland	183	31	5	3%	16%	42%	11%
Redcar and Cleveland	61	10	2	3%	20%	26%	2%
South Tyneside	64	16	4	6%	25%	38%	25%
Stockton-on-Tees	77	15	1	1%	7%	18%	5%
Sunderland	122	18	5	4%	28%	35%	20%
North West							
Blackburn with Darwen	77	10	3	4%	30%	30%	3%
Blackpool	44	2	1	2%	50%	41%	28%
Bolton	129	27	4	3%	15%	36%	25%

LA	Total No. Schools	Total No. of Outstanding Schools in 2014	Number of TSs 2014	% of TSs against all schools (average 3%)	% of TSs against Outstanding schools (average 17%)	TSA participation 2014 (average 32%)	TSA participation 2013 (average 21%)
Bury	87	14	3	3%	21%	25%	7%
Cheshire East	156	41	4	3%	10%	36%	31%
Cheshire West and Chester	165	38	3	2%	8%	18%	6%
Cumbria	329	47	8	2%	17%	29%	15%
Halton	66	16	2	3%	13%	36%	15%
Knowsley	63	12	0	0%	0%	10%	5%
Lancashire	645	140	12	2%	9%	19%	9%
Liverpool	180	37	3	2%	8%	30%	14%
Manchester	180	34	4	2%	12%	25%	17%
Oldham	105	21	5	5%	24%	48%	46%
Rochdale	92	21	1	1%	5%	21%	7%
Salford	104	13	2	2%	15%	24%	17%
Sefton	111	21	1	1%	5%	27%	17%
St. Helens	75	21	3	4%	14%	57%	8%
Stockport	120	36	2	2%	6%	26%	18%
Tameside	97	9	1	1%	11%	54%	63%
Trafford	95	46	5	5%	11%	44%	28%
Warrington	90	19	2	2%	11%	20%	13%
Wigan	134	32	4	3%	13%	28%	7%
Wirral	131	29	3	2%	10%	16%	5%
South East							
Bracknell Forest	40	6	2	5%	33%	68%	33%
Brighton and Hove	80	15	1	1%	7%	24%	24%
Buckinghamshire	242	61	4	2%	7%	30%	12%
East Sussex	199	21	4	2%	19%	13%	5%
Hampshire	553	116	10	2%	9%	34%	24%
Isle of Wight	53	4	1	2%	25%	85%	85%
Kent	604	93	15	2%	16%	31%	20%
Medway	103	9	2	2%	22%	52%	40%
Milton Keynes	112	24	4	4%	17%	31%	22%
Oxfordshire	304	36	5	2%	14%	11%	8%
Portsmouth	68	5	1	1%	20%	56%	58%
Reading	56	14	1	2%	7%	18%	4%
Slough	50	16	3	6%	19%	22%	8%
Southampton	81	11	3	4%	27%	63%	79%
Surrey	412	100	10	2%	10%	24%	17%
West Berkshire	84	12	2	2%	17%	15%	0%
West Sussex	297	45	7	2%	16%	28%	22%
Windsor and Maidenhead	66	16	4	6%	25%	21%	5%
Wokingham	65	14	1	2%	7%	26%	25%

LA	Total No. Schools	Total No. of Outstanding Schools in 2014	Number of TSs 2014	% of TSs against all schools (average 3%)	% of TSs against Outstanding schools (average 17%)	TSA participation 2014 (average 32%)	TSA participation 2013 (average 21%)
South West							
Bath and North East Somerset	80	22	1	1%	5%	40%	41%
Bournemouth	42	9	2	5%	22%	38%	20%
Bristol City of	154	35	7	5%	20%	51%	34%
Cornwall	284	40	9	3%	23%	37%	29%
Devon	375	64	10	3%	16%	29%	13%
Dorset	178	49	7	4%	14%	25%	8%
Gloucestershire	310	60	5	2%	8%	22%	9%
Isles Of Scilly	1	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
North Somerset	76	11	2	3%	18%	14%	16%
Plymouth	98	10	3	3%	30%	74%	72%
Poole	43	10	1	2%	10%	77%	30%
Somerset	274	37	3	1%	8%	21%	16%
South Gloucestershire	116	10	2	2%	20%	9%	3%
Swindon	82	12	2	2%	17%	43%	18%
Torbay	44	9	2	5%	22%	89%	84%
Wiltshire	238	34	4	2%	12%	24%	13%
West Midlands							
Birmingham	448	105	17	4%	16%	44%	30%
Coventry	122	12	4	3%	33%	18%	15%
Dudley	112	12	3	3%	25%	29%	13%
Herefordshire	106	16	2	2%	13%	17%	3%
Sandwell	120	21	8	7%	38%	65%	34%
Shropshire	159	11	3	2%	27%	40%	29%
Solihull	87	27	1	1%	4%	9%	11%
Staffordshire	402	48	4	1%	8%	17%	11%
Stoke-on-Trent	103	15	5	5%	33%	59%	36%
Telford and Wrekin	77	15	3	4%	20%	52%	52%
Walsall	123	28	4	3%	14%	20%	11%
Warwickshire	248	39	3	1%	8%	15%	19%
Wolverhampton	112	12	1	1%	8%	24%	29%
Worcestershire	248	43	9	4%	21%	17%	5%
Yorkshire and the Humber							
Barnsley	92	21	4	4%	19%	50%	32%
Bradford	215	24	5	2%	21%	33%	13%
Calderdale	104	20	4	4%	20%	29%	10%
Doncaster	129	18	3	2%	17%	76%	37%
East Riding of Yorkshire	155	16	2	1%	13%	57%	11%
Kingston upon Hull City of	102	11	6	6%	55%	78%	73%
Kirklees	190	36	8	4%	22%	30%	16%

LA	Total No. Schools	Total No. of Outstanding Schools in 2014	Number of TSs 2014	% of TSs against all schools (average 3%)	% of TSs against Outstanding schools (average 17%)	TSA participation 2014 (average 32%)	TSA participation 2013 (average 21%)
Leeds	273	45	6	2%	13%	23%	17%
North East Lincolnshire	67	7	1	1%	14%	37%	19%
North Lincolnshire	87	7	1	1%	14%	25%	11%
North Yorkshire	389	62	10	3%	16%	27%	17%
Rotherham	126	16	4	3%	25%	29%	21%
Sheffield	177	23	6	3%	26%	34%	33%
Wakefield	147	19	4	3%	21%	72%	64%
York	66	14	3	5%	21%	27%	22%
Total	22472	4138	603	Average 3%	Average 17%	Average 32%	Average 21%

Source: TSA database 2014

Appendix 5: Tables and figures from the survey of cohorts 1-3 teaching schools

Table 4.1 Key characteristics of TSAs as perceived by senior leaders of TSs and directors of TSAs (**Q2**)

Figure 4.1   Characteristics of TSAs as perceived by senior leaders of TSs and directors of TSAs (**Q2**)

Legend:
- I don't Know or Not Applicable
- Strongly Disagree/ Disagree
- Strong Agree/ Agree

Categories (x-axis):
2i_IsQualityAss — 95%, 5%
2c_ActiveDecisionMaking — 91%, 9%, 1%
2f_FinancialChallenges — 91%, 7%, 2%
2d_LeadSchoolRepsInGovernance — 89%, 9%, 2%
2j_NeedAccountabilityMechanism — 84%, 13%, 2%
2a_ExpandedSize — 80%, 18%, 2%
2b_GreaterMix — 80%, 19%, 2%
2h_NoChallenges — 39%, 60%, 1%
2k_DontNeedAccountabilityMechanism — 29%, 64%, 7%
2e_NoExternalReps — 18%, 75%, 7%
2g_FinanciallySustainable — 9%, 87%, 5%

Table 4.2 Key characteristics of TSAs as perceived by senior leaders of TSs and directors of TSAs **(Q3)**

	TABLES EXCLUDING STRATEGIC PARTNERS														
	Disagree Strongly		Disagree		Agree		Agree Strongly		I Don't Know		Not Applicable		Total		Mean
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	
3a_Collaborate_Neighbouring TSAs	1	.8%	12	9.4%	65	**50.8%**	49	38.3%	1	.8%	0	0.0%	128	100.0%	3.3
3b_Collaborate_OutsideLocality	1	.8%	33	25.8%	63	49.2%	28	21.9%	3	2.3%	0	0.0%	128	100.0%	2.9
3c_Collaborate_LocalAuthorities	2	1.6%	13	10.2%	63	49.2%	49	38.3%	1	.8%	0	0.0%	128	100.0%	3.3
3d_Collaboratively with higher education institutions on ITT	0	0.0%	1	.8%	49	38.3%	76	**59.4%**	1	.8%	1	.8%	128	100.0%	3.6
3.e. Working collaboratively with higher education institutions on Research and Development (R&D) activity	0	0.0%	16	12.5%	63	49.2%	47	36.7%	2	1.6%	0	0.0%	128	100.0%	3.2
3.f. Integrating the TSA work with the developments of other school networks and partnerships	0	0.0%	14	10.9%	68	**53.1%**	44	34.4%	2	1.6%	0	0.0%	128	100.0%	3.2
3.g. Aligning TSA's strategic developments with the school improvement priorities of the local authorities	3	2.3%	25	19.5%	63	49.2%	34	26.6%	2	1.6%	1	.8%	128	100.0%	3.0
3.h. Using other TSA(s) for peer review and health checks	2	1.6%	38	29.7%	61	47.7%	24	18.8%	2	1.6%	1	.8%	128	100.0%	2.9
3.i. Joining up capacity and/or resources with other TSAs or school networks to scale up the provision of support	0	0.0%	15	11.7%	77	**60.2%**	33	25.8%	2	1.6%	1	.8%	128	100.0%	**3.1**
3.j. Increasing dialogue and communication about standards and improvement within the alliance	0	0.0%	7	5.5%	81	**63.3%**	39	30.5%	1	.8%	0	0.0%	128	100.0%	3.3
3.k. Planning leadership succession arrangements within the alliance	1	.8%	24	18.8%	60	46.9%	42	32.8%	1	.8%	0	0.0%	128	100.0%	3.1

Figure 4.2 Key characteristics of TSAs as perceived by senior leaders of TSs and directors of TSAs **(Q3)**
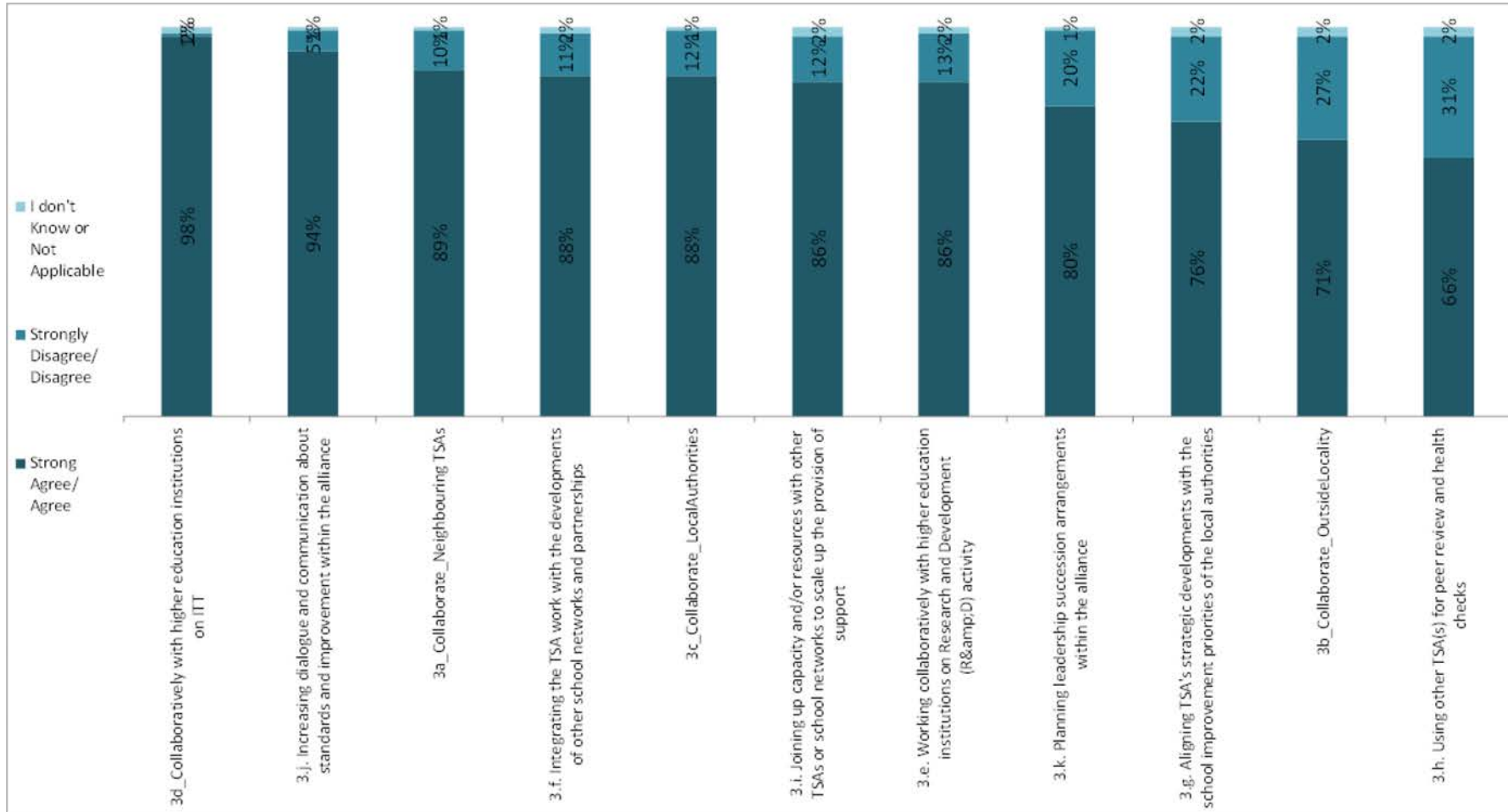
Table 4.3 Experiences of leading TSAs as perceived by senior leaders of TSs and directors of TSAs (**Q4**)

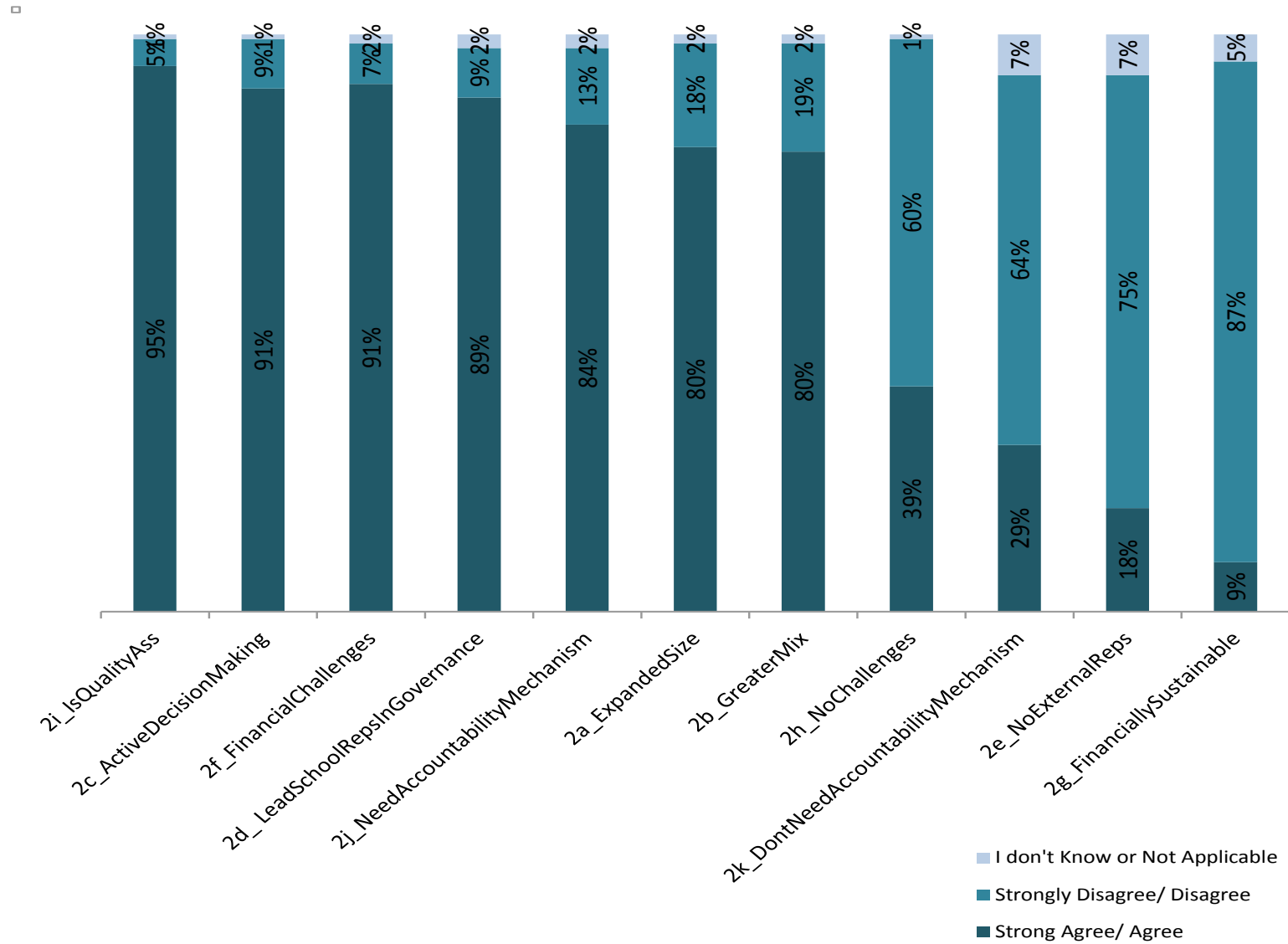Figure 4.3 Experiences of leading TSAs as perceived by senior leaders of TSs and directors of TSAs (**Q4**)

4.h. Teaching schools and their alliances play a central role in the development of a self-improving school system. — 98%, 1%, 1%

4.a. Partnership development in our TSA essentially relies upon shared moral purpose and good will of 'like-minded people'. — 92%, 7%, 1%

4.d. Running the TSA work on a daily basis requires a lot of resilience. — 92%, 6%, 2%

4.g. Limited resources and capacity are persistent challenges to the effective delivery of our TSA work. — 80%, 18%, 2%

4.i. Teaching schools and their alliances alone cannot achieve the self-improving system. — 77%, 19%, 4%

4.e. Our work on establishing a teaching school alliance is not recognised in the Ofsted accountability framework. — 72%, 13%, 15%

4.c. Maintaining the teaching school status is a constant cause for concern for senior leaders of our TSA. — 63%, 37%, 1%

4.f. Ofsted's accountability framework is conversant with the move towards a self-improving school system. — 39%, 48%, 13%

4.b. The uneven geographical distribution of teaching schools has caused tensions between TSAs in our locality. — 30%, 66%, 5%

4.j. Multi-academy trusts have a greater impact on school improvement than teaching school alliances. — 14%, 61%, 25%

■ Strong Agree/ Agree   ■ Strongly Disagree/ Disagree   ■ I don't Know or Not Applicable

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Table 4.4 Experiences of change in TSAs as perceived by senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAs (**Q5**)

	Not At All		Partially		A Lot		Very Significantly		I Don't Know		Not Applicable		Total	
TABLES EXCLUDING STRATEGIC PARTNERS															
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Mean
5.a. Enhanced reciprocal trust across the alliance	7	5.5%	29	22.7%	45	35.2%	43	**33.6%**	2	1.6%	2	1.6%	128	3.0
5.b. Fewer strategic partner schools	78	60.9%	29	22.7%	11	8.6%	2	1.6%	3	2.3%	5	3.9%	128	1.5
5.c. Increased collective capacity for school improvement across partner schools	5	3.9%	45	35.2%	43	33.6%	34	26.6%	1	.8%	0	0.0%	128	2.8
5.d. Enhanced collective (shared) moral purpose across partner schools	5	3.9%	34	26.6%	55	**43.0%**	32	25.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.6%	128	2.9
5.e. Extended collaboration beyond senior leaders (involving middle leaders, teachers and students) within the alliance	1	.8%	30	23.4%	54	**42.2%**	43	**33.6%**	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	128	3.1
5.f. Increased leadership ability to diagnose the improvement needs of partner schools within the alliance	5	3.9%	55	43.0%	44	34.4%	22	17.2%	2	1.6%	0	0.0%	128	2.7
5.g. Increased leadership ability to mobilise resources to meet the improvement needs of partner schools	5	3.9%	47	36.7%	49	38.3%	25	19.5%	2	1.6%	0	0.0%	128	2.7
5.h. Closer collaboration with local authorities	17	13.3%	49	38.3%	32	25.0%	28	21.9%	1	.8%	1	.8%	128	2.6
5.i. Closer collaboration with other TSAs	7	5.5%	42	32.8%	51	39.8%	27	21.1%	1	.8%	0	0.0%	128	2.8
5.j. Enhanced local reputation for the quality of its innovation and/or provision of support	3	2.3%	33	25.8%	53	**41.4%**	36	28.1%	3	2.3%	0	0.0%	128	3.0
5.k. Enhanced national reputation for the quality of its innovation and/or provision of support	12	9.4%	42	32.8%	43	33.6%	20	15.6%	11	8.6%	0	0.0%	128	2.6

Figure 4.4 Experiences of change in TSAs as perceived by senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of alliances (**Q5**)
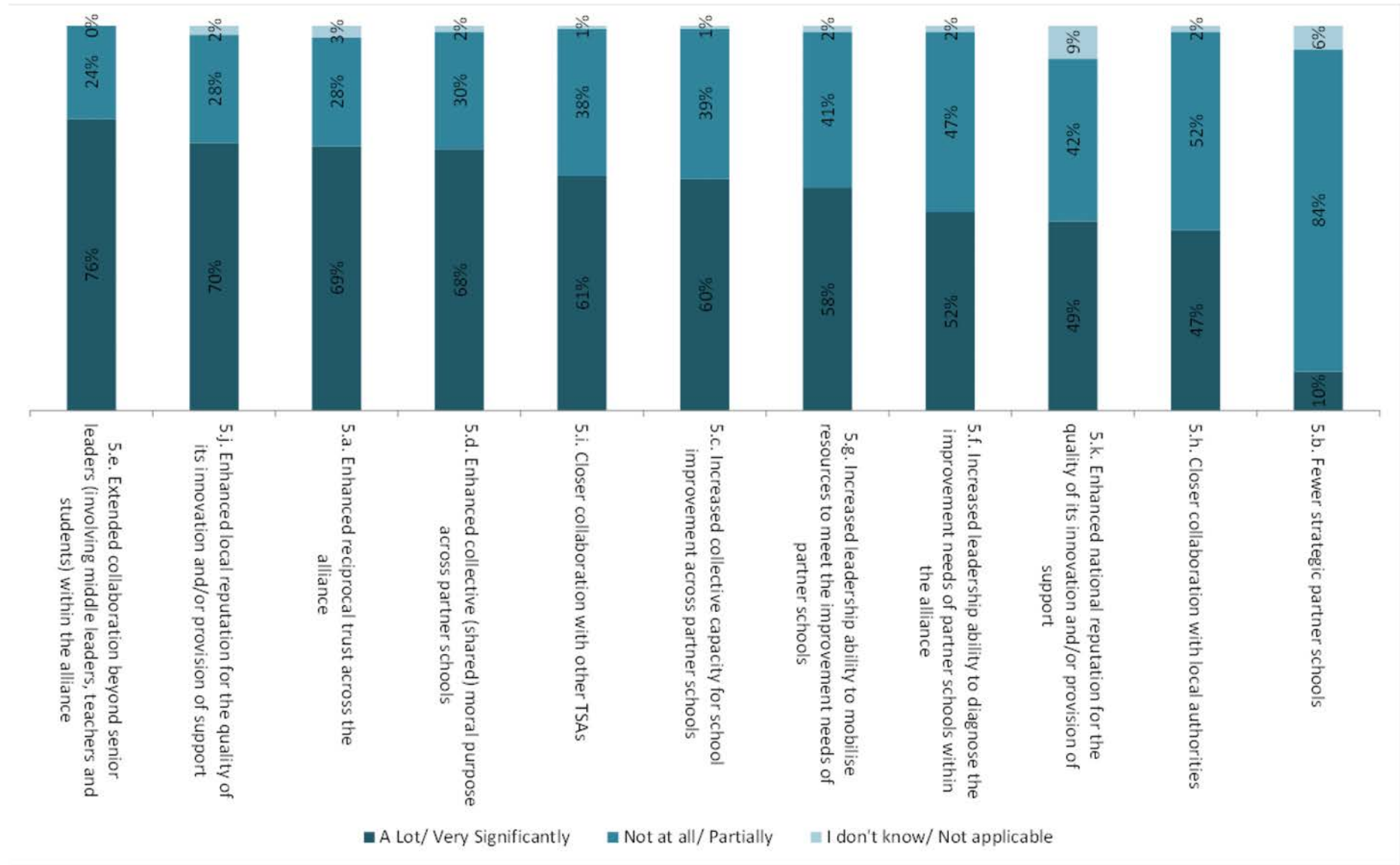
Table 4.5 Experiences of change in TSAs and leadership practices as perceived by senior leaders of TSs and directors of alliances (**Q6**)

	TABLES EXCLUDING STRATEGIC PARTNERS													
	Not At All		Partially		A Lot		Very Significantly		I Don't Know		Not Applicable		Total	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Mean
6.a. My improved leadership abilities to diagnose and make decisions about changes needed for improvement "within my own school"	6	4.7%	39	30.5%	41	32.0%	33	25.8%	3	2.3%	6	4.7%	128	2.8
6.b. My improved leadership abilities to diagnose and make decisions about changes needed for improvement "in other schools"	5	3.9%	36	28.1%	48	37.5%	34	26.6%	1	.8%	4	3.1%	128	2.9
6.c. Increased numbers of staff moving on to senior leadership posts within and outside the alliance	13	10.2%	67	52.3%	27	21.1%	14	10.9%	6	4.7%	1	.8%	128	2.3
6.d. An improved supply of good quality NQTs	4	3.1%	43	33.6%	37	28.9%	41	32.0%	2	1.6%	1	.8%	128	2.9
6.e. A more coherent professional development model that integrates ITT, CPD, leadership development and succession planning for the alliance	0	0.0%	31	24.2%	47	36.7%	49	38.3%	0	0.0%	1	.8%	128	3.1
6.f. Improved expertise amongst teachers to design, implement and monitor innovative practices across the alliance (i.e. "joint practice development across partner schools")	2	1.6%	47	36.7%	46	35.9%	32	25.0%	1	.8%	0	0.0%	128	2.9
6.g. Increased collaborative planning of joint practice development (JPD) among teachers to improve their practice within the alliance	1	.8%	51	39.8%	50	39.1%	26	20.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	128	2.8
6.h. A shared view about what constitutes outstanding teaching and learning across partner schools	1	.8%	40	31.3%	65	50.8%	19	14.8%	3	2.3%	0	0.0%	128	2.8
6.i. A shared commitment to high standards for academic performance across partner schools	0	0.0%	38	29.7%	57	44.5%	30	23.4%	1	.8%	2	1.6%	128	2.9
6.j. A shared commitment to sharing best practice within the alliance	0	0.0%	27	21.1%	55	43.0%	46	35.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	128	3.1
6.k. Regular discussion and monitoring of targets for improvement across partner schools	25	19.5%	50	39.1%	37	28.9%	14	10.9%	1	.8%	1	.8%	128	2.3
6.l. A collective focus on using data in planning for individual pupil needs within the alliance	25	19.5%	53	41.4%	31	24.2%	17	13.3%	2	1.6%	0	0.0%	128	2.3
6.m. Increased staff ability and expertise to undertake R&D activity to improve teaching and learning within the alliance	3	2.3%	63	49.2%	42	32.8%	20	15.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	128	2.6
6.n. Increased use of research evidence to inform and improve teaching and learning within the alliance	6	4.7%	62	48.4%	42	32.8%	18	14.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	128	2.6
6.o. Improved knowledge of where best practice in every subject is across the alliance	7	5.5%	56	43.8%	48	37.5%	17	13.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	128	2.6
6.p. More effective use of outstanding teachers for professional development across partner schools	1	.8%	34	26.6%	51	39.8%	42	32.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	128	3.0

Figure 4.5 Experiences of change in TSAs and leadership practices as perceived by senior leaders of TSs and directors of alliances (**Q6**)
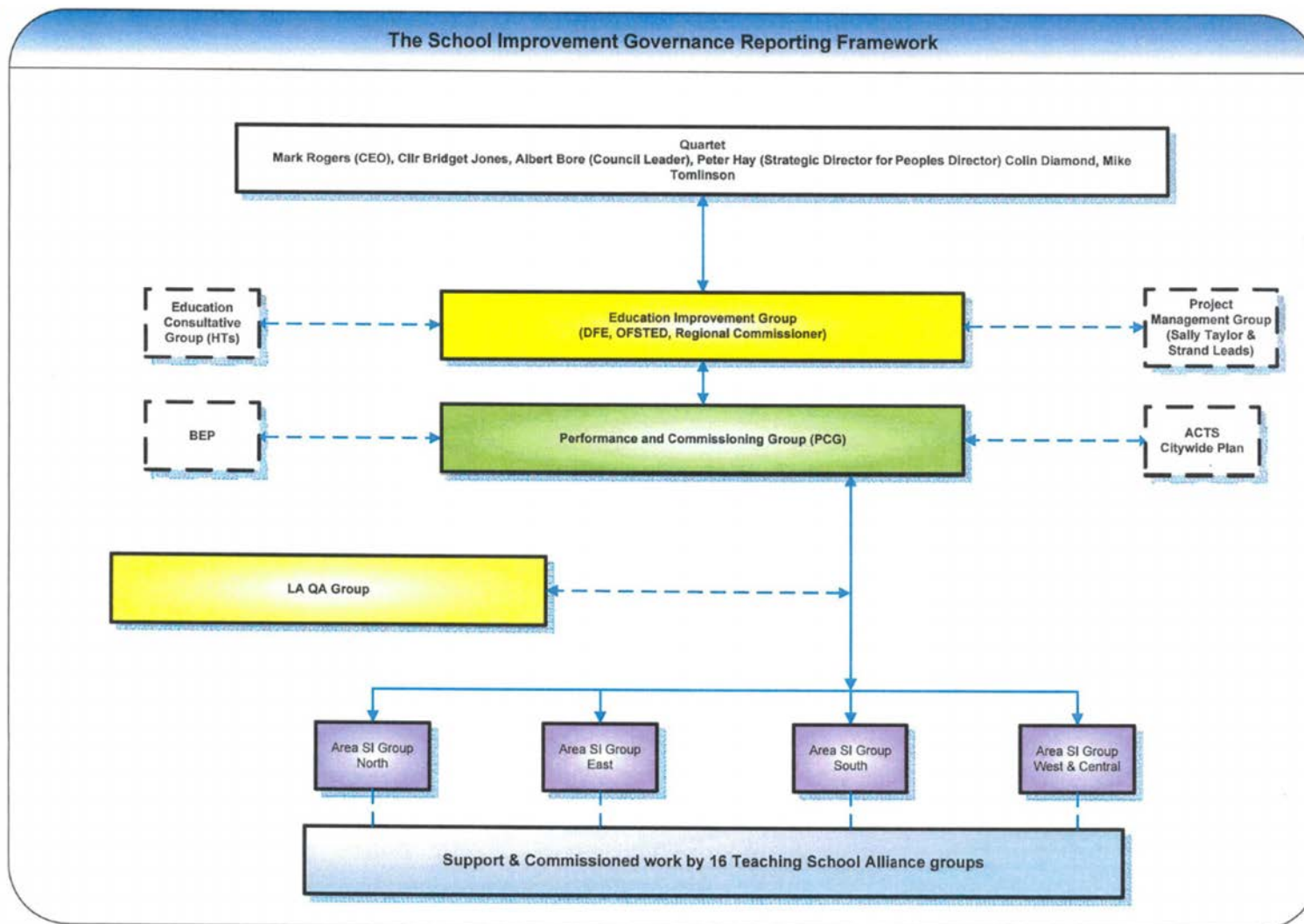
Table 4.6 The extent to which involvement in the teaching school work was perceived by senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAS as having contributed to improvement *in their own (teaching) schools* (Q7)

	TABLES EXCLUDING STRATEGIC PARTNERS													
	Not At All		Partially		A Lot		Very Significantly		Not Applicable		I Don't Know		Total	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Mean
7.a. The climate and culture of the school	5	3.9%	49	38.3%	41	32.0%	27	**21.1%**	6	4.7%	0	0.0%	128	2.7
7.b. The way in which teachers teach	4	3.1%	51	39.8%	47	**36.7%**	20	15.6%	6	4.7%	0	0.0%	128	2.7
7.c. The school's approach to learning	5	3.9%	56	43.8%	42	32.8%	19	14.8%	6	4.7%	0	0.0%	128	2.6
7.d. The engagement of pupils in learning	9	7.0%	60	46.9%	30	23.4%	17	13.3%	12	9.4%	0	0.0%	128	2.5
7.e. Pupil attainment	11	8.6%	70	54.7%	22	17.2%	11	8.6%	14	10.9%	0	0.0%	128	2.3
7.f. Pupil progress (value added)	15	11.7%	61	47.7%	25	19.5%	12	9.4%	15	11.7%	0	0.0%	128	2.3
7.g. Pupil behaviour	37	**28.9%**	49	38.3%	19	14.8%	8	6.3%	14	10.9%	1	.8%	128	2.0
7.h. The attainment gap between FSM pupils and their peers	24	18.8%	61	47.7%	26	20.3%	6	4.7%	11	8.6%	0	0.0%	128	2.1
7.i. Teachers' commitment to their work	14	10.9%	50	39.1%	34	26.6%	21	16.4%	9	7.0%	0	0.0%	128	2.5
7.j. Teachers' commitment to your school	12	9.4%	43	33.6%	40	31.3%	24	18.8%	9	7.0%	0	0.0%	128	2.6
7.k. Teachers' commitment to professional development	2	1.6%	32	25.0%	56	**43.8%**	31	**24.2%**	7	5.5%	0	0.0%	128	3.0
7.l. The quality of teacher recruitment	7	5.5%	45	35.2%	37	28.9%	30	**23.4%**	9	7.0%	0	0.0%	128	2.8
7.m. Reduction in teacher turnover	27	**21.1%**	48	37.5%	21	16.4%	13	10.2%	19	14.8%	0	0.0%	128	2.2
7.n. Leadership of teaching and learning	4	3.1%	49	38.3%	41	32.0%	28	**21.9%**	6	4.7%	0	0.0%	128	2.8

Figure 4.6 The extent to which involvement in the teaching school work was perceived by senior leaders of teaching schools and directors of TSAS as having contributed to improvement *in their own (teaching) schools* (Q7)
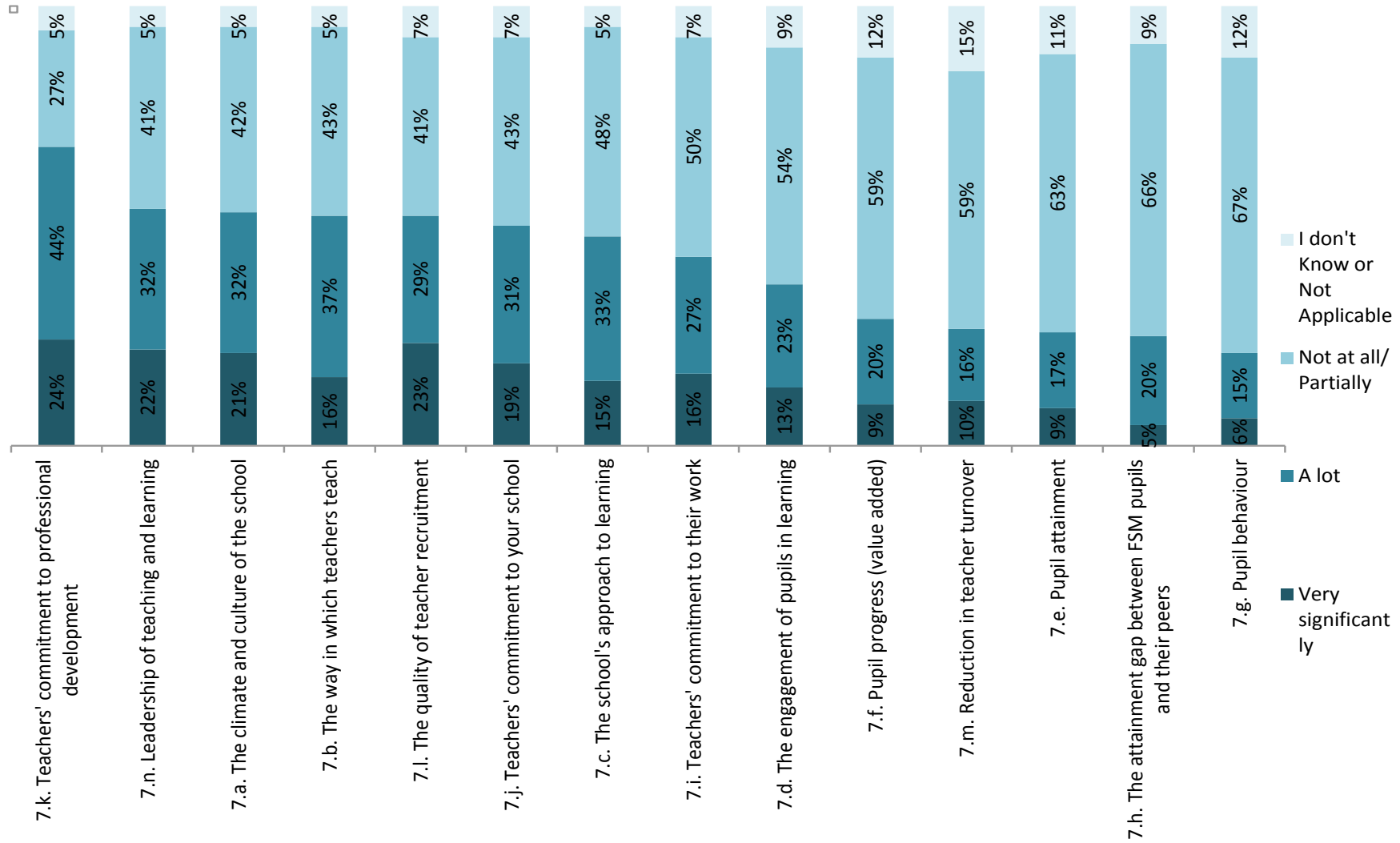
Appendix 6: A city-wide, layered partnership structure and mechanism for school improvement in Birmingham

The School Improvement Governance Reporting Framework

Quartet
Mark Rogers (CEO), Cllr Bridget Jones, Albert Bore (Council Leader), Peter Hay (Strategic Director for Peoples Director) Colin Diamond, Mike Tomlinson

Education Consultative Group (HTs)

Education Improvement Group
(DFE, OFSTED, Regional Commissioner)

Project Management Group
(Sally Taylor & Strand Leads)

BEP

Performance and Commissioning Group (PCG)

ACTS Citywide Plan

LA QA Group

Area SI Group North

Area SI Group East

Area SI Group South

Area SI Group West & Central

Support & Commissioned work by 16 Teaching School Alliance groups

National College for
Teaching & Leadership

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