Evaluation of the Extra Mile

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Executive Summary

The University of Manchester was commissioned by the former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to undertake an independent evaluation of the Extra Mile (EM). This report describes the methodology of the evaluation and outlines its findings in the three key areas of

- ***Impact***
- ***Activity*** and
- ***Sustainability***.

The main findings are summarised below:

1: Impact of the Extra Mile

The evaluation shows that EM is associated with a positive impact on pupil attainment and other outcomes although it is too early to say how significant and enduring this might be.

Participating schools report that the EM has been a worthwhile project with positive outcomes for pupils and staff. It has stimulated a focus in their organisation on the attainment gap between pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) and those who are not. Involvement with the EM has reportedly increased the motivation of staff and pupils and raised their confidence in tackling this particular gap. The processes and emerging outcomes have encouraged them to believe the gap can be reduced.

The analysis of national data revealed one statistically significant difference between students taking part in EM activities and a matched sample of students not taking part. On the measure of 'points scored at GCSE', EM students performed better than the comparator group. The analysis does not identify any other statistically significant correlations.

In the research interviews, school leaders, staff, pupils and local authority (LA) officers used a local mixture of mainly impressionistic information and, occasionally, numeric data to describe improvements in pupil attainment, achievement, confidence and ambition. All of the respondents reported that they had observed some improvement.

Most schools commented on how early it was to expect measurable improvement in attainment based on EM activity. Fewer than half of the case study schools made a direct reference to internal, short-term measures which might be used to track attainment, especially between or ahead of end of Key Stage assessments.

2: Activity

The research team was asked to consider whether schools "implemented the EM in a way that is faithful to the original aims of the project?" In more general terms, the team was asked to report on how well the activities complemented other initiatives, and fitted into the strategic planning of the school. Plans for the continuity of the activities after the project ended, including attention to contributory and inhibiting factors, were also of interest.

Overall, schools comfortably aligned EM activities and support with their own strategic planning and with other initiatives. This flexibility was almost universally described as a positive feature of EM. In the main, this involved EM activity accommodating or moulding itself around the school's existing priorities and extending the associated activities.

On the central question of whether the schools implemented EM in a faithful way, the evidence is that with one or two exceptions where the local activity deviated, they did. Schools consistently developed activities which could be categorised within the EM activity framework for their phase and which were focussed on the target group of FSM children with the intention of raising the attainment of that group faster than other averages.

The report illustrates the variety of ways in which schools adapted the EM framework and principles to accommodate local interests and priorities while remaining consistent with the project design.

3: Sustainability

The research team was asked to assess the sustainability of the EM programme – the drivers and challenges to maintaining improvements – and the capacity of schools to continue the activity or to act more widely as change agents.

All but one of the case study schools talked about the continuing effect of EM in very positive terms. At the one school where senior leaders spoke less positively about continuation, there was a commitment to review their position when the case study interviews revealed the depth of the students' continuing commitment.

Based on comments from the other schools, it would be more appropriate to describe the continuing effect of EM in terms of legacy rather than sustainability. For most schools, embedding the principles of EM had become more important than particular activities.

Although about two thirds of the case study schools reported explicitly that they intended to continue activity which had been sponsored by EM, most were uncertain about the continuation of particular activities. Funding issues were occasionally described as a critical factor in that uncertainty. Schools occasionally reported that the initial activity had run its course – their learning showed that it needed to be replaced by a new activity or, in some cases, had revealed underlying issues which needed to be addressed with a different kind of effort.

Interviewees have consistently reported that EM has changed the attitudes and approaches of staff in particular, notably the recognition of potential, the reinforcement of accountability, the development of shared professional learning and the building of social capital. While particular EM activities might or might not be sustainable, the project appears to have created a positive legacy embedded in those changes.

4. In Conclusion

The report concludes that schools participating in the EM project have benefited from six features of its approach which are consistent with other research evidence of effective school improvement. EM has:
   i.   benefited from its alignment with the values of the local participants
   ii.   provided a framework without imposing prescription
   iii. raised awareness of a compelling issue for improvement
   iv.   allowed local contexts to determine the design of local activity
   v.   offered good quality external support and critical friendship
   vi.   promoted, but not imposed, opportunities for collaboration.

Chapter 1. Introduction

In the autumn of 2009, the School of Education at Manchester University was commissioned by the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to conduct an evaluation of the EM. The focus of the study which is reported in the following pages has been on the *Impact, Activities and Sustainability* of the work associated with EM.

EM focused on what is believed to be a cultural barrier of low aspirations and scepticism about education that prevents some disadvantaged pupils from succeeding at school. EM focussed on how schools might close the attainment gap which commonly divides pupils entitled to FSM from their peers. It identified, encouraged and supported school-based actions which are known to be effective. Its aim was to reduce within-school variations and spread good practice between schools and so help to raise the aspirations and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Specifically, EM aimed to:

- raise the aspirations and attainment of disadvantaged children, and to engage them in their own education
- narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more advantaged peers
- transfer identified school improvement processes and key activities which have been particularly successful in raising aspirations and attainment in trial schools to other schools with similar intakes.

EM was established following an investigation completed by the former DCSF. In 2007, School Standards Advisers[3] from that Department visited 50 secondary schools which were identified as *"bucking the trend"* by achieving high results despite having an intake from some of the most disadvantaged wards in England (as defined by FSM eligibility). In 2008, a similar investigation was conducted in 45 primary schools. The Advisers identified 12 common activities for secondary schools and seven common activities for primary schools which appeared to be particularly successful in raising aspirations and attainment. These were developed into guidance documents for primary and secondary schools, with the aim of seeing if other schools, with similar intakes, could adopt some of these activities with the same success. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 outline the nature of activities offered.

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[3] School Standards Advisers, now The Effective Practice Team, are consultants who work with discretion in a civil service context and support policies of the government of the day. Each member is a qualified teacher and has worked as an HMI, or as a head teacher or held a senior position in a local authority.

Table 1.1: Seven Key Activities for Primary Schools

1	Providing a coherent curriculum with a strong focus on speaking and listening
2	Engaging pupils in their learning
3	Helping pupils to articulate and manage their emotions
4	Broadening pupils' horizons by providing a wide-range of stimulating activities
5	Providing support at transition points
6	Recruiting, developing and retaining staff with empathy for the pupils and their backgrounds
7	Promoting and valuing partnerships with parents/carers and the local community

Table 1.2: Twelve Key Activities for Secondary Schools

1	Increasing interactive and participatory learning
2	Developing a listening campaign which responds to pupil and parent perceptions
3	Promoting a culture of respect for local people, local culture and local values
4	Broadening pupils' horizons by offering experiences and opportunities with which they would not otherwise be familiar
5	Developing a culture of 'achievement' and 'belonging' in school
6	Offering a more relevant curriculum
7	Building pupils' repertoire of spoken and written language
8	Developing pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills
9	Cultivating traditional values of respect, good behaviour and caring
10	Tracking pupil progress and intervening promptly if they fall off trajectory
11	Developing effective rewards and incentive schemes
12	Supporting pupils at important moments in their lives, especially transition points

Schools involved in the EM were assigned a School Standards Adviser. The Adviser visited the school on a regular basis (approx. once per term) to meet with key people involved in implementing the project and offered ongoing telephone support. The role of the adviser was to provide critical friendship and monitor progress against an action plan.

The project operated in three phases:
- ***Phase 1 (Secondary)*** ran from September 2008 to July 2009 and supported 23 secondary schools across 11 LAs with guidance materials, input from School Standards Advisers, a linked partner school and a grant of £10,000 for each school.
- ***Phase 2 (Secondary)*** began in September 2009 to run for one year on a similar basis to phase 1 (Secondary) though without the £10,000 grant. Two schools in each of 30 LAs participated. In each of those LAs two similar schools were nominated to act as a comparison group and one school which was relatively successful with FSM pupils acted as a partner.
- ***Phase 1 (Primary)*** began in September 2009 to run for one year and involved 40 schools forming self-supportive clusters of four across ten LAs. A relatively successful partner school was nominated in each LA. Funding for this phase was at the level of £7,000 for each EM School, £3,000 for the partner school and £7,000 for the LA.

This report is organised in five chapters, as follows:

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the methodology employed for this evaluation. This also sets the context for the thematic headings used in the following sections.

The following three chapters are each organised in turn around one of three key features of EM's school-based projects and draw on the full range of data analysed during this evaluation. The three key features are:

> ***Chapter 3: Impact*** – what difference EM made
> ***Chapter 4: Activity*** – what schools did under the EM banner
> ***Chapter 5: Sustainability*** – the legacy of EM in schools

Chapter 6 focuses on the pupil perspective. It draws on interviews with pupils in the case study schools in order to offer insights into pupils' experience of EM activity. Most of the analyses presented are based on secondary school data. Primary schools indicated that they had only been involved with the project long enough to demonstrate limited impact on outcomes and their pupils were not on the whole aware of being in a special set of activities. Nonetheless, the research team's more limited contact with primary pupils confirmed the older pupils' generally positive accounts.

Chapter 7 offers conclusions and reflections on the findings of this evaluation.

Chapter 2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the key questions explored in the research project and the methodology used to assess the effect of EM in schools. Specifically it reports that the evaluation focussed on three key features: impact of EM, activities within EM and issues of sustainability. The evaluation was therefore guided by three key overarching research questions:

1. *Is being part of the EM a particular catalyst for narrowing the FSM achievement gap?*

2. *In what EM activity did schools engage?*

3. *What are the drivers for and challenges to sustainability of any observed EM impact, both within schools and across their LAs?*

The research design combined analysis of attainment data, reviews of documentary evidence produced by schools, telephone interviews with key personnel at a sample of schools and narrative accounts of practice based on interviews conducted at 14 case study schools. It took into account an ambition shared by the former DCSF and the Manchester team to keep requests to schools for data collection and other contributions to a minimum, while maintaining rigour. The following sections detail the methods used to collect and analyse data.

2.2 Methods

This evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach structured around four phases of data collection and analysis. The quantitative strand of the evaluation was designed to ascertain the relationship between EM activity and pupil outcomes. The qualitative phases of activity were designed to generate rich descriptions about the impact, activities and sustainability of EM. Specifically, the evaluation involved the following elements:

2.1.1 Quantitative analysis of impact

The aim of the quantitative element of this evaluation was to assess the extent to which pupils in receipt of EM interventions exceed (or otherwise) their expected levels of achievement at Key Stages 2 and 4. In order to examine this, an initial school-level analysis of the characteristics and outcomes for pupils in the phase 1 schools was carried out at an early stage in the research. That analysis confirmed the difficulty of discerning and attributing effects from the EM if school-level data was the only data used.

Variables which might obscure the EM effect include the type, duration and context of the EM interventions as well as the background, prior attainment and engagement of individual pupils. Additionally, many of the schools were involved in other projects or activities focussed on the same or some of the same pupil groups. After some

discussion about potential approaches, the Department expressed a preference for a pupil-level analysis comparing predicted and actual achievement at KS3 and KS4, using Contextual Value Added (CVA) data. The research team observed that the collection and analysis of the pupil-level data from schools would be a significant challenge. It expected many schools to be resistant to an extra task and this has been the case. However, as the aims of the EM were to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and narrow the attainment gap, this analysis was pursued in an effort to access indicative and emergent data on the extent to which these aims were achieved at pupil level. Given all these variables, the quantification of impact requires cautious interpretation.

 A sample of 27 schools was approached to collect data to supplement the Department's own national dataset. The sample had been designed to include:
- at least one site in phase 1 and one site in phase 2 from each of the seven government regions
- a range of schools based on criteria of size, attainment, admissions by gender, locality (city, urban and rural), faith affiliation and governance.

The additional data requested from these schools covered the attendance, behaviour and attainment of pupils who participated in the project. A small number of schools from the sample simply declined to provide the data.   Many others responded by saying that they had moved on and were reluctant to complete an additional task. Some also reported a practical difficulty in associating the EM activities with particular pupils, even more so particular pupils who have since completed a Key Stage. In order to improve the response rate, the research team approached the remaining schools by both email and telephone on several occasions. Only 2 primary and 9 secondary schools provided complete and usable returns.

Specifically, the methodology for data collection and preparation of the datasets for quantitative analysis and the analytical methods employed for comparative descriptive analysis and statistical modelling involved:

i) Data collection and preparation for analysis
Gathering and preparing the data for this analysis involved a three-stage procedure:
1. ***Survey of participating schools:*** During Autumn 2010, schools were asked to provide information about pupils who took part in EM activities, in a password-protected spreadsheet. Variables requested for each EM pupil included involvement in EM activity, attendance, behaviour referrals and behaviour exclusions for academic years 2008-9 and 2009-10. For secondary pupils the predicted and actual attainment grades (or teacher assessments when applicable) for English and mathematics at the start (September 2009) and end (July 2010) of the project were requested. For primary pupils the predicted teacher assessments for reading, writing and mathematics at the start of the project were also requested. In all cases, the Unique Pupil Number (UPN) was also requested so as to link with information from the National Pupil Database (NPD), which contains the details of all pupils registered as attending a state

school in England. This procedure led to collecting the relevant information from 11 out of the 27 EM schools for a total of 196 EM pupils. This serves as the 'core' sample for this analysis.

2. This core sample was matched to a comparative sample from the NPD. Information includes both pupils' characteristics and their examination results. Various datasets for different Key Stages and year groups and for different academic years (cohorts) were requested from the NPD for the following purposes:

  a) to complement the data for EM pupils with additional background variables, describing primarily their socio-economic status and their attainment 'history' when available

  (b) to select a comparative sample with comparable variables to explore the effect of EM activities. Due to the small sample size achieved in the survey of participating schools (see above) the selection of the comparative sample was performed at school level. Put simply, all the pupils attending the same school as those of the EM sample were initially selected from the various datasets.

3. The third phase of preparing the data for analysis involved *a process of "matching and cleaning"*. First, the various datasets (from school survey and the different NPD cohorts) were matched into one dataset. This process generated a spreadsheet of more than 5000 pupils with information about more than 1000 variables[4]. After the extensive process of checking the variables and selecting what was relevant, a more manageable dataset for analysis was created with fewer and pertinent variables. This included just under 5000 pupils.

ii) Final sample and implications for analysis

The methodology described above produced the sample described in Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1: The "total selected" sample split by Year group

| | Comparative Sample | | | | | | | Core sample: Extra Mile pupils | | | | | | | | Grand |
Year Group	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	total	Total
Primary	42	55	51				148	2	12						14	162
Secondary				1561	1544	1541	4646			4	25	18	34	101	182	4828
Grand Total	42	55	51	1561	1544	1541	4794	2	12	4	25	18	34	101	196	4990

The 'core' EM sample consists of 196 pupils, who came from 9 secondary and 2 primary schools, split by year group as shown in Table 2.1. The comparative selected sample consists of 4794 pupils who were found to attend the same schools during the period of the project.

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[4] The variables included those obtained in the participating schools survey (see p10) and those held in the NPD including age, gender, ethnicity, attendance and exclusions (sourced from the School Census for maintained schools only), matched to pupil level attainment data.

In order to check for the comparability of the two sub-samples, different comparisons were performed based on background pupil information including gender, ethnicity, FSM and English as an Additional Language (EAL). Notable characteristics of EM pupils included:

- Gender- there is an over-representation of boys in the EM sample of Year 9 compared to the comparator Year 9 sample. The opposite trend, i.e. over-representation of girls in the EM sample is observed for the Year 10 cohort. Year 11, with a larger cohort of EM pupils is more balanced in regards to gender.
- Ethnicity- the Year 10 EM sample is overpopulated by white British pupils, with only 1 in 34 ethnic minority pupils. The other two year groups' EM sample groups have an ethnicity split similar to the comparator cohort.
- FSM- in all investigated Year groups (9 to 11), more pupils in the EM sample are likely to be eligible for FSM compared to the comparator cohorts. The difference is of a 40% magnitude with the non-EM cohorts being eligible for FSM with a frequency of about 1 to 4, whereas the EM group reaches and exceeds 60% FSM eligibility.
- EAL- the only comparatively different distribution regarding language involves Year 10, where the EM group is overrepresented by "English speaking" pupils.
- SEN- there is a 50% split in the EM group of Year 9 pupils between SEN and non SEN, compared to a 70% (Not SEN) to 30% (SEN) split for the comparative sample. The distribution for the other two year groups appears to be more uniform.

Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)

The final indicator of socio-economic status (SES) used in this report is an index of deprivation based on values between 0 and 1. An IDACI score of, for example 0.24 means that 24% of children aged under 16 in that area (based on pupils' home postcodes) are living in families that are income deprived. In some schools there is a noticeable trend for EM pupils to be on average more deprived. The small apparent difference in IDACI (0.33 for the EM group, compared to 0.31 for non-EM pupils) is not statistically significant.

Analytical methods

Analysis of the datasets was performed in two distinct phases. The first included a descriptive analysis of the characteristics of the EM core sample compared to the 'comparative selected group' and the second involved inferential statistics. The focus of the inferential analysis, described below, was on the effect of the EM activities on pupils' attitudinal and outcome measures.

For analytical purposes these variables can be grouped into the categories shown in Table 2.2 on the following page.

Table 2.2 Variables classification under our analytical modelling framework

Background Variables	Previous Outcomes	"Experimental" Condition	Outcome Variables (When available, depending on Year group)
Gender, SES, ethnicity	Attainment (TA and grade)	EM Activity	End of Year Grades: English and maths
Year Group	Predicted Outcome		Teacher Assessments: English and maths
	Behavioural Variables		"Broader" Outcomes: Attendance and Behaviour

The categorization in Table 2.2 serves as a framework for modelling under the Generalised Linear Model (GLM) perspective. GLMs are applied in order to model "Outcome Variables" at the end of the year during which the EM project activity took place (grade, teacher assessments, and behavioural variables) as a function of (i) outcome variables before the Activity and (ii) background variables.

For example, to see how the EM affected any change between the start and end of year maths grade of secondary pupils we can use the simple model:

maths grade (End) = maths grade (start:previous) + EM

Note: EM in this model is a binary variable (YES/NO)

The effect of other background variables on this change was also examined, as well as the effect of pupils' year group by adding variables to the above model:

maths grade (end) = maths grade (start: previous) + EM + Yr Group + Gender + Ethnicity + Low Participation Neighbourhood+…

Similar models help to explore the question of whether the intervention helped pupils to exceed their expected grades: in this case the "previous" grade would be replaced by the expected grade.

Due to sampling restrictions this process was only applied to the subgroup of Yr11 pupils.

Quantitative methodology: Caveats and implications

The research team highlighted a number of issues and limitations during the preparation of the quantitative methodology. These included:

- A small number of schools returned the information sheets. This was as low as 2 for primary schools (including a total of 14 pupils only) and 9 for secondary schools. This limited the potential for constructing a sample from which generalised conclusions could be drawn.
- Primary pupils involved in EM projects came from younger Year groups and so could not be linked to NPD data. Therefore comparable analysis was only performed for Years 9-11, with a focus on assessed Yr11 pupils.
- We were not able to test for the effect of (all) the activities because of the variable frequency of their use, as reported by the schools.

Given these caveats, the research team recommends that findings from the quantitative analysis should be treated with caution. However, the combined weight of the quantitative and qualitative findings leads us to conclude there is evidence to suggest EM has made a positive impact on schools, teachers and pupils involved in the initiative and that it has had an impact on some pupils' test scores.

2.1.2 Qualitative analysis of impact, activity and sustainability

The qualitative analysis had three dimensions, a review of documentary evidence provided by EM schools, a series of telephone interviews and case study visits to a sample of EM schools.

i) Review of Management Information

School and LA documents relating to the EM and including proposals and plans were scrutinised for evidence of impact, activities and sustainability of the EM. The sample for this exercise was created using maximum variation sampling[5] to select ten secondary schools from phase 1 secondary, twenty intervention schools from phase 2 secondary and six primary schools from three LAs in phase 1 Primary (See table 2.3 below). The schools selected represented a range of geographical locations to ensure coverage across the regions. The range of contexts included inner city, urban, suburban and rural schools that served different types of communities, eg ethnically homogeneous or ethnically diverse.

Table 2.3 Summary table of characteristics sample schools

Extra Mile Cohort	Local Authority/ Government Office Region (2009)[6]	Age range	Gender	%FSM	Main Specialism
Secondary Phase 1	Metropolitan District/ North West	11-18	Mixed	18	Humanities
Secondary Phase 1	Unitary/ Yorks &Humber	11-16	Girls	4	Maths & Computing
Secondary Phase 1	County/ East Midlands	11-16	Mixed	20	Maths & Computing
Secondary Phase 1	County/ East Midlands	11-18	Mixed	15	Sports
Secondary Phase 1	County/ East	11-18	Mixed	14	Performing Arts
Secondary Phase 1	Metropolitan District/ London	11-16	Mixed	17	Design Technology
Secondary Phase 1	Metropolitan District/ London	11-16	Mixed	47	Sports
Secondary Phase 1	Unitary/ South East	11-16	Boys	23	Sports
Secondary Phase 1	Metropolitan District/ North West	11-16	Mixed	23	Sports with ICT

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[5] Maykutt, P. and Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research: A philosophical and practical guide,* London: Falmer

[6] Note: Government Office Regions were abolished 31st March 2011

Secondary Phase 1	Academy/ North West	11-16	Mixed	33	Business and Enterprise, Sports
Secondary Phase 2	County/ North East	11-16	Mixed	36	Performing Arts
Secondary Phase 2	County/ North East	11-16	Mixed	16	Arts
Secondary Phase 2	County/ Yorks &Humber	11-16	Mixed	12	Technology
Secondary Phase 2	County/ Yorks &Humber	11-16	Mixed	10	Performing & Visual Arts
Secondary Phase 2	County/ South East	11-18	Mixed	9	Humanities
Secondary Phase 2	County/ South East	11-18	Mixed	7	Arts
Secondary Phase 2	Metropolitan District/ West Midlands	11-16	Mixed	51	Media Arts
Secondary Phase 2	Metropolitan District/ West Midlands	11-16	Girls	25	Science, Maths & Computing
Secondary Phase 2	Metropolitan District/West Midlands	11-18	Mixed	48	Maths & Computing
Secondary Phase 2	Metropolitan District/ West Midlands	11-18	Mixed	26	Business & Enterprise
Secondary Phase 2	Metropolitan District/ London	11-18	Girls	42	Technology
Secondary Phase 2	Metropolitan District/ London	11-18	Mixed	56	Business & Enterprise
Secondary Phase 2	County/ South West	11-16	Mixed	12	Technology
Secondary Phase 2	County/ South West	13-18	Mixed	9	Media Arts
Secondary Phase 2	County/ East	11-16	Mixed	6	Business & Enterprise
Secondary Phase 2	County/ East	13-18	Mixed	12	Technology
Secondary Phase 2	County/ East	13-18	Mixed	10	Technology
Secondary Phase 2	Metropolitan District/ North West	11-18	Girls	43	Business & Enterprise
Secondary Phase 2	Metropolitan District/ North West	11-16	Mixed	30	Performing Arts
Secondary Phase 2	County/ West Midlands	11-18	Mixed	19	Arts
Primary Phase 2	Unitary/ South West	3-11	Mixed	38	N/A
Primary Phase 2	Unitary/ West South	4-11	Mixed	59	N/A
Primary Phase 2	County/ North	9-13	Mixed	21	N/A
Primary Phase 2	County/ North East	5-9	Mixed	24	N/A
Primary Phase 2	County/ North East	3-9	Mixed	35	N/A
Primary Phase 2	Unitary/ East	4-11	Mixed	38	N/A
Primary Phase 2	Unitary/ East	4-11	Mixed	21	N/A

ii) Telephone interviews

The research team designed, in consultation with the DCSF, a questionnaire schedule for telephone interviews. The schedule was nuanced for interviewees in different phases of EM and for LA officers. The schedule was built around the key issues of how the interviewees and their organisations had become involved in EM, what activities had resulted locally, what had been the impact and how sustainable the developments would be. For phase 1 Secondary, the research team approached ten schools in nine LAs. EM leaders at eight schools and officers in eight LAs provided interviews. For phase 2 Secondary, the research team approached a sample of 20 schools across 10 LAs. The research team completed interviews with 18 schools and all 10 local authorities. For phase 2 Primary, the research team approached a sample of 7 schools across 2 LAs. The research team completed interviews with all 7 schools and both the local authorities.

iii) Case study visits

The work of Yin[7] guided the design and implementation of the case study research. A common analytical framework was developed to facilitate both within and across case analysis in order to:

   a) provide detailed insights into individual school responses to EM and the activities and into the impact of these activities on closing the attainment gap between different groups
   b) identify broader themes, patterns, trends and associated issues, tensions and dilemmas across the wider policy context of closing the attainment gaps between different groups.

The research team used the telephone interview returns to inform the identification of 15 EM case study schools for deeper exploration. The cases were selected in consultation with the EM research steering group to ensure they covered different approaches to and experiences of EM and emerging key issues for project evaluation. The research team negotiated access to 14 of the 15 schools identified for case study visits. The case studies included:

Phase 1 Secondary, three schools
Phase 2 Secondary, eight schools
Phase 1 Primary, three schools.

Interviews with key stakeholders formed the primary source of evidence for the case studies. Between five and eight interviews and focus groups, each lasting approximately one hour took place at each site. Both the interviews and the focus groups were conducted in an informal style to a common framework. The framework was designed to provide the basis for a common analysis within and across case studies. Key features of the framework were an exploration of the three recurring themes of impact, activity and sustainability as well as a section on the effect of EM on lateral and hierarchical relationships within and between organisations.

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[7] Yin, R. (1994) *Case Study Research: Design and methods*, (2nd ed.) CA: Sage

Visits were conducted over a period of one to two days. Interview data was triangulated with documentary evidence and observational data. Where appropriate LA perspectives were incorporated into case study reports to ensure the generation of 'thick descriptions'[8]. Direct quotations from the case studies are used throughout this report.   Appendices A and B contain extensive quotations in case studies summarising the experiences of individual schools.

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[8] Geertz, C (1973) Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In C. Greetz, C, *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* (pp. 3- 32) New York: Basic Books

Chapter 3.   EM Activity: Impact on pupil achievement

Summary

The evaluation shows that EM is associated with a positive impact on pupil attainment and other outcomes although it is too early to say how significant and enduring this might be.

Participating schools report that EM has been a worthwhile project with positive outcomes for pupils and staff. It has stimulated a focus in their organisation on the attainment gap between pupils entitled to FSM and those who are not.   Involvement with the EM has reportedly increased the motivation of staff and pupils and raised their confidence in tackling this particular gap. The processes and emerging outcomes have encouraged them to believe the gap can be reduced.

The analysis of national data, using the measure of 'points scored at GCSE', shows a significant difference in the GCSE points scored between pupils taking part in EM activities and a matched sample of those not taking part in EM activities. The analysis does not identify any other statistically significant correlations.

In the research interviews, school leaders, staff, pupils and LA officers used a local mixture of mainly impressionistic information and, occasionally, numeric data to describe improvements in pupil attainment, achievement, confidence and ambition. All of the respondents reported that they had observed some improvement.

Most schools commented on how early it was to expect measurable improvement in attainment based on EM activity. Fewer than half of the case study schools made a direct reference to internal, short-term measures which might be used to track attainment, especially between or ahead of end of Key Stage assessments.

This chapter focuses on the first of the three key features of the EM's school-based projects – Impact – and examines the difference involvement in EM has made, using the full range of data analysed during the evaluation.

3.1 Quantitative Analysis: national comparators

Improving the attainment of pupils in the national assessments at the end of Key Stages 2 and 4 was the core ambition for all the participants in EM. Measuring whether there were significant improvements for the pupils involved in EM activities and whether those improvements could be attributed to the EM activities provided major methodological challenges for the research team as well as for the schools.

Prominent amongst the challenges was the expectation in many of the schools that the activities they had designed would not show an impact in the end of Key Stage assessments for some time, in many this would take years. This was most obvious in those secondary schools which had selected pupils from lower age groups, Yr8 for example, to be the subject of the EM activities. In primary schools, none of the pupils who undertook the national assessments at the end of KS2 in 2010 would have been engaged with EM activity for more than eight months.

There has also been a wider range of influences on the attainment of the EM pupils than their participation in that project. Many of those factors could not be controlled in the analysis. The data available to the research team has enabled some allowance to be made in the comparative analyses for the FSM factor itself and for prior attainment. The available data made no allowance for school factors, for example whether the school overall was in an improving or declining stage. Because of the level and diversity of deprivation with which many of the schools and pupils were associated, many reported receiving support from other national or local sources in terms of additional funding or activity. It was not possible to control for those wider factors.

3.2 An initial analysis of relevant national data

Early in the research programme, a data analysis of pupil characteristics and attainment from EM's phase 1 secondary cohort was conducted with a view to providing an initial insight into the composition of the EM cohort and an overview of the trajectory of improvement in schools before and during the initial stage of their involvement in EM. That analysis produced the comparisons with national averages reported in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 below.

Overall, an EM effect could neither be ruled out nor demonstrated on the basis of the results reported in that initial analysis*.*

Table 3.1 shows that, with the exception of pupils whose first language was not English, the EM secondary schools in phase 1 were similar in profile to the national averages.

Table 3.1: A comparison of pupil characteristics in EM phase 1 schools with national averages

	EM Phase 1	National Average
Statement of special needs	2.2%	2.0%
School Action or Action Plus for SEN	17.9%	18.2%
Gifted and Talented	13%	14.7%
FSM	16.3%	14.5%
English not their first language	17.9%	11.6%
White British	74.4%	77.3%

Table 3.2 shows that across the EM phase 1 schools, between 2005-2009, there had been a notable increase in the percentage of pupils achieving 5 A*-C passes

including English and maths from 28% to 39%. There had been no significant movement in the overall performance in terms of percentages achieving 5 A*-C. There was a small decrease in the average number of passes per pupil from 4.0 to 3.9 at A*-C and 8.2 to 7.1 at A*-G. One explanation for this might be an increasing concentration on English and mathematics in these schools. There had been a continuous improvement in CVA from KS2 to KS4 in the EM phase 1 Schools, though this trajectory began before the EM project was introduced.

Table 3.2: Change in performance over time - Extra Mile secondary schools

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
5 A*- C	41%	43%	44%	41%	40%
5 A*- G	84%	84%	86%	82%	81%
5 A*- C incl E&M	28%	29%	33%	38%	39%
5 A*- G incl E&M	83%	82%	85%	85%	89%
Mean No. Passes A*- C	4.0	4.3	4.8	4.0	3.9
Mean No. Passes A*- G	8.2	8.5	8.1	7.1	7.1
KS2-KS4 CVA	-12	-6.8	-3.4	-1.6	3.8

In the same analysis, each EM school was individually matched to a comparator school using phase, type of school, gender intake, attainment levels, pupil intake characteristics, location by social demography and school size as criteria. Table 3.3 illustrates that there were few significant differences on average between the groups before 2008. In 2008, comparison schools outperformed EM schools with statistical significance on 5 A*-C and 5 A*-G, while EM schools similarly outperformed comparison schools on 5 A*-C including English and maths. These three trends persisted in the 2009 results but in that year, only the 5 A*-G difference was statistically significant.

Table 3.3: EM and comparison secondary schools

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
5 A*- C	EM	41%	43%	44%	41%	40%
	Comparison	40%	43%	45%	44%	43%
5 A*- G	EM	84%	84%	86%	82%	81%
	Comparison	87%	89%	88%	88%	86%
5 A*- C incl E&M	EM	28%	29%	33%	38%	39%
	Comparison	29%	28%	32%	34%	38%
5 A*- G incl E&M	EM	83%	82%	85%	85%	89%
	Comparison	84%	87%	86%	88%	90%

3.3 Pupil-level analysis

The findings reported below are based on the methods described in Chapter 2 of this report.

3.3.1 Attainment of EM pupils compared to matched sample[9]

The measure of 'points scored at GCSE' for the pupils for whom comparison was possible with the matched sample of pupils demonstrated a significant positive effect of taking part in EM activities, associated with an increased score. There was a 20 point difference in favour of the EM group, statistically significant at the 5% level. This is equivalent statistically to compensating for one - but only one and not any combination - of the effect of FSM or 22% adverse deprivation on the IDACI scale or an 8% absence rate.[10]

Table 3.4 shows that, within the comparable sample, a lower percentage of the EM cohort achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs (46.5%) than the equivalent percentage in the comparator cohort (54.2%).

Table 3.4: Comparable Performance 5+ GCSE at A*-C including English and maths EM and non-EM pupils

	Achieved 5+ A*-C Inc Eng and maths	Not achieved	Total N
EM	46.5% (N47)	53.5% (N54)	101
Comparator	54.2% (N815)	45.8% (N689)	1504
Total N	862	743	1605

The differences in Table 3.4 are not statistically significant and may be attributable to a variety of factors which were not controlled in the sample. In particular, schools may have selected pupils for EM participation who were more 'at risk' of lower performance than others. Nevertheless, the overall EM average for 5A*-C including English and maths (46.5%) is more than half as much again as the equivalent average for pupils entitled to FSM nationally (31%). This is a notable figure given that the EM was targeted at FSM pupils. However, it is not possible to state confidently that the EM interventions caused or contributed to the difference in performance between the EM cohort and FSM pupils nationally (see Figure 3.1 below).

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[9] For details of matched sample see pages 10-11

[10] These inferences are made on the basis of the following regression model, in conjunction with the distribution of the explanatory variables:

points scored at GCSE=-271.1+3.3*KS3totalpoints+19.8*EMGroup(YES)-19.8*EligibleFSM(YES)+2.5*Attendance%-48.1*Ethnicity(WhiteBritish)-34.6*Gender(Male)-88.6*IDACIscore+6.6*KS2valueaddedscore [$F_{(8, 1420)}=259.2$ $p<2.2e-16$, $R^2=0.5936$ (Adjusted $R^2=0.5913$)]

The following three graphs, Figures 3.1. 3.2 and 3.3, throw further light on the characteristics and attainment of the EM cohort. The data for these three graphs is sourced from the EM and comparator groups described on pages 10 to 11 in Chapter 2.

Figure 3.1 shows that, overall, 40% of the EM sample group were not entitled to FSM. This included more than a quarter of the girls and more than half the boys. The proportion of FSM pupils in the non-EM comparator group is 24%. The national figure for FSM is close to 15% of secondary students.

It is interesting that, in a project which gave so much emphasis to the gap between FSM students and others, two out of five students selected by schools to participate in EM were not FSM students. This characteristic of the EM group undermines the value of direct comparisons with overall national attainment averages for FSM students.

Figure 3.1: Profile of students comparing EM and comparator group by FSM and gender
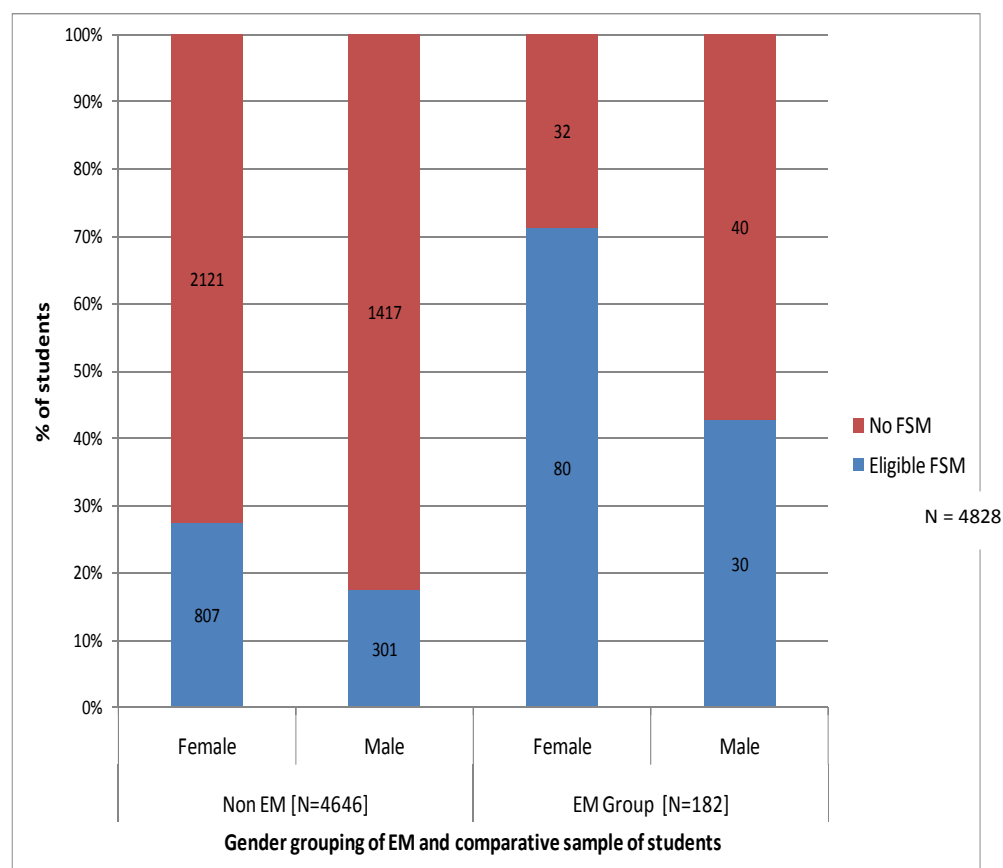
Figure 3.2 reveals that a notable factor within the overall performance of EM pupils was the relatively low average attainment of pupils from white British backgrounds. While non EM and ethnic minority pupils perform at levels very close to one another and approaching the national average for 5 A*-C at GCSE, including English and maths, pupils from white British backgrounds perform notably less well.

It is not possible to draw any firm conclusions from this evidence although it appears to be further confirmation of the challenge that this group poses.

In 2010 25% of white British students eligible for FSM obtained 5 A*-C GCSE passes, including English and maths. In the same year 42% of students from other ethnic backgrounds who were eligible for FSM reached that national benchmark. There is some scope, therefore, for optimism in both sets of figures for the EM group in Figure 3.2 although that must be read with the caveat about FSM proportions from the previous page. It might also be a reasonable hypothesis, though it was not tested in this evaluation, that schools chose some of their more challenging students to participate in EM.

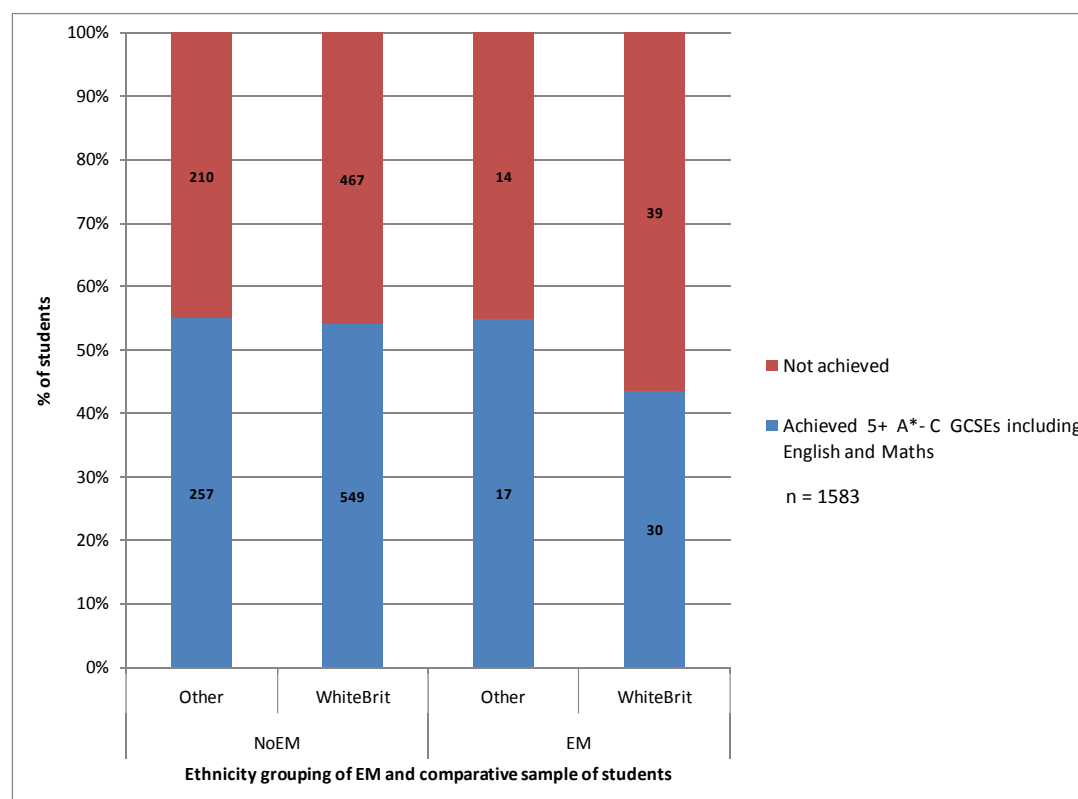**Figure 3.2: Average attainment and ethnicity of EM and non-EM pupils**

Figure 3.3 takes us a step further into the detail of the EM and comparator groups by controlling for FSM and gender across the two. Again using the national GCSE benchmark, this reveals that the lowest performing group overall is boys on FSM who are in the EM group.

Given the national figures on attainment, this is not a surprise and may be a direct consequence of the choices made by schools when selecting the most academically 'at risk' pupils to participate in EM. It does again confirm the persistence of particular challenges in the system.

Figure 3.3: The distribution of EM and non-EM pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths, by FSM and gender.
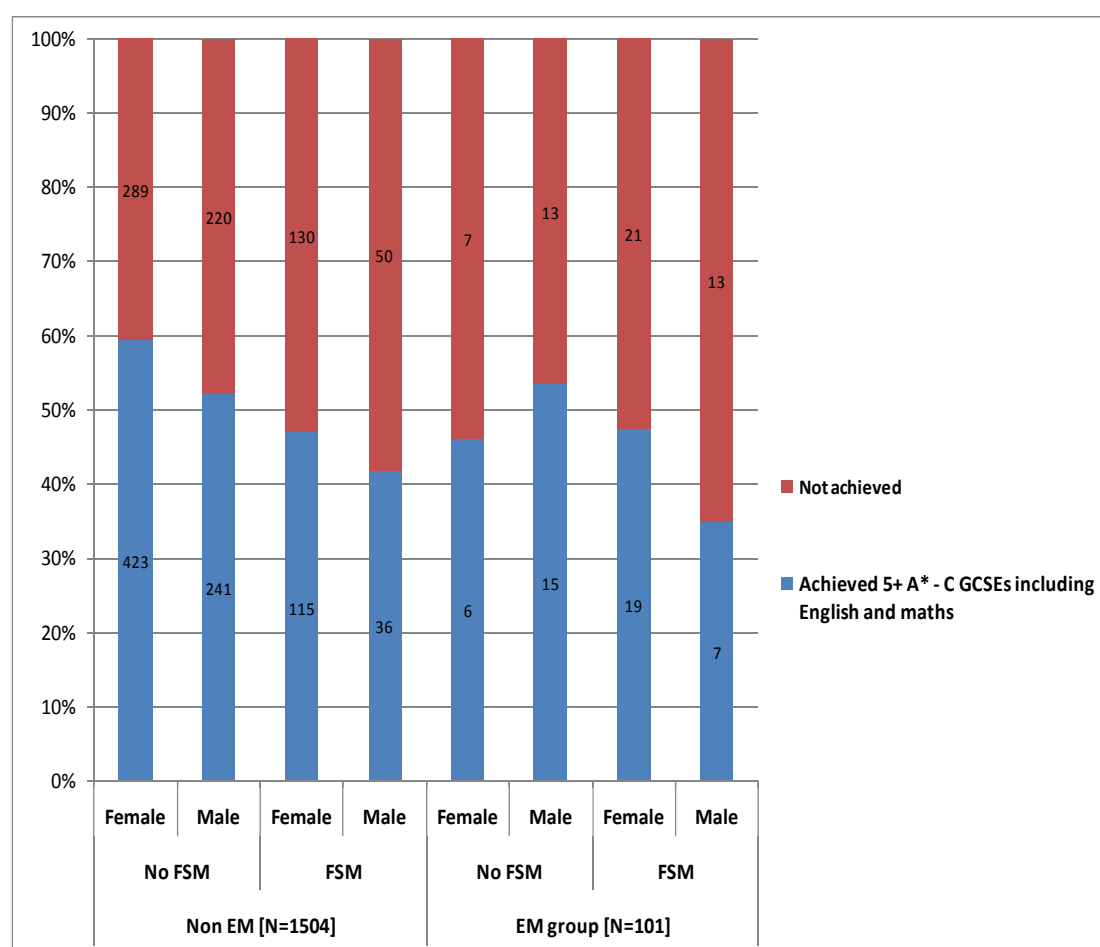
Further analysis targeting school effects and EM activity effects on attainment that are visible in GCSE performance did not produce any identifiable trends. However, graphs on the following pages show trends in a different outcome; attendance.

Figures 3.4 and 3.5 show the analysis of an outcome, improved attendance rates, which is arguably a necessary precursor to improving attainment. The data for these two graphs is sourced from the EM and comparator groups described on pages 10 to 11. The analysis identifies a trend for the attendance rates of EM pupils to improve more rapidly than those of non-EM pupils and at different rates for different EM activities. Although the trends revealed by these graphs are not statistically significant, they do indicate the potential for EM to have an impact on other student outcomes in addition to attainment.

Figure 3.4 compares overall absence rates for pupils in 2009 and 2010 by EM activity. The trends in Figure 3.4 are at a level which can only be suggestive of underlying factors.

The overall absences of EM pupils reduced most notably where Activity 2 (developing a listening campaign which responds to pupil and parent perceptions) and also where Activity 8 (developing pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills) were the focus of their groups.

In groups where Activity 5 (developing a culture of 'achievement' and 'belonging' in school) was implemented, overall absence increases.

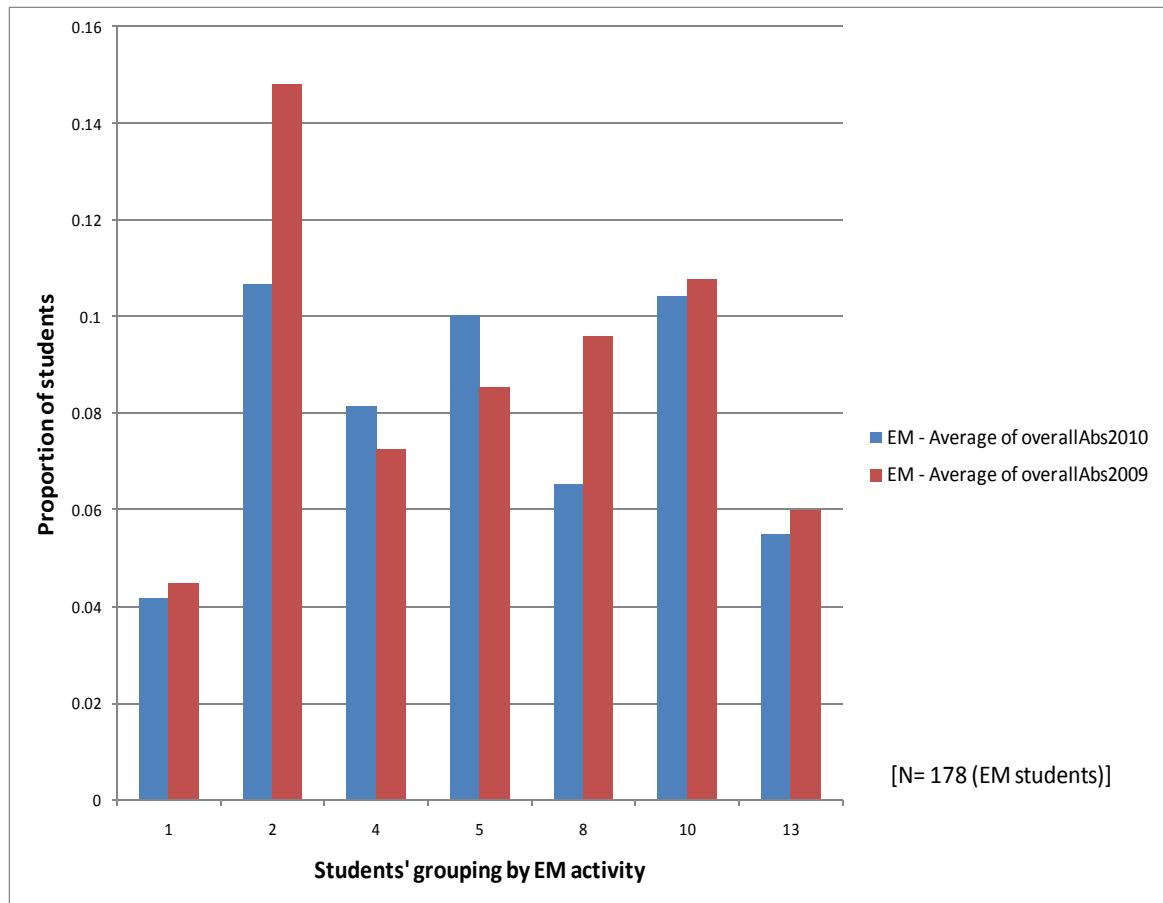**Figure 3.4: Average overall attendance at 2009 and 2010 by EM activity**

Figure 3.5 confirms the general attendance trends from Figure 3.4 and additionally illustrates the effect of combinations of EM activities. Figure 3.5 also compares attendance measures between the EM group (n=178) and the comparator group (n=4650) in bar 13. The trends observed in Figure 3.5, including the improvement in attendance by EM pupils compared to non-EM pupils, are not statistically significant and, in a relatively small sample, should be interpreted only as a description of the position and not as a causal consequence of any particular feature. Nonetheless they again suggest a wider, halo effect for EM beyond attainment.

Figure 3.5: Average overall attendance in 2009 and 2010 controlling for combinations of EM activity and comparing EM group outcomes with those of the comparator group.
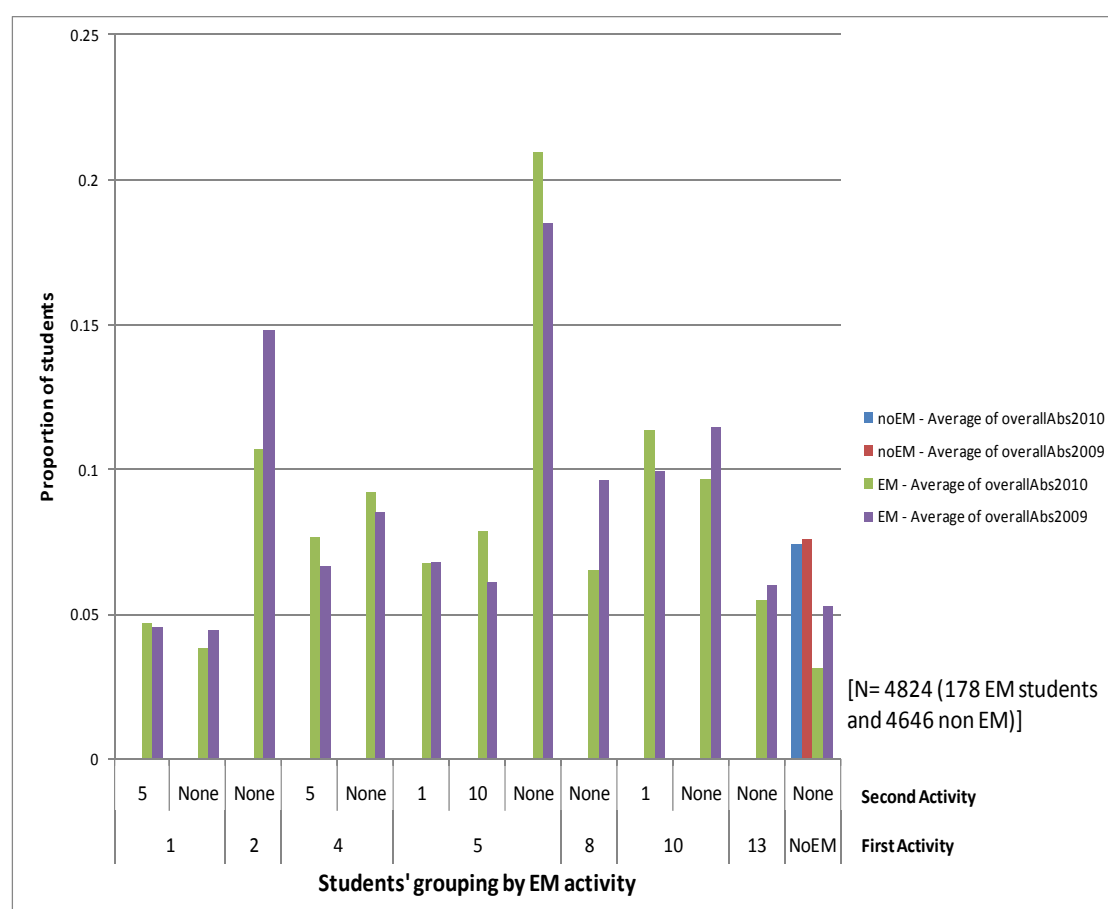
3.3.2 Predicted v Actual Grades

For primary schools, sample size prevented any meaningful analysis of predicted v actual grades (i.e. what pupils actually achieved in exams, tests or, where applicable, teacher assessments compared to what prior data suggested they would achieve). An analysis of predicted v actual grades in English and maths for secondary pupils was completed and included EM activities as a variable. For details of the methods used refer to Chapter 2 above. Although there was no identifiable overall EM effect

on predicted v actual grades in English and maths there was a notable tendency for some activities to show the same trend in both subject areas.

Figures 3.6 and 3.7 illustrate the trend for some EM activities to be associated with an effect on actual compared to predicted grades in English and maths. The data for these two graphs is sourced from the EM and comparator groups described on pages 10 to 11.

The conclusions to be drawn from the trends in Figures 3.6 and 3.7 are that:
- Activity 1, when in combination with Activity 5, had better impact than when used on its own.
- Activity 2 was not associated with an improvement on predicted attainment in English or maths grades.
- Activity 4 had better impact when applied on its own, compared to when in combination with Activity 5.
- Activity 5 on its own had equally spread positive and negative effects. It seemed to be more effective in improving grades when used in combination with 1 and 10.
- Activity 8 had a positive effect on improving attainment.
- The combination of Activity 1 and Activity 10 seemed beneficial for English but not for maths.

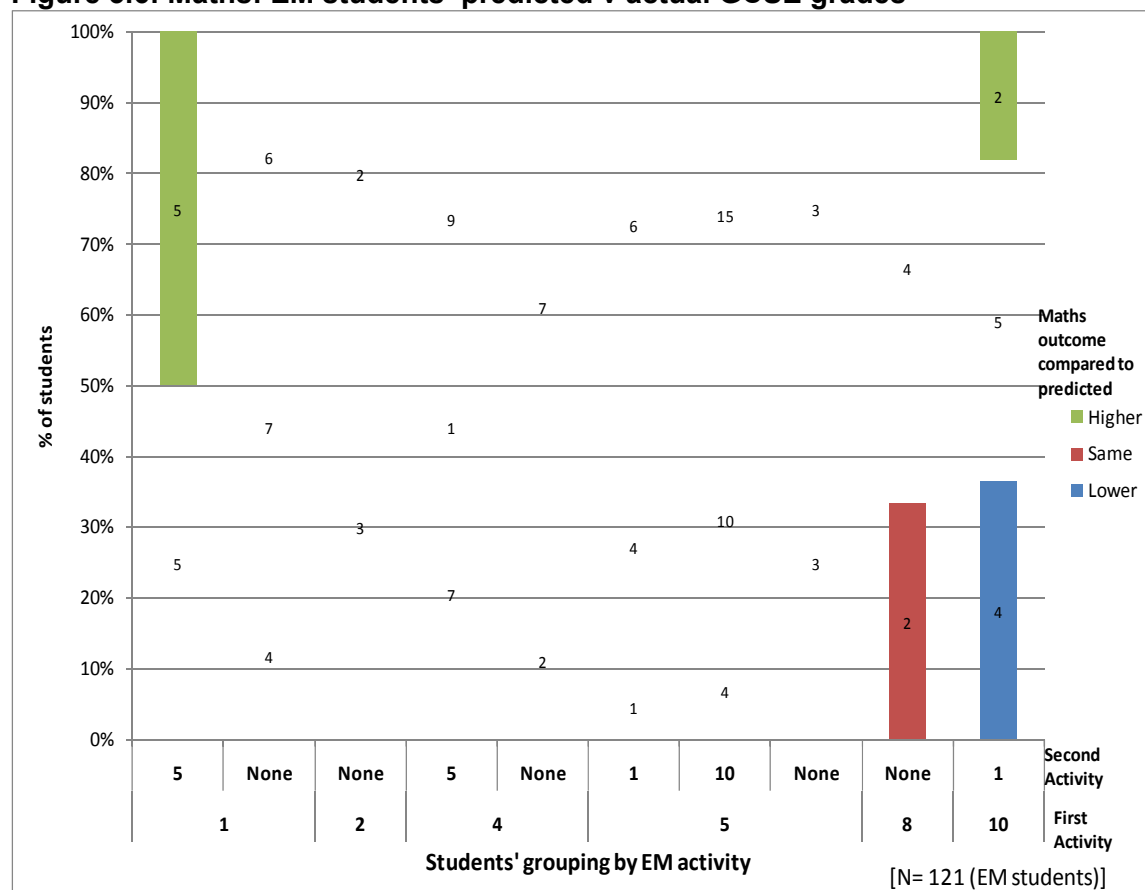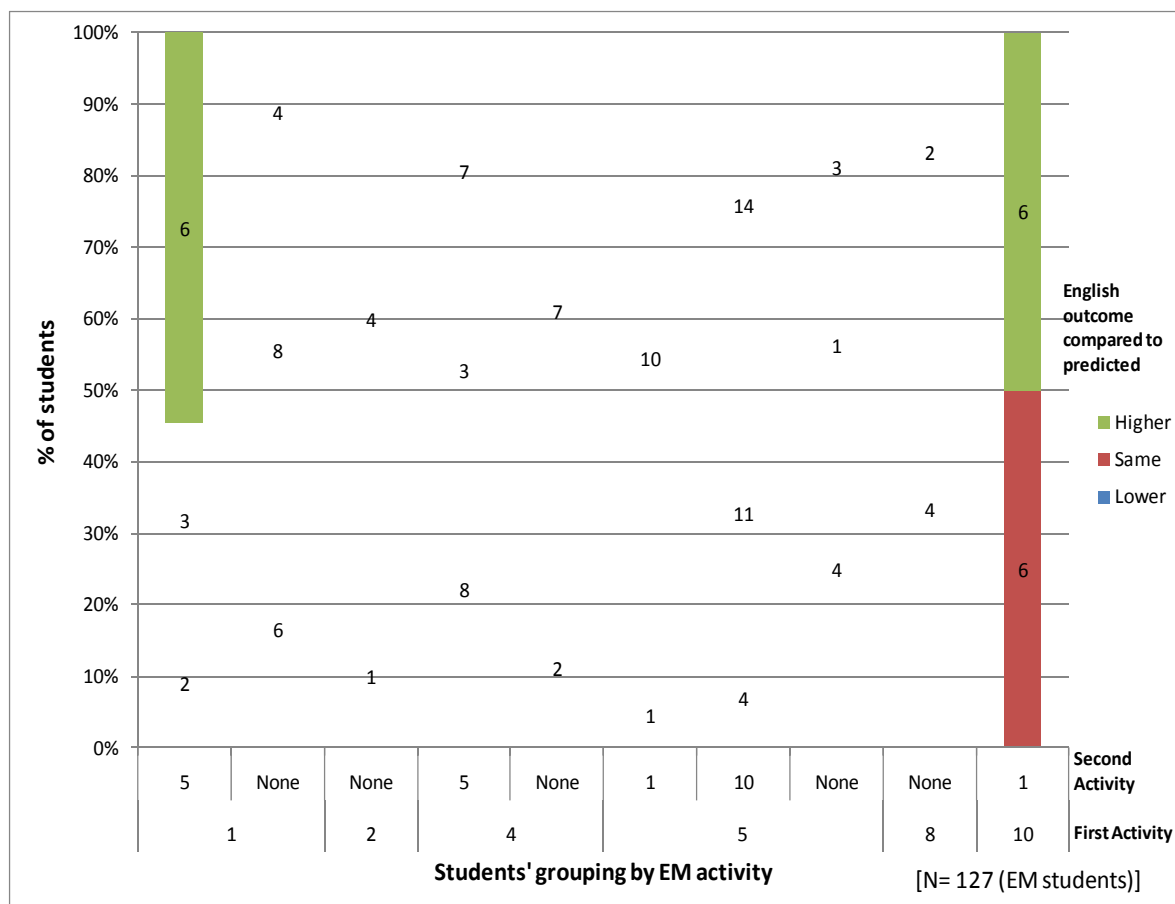**Figure 3.6: Maths: EM students' predicted v actual GCSE grades**

[N= 121 (EM students)]

Figure 3.7: English: EM students' predicted v actual GCSE grade

3.4 Qualitative Analysis: local perspectives

The absence of a conclusive EM effect in the national and cross-school analyses is in marked contrast to the accounts provided by staff and pupils in schools.

The following accounts are drawn from the in-depth telephone interviews with senior personnel at 33 EM schools and LAs and from the case study visits to 14 EM schools most of which had also completed telephone interviews.

Schools

Most schools, early in the conversation, drew attention to the difficulties they encountered in identifying impact and fulfilling the requirements for accountability in the project. In particular they reported their concern at being unable to draw a direct line of cause and effect between EM and improved outcomes, not least because of other inputs and interventions around their school and sometimes directly influencing the same young people.

> *"This has always been a problem with something like this, because we have got so many things going on in and around school then if we do see an overall improvement it will be difficult to say this is a direct result of this really."*

> (Senior Leader, Secondary AC)

> *"I cannot single out the impact, no. It's an impossible task because there are so many other impacting factors on the children's progress."*
>
> (Teacher, Primary Q)

Schools were also concerned that, for activities which are focussed on the earlier years of their phase, for example Yr7 or Yr8 in secondary, and Yr 2 or Yr3 in primary, it is too soon to show an impact on nationally reported standards at the end of Key Stages. One LA officer summarised that conundrum:

> *"We have got one school doing very largely different projects with Yr8, one of which is about parents and one about experience in universities and so on. Well we can measure it in terms of the number of parents who took that up and engaged and that is quite positive at the moment. But obviously, longitudinally, what difference it makes to those youngsters - we will have to wait a few years."*
>
> (Officer, LA/a)

Local Authorities

LA engagement with EM schools varied. Some LAs were keen to get involved and had close relationships with EM schools and their projects. Others took a more detached stance leaving the schools and the School Standards Advisers to take control of the initiative. LA officers cited LA capacity to engage as a critical factor in determining the level of engagement. One LA officer said that understaffing within the school improvement service acted as a barrier to engagement.

None of the schools expressed anything less than a conviction that EM had had a positive impact on pupils and, importantly, on staff as well.

There were examples where the school could relate its conviction to measured outcomes. More often it was associated with affirmative statements from school leaders, corroborated in the interviews with staff, pupils and LA officers describing 'indirect' impact. School processes, it was repeatedly said, had improved staff and pupil aspiration and the quality of the adults' and children's work had been raised.

The research team was asked specifically to comment on the strength of the evidence *"that any observed impacts on attainment/the FSM gap in EM schools are attributable to the project, rather than to other factors such as change in leadership or other initiatives?"* It has already been noted that the impact on all but one numeric outcome to date has not been statistically significant. Therefore, overall, the evidence relating to EM impact on pupil attainment is inconclusive. However, school leaders, teachers and pupils provided a consistently strong and positive narrative about the impact of EM behaviour and attitudes. A substantial minority of the case study schools also drew attention to local, in-house evidence that the attainment of pupils entitled to FSM in these schools had improved and gaps had closed. In some schools, that improvement is attributed by senior leaders directly to the EM project. The following paragraphs reflect on those findings in more detail.

3.5 Pupil attainment

Half the case study schools pointed the research team towards measured improvement in pupil attainment. In some cases that was informed by reference to national assessments and in other cases by local measurements. The following quotes illustrate the schools' approaches.

National indicators used by secondary schools as a measure of success focussed mainly on GCSE scores and attendance rates.

> *"I think it has already had an impact in that ten pupils have a level two qualification with two GCSEs at grade B and another twelve have a level one qualification. Of those in Yr10 the attendance of seventeen out of the twenty has improved considerably."*
>
> (Senior Leader, Secondary I)

Secondary F, a school visited in the autumn term of 2010, reported a marked improvement in 5 A*-C grades from 36% in 2009 to 54% in 2010, to which the school believes EM contributed significantly.

> *"We were working on loads of other projects but Year 11 EM groups, if they hadn't performed we wouldn't have got the lift in % including English and maths."*
>
> (Deputy Headteacher, Secondary F)

Secondary N conjectured that the absence of statistically significant improvement might disguise the real impact of EM at the school:

> *"If we had not been involved in the project the gap would have been bigger, so although the figures in the raw sense indicated there was no impact I think there was a positive impact."*
>
> (School Leader, Secondary N)

Local indicators of success adopted by schools have been tightly focussed on local ambitions for the project and to provide evidence of short-term impact. Where this tracking was effective, it required the school to have a clear view of its intended outcomes and a tool to assess the pupil's baseline and periodic monitoring to check progress. The following examples are again illustrative of local approaches to tracking.

Primary B used sub-levels of national English tests to show the good progress of the pupils across the first year of its project to raise aspirations through writing. The school also set a 95% attendance target for the EM pupils. It was disappointed that only some achieved that, although the activity allowed the school to look more closely at the factors influencing those attendance rates.

> *"...what we were looking for was huge leaps in their attainment which some of them have and some of them haven't really. But what they have done has really built their confidence massively… But we haven't seen that huge jump in attainment that we wanted… For us, the value of raising their confidence and raising, and giving them something to feel proud of and enjoy, the value*

> *of that implicitly is amazing but the fact that doesn't show in their kind of levels it makes it look like it hasn't worked, but I wouldn't say they haven't got anything out of it."*
>
> (Deputy Headteacher, Primary B)

Primary C screened all its pupils using the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS)[11] to produce a language age which could be used to identify a target group and a baseline. All the FSM pupils on EM in the foundation year, Yr2 and Yr5 have met or exceeded their targets. The FSM pupils in other years who did not achieve that level of development were identified as having multiple barriers to learning. Primary C was also able to report remarkable improvement in the KS2 performance of FSM pupils: 0% achieved Level 4 in 2009 and 67% in 2010. The school points out that although these results are pleasing, they disguise the small numbers involved and the "multiple barriers to learning" which the small 2009 cohort experienced.

> *"We have to track our pupils individually and not as a category. When you look at the data over the last four years, comparing our FSM and non-FSM, this year has got the smallest gap, so I can say that..."*
>
> (Deputy Headteacher, Primary C)

Secondary F reported a notable improvement in the local 'effort grades' for its EM pupils along with a decline in the number of pupil behaviour referrals, an increase in attendance and a decrease in the number of 'lates' recorded. Staff and pupils at Secondary F reported changed attitudes towards learning, particularly in relation to co-operative learning and willingness to engage in lessons. Secondary I tracked attendance at after school activities for indicators of success. Secondary G was another school which tracked the internal system used for referring pupils when their behaviour is laudable or unacceptable:

> *"It is evident from the data that there is a statistical correlation between the pupils who attend the groups and higher numbers of positive referrals for them on the system. Pupils who attend the group and their friends are demonstrating better social skills compared to their peers; they interact with other group members and with myself in a consistently positive manner, from saying hello in the corridors, to asking for assistance with class work."*
>
> (Senior Manager, Secondary G)

3.6 Pupil confidence, behaviour and attitude

A recurring theme in the interviews and case study visits has been the adults' affirmation that involvement in EM activities has improved the confidence – and sometimes the aspiration – of young people, not just in relation to the EM activity but across their school experience.

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[11] For further information see: *The British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVSIII) 3rd ed.* Windsor: NFER-Nelson ISBN: 9780708719558/N0078

> *"It has boosted their self-esteem and they have become a lot more independent and generally they have become more confident that they really can do things."*
>
> (Year 3 Teacher, Primary A

Staff and pupils at all but one of the case study schools made direct reference to young people's enhanced confidence as a result of participating in EM activities. The exception was the one school where the project appeared to have run out of steam and where, as the Deputy said, "*time ran out and it wasn´t followed up…In the end certain other things took priority and we didn´t give as much attention to it as we´d have liked to.*" (Secondary M). In contrast, at that school, the interviewed pupils who had been inducted as 'leaders of learning' spoke confidently about their progress and their disappointment at their school's premature closure of the project.

> *"We wondered why it didn´t continue cos it was helping people. We had the badges, and we had people coming up to us and asking if we could tell the teachers this, or could they do that, and other pupils were asking us about the lessons as well."*
>
> *"It felt really good because we can help anyone out, we can help anyone in learning, that´s what Miss said to us when we started – pupils and teachers.*
>
> (Pupils at Secondary M)

Primary B has been tracking the growth in confidence through a perceptions survey of story writing, conducted initially at the start of the EM process *"and all of them came through as 'no I don't like it because I can't do it'."* (Headteacher, Primary B). Typically by the end of the intervention pupils were, like this one, reporting how their confidence had been boosted:

> *"When we were doing the stories and doing literacy it didn't feel like literacy lessons. I thought more about what I was writing and was more confident that I could write a story."*

During all of the case study visits, staff and pupils made direct reference to their belief that behaviour and attitudes had been improved by involvement with EM. In the majority of cases this was impressionistic and anecdotal though always strongly affirmed. In some cases there was supporting evidence from, for example, questionnaire surveys. Comments from the leadership team at Secondary J were typical. Speaking about a general change of attitude across the target group, one senior leader there said:

> *"The overall benefit to the pupils was very positive… From what they were like when they started there were some definite skills learned in the process. The fact that none of the children would have been regular out of school hours learners in any curriculum area for a start, committing to staying after school for an hour was a start and in itself was progress… and gave them some initial confidence and initial purpose"*
>
> (Senior Leader, Secondary J)

The Headteacher used one pupil as an illustration.

> *"What is interesting is when you look at individuals and how their demeanour has changed, and their involvement in the school has changed. There´s one lad, now in Yr11 who was a bit disaffected, a bit unengaged in studies at the beginning of Yr10 and certainly in Yr9 and was someone who staff were concerned about, whose name would appear on school round robins about effort and attainment and who was not quite getting there. Through this project he has certainly turned around. He´s not perfect but, my word, he´s different, he´s engaged."*
>
> (Headteacher, Secondary J)

Another individual was picked out at Secondary L where a middle leader told the following story:

> *"The change I´ve seen in G is growing in confidence, a self belief and she´s also developed a more positive approach toward school and she believes in the importance of education a lot more than she did. A couple of years ago G could have gone, dropped out of school. [Now]... her aspirations have lifted."*

There were projects, at Primary B and Secondary G for example, where the pupil beneficiaries of confidence building were not confined to the target group. In both those cases, the target group were paired with higher achieving pupils from an older age group and, as one Yr 10 pupil reported in Secondary G,

> *"There is nothing like having to explain something to another pupil, to make you think about it yourself… I guess when the kids were showing me their work, I felt that we'd achieved that together, I'd helped… I felt quite proud."*

It was at the same school that a Yr8 pupil described the benefits of working with a Yr11 pupil:

> *"When the teacher asks you a question, you are under pressure, it feels like everyone looking at you but the Yr11s are more down to earth. There was less pressure with the Yr11. In my own classroom, I get frightened and like everyone is staring at me and Miss then asks if anyone can help me and it feels awful. They have more patience than teachers have because teachers have books to fill in and lessons for all five periods, but Yr11 understand, they know how the school feels and can give you good advice."*

The benefits of pupil-to-pupil connections are explored further in Chapter 6.

3.7 Staff and school development

Although EM is rightly focussed on improving the outcomes for young people, its effect on adults appears to have been notably important. It is widely acknowledged that continuing professional development is a key factor associated with successful improvement in challenging circumstances.

School leaders and their staff frequently reported a marked improvement in the skills and working practices of adults in the school.

These reports had three features:
- EM enabled schools to identify, accept and respond to the low attainment of pupils from socio-economically poor families in ways which had previously eluded them.
- EM created a space in which staff who would not otherwise have taken on such a responsibility have been able to step up, either voluntarily or on request.
- EM offered opportunities for staff development, both individual and collaborative, which would not otherwise have happened.

Typical of the responses which spoke of a new awareness was the School Leader at Secondary AA:

> *"If we are being really honest we have not focused on this group of pupils before in terms of the FSM pupils so it didn't reflect anything we had in place already. It became quickly apparent that they were a group of pupils we needed to focus on... there was a huge gap on our radar if I am being honest."*

A School Leader at Secondary H raised an issue which members of the research team have encountered in other studies but only once in this evaluation. School staff can be uncomfortable talking about social-economic status and low incomes. The reasons for this appear to be a complex mixture of insecurity and prejudice which have been more openly dealt with in other analogous areas of, for example, gender, ethnicity and disability. The leader at Secondary H commented:

> *"...how difficult an area it is to talk about. We run a black pupils achievement project and there is no problem calling it that. But white, working-class, FSM, that whole description and language around that area is still unresolved, there are still real issues about how you tackle that with parents."*

It is not possible to tell whether this arose only once in this evaluation because the discomfort permeates these schools as much as any others or because these teachers are now more comfortable with these issues and do not see them as difficult.

The identification and response to low attainment appears to have been useful in a particular way to school leaders who were at an early stage of their current headship.

The invitation to participate, often brokered by the LA, provided them with a platform for conversations and changes which might otherwise have been delayed or frustrated. The new leadership team at Primary B recognised 'within a couple of weeks' that they could identify the children in need of intervention and see EM as a vehicle for raising standards across the school.   There were also examples where EM offered a new option to schools which had been working with limited success for some years:

> *"The opportunity came along to do something creative and maybe something a little bit outside the box… I have this whole philosophy that if school is not fun why would you want to come and I believe that for the staff as well, so the more we can put interesting and exciting things into how we deliver our curriculum the more you are likely to fire your children up to learn."*
>
> (Headteacher, Primary A)

A particular feature of EM in the primary phase has been the deployment of non-teaching staff to lead or at least play a significant role in the intervention. At Primary B, a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) was asked to lead the writing sessions with buddies so providing her with a development opportunity and the school leadership with some relief from the day-to-day activity.   At Primary C, an experienced teaching assistant led the group using a programme called Developing Social Communication to develop their listening and communication skills.

> *"It is quite interesting with the Yr3 boys, they didn't realise that you had to make an effort to listen, they think someone is talking, it's just a noise, it's a competition with how many individual noises can we hear in the same place. It was interesting how some of them could hear and what others couldn't hear."*
>
> (Teaching Assistant, Primary C)

Collaboration between staff, with consequential effects of team building, appears to have been an important by product of EM for schools. All of the case study schools made some reference to the benefits of teachers working together and half highlighted this as a particular benefit for their school.   One secondary leader contrasted the short-term nature of the pupil projects with the long-term value of the staff activity.

> *"The sharing of good practice across the school and cascading down is a long term process and changing the way teachers work is the long term gain..."*
>
> (Senior Leader, Secondary V)

One headteacher spoke about the development of staff teamwork:

> *"It enabled my staff, it empowered them, they were able to develop their collaborative leadership, it was a team, it allowed them to get inspired and gave them the opportunity to work together as a whole school. This helped us shift something that we knew was entrenched at the school..."*
>
> (Headteacher, Primary C)

In contrast, another spoke about development for an individual that had a wider effect:

> *"We asked the pupils to name some teachers they felt might respond well to the project and they came up with quite a list including some interesting people. There´s one long-standing member of staff who has been here 25 years, he´s an institution and cares desperately about the school but is incredibly grumpy sometimes… for him to sit down in here at lunchtime with the pupils and let them explain what they wanted to do, to observe the learning, sharing their observational grid and listening to their feedback was very positive, as it was for the rest of the teachers."*
>
> (Headteacher, Secondary E)

In summary, the key findings relating to the impact of EM suggest the initiative:

- had a positive impact on closing the achievement gap between some FSM and non-FSM pupils. There is strong qualitative evidence to support this claim and some quantitative evidence to suggest this may also be the case in terms of pupil attainment. A further larger-scale quantitative analysis could confirm or refute the relationship between EM and pupil attainment.
- had a positive impact on staff development. There is strong qualitative evidence to suggest that EM has had a positive impact on the practice of teachers and school leaders.
- received variable engagement from LAs. LA officers reported capacity to engage as a critical factor in taking an active role in the initiative.

The following chapter reports findings relating to EM activity.

Chapter 4. EM Activity: what happened in schools

Summary

The research team was asked to consider whether schools "implemented the EM in a way that is faithful to the original aims of the project?" In more general terms, the team was asked to report on how well the activities complemented other initiatives, and fitted into the strategic planning of the school. Plans for the continuity of the activities after the project ended, including attention to contributory and inhibiting factors, were also of interest.

Overall, schools comfortably aligned EM activities and support with their own strategic planning and with other initiatives. This flexibility was almost universally described as a positive feature of EM. In the main, this involved EM activity accommodating or moulding itself around the school's existing priorities and extending the associated activities.

On the central question of whether the schools implemented EM in a faithful way, the evidence is that with one or two exceptions where the local activity deviated, they did. Schools consistently developed activities which could be categorised within the EM activity framework for their phase and which were focussed on the target group of FSM children with the intention of raising the attainment of that group faster than other averages.

This chapter illustrates the variety of ways in which schools adapted the EM framework and principles to accommodate local interests and priorities while remaining consistent with the project design.

This chapter focuses on the second of the three key features of the EM's school-based projects – Activity – and examines what schools did under the EM banner, using the full range of data analysed during the evaluation.

4.1 Overall approaches to EM

The EM design offered school leaders a framework without being formulaic. It provided a focus around which they could develop local activity. EM allowed schools to adapt the local activity to their local need and even, on occasion, to previously unrecognised need which the activity itself revealed:

> *"The new head teacher wanted to focus on teaching and learning and wanted to interest us in what was happening in other schools and how this might influence our practice, so it came at a time when we were looking at what might be useful to bring things on… this was one of the things that we decided to do."*

> (Deputy Headteacher, School M)

> *"I think it's about being aware. We hadn't really looked at FSM before, that was a particular focus group for us and just thinking what extra can we give these children and how can we work?"*
>
> (Senior Leader, Primary O)

The Headteacher at Secondary L described how, initially, the school felt resistant to the LA's suggestion that it should join the project and only agreed when it became apparent that it could incorporate EM into the projects it was already running. The Headteacher reported that, although the school did not adopt any different activities, the focus given by EM to the FSM group was valuable. Their analysis revealed that despite their CVA being above the national median score of 1000, the FSM group was the lowest performing group in the school. This was a school which could show end of Key Stage results for the EM group which were 100% 5 A*-C of which 70% included English and maths*.*

Sympathy to local context and needs was a feature of EM which school leaders appreciated even if they initially treated it cautiously. For example, Primary School B wondered if it was acceptable to choose its activity from the secondary school list, Raising Aspiration, and combine this with a primary focus on 'speaking and listening'. Secondary School K approached its adviser asking it if could change the focus of its activity to deal with the significant gaps in its approach to monitoring and assessment which the early stages of EM had revealed. The answer to both was 'yes'.

> *"The idea of something like that* [EM] *came along with that creative slant to it, not being rigid in the way you follow strategies by the way they are written down, but achieving the objectives by just coming at it from a different angle."*
>
> (Headteacher, Primary A)

One of the major advantages of this approach, from the school perspective, was that they did not feel compelled to stick rigidly to a plan which was not working or had become redundant in the light of what it was exposing.

They understood that the purpose of the exercise was to improve outcomes and that the delivery of a plan was only the means to that end. If the plan needed to be changed, it could be. This emphasis on outcomes rather than process was an important feature of EM. The early work in tracking a Yr8 Group at Secondary K revealed a serious gap in the school's approach to managing and using data:

> *"In the sense that we were very data rich but did not understand what the data was telling us and what we should do about pupils not making progress."*
>
> (School Leader, Secondary K)

In consultation with its School Standards Adviser, the school changed the emphasis of its effort and focussed on designing and introducing a new school wide system for assessment, monitoring and tracking. A similar shift was reported at other schools including Secondary E:

> *"If I am really honest, the reason we started was that when we went through the documentation it seemed a really good place to start, but where we are now, the project has gone in a completely different direction because the pupils have led it, and what we have now is the opportunity to review some of our policies and procedures which will impact all children."*
>
> (Senior Leader, Secondary E.)

At the primary phase, the case study schools had each initially chosen different foci from the list of seven headline activities in the EM guidance. 'Engaging Pupils in their Learning' was the theme at Primary A, 'Raising Aspirations' was selected from the secondary list by Primary B and 'Speaking and Listening' at Primary C. Under these headings each of the schools designed activities which are described in the case studies. It is reasonable to claim that the activities were sufficiently diverse in aims and content to be accommodated under one of the other headline activities. It appears that the headline list provided a guiding framework for primary schools while the particular choice of headline was to some degree arbitrary and perhaps fluid.

> *"Initial feelings that they were detailed enough to focus you but you could take on that school ownership, but actually it was quite difficult because when you looked at those different activities, those seven activities, it was all of them, we couldn't go for all of them, so it was looking at them and saying which one you actually go for and drive the School Development Plan forwards. I thought they were detailed but gave the school ownership."*
>
> (Senior Leader, Primary C)

The case studies suggest that schools focussed on outcomes they wanted to achieve and on the local activities they wanted to pursue before 'slotting' those under one of the headlines for administrative purposes. The value of the seven headlines may be in the stimulus they provide for local discussion of what might be done. The value of the EM activity list appears to be not that they are activities themselves but that they are broad areas of effective activity on which schools can choose to focus and within which they can choose to deliver particular activities. The research team did not observe any activities which are unique to EM. Given the source of the EM framework in existing effective practice it would be remarkable if it had. However, the EM framework was valued by almost all the interviewed and case study schools for the focus it brought to analysis and action.

EM focused the minds of LAs and schools on key issues relating to closing the FSM attainment gap and supported the development of context-specific interventions designed to tackle this challenging area.

4.2 Adopting Activities

At the secondary level, 'tracking and intervention' was the most common activity in our sample across phases 1 and 2 of EM, as it had been overall for all schools in phase 1. Tracking and intervention was particularly valued by the schools that chose to focus on this area. Again it is not possible to do justice in the body of the report to

the range of activity which had been organised under the headlines and is reported in case studies (Appendix B).

None of the schools in our sample reported any difficulty aligning the EM activity with other work aimed at closing the attainment gap. For most, EM acted either as a catalyst to stimulate the school's work or as a lens to focus it. The Headteacher at Primary A spoke about EM "allowing the school the scope it required to implement the projects it had wanted to". At Primary B the Headteacher reported that EM just fitted in:

> *"The LA phoned up and said there is this new EM, would you like to be involved? They told me about the list of activities and we thought that it was going to fit in right now. It was the right phone call, at the right time, with the right activities, so that's why we became part of it."*
>
> (Headteacher, Primary B)

Secondary E summarised the approach of the many secondary schools which worked on the assumption that improving teaching and learning strategies across the school would benefit FSM pupils especially. They also assumed that staff skills improved by working with FSM pupils would transfer across the school. One senior leader commented on how their school viewed EM as a way of working rather than another "add on":

> *"When we went down to look at what we were doing, what we intended to do linked into the EM. So we're going to do both these things…so instead of being additional things on top we felt it could just give us focus on the initiatives we had."*
>
> (Senior Leader, Secondary AC)

EM was not seen as an initiative that competed with other improvement efforts. Some schools were focused on EM issues already and relished the opportunity to get involved. Both schools and LAs recognised the importance of working with pupils to challenge the relationship between poverty and achievement.

> *"We were already doing this before, the way we are doing it with the EM is to sharpen up on that… things like vision lunches and vision breakfast before maths and English exams, so we can use some EM funding for that."*
>
> (Senior Leader, Secondary I)

> *"[The LA] recognises that this is a key cohort to be working with and it recognised [Secondary H] as having, percentage wise, the largest number of those within its secondary schools. So we were an obvious partner school to link with… so doing things together [LA, EM and School) came together at the same time."*
>
> (Senior Leader, Secondary H)

LA officers spoke in a very similar vein. Articulating the importance of this area and indicating that EM fitted in to their core activity:

"There was no danger that this was yet another initiative being bolted on it was sort of very much fitting in to the cultures and aspirations of the school."

(LA/c)

"This was another initiative that fitted exactly what we were actually doing."

(LA/d)

The flexibility of EM and its capacity to sit alongside, merge with or add to existing local priorities and activities was evidently seen as a considerable attraction by schools. The consequent seamlessness at local level limited this evaluation's ability to separate out 'EM activity' as a distinct entity and to identify what the distinctive impact of EM has been. EM has sharpened awareness of the FSM achievement gap and focused efforts to challenge it.

Chapter 5.   EM Activity: Sustainability

Summary:

The research team was asked to assess the sustainability of the EM programme – the drivers and challenges to maintaining improvements – and the capacity of schools to continue the activity or to act more widely as change agents.

All but one of the case study schools talked about the continuing effect of EM in very positive terms. At the one school where senior leaders spoke less positively about continuation, there was a commitment to review their position when the case study interviews revealed the depth of the students' continuing commitment.

Based on comments from the other schools, it would be more appropriate to describe the continuing effect of EM in terms of legacy rather than sustainability. For most schools, embedding the principles of EM had become more important than particular activities.

Although about two thirds of the case study schools reported explicitly that they intended to continue activity which had been sponsored by EM, most were uncertain about the continuation of particular activities. Funding issues were occasionally described as a critical factor in that uncertainty.   Schools occasionally reported that the initial activity had run its course – their learning showed that it needed to be replaced by a new activity or, in some cases, had revealed underlying issues which needed to be addressed with a different kind of effort.

Interviewees have consistently reported that EM has changed the attitudes and approaches of staff in particular, notably the recognition of potential, the reinforcement of accountability, the development of shared professional learning and the building of social capital. While particular EM activities might or might not be sustainable, the project appears to have created a positive legacy embedded in those changes.

This chapter focuses on the third of the three key features of the EM's school-based projects – Sustainability – and examines the legacy of EM in schools, using the full range of data analysed during the evaluation.

5.1 An 'embedded legacy'

Schools and LAs were optimistic that EM would leave what is described here as "an embedded legacy". This optimism was less about particular activities continuing than about the way that thinking about gaps in attainment had permeated the culture of some schools. A leader at Secondary F described this as the Trojan Horse:

"…. we used the EM as a Trojan Horse… it gave it formality, a name I guess to some stuff that we wanted to try that was actually going to be quite challenging for the staff."

(Senior Leader, Secondary F)

"The key thing from all of this was that it made us look, focus and work on small groups of pupils we did not, who are disadvantaged and I think, linked with that, by monitoring those groups it can have an impact. If there are any issues we can actually make an impact."

(Deputy Headteacher, Secondary N)

One school, Secondary D, felt that it might even be counter-productive to be obviously continuing or recreating EM activities:

"What we didn't want to do is say this is EM Mark II because we don't think that would work for us, it has got to link into all our intervention programmes."

(Deputy Headteacher, Secondary D)

The large majority of school leaders referred positively and strongly to the legacy of EM in terms of 'embedded changes' in the culture and work of their school. A further study would reveal the extent to which those changes are profound, well established or enduring.

However, schools reported a range of practices to promote the embedded effect. At Secondary M, responsibility for the legacy was included in the Deputy Head's personal performance indicators. At Primary A where EM funding was divided between a capital purchase and a staff led intervention, the activity created by the former will continue, the latter will not. Other examples included:

"We have linked it to performance management; we have linked it to professional development as well as to the School Development Plan. All members of staff have a card with a target for performance management based on the EM. So it is going all the way through our strategic planning."

(Senior Leader, Secondary D)

"It has been used as CPD for the whole staff."

(Senior Leader, Secondary AC)

"...it will go into this year's development plan which we are currently writing at the moment and the info on the achievement gap and family work we will do. It has gone into the SEF[12], it has gone into my personal performance management targets… the strategic team meet once a week and because it's so central to that and attainment it directly relates to exam results of the Y11 we talk about it a lot."

(Senior Leader, Secondary I)

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[12] Self Evaluation Form

> *"[EM works] because the approach is very much getting into the culture of the school and getting into the basics of practice in terms of styles of teaching and use of data and things like that."*
>
> (LA/c)
>
> *"In terms of strategic planning we are looking at this long term in the LA and yes it does very much reflect priorities in the LA and it links ideally with the priorities of the schools."*
>
> (LA/e)

Of the embedded, school-wide changes, one of the most striking came from Secondary N:

> *"The EM stimulus and the work that has come out of that have probably had the biggest impact on the school in the last two to three years. To get to the point we are at, and need to move to, we had to have done this work and if we had not done this through the stimulus of the EM we would have been behind."*
>
> (Senior Leader, Secondary N)

5.2 Creating 'social capital'

The connections which EM has promoted within schools as well as between schools and other organisations are an important feature of this legacy. At least two thirds of the case study schools report that the project has made a significant contribution to building social capital in their school community. School leaders and their staff report that the teamwork and professional development associated with the EM project has improved their own work and increased the sense of teamwork in their curriculum area.   Pupils report a parallel shift in their own engagement and enjoyment. This kind of legacy was apparent in both primary and secondary phases. The Headteacher at Primary C reported how EM has improved aspects of the school and the staff both in terms of outcomes but also in developing a greater understanding of the school and how to tackle some of its most prominent challenges.

> *"…this helped us shift something that we knew was entrenched at the school… it was actually shifting, reinforcing all the things we were doing in a cohesive manner. We all enjoyed and celebrated each others' successes and on the last day we went round and looked at everything and it was just amazing how far classes had taken it."*

This building of social capital was also a feature in the secondary phase, typically represented by a teacher at Secondary G:

> *"Building social capital – those bonds are huge, I was struck by the connections being built, building community, pupils saying hello to me on the corridor. Somebody out there knows who you are and will look out for you. That social strength built to their academic learning – this programme made it clear to me that if the pupils felt more confident then that showed in their work. "*

Another kind of legacy emerges where EM has been the catalyst for a fundamental change in aspects of a school's processes. Primary B and Secondary K are examples where EM exposed underlying shortcomings in the school's data analysis which could not be compensated for by short-term initiatives. At the former, the Senior Leadership Team identified how important data and tracking had been to sustaining the project and resolved to review that.

> *"…we weren't secure on the data and I think for what we wanted to do, we needed to pick children more carefully than we did."*

(Deputy Headteacher, Primary B)

At Secondary K:

> *"There is a massive legacy. Actually, in my subject it is a ripple effect because the new approach is not just being introduced year by year from the youngest, it is already influencing teaching and learning in Yr10 and Yr11. The change in performance monitoring is profound: we have shaken up our data tracking and accountability right down to classroom level, how we collect data, how we use it and what we then do. We are using the data, not just collecting information, we use it to change what we do in and around classrooms".*

(Senior Leader, Secondary K)

At Secondary Y, the leadership team were conscious, as were others elsewhere, that a decision to continue with EM activity had to create its own business case to justify its demand on school resources.

> *"As a school we decided this kind of approach had an impact so we are continuing with them and booked for something in April out of our own budget and we are developing [our approach to EM]. So I think we will make it sustainable within school, but it will be obviously at the expense of something else."*

(Senior Leader, Secondary Y).

The flexibility which we reported in the previous section and which has allowed EM to be embedded in schools' planning and existing approaches to school development is also making a contribution to its legacy.   Leaders in EM schools appear to believe that attitudes and processes which are embedded are more likely to be sustained and to endure when marginal additional funding evaporates.

5.3 Factors associated with sustainability
The evaluation has identified five key factors associated with sustainability:

(i) National status
(ii) Role of the LA
(iii) Additional funding
(iv) Role of the School Standards Adviser
(v) Other schools

(i)   National status

National status was a feature of EM to which reference was made by leaders at a third of the case study schools. Involvement in a national project provided both status and foundation for the work they wanted to introduce in their school. It was an encouragement for governors and staff, something the Headteacher at Secondary K called '*an aura'*.

> *"This gave a talented and creative group of teachers the chance to work with pupils outside the constraints of the usual curriculum and timetable. They had, sort of, permission to do that and they knew that there was this interest in how it worked out."*
>
> (School Leader, Secondary G)

> *"It was really helpful that the civil servants really seemed to care about this issue, that rubs off."*
>
> (Officer, LA/f)

(ii)   Role of the LA

The LA roles described to us can be categorised in three ways, of which the first, a minimal connection, was the most common.

- firstly, as the broker, introducing the school to the national project and then having no further involvement or obvious interest:
  > *"The LA wheeled it out and there hasn't been any contact since then, we are doing it."*
  >
  > (Senior Leader, Secondary X)

- secondly, acting as broker and then developing a supportive relationship in which the LA becomes active as and when it seems appropriate:
  > *"We have a great relationship with our LA person, he was very enthusiastic from the start."*
  >
  > (Senior Leader, Primary R)

- thirdly, acting as broker and then becoming a significant contributor to the local work and its transmission to other schools:
  > *"I would say the LA has had a crucial role in helping set this up and that is so they can take it back to other schools."*
  >
  > (Senior Leader, Secondary H)

Of these, it seems apparent that the second will enhance the legacy inside a school and the third enhance the legacy across the locality. As noted in Chapter 4 of this report, LA capacity to engage in the project appeared to be an important factor in determining the level of engagement.

(iii)   Additional funding

Additional funding was sometimes described as marginal, but symbolically very important, and sometimes as critical. In just over half of the case study schools,

funding, or more precisely the limited timescale for additional funding – in one case described as capacity, was reported as a key inhibitor to the continuation of particular activities.

"Funding is a major issue. Money dictates everything we do."

(Assistant Headteacher, Secondary J)

"I was annoyed that phase I schools got funding and we in phase II did not."

(Senior Leader, Secondary V)

Overall, access to finance did not seem to be associated with the local success or otherwise of EM:

"Because we have not done anything that has cost a fortune I think it is completely sustainable, we have created budgets within the school for other projects and EM has been able to link to those."

(Senior Leader, Secondary E)

"I think it is incredibly cost effective, it's such a small amount of money as well I don't think it needs vast amounts of money spent on it. For us it's been a raising awareness thing really and extending some of the things we do."

(Senior Leader, Secondary AA)

"It's just a brilliant opportunity to be given such a small amount of money, well relatively small amount of money to think creatively about using it."

(Senior Leader, Primary B)

"The cash is small, the enthusiasm is the bonus, and it is difficult to judge cause and effect, long and short term sustainability yet."

(Officer, LA/f)

The capacity provided, not least for primary schools with smaller budgets, to buy materials, create some extra staffing and to offer small additional payments to staff taking on extra responsibility was highly valued by all the leaders. One secondary head reported the importance of providing high quality off-site accommodation for staff who gave up a day of their weekend for planning. One teacher explained how it felt at the receiving end:

"The money was a sort of honey-trap, you want to be a great teacher for all your classes, so something is needed to catch your attention when you're busy. The money caught my attention, but I gradually realised how this fitted in to other things I wanted to do- research- and development of my own skills."

(Class Teacher, Secondary G)

There was a different thread for some schools. For schools in Secondary phase 2, the project came with support and no additional funding. Several schools in phase 2 expressed regret about that though others were less concerned – one to the point of wondering if the lack of funding supported creativity. Certainly some schools in phase

2 were adept at drawing in or redirecting funds towards EM once it was established as a priority for them.

> *"We have just resourced it from existing school budgets because there was no funding. The LA does allocate money for FSM but not at all for the EM… we have made it very 'doable' and cost effective as well…"*
>
> (Secondary Leader, Secondary D)

> *We´re trying to use grant funding now to continue the process because we feel that what we´ve done for that group of pupils was very valuable... It's in the School Development Plan."*
>
> (Headteacher, Secondary J)

In phase 1, the Headteacher at Secondary E, when describing the 'wow experience' for the pupils, simply said *"we had to spend some money"* and at Secondary G EM funding was supplemented from school funds to allow for the appointment of additional staffing. School leadership teams for whom EM or its associated activities were a priority could either rebrand activities funded from core or other grant funding streams in order to give them an 'aura' or could redirect funding from other areas to the new activities. If the focus, FSM attainment gap in this case, is regarded locally as a sufficient priority, effective school leaders will mobilise resources around it.

(iv)   Role of School Standards Advisers

The School Standards Advisers were often referred to as a valuable source of information and ideas as well as providing a timekeeper to maintain the rhythm of local implementation. Primary A reported how the School Standards Adviser had helped the school remain focused on the project and widened its perspective on what might be achievable through the EM. One head reported *"I haven't been made aware that they exist to be honest with you."* (Secondary AB). However, the vast majority made more positive comments:

> *"Our adviser has been great, she has been very good."*
>
> (Headteacher, Secondary E)

or

> *"We had a great adviser, very good at advising and helping us on to the right path; good at asking questions and not directing. "Have you looked at it from this angle?" "Have you thought about this?"*
>
> (Headteacher, Secondary K)

(v)   Other schools

EM provided the opportunity and encouragement for schools to collaborate with each other. There was a wide variation in the extent to which schools engaged in collaborative activity. The few case study schools involved in collaboration reported that it was much appreciated but infrequently sustained. Where collaborations were sustained they tended to precede the EM initiative. Secondary J approached EM as a vehicle for strengthening existing connections.

> *"There was already an established partnership, potentially a network there, developing, of school-to-school support and collaboration. So what we tried to do was bring those schools together and do something that was a bit different and gave the activities a bit of a lift… to show the kids that they could achieve."*
>
> <div align="right">(Headteacher, Secondary J)</div>

> *"I wouldn´t have put in the time and the effort if we hadn´t done it as a partnership."*
>
> <div align="right">(Senior Leader, Secondary J)</div>

LA officers referred noticeably to the wider network opportunities created by EM:

> *"We chose to go into the EM because it gives us a national link to the sort of things we are trying to focus on locally… it is always good to face outwards as well and not just inwards."*
>
> <div align="right">(Officer, LA/a)</div>

Schools appreciated collaboration was an optional rather than mandated element of the programme. For most, this provided opportunities to focus on issues of within school variation. For others EM offered possibilities to share practice across schools and develop collaborative approaches to tackle the FSM achievement gap.

Chapter 6. Pupil perspectives

Pupils who had been the focus of EM activities at the case study schools were overwhelmingly positive. The pupils' comments on their school experience suggested that if they had not been pleased with it, they would have been able to say so. On the other hand, it was evident that a small, perhaps a tiny, number of pupils had dropped out and they, of course, were not in these conversations.

It appears to the research team that four features of EM were especially noticeable and welcome to the pupils:

        (i) It felt good to be chosen
        (ii) The work ethic stepped up
        (iii) The activity was an intrinsically positive experience
        (iv) Outcomes were improved

(i)   It felt good to be chosen

In the majority of case studies the pupils reported specifically that they had been, or had become after initial reservations, pleased to be chosen. That pleasure appears to be partly related to their raised attainment but also to aspects of confidence and relationships, not least with home.

Some pupils were pleased to be involved in a project which, they sensed, had high status. This was an interesting echo of what school leaders and other staff had reported to the research team about the value of a project with national status and local design. There is no evidence that pupils knew the national context of EM. They did understand its importance within the school and there is in their comments an interesting repetition of the staff's comments that at last it was obvious someone cared. One pupil at Secondary E went as far as describing this as the "best thing":

> "*The best thing of all is knowing we are part of an important project which could change how our school works... really turned into something that will change the school for the pupils and teachers.*"
>
> (Pupil, Secondary E)

Though it was not without its trying moments for the same pupil:

> "*The most difficult thing was having the meeting with teachers. It was quite weird because we normally only see them in lessons. It was strange just to sit down and talk to them.*"
>
> (Pupil, Secondary E)

Some schools reported a continuing reluctance on the part of many parents/carers to become engaged with their children's education. There was, in contrast, a seam in the pupil's comments about participating in a project which connected directly with home.

For some pupils that connection was there from the start of EM at the school:

> *"It was good to be chosen… Our parents received a letter saying we had been chosen. My mother thought I was in trouble till she read it. She was very pleased and encouraged me."*
>
> (Pupil, Secondary G)

For some it was about the processes which drew parents alongside or even into the EM activities:

> *"The parents' evening was great. The prizes were to spend a day at the [adjacent] University Medical School being a doctor. It helped that our parents met our friends' parents there."*
>
> (Pupil, Secondary K)

There was, eventually, parental pride in the outcomes:

> *"My parents feel proud because all my levels and attendance have gone up."*
>
> (Pupil, Secondary F)

> *"I´m trying harder in lessons and I´ve given up bad habits. My parents are proud. My mum had taken everything from me because I was behaving badly. Now I´ve got them back."*
>
> (Pupil, Secondary F)

Though a price might have to be paid:

> *"I used to go trampolining on a Thursday but I had to give it up because of this. That's quite a commitment."*
>
> (Pupil, Secondary J)

There was a risk that pupils would not welcome being chosen for an intervention and that they would fear a loss of status with staff and, even worse, with peers. There has been no evidence that this was the case and the opposite appeared to be the reality at many schools where pupil-staff and pupil-pupil relationships were reportedly improved. One pupil at Secondary N talked about her relationship with her mentor and how, even just seeing each other around the school, they would now have a quick chat about things or arrange a meeting. That experience had left the pupil feeling that someone was there. The notes record that, walking around the school with two different pupils, a researcher saw exactly the kind of conversations which the first pupil had described.

(ii)   The work ethic stepped up

Pupils also spoke about the 'step up' in work ethic which the project had instilled in them and their group.

> *"I was really quiet the first meeting, I wasn´t really putting much in; but now, I put in much more."*
>
> (Pupil, Secondary E)

"It was a better working environment – people who really wanted to learn. And there was the incentive of a voucher – to spend in Woolworths, WH Smiths or Halfords. That was a surprise..."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

Pupils at Secondary N were typically positive about the assertive role staff had taken across a range of subjects:

"I did this essay and it was really rubbish, so I had to do it again and my tutor knew. So he kept pushing me and asking me how it was and making sure I did bring it in."

(Pupil, Secondary N)

"In maths there is a whole new, I don't know how to say it, they want you to be there and gives you that encouragement and want you to be there."

(Pupil, Secondary N)

"I think it's been good having them on our back pushing us to do better. If they can help me do it and do well, I will do it."

(Pupil, Secondary N)

For some pupils the 'step up' was a step into a different leadership role which involved helping others with their learning. That happened for Yr 10 pupils at Secondary G:

"I learned a lot, it was for me an experience of how you would teach, we have always been the pupil. It was hard work, in some ways it was, is the word enlightening?"

(Pupil, Secondary G)

"I found the experience quite fun, I met the [younger] Yr8 and it reminded me how far I had developed myself, I found the experience of being a teacher, well I've always wanted to be a teacher and did not know if I could do it, and I've learned something, it was fun and we had respect for it."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

There was a corollary for Yr8 pupils who were being helped as these two reported:

"It felt like a normal lesson but it was different to a normal lesson. Sometimes the Yr11 helped you and it felt better, more comfortable, with other pupils helping you."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

"It felt natural to have the older pupils there, you get to know how they work and use their time. We had Yr11s in the group and we didn't get fractions, I didn't and they didn't either. So we helped one another and can do fractions now."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

Perhaps the last word on working ethic could go to the pupil from Primary C who told us:

> "*I think everyone working together as a class… sometimes individual work is quite important but there are lots of things in later life you need to work as a team for. I think it's good everyone working together. Working together as a class, as a Key Stage, as a group is really good.*"

> (Pupil, Primary C)

(iii)   The activity was an intrinsically positive experience

The pupils, overall, described EM as a very positive experience, with very few caveats. The invitation, we noted above, had been welcome; the activities had been either enjoyable or worthwhile or both.

Part of that has been the expansion of horizons for some pupils:

> "*Being given the chance to take charge and make a change; seeing how other pupils in other year groups behave and learn and working with people I didn´t know.*"

> (Pupil, Secondary N)

Part of it is enjoyment of the kind reported by Yr8 pupils at Secondary G:

> "*I'd like to do it again… and for a longer period of time, more things, more trips and more subjects, things to do, like sports and arts. It would be good to have two teachers in there.*"

> (Pupil, Secondary G)

> "*It was fun, it was great, we recommend it to other people, can we do it again?*"

> (Pupil, Secondary G)

One recurring theme was the positive nature of new relationships between older and younger pupils with the former often acting in a mentoring role. Sometimes the younger pupil is, as intended, the main beneficiary of that connection.

> "*…this young man hangs off the coat tails of his mentor…it has had a massive impact on him. The Yr10 says if he sees bullying going on he is prepared to check his behaviour to not associate with that and the Yr7 has explained that when he came to [Secondary H] he didn't really go and try and meet people but after developing the relationship he was much more confident to go and build relationships with people in his year he didn't know.*"

> (School Leader, Secondary H)

Sometimes the beneficiary was the older mentor as these quotes from Yr10 pupils at Secondary G illustrate:

> "*It was a good experience, fun; I learned something about my subject; I felt a bit better about myself.*"

> (Pupil, Secondary G)

"I guess when the kids were showing me their work, I felt that we'd achieved that together, I'd helped… I felt quite proud - we don't hang out with Yr7 so it was good to be the responsible people."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

"When the teachers were surprised that we knew things and said 'I didn't know you could do that', that was good."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

"We can put this experience everywhere we can - like in prefect and college applications. It should continue because it is really good and it helps the pupils a lot."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

Perhaps the last word on this should be left to the pupil at Secondary E who might have represented the ambition of many school leaders and staff:

"I *think it´ll change the way that other schools see this school, and make parents want to bring their children here."*

(Pupil, Secondary E)

(iv)   Outcomes were improved

The interviewed pupils were not only saying that EM had been an enjoyable project, they were reporting that, for them, it had been an effective project: it had increased their social capital, improved their confidence and raised their attainment levels.

We have referred to the importance of social capital in many of the EM projects. It reportedly helped between pupils and teachers as well as between pupils and pupils:

"I suppose you learn to appreciate what [teachers] do more. You respect them more - because they´ve given their time like we have. We learned to work together. They stayed after school with us but they didn´t have to do that. They could have just gone home."

(Pupil, Secondary J)

"You see one of the Yr11s around school and they say 'hi' to you. That feels good."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

Increased confidence was a frequently recurring theme in the conversation of young people about EM. In many of the interviews increased confidence seemed synonymous with increased aspiration. Pupils understood the importance of confidence:

"Confidence will teach you anything you need, you have to have the courage. If you don't have courage inside you to do it you won't be able to do the job you want, like being a lawyer and having to speak up – if you don't have the courage inside you."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

They also believed that their involvement in EM activities was increasing their confidence:

I think it´s made me more confident about meeting the staff, and presentation as well. It just gives you key tips on how to do things…. If I´m in an interview make sure you're confident talking to the person, looking at them so they know who you´re talking to. It´s just given me a load of confidence."

(Pupil, Secondary E)

"It's made me more confident, speaking with other people. Like when we did that day with people we didn´t know. We had to communicate and stuff otherwise you can´t do the tasks and stuff."

(Pupil, Secondary I)

"So I got upset in lessons, I didn't understand so I got upset, I didn't want to put my hand up in front of the class. So I had some one-to-one sessions and now I just get on with it, I have got more confidence… things that I was unsure on we just talked through… We did this after school, just half an hour after school."

(Pupil, Secondary N)

Pupils also believed that their core learning skills had improved.

"I pay more attention to how much we´ve actually got to get done, and how much is involved in the lesson. It´s so much more important than it used to be before I got involved in this."

(Pupil, Secondary E)

"My listening skills and my behaviour are better. In the past I didn´t used to listen a lot and my behaviour was being a bit rude. But now it´s all changed. It´s like I know education´s dead important and I should be really listening. So I´ve changed a lot."

(Pupil, Secondary F)

"I'm better at writing and vocabulary. I can now answer questions in class and I can write more fluently – I used to get stuck, so now if I get stuck I can think about it and about different ways to work out the question."

(Pupil, Secondary G)

The end product of these improved relationships, heightened confidence and sharper skill sets was that pupils reported better academic outcomes:

"My levels have gone up. I´ve been coming earlier to lessons and all and I´ve been getting higher levels."

(Pupil, Secondary E)

> *"I started to realise that I was on the way to failing but got B and C in English and the grades I wanted to get, from Gradewatch and Saturday morning revision classes."*
>
> (Pupil, Secondary I)

> *"I did some coursework and it was at D and E and they were two GCSEs I needed for college. So my tutor worked with me for a few weeks and I re-did some work and got them up to a C and a B and that was thanks to the work with my tutor."*
>
> (Pupil, Secondary N)

A final, sentimental but no less important summary from a GCSE pupil at Secondary I:
"I kind of realised how much it helped afterwards… I wasn´t expecting my results and my mum came with me and cried. I hope to finish off my A levels and go on next year and go on to University to do something to do with English cos I really enjoy my English. I didn´t think about it this time last year. I didn´t think I´d go to 6th form let alone to University."

Chapter 7. Conclusions:

This chapter summarises the evaluation findings which have been described in full in previous chapters.

The impact of EM in schools was evaluated in Chapter 3 as generally positive. The evaluation showed that EM is associated with a positive impact on pupil attainment and other outcomes although it is too early to say with confidence how significant and enduring that association might be.

The EM activity in schools was described in Chapter 4 as generally faithful to the EM framework and principles. Schools could comfortably align EM activities and support with their own strategic planning and with other initiatives. They almost universally described this flexibility as a positive feature of EM.

The sustainability of EM in schools was reported in Chapter 5 in very positive terms. It was described as a legacy rather than sustainability, a commitment to the principles of EM emerging more strongly than any assurance that particular activities will continue.

Based on the evidence in those chapters, there are six key lessons to be learned from this evaluation which might inform the development of future interventions for school improvement. These lessons are set out below as six propositions for further exploration, consideration and development.

1.   EM has benefited from its alignment with the values of the local participants.
EM is highly regarded by school leaders and teachers because it focused on issues that resonated with their values and priorities, even if they did not realise that at first contact. Even schools which had done very little previous work in the FSM gap were keen to engage and saw this project as an opportunity to either add a new dimension of work in this important area or to build on existing successes. This alignment was a source of energy and commitment for everyone involved.

2.   EM has provided a framework without imposing prescription
EM benefitted in three key ways from not being overtly or overly prescriptive in terms of content or process:
First, EM provided an agenda for engagement, and an overarching framework for change without being interpreted within the schools as another top-down, centrally imposed directive.
Second, the EM approach encouraged schools to reflect on their context and the action they will take to improve the situation. This 'socialised' the issues through conversation and internal (and in some cases external) collaboration. This built ownership at the school level from early on in the project.
Finally, the freedom and space provided within the EM framework had an important positive impact on staff motivation. Many school staff close to EM have developed creative approaches to their practice; others have re-engaged and re-discovered their 'spark' for teaching while others have benefited from new leadership and CPD opportunities. EM was not seen by the staff in schools as an intervention to which they had been subjected.

Instead, most viewed EM as a project or series of projects developed by the school for their community with support from central – and sometimes local – government.

3.   EM has raised awareness of a compelling issue for improvement

EM was very successful at raising awareness of the nature and complexity of key issues for school improvement.   Some schools were underestimating and may even have been unaware of the FSM achievement gap as a core issue for the education service; some were naïve in their approach to within school variation; others were 'data rich' but showed a poor understanding of how to use data to inform improvement. EM raised awareness of these issues in a sensitive and thought-provoking way.

4.   EM allowed local contexts to determine the design of local activity

EM has facilitated schools to develop their capacity for localised problem solving. The project has supported schools to develop tactics and strategies that 'work' in their particular context while still adhering to the core values and overarching aims set out by the former DCSF. This would seem a relatively cost-effective model of context-specific improvement, something which can be difficult to achieve in practice.

5.   EM offered good quality external support and critical friendship

The report records the general appreciation from EM schools of the contribution of the School Standards Advisers who worked with them. In most cases their work was highly valued by the schools and the critical friendship they provided made a positive contribution to EM.

6.   EM promoted, but did not impose opportunities for collaboration.

EM has provided the opportunities for school-to-school collaboration and engagement with other local stakeholders, including other schools and the LAs. The pattern of this activity is not uniform. This is unsurprising given the diversity of the schools and localities engaged in EM and may be considered a strength of the project. It is difficult, some would argue impossible, to mandate collaboration and engagement of this type. It is likely that, where relationships are strong and mutual respect exists, different partners will come together for the benefit of their communities.

In summary, the lessons from EM give some useful indications of the features that are likely to be associated with successful interventions for school improvement. The framework underpinning EM could be described as tight-loose-tight. That is tight in terms of values, loose in terms of prescription and content and tight on context-specific design and action, supported by an external critical friend. These features form the basis of a model for successful improvement, particularly in challenging circumstances.

APPENDIX A: Primary School Case Studies

Ashfield
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Ashfield Primary School is located in a coastal town to the South East of the country. The school has been at the heart of the community for over a century and has served several generations of the same families. The school has had a high mobility rate but this has started to level out and the school population is now relatively stable. The school has been under a Notice to Improve and Special Measures. Shortly before the case study visit it was said by Ofsted to be making significant progress.

Year	% L4+ Both Eng & maths			Average Point Score		
	School	LA	National	School	LA	National
2008	60%	71%	73%	26.2	27.1	27.4
2009	56%	71%	72%	25.9	27.3	27.4
2010	67%	NA	73%	27.0	NA	27.5

Extra Mile aims and activity

The LA identified Ashfield Primary School as a school with the potential to benefit from involvement in the EM project as the School Development Plan identified a number of relevant themes. The EM project Coordinator at Ashfield is the Deputy Headteacher. She explained that, although there were initial nerves about the size and requirements of the project, the focus and objectives were welcomed:
"…it did seem to meet the need and that's why we embraced it. It reflects our own thinking and evaluation of the barriers. We could use the money to think a little bit outside the box. It really helped us try to unpick what the government was trying to say." (Deputy Headteacher)

The school had identified that, at the end of KS2, pupils' numeracy standards were higher than literacy and their reading was stronger than their writing. Teacher assessments highlighted that pupils' factual writing was much stronger than their fictional writing. The school realised that, rather than focussing on written English, there was a need to look at speaking and listening. The school's survey showed that pupils enjoyed social talk out on the playground but did not always realise that it was inappropriate during lessons and on other formal occasions. Several pupils lacked the skills and confidence to discuss issues with their peers or others within the school. The school's EM project focus engaged staff, as this was an issue to which they could all relate.

Speaking and listening was a major area of concern and one of the first activities the school undertook to enable staff to crystallise their understanding of pupils' abilities was to assess language ages using the British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS). This was used as a baseline to identify which pupils should be targeted. The school

'Ashfield Primary School'

developed several activities, including one-to-one and group interventions for the FSM cohort, a curriculum week and role-play activities within each classroom.

First proposed activity: Improving communication skills - The focus on FSM pupils was led by an experienced Teaching Assistant who worked with pupils to develop their listening and communication skills. A programme called 'Developing Social Communication' challenged them to listen to instructions, follow them, answer and – most importantly – ask questions. Many of these activities included building confidence and raising pupils' awareness of communicating and listening in different contexts.

This level of intervention was not appropriate for all the pupils, especially those in KS2. It was decided that they would be better served using the Philosophy for Children (P4C) principles for discussion and questioning. The school introduced a themed role-play area into each classroom to provide pupils with different learning environments where they were free to discuss and explore lesson context in ways more suited to developing speaking and listening. Many older pupils had not participated in role-play activities since KS1.

Second Proposed Activity: Curriculum week - The team devised an opportunity for pupils to develop their communication skills and imagination in the form of a curriculum week based on the arrival of a mysterious alien egg. The staff made a giant egg, which nested in the basketball hoop on the playground. The hoop and egg were taped off and an investigation scene created. Staff were asked to ensure that pupils completed a piece of maths work, a piece of written English and a science investigation and also took part in speaking and listening activities. After that it was down to individual classroom teachers and pupils how and where they took the week's work. Local agencies worked with school staff in a variety of roles – reporter, police officer and 'government scientists' – visiting the school as the story developed, with footprints appearing over the playground and the egg starting to leak goo and make strange noises. Pupils engaged with these different agencies in attempt to solve the mystery behind the arrival of the egg, where it had come from, how big the mother must be and so on. The staff felt strongly that improving the speaking and listening skills of pupils would help to tackle the challenges they faced higher up in the school around the use and appropriateness of language. Fundamental to the design of the activities and outcomes was deep analysis and reflection on the issues that create barriers for pupils with their literacy.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

The team created to develop the EM met regularly to analyse and reflect on impact and this was seen as a key process in working towards outcomes. Once this distillation had taken place, the team felt that the project was much more tailored to their pupils' needs.

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First activity: improving communication skills - For pupils on the intervention programme there was no formal testing of skills and much of the reported impact was observation based. The Teaching Assistant said that, in discussion sessions during the first three weeks of the programme, some pupils had not spoken at all. As the programme continued, some began to develop the confidence to ask questions, contribute answers and offer wonderful ideas about what the focus objects could be used. These skills had been transferred back into the classroom. At the lower end of the school, the intervention programme looked at pupils' listening skills, building their confidence to follow instructions and become more independent. Initially several pupils would not complete tasks alone and wanted others to help. However, following the intervention the TA commented *"you watch them gain confidence. Ask them to do something and it is no longer 'can they all come with me?' they will get up and do it on their own."* (Teaching Assistant)

Some of the impact was difficult to measure and took the form of pupils' improved eye contact, or spontaneous conversation with teachers. In the Foundation Year, Yr 2 and Yr 5 all of the FSM pupils on the programme met or exceeded their targets. FSM pupils in other years who did not do so were identified as having multiple barriers to learning. However, despite not making their targets, there was also impact with some of these individuals but as they were involved in other initiatives this impact cannot be solely attributed to the EM project. When the pupils were retested using the BPVS, 67% had advanced their chronological age by more than the eight months for which they had been on the interventions. Some children made up to two years' progress using this scale. Role-play also brought a positive impact:
"...my children would say 'Right what should our role play area be, how should we do that, who's going to do that and achieve that, who's going to do this?'" (Yr2 Teacher)

The pupils in Yr2 also took far more control of their learning experiences after gaining confidence to talk to each other about lesson content. Communication between different groups of pupils significantly improved and fostered new working relations. Some Yr6 pupils took longer to build up an understanding of what the role-play area was to be used for but there was impact in lessons. There was also impact on attainment with a narrowing of the attainment gap between FSM and non-FSM children in the achievement of level 4 in English at the end of KS2. However, the school is very aware that each year group is different. It is also wary about using generic statements when discussing the attainment of FSM pupils:
"…that is why we have to track our pupils individually and not as a category. When you look at the data over the last four years, comparing our FSM and non-FSM, this year has got the smallest gap, so I can say that but again they are sweeping statements." (Deputy Headteacher)

Second activity: Curriculum week - During the egg week, average school attendance rose from 94.9% to 96.3%, one of the highest in the school year. All the staff involved in the EM project, including the Headteacher, described how it has led to changes in practice, systems, approaches and attitudes:

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"It enabled my staff, it empowered them, they are able to develop their collaborative leadership, it was a team, it allowed them to get inspired and gave them the opportunity to work together as a whole school." (Headteacher)

Vignettes

Pupils described their feelings about Speaking and Listening:

"It has been quite fun, everyone together. People have been more confident to talk out in front of the class and get to know each other more."

"Before the egg day... it was just a normal school day, maths, English, P4C, done. Then suddenly bang this egg lands, you're not laying there in bed thinking it's a normal day, you're thinking what if, what if, some dinosaur is standing in the play ground. Then it is English, what are we doing today, yes P4C, what will we talk about?"

The interventions allowed pupils to develop team-working skills. Not only did they feel empowered to talk but also they noticed how other pupils had gained confidence and contributed to discussions:
"I think everyone working together as a class, sometimes individual work is quite important but there are lots of things [in] later life you need to work as a team for. I think it's good everyone working together. Working together as a class, as a key stage, as a group is really good. We were together to try and solve the mystery, that was one of the best things about it."

The activities, especially the egg week, allowed pupils to open their minds and think creatively:
"I learned things about science because it was different colour goo and we had to do different tests on it. It was about science and you were actually learning a bit more and physically doing it."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Teamwork – In all conversations with staff, a strong emphasis was placed on the teamwork used to develop, implement, analyse and assess the project. The team were all involved from the very beginning of the process and all those involved felt an ownership of the programme and its intended outcomes. The workload was shared.

Funding - The school received £5K support to enable it to purchase resources to launch the activities. This was a great help as it was used to purchase costumes and fund staff to take on extra responsibilities.

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Project requirements -

"[There were] initial feelings that [project requirements] were detailed enough to focus you but you could take on that school ownership, but actually it was quite difficult because when you looked at those different activities – those seven activities – it was all of them, we couldn't go for all of them, so it was looking at them and saying which one you actually go for and drive the School Development Plan forwards. I thought they were detailed but gave the school ownership." (Senior Leader)

External links - The school worked with the LA during the infancy of the project and the LA reviewed its project development plan before funding was released. Additional support came from the LA's speech and language team who worked with the Teaching Assistant on the Developing Social Communication aspect of the intervention. There was a good relationship and regular communication between the school and the LA. There was no monitoring visit from the DCSF.

Parents - Informing parents about the EM project was problematic. Staff encouraged parents, specifically the targeted FSM parents, onto the playground and encouraged them to talk to their children about what was happening in school.

National focus - In the early stages it seemed that most of the documentation and the presentations in London were focused on secondary education. Although this was a minor detail the school would have liked to see more guidance and examples based on primary activities.

Flexibility - The school was able to develop its own stratagems and to manage the project itself. This was seen as a particular strength by all involved.

Sustainability

Through identifying the needs of the pupils and how the EM project could be used to meet these needs, the EM project was built into development planning early in the school year and reviewed on a regular basis. The inclusion of EM project activities in the development plan will be continued:
"…when you launch things it's always handy to have a bit extra so that you can then do the thinking outside the box and we can buy this resource. But then it should be embedded in your practice and it should be embedded in your School Development Plan, start budgeting for it and you must take responsibility and be responsible for the sustainability." (Headteacher)

The team approach adopted by the school is an asset in securing sustainability:
"...the advantage of being in a small school [is that] there are only eight classes and the communication and the movement is so much quicker and when you think four people were on the [EM project] team, that's half the staff instantly." (Headteacher)

APPENDIX A: Primary School Case Studies

'Ashfield Primary School'

The Yr2 and Yr6 teachers wanted to continue many of the activities into the next term but with annual reviews. As pupils progress, their learning experiences and expectations will change:

"It is so important to put that intervention down in the early stage at Foundation in Yr1 so yes it's going to take time to get up to Yr6 but if every year they are building on it by the time you get to Yr6 you won't even need to be facilitating it. It should be running itself, they will be the facilitators." (Deputy Headteacher)

The EM project has been rewarding in terms of outcomes and also in developing a greater understanding of the school and how to tackle some of its most prominent challenges:

"…this helped us shift something that we knew was entrenched at the school and the connection between speaking and listening and being able to describe and express learning, extending vocabulary – because they don't have that at home. And again it linked very well with the SEALs… it was actually shifting, reinforcing all the things we were doing in a cohesive manner. We all enjoyed and celebrated each other's successes and on the last day we went round and looked at everything and it was just amazing how far classes had taken it." (Deputy Headteacher)

'George Street' Primary School

George Street
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

George Street School has 130 pupils aged between 3 and 9 and is located in a small coastal town in the north of England. Since the 1970s there has been a steady increase in unemployment and whilst the town has some tourist potential it is very isolated. There are pockets of severe deprivation and the school intake suffers from the community's low aspirations. Currently 36% of pupils at the school are on the SEN register and 30% receive FSM. All but four children are white British.

In the academic year 2008-2009 a significant number of children made little or even no progress in mathematics in KS2. The school also had concerns about the progress of some children in literacy.

Year Group	Subject area	APS* Sept08	APS Sept09	Progress	APS Sept08	APS Sept09	Progress
			FSM			Whole class	
Yr3	Reading	13.6	18.4	4.8	15.3	19.1	3.8
	Writing	14.4	15.9	1.5	14.7	17.5	2.8
	Numeracy	14.1	16.4	2.3	15.8	17.5	1.7
Yr4	Reading	19.7	21.3	1.6	20.5	22.7	2.2
	Writing	17.3	19.7	2.4	18.5	20.7	2.2
	Numeracy	18.0	20.0	2.0	20.8	22.3	1.5

*Average Point Score

The school has recently 'soft federated' with four other local first schools, two middle schools and the high school in George Street.

Extra Mile aims and activity

George Street School was invited to participate in the EM project by the LA. Initially the school was unsure whether it had the internal capacity to respond to further interventions but it did see the potential for the EM project to act as a vehicle to develop project ideas they wished to implement. The EM project was seen to complement current work within the school around improving aspirations and it enabled the school to target children who had not benefited from other interventions such as one-to-one tuition or Every Child a Writer.

The school selected Activity 2: Engage Pupils in their Learning as this offered the scope to implement cherished projects:
"The opportunity came along to do something creative and maybe something a little bit outside the box… I have this whole philosophy that if school is not fun why would

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you want to come and I believe that for the staff as well, so the more we can put interesting and exciting things into how we deliver our curriculum the more you are likely to fire your children up to learn." (Headteacher)

The first activity: Nintendo DS consoles - This was selected following observation of similar practice at another school locally. With the aim of remedying the performance dip at KS2 in mathematics, the school invested in a number of Nintendo DS portable game consoles. These operated a mathematics programme, similar to a brain training exercise, focussing on mental arithmetic. The programme presented the pupils with different challenge levels as their ability and scores improved. The consoles were used by all pupils in Yr3 and Yr4 and presented an opportunity for FSM pupils to use equipment that they might not be able to access at home.

The second activity: Puffin report - This was much more focused, involving a smaller group of pupils from both Yr3 and Yr4. They were identified using attainment data from the end of Yr2, FSM status, summer birthdays and known issues with self esteem related to prior attainment or issues at home. This produced a mix of pupils that perhaps would not have been identified as needing attention using the criteria set by other interventions. The Headteacher took responsibility for this group and arranged to meet them on Friday afternoons to work on a project named after the school crest – the Puffin Report. The group was to develop a media output such as a DVD or podcast based on the BBC Newsround programme and focusing on what makes George Street First School an enjoyable place to attend. Pupils were to be involved in designing the media, filming, interviewing and layout. Intervention sessions were intended to engage pupils in their own, personalised project that would encourage them to appreciate positive aspects of the school. In addition they would develop their communication skills and build confidence through the interviews and decision-making processes. The output was to be provided to prospective pupils and their parents.

Progress and observed/perceived impact

Everyone connected with the school talked positively about the work that was achieved through the EM project. The target groups of pupils achieved some significant gains.

First activity: Nintendo DS consoles - This had a much wider target group than the intervention group. The maths groups in Yr3 and Yr4 had already been divided into two ability-based sets in an attempt to stem the decline in achievement in mathematics. Introducing the Nintendo DS to the lower ability group was difficult, predominantly because of some challenging pupil behaviour. However, several pupils had improved outcomes. Pre intervention tests were conducted and, following a relatively short assessment period, 50% of Yr4 pupils showed improved test scores whilst 25% of the Yr3 pupils showed improvement. Following the monitoring period and continued classroom use, the school is convinced the Nintendos have been a

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success for the vast majority including the more challenging, lower ability maths group:
"They are much more prepared to have a go… when they are moving up levels [computer levels] *they are getting a sense of achievement."* (Yr 3 teacher)

The Yr3 teacher observed impact not only in maths lessons but also on foundations skills in a cross-curricular context. The Yr4 teacher, who teaches the higher ability maths group, suggested that the speed with which pupils answer questions improved as a result of the project, as did the quality of written number work. However, she was more cautious about the reasons for this with the higher ability groups:
"All the children have made improvements in their mental maths test, but I don't know if that is general improvement and how much is related to the DSs."

Asked about the Nintendo DSs, pupils said they felt that the consoles were a beneficial way to learn:
"It sometimes helps with the times tables. When we are doing it we are actually learning about them."

The Yr3 and Yr4 teachers agreed that pupils enjoyed using the consoles. Even some higher ability pupils found maths difficult but the consoles helped improve their enjoyment and confidence.

If attainment levels in tests remain on an upward trajectory and the attainment gap begins to close, the scheme will be rolled out to Yr2. However the school is aware that, if all the pupils use DS consoles, the attainment of all may improve with the consequence that the gap may not reduce as dramatically as if the project was aimed at a specific group.

Second activity: Puffin Report – This was targeted at a much more focused intervention group. The speaking and listening levels of the pupils involved had all improved since the introduction of the project. Some scores had risen by two points, others by six and eight points and improved confidence levels in speaking and listening were noticeable. The project offered pupils a number of roles, allowing them opportunities to show and develop previously unknown skills.
"Four of the children really blossomed in front of that camera and did a really nice job of presenting it. The others, we had the role of director, which got changed to 'bossy boots'. Some of them got to be 'bossy boots' which they would not normally have been because they are not, within the class group, necessarily seen as having leadership potential." (Headteacher)

One pupil explained that despite the fun and enjoyment of the project *"it's still like hard work"* and another told of her keen anticipation of Friday afternoons which *"made me happier coming to school."*

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Teaching staff and the Headteacher said the impact on engagement, enjoyment, confidence and self-belief were starting to be seen at all times within the school week and not just on a Friday afternoon in group session. The LA Primary Strategies leader noted that George Street has been involved in other initiatives and support around mathematics but said he felt that there had been impact for the school and the LA in the way that the EM project brought awareness of the issue of disadvantage and underachievement.

Vignettes

Staff spoke of the changes they observed in different pupils:
"She has improved quite dramatically in her work and she seems more focused. Now I am not quite sure if that is part of maturity, but I do think being in the group has helped with her confidence." (Yr4 teacher)

Overall there was a strong sense that the Puffin Report boosted pupils' enjoyment for learning and school. Gains in self-belief and improved attitudes have been transferred into the classroom.

Key facilitators and inhibitors

External links - One of the key facilitators for the project was being able to witness firsthand how an intervention, such as the Nintendos, was being used by another local school facing similar contextual issues. The partnership between George Street First School's Headteacher and the other school had been strong before the EM project, so the opportunity to work together was easily accommodated. The LA also supported the project, providing a consultant to develop the introduction and use of the Nintendo DS within lessons.

Federation, still very much in its infancy at George Street, allowed for increased communication and collaborative working between schools and the EM project also contributed to this, opening doors to future collaborative working on such projects.

Flexibility - While the selected EM project aim fitted in well with the school's development plan the Headteacher felt that the flexible nature of the programme increased capacity to *"think outside the box"* and plan more creatively. Support from the School Standards Adviser further helped the school remain focused on the project while input from the link worker ensured that the broader possibilities of the EM project remained in focus.
"The idea of something like that [EM project] *came along with that creative slant to it, not being rigid in the way you follow strategies [exactly as] they are written down, but achieving the objectives by just coming at it from a different angle."* (Headteacher)

Funding - The funding of £5K provided by the DCSF was highly beneficial in purchasing the Nintendos, which might not have been possible without the project.

'George Street' Primary School

Pupil engagement - Challenges to implementing project 1 included the behaviour of some Yr3 pupils.

Competing demands - The school's involvement in numerous other initiatives – such as one-to-one tuition and Every Child a Writer – and the recruitment of NQT staff have created substantial demands on the resources of the school and the Headteacher. The Headteacher described the difficulty as *"just balancing it against everything that is going on in school."* Success in such circumstances may only be possible where a school's leadership is confident and secure.

Sustainability

Interim evaluations and monitoring are encouraging the school to see the use of Nintendos as a long-term investment. The school is considering extending this work to Yr2 in order to reduce further the potential risk of a dip in Yr3 achievement. It is anticipated that less support will be needed to set this up and it is hoped that current pupils will act as instructors to those pupils moving up to Yr3.

Sustaining the success of the intervention group, which the school perceived as being very beneficial, may be more challenging. The weekly sessions, along with the planning and preparation of resources specifically for the group, have taken a considerable amount of time:
"I have loved doing the self-esteem group and I would like to continue doing that. Maybe not the same children because they would move on [to middle school] but maybe a new group of children and doing a similar kind of thing. I think this idea is really important, getting them to do something special for them… it's worth it you know, just choosing the right little group of people to do it." (Headteacher)

"My issue with sustainability of it is, if nothing else happens after this year, they have had a nice time and done a few things, they have enjoyed it, whatever. But – so what?" (LA Primary Strategy Manager)

The Primary Strategy Manager stressed the need for strong leadership and opportunities for staff to contribute to development in projects like the EM project. Later manifestations of EM project work would need to build on the lessons from early trials.

Funding will be tight for the foreseeable future and the level of financial and physical support is likely to be greatly reduced. However, based on the impact and evidence of schools working with the EM in the LA, the manager believes that the EM legacy could be sustained with George Street's Headteacher being used to disseminate good practice to other Headteachers at primary meetings and the school acting as a hub of excellence for others.

'John Bishop' Primary School

John Bishop

(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

John Bishop Primary School and Nursery are located in the South West of the England. The school is a larger than average primary with over 380 pupils on roll. It serves a predominantly white British community living in some of the most deprived areas of the nearby city. It also has pupils from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds and some who do not have English as their first language (but their number is lower than average for a school of this size in such a location). The school has had a constant turnover of staff, including senior leaders, under a long serving Headteacher who has recently retired. It was judged to be 'satisfactory' in both 2001 and 2007 Ofsted inspections before being placed in Special Measures in March 2010.

	% L4+ Both Eng & maths			Average Point Score		
Year	School	LA	National	School	LA	National
2008	62%	66%	73%	26.5	26.7	27.4
2009	64%	68%	72%	26.0	26.9	27.4
2010	57%	72%	73%	26.1	27.5	27.5

Extra Mile aims and activity

John Bishop Primary was identified as a school that would benefit from involvement in the EM before the new Headteacher took up her post:
"The LA phoned up and said there is this new EM, would you like to be involved? They told me about the list of activities and we thought that it was going to fit in right now. It was the right phone call, at the right time, with the right activities, so that's why we became part of it."

She and her Deputy had determined that the data used by the school to monitor and track pupils was not sufficiently robust and accurate:
"…after being here a couple of weeks, we identified the children but we would see the EM as a way of improving the standard of writing across the whole school so that's been the most beneficial way for us doing it."

Proposed activity: Story buddies - The school opted to work on raising aspirations, linking this work to raising attainment in English. It targeted FSM eligible pupils in Yr4 who were underachieving in English and employed a professional storyteller to work with pupils and staff.
Success criteria were to be:

- storytelling is embedded throughout the literacy curriculum.
- staff are engaged and involved in the development of storytelling.
- the children are using the digital blue cameras to facilitate storytelling

'John Bishop' Primary School

- trips/wow days and experiences are taking place as a stimulus for storytelling in all year groups throughout the year
- attitudes towards literacy and achievement have improved with 100% of children now enjoying writing stories
- progress in literacy has accelerated for target children and year groups and throughout the school
- 100% of the target groups have reached age related expectations in writing.

The storyteller came into the school on a number of occasions throughout the year and worked intensively with the Yr4 year group and also with staff. The school also invested in some digital technology so that pupils could produce films alongside their writing. After the initial input from the storyteller, the Yr4 pupils were attached to high achieving Yr6 pupils to work together on written work. The Yr6 pupils were encouraged to talk to them and improve their vocabulary so that their written work could improve. Initially the Deputy Headteacher worked with the group. However, the demands of the school were greater than originally anticipated so staffing changes were necessary to enable the project to continue.

"It soon became clear, especially a school like us in Special Measures, for me to spend time every week doing it as Deputy was not the best use of my time, despite how enthusiastic I was about it, so we have now got an HLTA." (Deputy Headteacher)

The HLTA was highly motivated and enthusiastically took on the group. They met regularly and the HLTA produced a number of resources including sound effects, power points and activities and tasks that enhanced the experience of the pupils and engaged them with the activities.

As a result of work with the storyteller a 'Little Red Riding Hood' theme day was held at the school, with the classrooms and corridors transformed into scenes from the story. The purpose of this activity was to use the decorations and the story to inspire pupils to enhance their own writing and stories.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

The eight Yr4 pupils who were selected all started the year with levels of attainment in English that were between 2C and 2A. By July 2010 four of them had progressed through four sublevels of attainment while three pupils had progressed by only one sublevel. One pupil had jumped through five levels of progress. However, this was a child in care who benefited from other interventions and support. The school had set a 95% attendance target for the EM pupils. Four exceeded this target. Another pupil improved attendance by 5% from 70% to 75%. Again the school points to the fact that several pupils have taken holidays during term, principally for financial reasons, which affects attendance rates. While overall progress in the target group was not as great as the school had hoped, there were several positive outcomes from the project:

'John Bishop' Primary School

"They still got a lot out of it, but what we were looking for was huge leaps in their attainment which some of them have and some of them haven't really. But what they have done has really built their confidence massively… But we haven't seen that huge jump in attainment that we wanted… For us, the value of raising their confidence and giving them something to feel proud of and enjoy, the value of that implicitly is amazing but the fact that doesn't show in their kind of levels it makes it look like it hasn't worked, but I wouldn't say they haven't got anything out of it." (Deputy Headteacher)

However, EM work highlighted several key points for the development of the school at all levels that the SLT feels will increase the effectiveness of its work and overall attainment:

"I think being new to the school made it less effective than it will be next year if you see what I mean. It's important for it to work properly, you do need to know the school and the children well and pick them well and effectively, which came out through the conference and in talking to other people. They have a better handle on who it was going to work for really." (Deputy Headteacher)

Both the Deputy Headteacher and the HLTA said that the Story buddies sessions took time to develop but were well received by pupils and that they engaged well with the work:

"They enjoyed the writing eventually and they were really proud of the writing they produced. Because they were with the Yr6 and had a one to one, they were very proud of the amount and what they produced. They were often writing a sentence each, or the Yr6 was writing so the Yr4 was giving the ideas and the words so the barrier to writing which they normally experience was removed, somebody else was actually writing and they were giving the ideas and that kind of thing." (Deputy Headteacher)

Vignettes

The Deputy Headteacher had surveyed pupils at the start of the EM process and *"...all of them came through as 'No I don't like it because I can't do it"* (Headteacher).

When asked about what the pupils thought about literacy before the storyteller's input and the Little Red Riding Hood theme pupils said:
"I found it really boring and not exciting" and *"I just didn't enjoy it. I found it hard work and did not really want to do the stories we had to write."*

Others said that literacy was hard work and that limited their approach to it:
"I was rubbish at literacy, my spelling was no good and I couldn't do it. I just got fed up of doing it because I felt I couldn't do it."

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After working with the storyteller these pupils expressed a newfound enthusiasm for literature and for school:

"I found literacy boring but when the story-teller was in and then we did the Red Riding Hood things it suddenly started to get interesting. I was starting to think about other things than just having to write and write."

The pupils who had worked in the Story buddies group explained that the work boosted their confidence in writing and changed their perceptions towards literacy and school.

One member of staff particularly enjoyed the freedom to be creative:

"It's just a brilliant opportunity – to be given such a small amount of money, well relatively small amount of money – to think creatively about using it."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Ethos - A major inhibitor for the SLT was the ethos of the school prior to their arrival and the beginning of the EM. Many parents and some members of staff did not think aspirations were important:

"The culture that was running through the school - it's still there - was 'We are good but we don't need to worry about it. As long as the children are having a nice time it's OK and it doesn't matter if the children are not achieving their full potential." (Headteacher)

External links - The Headteacher worked in the LA prior to her appointment at John Bishop Primary and had a strong relationship with many schools in the area that were involved with the EM. John Bishop used cluster arrangements and did some work with the hub school. However, this was felt not to be a great asset.

Data - John Bishop is concerned about the use of FSM as a sole or main indicator as the school has such a large number of pupils claiming or able to claim FSM. The ability range of pupils and other associated factors make using FSM as a sole indicator very difficult:

"There are lots of pupils eligible for FSM who don't actually claim them for various reasons so they would not come up on it either. You can't really measure, that comes from again knowing the children and knowing their families. I don't think it is great, we have so many - and some who should be who aren't - it almost, if you have got that many FSM, it becomes harder to use it as an indicator."

Sustainability

The school identified early on that despite the enthusiasm and motivation of the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher it was not feasible for them to organise and run the EM at the level that they felt it deserved. They acted quickly to place an

APPENDIX A: Primary School Case Studies

'John Bishop' Primary School

HLTA in charge of Story buddies. Because of the school's circumstances, without this shared responsibility, the EM focus could have been lost:
"If it is something you are going to carry on it needs to be someone like that... here especially we have got huge pressures, lots of things going on, and the EM for us could fall off the edge. For her [the Headteacher] it's not going to fall off the edge as it's her thing." (Deputy Headteacher)

However, the fact that both Headteacher and Deputy had been heavily involved in the development of the project improved opportunities to sustain it. The EM was not seen as a bolt on or something that was forced on staff by the SLT. Instead the work was being led and driven by staff across the school.

The school has included Story buddies time on the HLTA's timetable for next year, ensuring that activity is sustained.

The importance of data and tracking has been highlighted and this is key to sustaining the project and ensuring that efforts are focused on the pupils who require extra support and provision:
"…we weren't secure on the data and I think for what we wanted to do, we needed to pick children more carefully than we did in the sense that we did. We looked for children who were FSM and also underperforming, there were quite a lot of those because of where the school is at." (Deputy Headteacher)

John Bishop Primary School's engagement with the EM has allowed the SLT to think more deeply about the external issues affecting pupils and this will inform future planning:
"It is looking for, gathering those children who are underperforming and looking at [where] we think it is because they are not having lots of support and aspiration from home, that kind of thing. The kind of activity that we have done would benefit that type of pupil." (Headteacher)

The SLT has seen many positive activities and approaches in their work with the EM that will sustain parts of the project in the future as it develops its current practices and moves forward out of Special Measures.

APPENDIX B: Secondary School Case Studies

Broadbank
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Broadbank School and 6th Form Centre is situated in the South East of the country. It is a large school with 2187 pupils currently on roll. Of the pupils who entered Yr7 in 2010, 20% were working below level 4. 15% of pupils are on School Action or a higher level. 7% of pupils have child protection needs. FSM take up is relatively low at 7% as many families refuse to take up their entitlement. There are a growing number of families that experience difficulties in providing school uniforms and finding money for bus fares to school. The intake is almost 100% white British, with a small number of Traveller children.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	35%	48%	46%
2008	38%	50%	48%
2009	39%	52%	50%
2010	44%	57%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activities

The school has been involved in what it describes as a mapping activity that identified a 'mosaic' of profiles of the pupils attending, their families and communities. This identified pockets of severe deprivation, as well as relative affluence.

First proposed activity: Securing attention, engagement and mutual respect - The objectives of this project were:

- to involve pupils and families in the school's work
- to involve relevant staff including form tutors, support workers, teachers and the Extended team in identifying pupils in need and the nature of their needs
- to ensure that attainment at least matches potential.

The school knew that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds were not accessing all the extra-curricular and extended services school activities and opportunities available to them. Lack of money or other resources were often factors preventing them from attending after school or holiday activities. The targeted pupils were identified using a number of indicators: FSM entitlement; being Looked After (LAC); coming from households with acute domestic problems; coming from families on low pay, benefits or in unemployment; poor health; coming from isolated communities and having refugee or asylum seeker status.

'Broadbank' School and 6th Form Centre

The school received money from the Your Choice project, which it decided to use for this part of the EM. Each pupil was allocated £150 which could be used to help enrich their learning experiences. The Head of Extended Services commented on the flexibility of the project and the variety of uses of the money:

"We've had pupils we've supported through gym membership, flute lessons and transport, because they rely on the school transport to take them to and from school but they have to leave school at half past three and they couldn't access all the out of school activities we provide. So we paid for a Freedom pass which is £50 and that allows them to get any bus in and any bus home. And again it allows them to go out with friends at weekends… these simple things open up so much for these young people. They could no way financially afford it."

Each pupil's activity was tracked and audited at the end of the financial year (March 2010) and each was interviewed to determine the impact of the additional financial support. Success criteria for this project were:

- pupils and their families can evidence a range of activities in which they have taken part or resources they have been able to utilise to help their learning experience
- there are examples of participation and fulfilment - photos, surveys, newsletters, prizewinners etc.
- the attendance of the identified group is at least 94%.

Second Proposed Activity: Yr11 - Holding them to it, No-one fails - The school offers a wide range of opportunities and academic routes for its pupils at KS4, starting in Yr9 with opportunities for early entry for GCSEs so that pupils finish their GCSEs in Yr10 and go on in Yr11 to study A levels or alternative options such as BTECs. For some time pupil progress, particularly in maths and English GCSE, had been tracked by an initiative called 'Grade Watch,' which focused on pupils on the C/D borderline or at risk of underachieving. This was extended in September 2009 to focus specifically on the EM pupils. The stated objective for the project was to ensure that the 'poorest of pupils were included in the Grade Watch project regardless of ability.' This included regular monitoring of progress and intervention where necessary. Pupils were identified through FSM entitlement and other indicators as above and their progress was tracked in detail. At the beginning of Yr11 pupils were identified who were at risk of disengaging or falling behind. They were given one to one mentoring support on a weekly basis. The EM pupils had high levels of support throughout the year in order to ensure their continued engagement and academic success, with a particular focus on maths and English. They were also given the opportunity to join the Achievement Group which offered after school and Saturday revision classes, holiday revision sessions and breakfast/lunch before exams. Success criteria for this activity were:

'Broadbank' School and 6th Form Centre

- as many pupils as possible achieve their predicted grades, realise their potential and achieve a 94% attendance rate
- pupils feel supported and confident and their responses to the input are evaluated
- parents and carers respond to the programme positively, and their views are sought
- staff feel the pupils are improving and supported.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

The school identified several areas in which the EM activities had positive impact:

- reduced rates of under-achievement and a reduction in the FSM gap (as evidenced by school monitoring, teacher feedback etc)
- attendance, participation, motivation and levels of behaviour.

First activity: Securing attention, engagement and mutual respect - The impact of the Yr7 and 8 project is hard to quantify:
"We cannot measure impact through attainment, we can only measure by progress as much as we achieve it… it's very difficult to quantify. For instance little Jimmy in Yr8 wanted a drum kit. Now he plays in bands Saturdays and Sundays and his self-esteem has gone through the roof, his self-confidence has gone through the roof, he embraces learning more readily. That's a fact because we then target his subject teachers and his form tutor and little Jimmy's happy because he's achieved something. That's the impact." (Head of Extended Services)

Regarding the provision of a Freedom Pass for one pupil a form tutor had written:
"This has not only eased the financial pressure for the family but has also allowed [the pupil] to engage in new experiences which require travel at weekends and have new experiences and attend after school clubs."

The school bought a guitar for one pupil:

"You could see him so happy, he had equity with his friends, he joined an after school club to learn to play the guitar and I see him now and he still talks about it a year later." (Head of Extended Services)

Measurable impacts could be identified in terms of attendance at extra-curricular activities. In Yr7, 52% of EM pupils have gone from no extended school activities to one or two activities a week plus whole week holiday activities while 23% have moved from one or two activities a week to holiday clubs and activities. In Yr8 the whole cohort now attends at least one activity per week and 33% also attend holiday activities within the school (generally lasting for four days each).

APPENDIX B: Secondary School Case Studies

'Broadbank' School and 6th Form Centre

Second Proposed Activity: Yr11 - Holding them to it, No-one fails - For the older cohort
"I think it has already had an impact in that ten pupils have a level two qualification with two GCSEs at grade B and another twelve have a level one qualification. Of those in Yr10 the attendance of seventeen out of the twenty has improved considerably." (Senior Leader)

Vignettes

Students at Broadbank were positive about their EM experience:
"At the beginning of Yr 11 I realised that all my time in school was coming to an end and I needed to do a lot of work, my lessons weren't enough. I didn't really want to work... I knew that I didn't have the motivation to do it."

"They helped me understanding. They could see where I was coming from so they could help me. And getting the extra help on Saturdays was probably one of the biggest helpers cos [sic] *when you're at home you've got Facebook and all that to distract you, but when you're at school and you've got the teachers there to help you it's easier. Miss W. helped. She was my English teacher too."*

"I wasn't expecting my results and my mum came with me and cried. I kind of realised how much it helped afterwards."

"I hope to finish off my A level and go on next year and go onto University to do something to do with English cos [sic] *I really enjoy my English. I didn't think about it this time last year. I didn't think I'd go to 6th form let alone to University."*

Of this pupil, a teacher said:
"I've never seen a parent so happy as that day [when they came in to get the results], she was bursting with pride and he had a big smile all over his face."

And of another:
"I cannot stress how much different he is now. This time last year, well his whole attitude is so different, on Saturdays he was so well behaved, and it did have an added effect across all his subjects because he had that support and back up, across the board which gave him self confidence across all his subjects… his attitude to maths. Okay he didn't quite get the grade but he hasn't given up. It's like he thinks "I can do it and I will do it, and I won't be defeated by it by not bothering trying.""

Key facilitators and inhibitors

The school identified the following facilitators:

Funding - (from the Your Choice project)

'Broadbank' School and 6th Form Centre

Extended Services - (already a part of school life).

Staff commitment - (willingness to do additional paid work on Saturdays, during holidays and after school).

Existing processes - (such as the use of Grade Watch and Achievement group activities).
"We were already doing this before, the way we are doing it with the EM is emphasising FSM, sharpen up on that… things like vision lunches and vision breakfast before maths and English exams, so we can use some EM funding for that." (Senior Leader)

There was a single identified inhibitor.

Programme requirements - This limited the school's freedom to manoeuvre and some of the Department's requirements were a poor fit for the EM activities.
"Sometimes it's an inconvenience as we've had to jump through hoops. We were having to do reviews when it wasn't the right time to do reviews, if you know what I mean." (Senior Leader)

Sustainability

Broadbank School is continuing both its EM activities. One of the main factors in facilitating the continuation of the Yr11 project is that Grade Watch, the Achievement group and the school's extra-curricular activities were deeply embedded within school practice before they joined the EM. Monitoring systems continue to be developed and the school is currently working with another local school to update and improve its data collection processes:
"It will go into this year's development plan which we are currently writing at the moment and the info on the achievement gap and family work we will do. It has gone into the SEF, it has gone into my personal performance management targets… the strategic team meet once a week and because it's so central to that and attainment – it directly relates to exam results of the Yr11 – we talk about it a lot." (Senior Leader)

However, funding may become a problem:
"Funding, obviously. Also the first year of a new system is always the most difficult. The first year of learning how to do it, how to set up a database. Once you set the system up it is easier and the frustration is, if the funding that we've been using dries up, it becomes difficult. We need to get it embedded, and in the first year it wasn't embedded into what we do and this year it is. The first year everything was wrong, people making referrals for the wrong reasons… now the impact's better, more apparent. If they pull out the funding we won't be able to continue, and the right level of funding too. If it's just £500 it won't go anywhere."

APPENDIX B: Secondary School Case Studies

'Callow Brook' Secondary School

Callow Brook
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

The school, located in the East of England, is smaller than average with approximately 650 pupils aged 14-19 on roll. It serves pupils from a widespread rural area. The vast majority of pupils are white British and speak English as their first language. The percentage known to be eligible for FSM is below average. An above average percentage has SEN and/or disabilities, of which most are moderate learning difficulties. The school is part of a collaboration with two middle schools and belongs to a 14-19 partnership in the region. The school is working to raise the aspirations and attainment of pupils on FSM and groups of pupils of all abilities who are at risk of underachieving at KS4.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	**School**	**LA**	**National**
2007	53%	47%	46%
2008	46%	47%	48%
2009	43%	49%	50%
2010	46%	52%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

Initially the school wanted to run two activities. However, the second project - monitoring pupil progress through data collection and regular meetings with staff and pupils to discuss progress – did not run. This was because of capacity issues and financial constraints, such as the lack of funding to buy additional learning materials for the pupils.

Proposed activity: STAR - This was a joint project with two other local schools in the 14-16 Partnership, aimed at broadening horizons. Each school agreed to select 15 pupils. Callow Brook pupils were selected using ACORN data to identify hard-pressed families and low levels of parental support.

Planned activities were aimed at improving social skills and broadening pupils' horizons. The STAR project is a school-based rewards system involving pupils in a joint 'raising esteem' launch event, followed up by external 'educational aspiration rewards' at the end of the year. Each school was to use this rewards system flexibly to link it with other interventions, using the motivation it generated. Activities included an outward-bound activity day with partner schools, regular Thursday team-building and motivational sessions and a BMX day (a Sky Sports initiative). The school had a lunchtime sports equipment shop 'Active lunchtimes', run by pupils, which bought and loaned sports equipment to pupils.

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'Callow Brook' Secondary School

The aims of this EM work were to:

- raise the self esteem, progress and motivation of learners
- develop leadership skills in young people, generating improved behaviour in them and their peers
- set up a pupil-led 'Active lunchtimes' equipment lending scheme to enable pupils to participate in 'alternative' sports and pastimes and subsequently share their experience of new activities with others, leading 'master classes' in some of the more unusual sports (e.g. ultimate Frisbee)
- promote the 'six steps to success' mantra, to be adopted by participants and other pupils: *Mental Toughness, Hunger to Achieve, People Skills, Life Knowledge, Breaking Barriers, Planning for Success.*

The school anticipated that this work would lead to targeted pupils achieving progress rates and outcomes that matched those of other pupils with similar abilities. Improvements in self-esteem and motivation were to be measured through differences in recorded pupil perception interviews. The intention was to repeat the STAR project with similar groups in future years. Success criteria for this work were:

- improved enthusiasm and commitment for school work (measured by monitoring school reports in terms of overall effort and behaviour scores every eight weeks)
- establishing a successful, pupil-led and managed equipment lending service in school
- providing positive and proactive pupil 'role models' for other pupils, giving something back to the school
- involving other pupils in active pursuits during recreation time within the school day, resulting in reduced 'incidents' at break/lunchtime
- increasing appreciation by participants of the 'pitfalls' of dealing with other pupils e.g. inconsiderate behaviour (equipment loss/damage) with consequent improvements in their own behaviour.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

There were difficulties in getting the project off the ground. Funding was a problem. However, pupils were extremely positive and enthusiastic about the opportunities they were given. Take-up and behaviour on a joint trip to an outdoor centre were excellent and showed that they had developed in terms of confidence and leadership skills. Behaviour in lessons improved significantly amongst this group of pupils who had been described as 'challenging' immediately prior to the project. The number of classroom referrals and fixed term exclusions for poor behaviour reduced dramatically in the target group, falling from 26 referrals and two fixed term exclusions in Autumn term 2010 to seven referrals and no fixed term exclusions in Spring term 2010. The improvement in pupil effort was less obvious with effort scores between Reports 1 and 2 of Yr 10 showing that, of the 13 pupils on the project, the

'Callow Brook' Secondary School

average effort of six pupils had gone down slightly and the average effort of seven pupils had gone up slightly:

"The kids were really up for when Mike (the BMX champion) came in with the bikes. We gave them T-shirts and got a bit of ownership… to kids who don't have much, getting a T-shirt is quite a big thing." (Assistant Headteacher)

The overall benefit to the pupils was very positive… From what they were like when they started there were some definite skills learned in the process. The fact that none of the children would have been regular out of school hours learners in any curriculum area for a start. Committing to staying after school for an hour was a start and in itself was progress… and probably gave them some initial confidence and initial purpose." (Senior Leader)

The Headteacher felt that the impact on pupils in school had been significant:

"What is interesting is when you look at individuals and how their demeanour has changed, and their involvement in the school has changed. There's one lad, now in Yr11 who was a bit disaffected, a bit unengaged in studies at the beginning of Yr10 and certainly in Yr9 and was someone who staff were concerned about, whose name would appear on school round robins about effort and attainment and who was not quite getting there. Through this project he has certainly turned around. He's not perfect but, my word, he's different, he's engaged. A good example would be that you can have a very mature conversation with this lad now and he will initiate those conversations with you in the corridor, and that's a huge move forward. That to me is a success story. His attainment is rising to near where it should be." (Headteacher)

The outcomes of the EM project were more far-reaching than for the cohort involved, because of the Active lunchtimes project. The School Sports Co-ordinator explained how the process had been led by the pupils and helped them develop broader skills while also leading more pupils to engage in sporting activities at lunch times:

"I wanted something sustainable… we set up a lending shop in the youth club and part of the process was they were involved in ordering the equipment. I managed to secure £500 from the School Sports Partnership for the programme and I put it over to them… we got our catalogues out and we went on websites… one thing they wanted was chain basketball nets, they went through the whole process and realised that you could only get them from the USA and that just bumped the price up so decisions had to be made. We couldn't get them but it was all good stuff. It was all good research." (School Sports Co-ordinator)

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'Callow Brook' Secondary School

Vignettes

Yr11 pupils talked about what they did, how it had changed them and their relationships with teachers and about some of the problems:
"We were picked cos [sic] *we're not scared of other people, we can take charge."*

"We went for a day at this centre and there were two other schools there too. We did things like crate stacking and archery and this thing where you had to lead someone round this course blindfolded. It was really good cos [sic] *you had to talk to people you didn't know from other schools and it built up your social skills."*

"One of the groups of pupils from another school relied on their teachers where we didn't and that was a good thing. Our teachers trusted us."
"I suppose you learn to appreciate what [teachers] do more. You respect them more. Because they've given their time like we have. We learned to work together. They stayed after school with us but they didn't have to do that. They could have just gone home."

"I think in PE I get more involved now than I did before. You have more confidence, cos of your leadership skills you have more confidence."
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Key facilitators and inhibitors

Flexibility - Freedom to use the EM project in a way that they wanted was an important facilitator for the school, although it also made for some uncertainty:
"It fitted in to what we're already about. We're a Leading Edge school, we've always tried to be innovative. We thought, we'll try something. I don't care if it doesn't always work. I want to give staff the opportunity to try something different... And certainly the impacts have been good with that particular [pupil] group." (Headteacher)

External links - Partnership with the two other schools was seen as a key driver for the project even though their projects were, in the end, conducted separately:
"We wanted something that was collaborative... it just so happened when EM contacted us, the three schools identified by the LA as being part of the project were already part of [a local] partnership where we already share practices... There was already an established partnership... so what we tried to do was bring those schools together and do something that was a bit different and gave the activities a bit of a lift… to show the kids that they could achieve." (Headteacher)

"I wouldn't have put in the time and the effort if we hadn't done it as a partnership." (Assistant Headteacher)

The LA Adviser's support was helpful and partnership with other organisations was also seen as important but of variable value:

'Callow Brook' Secondary School

"We linked the EM in with Sky Sports 'Living for Sport.' It's a useful trust initiative and is aimed at engaging hard to reach groups in physical activity. Part of that involves a visit from an athlete mentor… we got Mike Mullen, ex world BMX champion, who was a bit off the wall... He did a day of personal development with them. We incorporated that into the programme. It's all about personal development. He calls it the six steps, and he brought in his own story to that… what was great is we had the local newspaper come down and it did a centre page spread about it... You couldn't have asked for a better role model and someone to engage the pupils." (LA School Sports Co-ordinator)

DCSF training and support materials were also said to be helpful.

Staff buy-in - Staff support and the school ethos were crucial to the success of EM work:
"As a school we have the motto 'Achievement for All,' but I think we do go, irrespective of the title of the project, the extra mile. We've got staff who really care, that want the children to succeed." (Headteacher)

Funding - Inter-school work did not happen beyond the initial start up activity. The schools ended up running their own projects but funding for them was problematic:
"Funding is a major issue. Money dictates everything we do. The biggest thing I was trying to avoid was turning the young people off so that when we tried it in future the kids lower down the school would want to do it." (Assistant Headteacher)

Competing demands - Pupils, as well as staff, have other demands on their time*:*
"The problem is, the Yr11 now have to be involved in the academic stuff… so it's hard to keep that group going as a group into Yr11 but I'm more than happy to start it again in Yr10 and have that group going into Yr11 and maybe change the focus from broadening horizons to an academic focus." (Assistant Headteacher)

"I used to go trampolining on a Thursday but I had to give it up because of this. That's quite a commitment." (Pupil)

Sustainability

The school is clearly committed to continuing with the EM this year and in the future. However concerns were raised about funding, and staffing capacity:
"We're trying to use grant funding now to continue the process because we feel that what we've done for that group of pupils was very valuable so if we could carry on, if we did have the funds, we would certainly do it again. We were lucky the Sports Partnership helped us out… if we see an opportunity we'll go for it but you have to be realistic about funding in terms of what is required." (Headteacher)

"You have to look at the capacity of Senior Staff. At the moment we're going through a major school reorganisation... I'm working across two schools as Executive

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'Callow Brook' Secondary School

Headteacher and we're quite stretched. It would be lovely to do all these types of things... there's no shortage of goodwill to continue to do it. But capacity is always an issue." (Headteacher)

"*Ideally the Active lunchtimes would have been sustained. It would have been incorporated into the school this term, but for one reason or another it fell away. There were teething problems with that. But unless you try these things you're not going to make it better for the next year."* (School Sports Co-ordinator)

With impending change (becoming an 11-18 school) Callow Brook hopes that some of the practices developed during the EM will become embedded. If used at an earlier age the school thinks these practices could effectively address issues such as demotivation, particularly for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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'Cotehill Lane' Secondary School

Cotehill Lane
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Cotehill Lane is situated in a region of the country which has lost much of its traditional heavy industry and this is reflected in the high levels of socio-economic disadvantage in the area. The school is a smaller than average comprehensive with a rapidly declining population of pupils aged 11-18. There are currently 860 pupils on roll. The population of the school catchment area is predominantly white British, many of whom live in poor quality social housing with large-scale unemployment across several generations. A significant number of pupils are therefore eligible for FSM. The school also houses an increasing number of ethnic minority groups (27%).

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	38%	56%	46%
2008	34%	50%	48%
2009	41%	51%	50%
2010	42%	54%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

The school's Headteacher is very clear about her philosophy asserting that '*…we provide a curriculum with currency for all pupils, we will not play the game and I am using very strong language there… the courses we offer here are bona fide, traditional courses which are quite difficult with our cohort, but they come out with a broad, balanced portfolio.'* There is huge pressure on the school to achieve national targets. However, despite achieving some of its best results at GCSE for the past nine years in 2009 the school was still towards to the lower end of the LA league table.

By the time the EM was introduced, the School Development Plan for the coming academic year was already in place. However, there was a synergy between EM activities and issues raised in the plan. Compared with many new policies or interventions, the EM was easily incorporated into the work of the school. To begin with the school looked at FSM pupils:
"[There were] a few surprises and a few not. [We asked] are... others being catered for very well already through, for example, the MEEP project or Gifted and Talented… then we looked at the things that others are doing and asked where is there an area we genuinely want to strengthen practice on?" (Headteacher)

First proposed activity: New curriculum - The school identified two strands of the EM that met its needs. At KS3, the humanities faculty wanted to develop a new approach to the curriculum and they felt that the EM provided an opportunity to have a focus group. The school as a whole was looking more at skill based teaching and learning and the Geography Department was asked to focus on this. The pupils who

were selected to take part in this activity were Yr9 borderline level 4/5 in English and maths. Success criteria were:

- to raise the attainment levels of targeted pupils
- to change teaching practices.

Second Proposed Activity: Mentoring - The second project 'to track pupil progress and intervene promptly if they fall off trajectory' was focused on Yr11 and fitted into the school's current intervention systems. The school selected a group of FSM pupils and mentored them throughout the year in weekly group mentoring sessions with additional individual support. The success criteria for this activity were:

- to produce a KS3 VAK Guide based on the positive experiences of the Yr9 EM pupils in geography
- a rise in the average residual for 80% of the Yr11 EM group, thereby narrowing the gap between the FSM group and other groups in the school.

All subject leaders had this strand built into their performance management. The Deputy Headteacher was similarly held accountable for ensuring that this group of pupils had access to all extra-curricular and lunchtime activities and revision sessions.

Twenty pupils were identified as being entitled to the intervention. They had not been picked up previously within other school intervention structures. Responsibility for the group was given to the KS4 manager. Along with two members of the KS4 pastoral team she identified suitable mentors for them, including teaching and non-teaching staff. The group met every Friday in the school conference room. Sessions were relatively informal and sandwiches and drinks were provided for pupils. The Headteacher joined them and the sessions provided an opportunity for staff to 'pop-in' if they needed to:
"…many of them don't sit down, don't have a table at home and have a conversation with an adult… but there were times where there was assertive mentoring going on… and sometimes it was a case of 'If this is your target, what are you doing, what have you done, what are you going to do next?' and it was a non-excuses culture."
(Headteacher)

The school used an existing electronic data tracking system to enhance the quality of mentoring, displaying the most up-to-date information about attendance and attainment and also comments by staff. As soon as a dip appeared intervention was put in place but it also highlighted successes, with pupils being awarded e-merits that allowed mentors to give further praise. However, the school knows this is not accessible to all parents and so traditional methods of communication are still in place.

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'Cotehill Lane' Secondary School

Progress and observed/ perceived impact - The school points to a number of successes:

First activity: New curriculum - In work with Yr9 pupils the school reported that all ten were currently at or above level 5 in maths; six achieved a C grade in a science GCSE unit test. Nine are at or above their English target grade. In a Yr9 review six pupils had positive residual scores and five are at or above their July 2009 residual scores. The Geography Department was involved in a number of new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning including podcasts and creating a Biome Box.

Second activity: Mentoring - In Yr11 work, 14 of the 19 pupils who remained on the EM intervention list were at or above their D grade target in maths with nine at grade C or above. In English mock exams 18 pupils achieved above their English targets and data suggested that over half the pupils had positive residual scores. As with Yr9, the numbers attending drop in sessions, extra-curricular activities and so on increased. Furthermore, the Head of Faculty said many staff had commented on the renewed or developing confidence of pupils who had been assertively mentored. This was evident in lessons and in their work.

Analysis of behaviour reports and other data showed that six out of the ten Yr9 pupils had a reduction in behaviour incident reports and five out of ten improved their attendance. In Yr11, 12 out of 19 had a reduction in numbers of behaviour reports and 15 improved their attendance rates. There were some surprising outcomes too:
"We very quickly realised... how powerful it was and it was almost like we stopped being in the driving seat… it was almost as if the kids took the lead once they had settled in. They were incredibly supportive of each other, someone would bring an issue to the table that was a stress to them and before I could talk the kids would chip in and off they went." (KS4 Manager)

Vignettes

When asked to reflect on how they feel they have changed due to the activities, pupils said that awareness of their issues, relationships with teachers and self-confidence were the three main areas highlighted by the work. They talked fondly of a mask creating session and said how this had pointed to several issues. Because the pupils identified their barriers and issues to learning, the school and the EM leaders could tailor their intervention more specifically:
"The mask was good for me because my expected grades are quite high and even though I do try hard I still don't get them. If you look at my books I don't get them and it can be quite disappointing. My mask reflected this... I have seen an improvement in my grades; I have started to work harder." (Pupil)

Several pupils commented on improved confidence levels. They confirmed that the impact of this work was felt across the school:
"If I hadn't have done this I wouldn't have been aware of the situation I was in."

'Cotehill Lane' Secondary School

"It has improved my confidence and my levels. In science I was below target and now I have shot up to 6b. That's just by, if I was unsure, asking the teacher - and I listen more."

In the geography sessions different approaches enabled them to engage with the subject at a deeper level:
"The different ways in which we learned and were taught made it much more fun. Sometimes we will be watching a film, sometimes different things and talk about things like global warming which will affect us."
Pupils suggested that not all subjects in school were as interactive. Certainly maths and English were very important to them so this approach was not necessarily needed. In general pupils felt that the EM activities helped them focus on school, themselves and their futures.
"All the way through we have talked about our futures, the way we learn and we did something one week on our future goals; what we want to be and what we would have to do to reach our future targets."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Flexibility - While staff praised the precision and focus that the project brought they were able to put their own stamp on it and this significantly enhanced implementation of the EM.

Experience - The school already worked on intervention programmes and projects, for example for Ethnic Minority and Gifted and Talented groups. These provided a good grounding for introducing the EM.

Status - The national status of the project was also seen as important in 'selling' the project to staff, parents and particularly pupils. There were a few challenges in launching the interventions with such a diverse range of pupils, creating groups that may never have worked together or identified with each other before.

Timing - This was problematic as the school had already developed its action plans. Although these were amended to incorporate the EM, it was possible to do so only because narrowing the attainment gap was something that had already been highlighted.

Analysis - The school had drilled down into the context of its pupils and identified areas that may act as barriers for them in school. Through internal programmes, such as the lead teacher group, it was able to share the issues that were identified and the work undertaken, both before and during the EM, with the wider staff community.

'Cotehill Lane' Secondary School

Funding - Within maths and English, funding was available for one-to-one tuition for some pupils and the departments tied this in with the EM pupils, linking it to raised attainment:
"We have just resourced it from existing school budgets because there was no funding. The LA does allocate money for FSM but not at all for the EM… we have made it very 'doable' and cost effective as well…"

External links - Cotehill Lane's link school did not face the same issues with its pupils. Although communication between them was not an issue and a visit was arranged the ethos, processes and structures deployed in the link school had little in common with Cotehill Lane.

Sustainability

The school's continuing demographic problems make it imperative for the EM work to continue. That is why building activities into the routine of the school was so important:
"The EM has not just been a project for us, it has been absolutely explicitly linked to all the work that we have done in the school, especially with the work of the Deputy Headteacher with things like Aim Higher and aspiration with children whose families have had no history of it…" (Headteacher)

The EM will not be specifically written into School Development Plans in future because the SLT feels that work developed through the EM is to be embedded within raising attainment:
"What we didn't want to do is say this is EM two because for us we don't think that would work for us as a school, it has got to link into all our intervention programmes." (Deputy Headteacher)

However, the work is firmly embedded in strategic planning:
"We have linked it to performance management. We have linked it to professional development as well as to the School Development Plan. All members of staff have a card with a target for performance management based on the EM. So it is going all the way through our strategic planning." (Senior Leader)

The choice of EM leader in the geography curriculum group was significant because he is also a member of the school's Lead Teacher Group:
"…all his work has been fed back to the lead teachers in his position of Raising Achievement Coordinator… so everything he has done in humanities will not only be of benefit there but next year will go out into English, maths, science and all the other departments." (Deputy Headteacher)
The SLT sees sustainability as dependent on regularly revisiting this work through whatever forms or approaches the school employs – development and improvement plans, Lead Teachers' group, SLT and governors. Future work will be supported by the introduction of action research projects as part of staff professional development.

'Grainthorpe' Secondary School

Grainthorpe
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Grainthorpe Community School is an 11-16 school with 1000 pupils located in the South West of England. The school serves an area of significant social deprivation and family dysfunction. Its pupils are predominantly of white British origin, with 5.7% coming from ethnic minorities, most of whom are from Eastern European countries. 4.2% have English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs. The school is in the lowest 25% of the wealth poverty ranking in the region and 60.5% of pupils are in the lowest three deciles. 33.9% of pupils have SEN and 11.1% have FSM. The school has a steadily improving achievement profile and consistently high CVA. It is routinely oversubscribed.

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5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	33%	47%	46%
2008	31%	47%	48%
2009	43%	49%	50%
2010	36%	54%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activities

Grainthorpe School first started its EM activities in September 2009. The school decided, for reasons of capacity, to focus on a single activity: pupils as researchers. This fitted in well with the work the school was doing with teachers on improving teaching and learning and there was also a wish to build on Pupil Voice activities and on the revamped Pupil Parliament. The project fitted in well with the school's development plan which was aimed at encouraging pupils to become more engaged in learning processes and to contribute to the development of effective teaching and learning with their teachers. The hypothesis was that improving teaching and learning strategies throughout the school would have the greatest impact on FSM pupils.

The objectives of the EM were:
- to encourage pupils to understand what constitutes effective learning and to become more active in teaching and learning processes
- to ensure that the key role of Pupil Voice is understood in the teaching and learning agenda of the school
- to share positive learning strategies with pupils and staff, building on existing good relationships and improving outcomes for all.

Success criteria were:
- pupils will have devised a learning observation sheet that enables pupils to consider their role in effective learning

'Grainthorpe' Secondary School

- pupils will want the project to continue into its second phase
- teachers will want to use pupil data and the checklist to inform their own practice
- pupil learning is a standing item at Pupil Parliament meetings.

Pupil researchers (two from each year group) were identified by Heads of Year as those who would respond well to the activities and who had positive relationships with their peers, without being *"too squeaky clean."* They were thought likely to have a broader influence outside the research group:
"We needed to start with a group of children who are sufficiently sharp to deal with it… they're not academically brilliant in terms of the whole school, they're quite average really." (Deputy Headteacher)

The Senior Management were very clear that the objective was to narrow the gap. At the beginning of the project they considered targeting a group of seven or eight pupils but decided that a broader, whole school project would make a difference to a much larger group, with the potential to become embedded in the long term practices of the school. This work was about transforming teaching and learning at the school. The researchers went to the Boardroom at the local professional football club to be briefed about the project. They developed a learning checklist which they used to survey 300 pupils on what makes a good learner. They also analysed the data. Subsequently they negotiated with teaching staff who had volunteered to host them as observers in class, focusing entirely on pupil learning rather than on the teacher. They shared their findings with the teachers involved.

In consultation with all school stakeholders, the researchers devised what they called a 'Learning Partnership' agreement consisting of a breakdown of the expectations and responsibilities of both teachers and pupils. This was to be included in pupil planners for 2010/2011 as well as being the starting point for revision of the school's Behaviour Management Policy. The pupils presented their research to the school Governors, the teaching staff and to EM researchers. Pupils met on a regular basis, often at lunchtime, to discuss the progress they were making and how to proceed. The Deputy Headteacher, who facilitated the project, described it as "taking on a life of its own".

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

In terms of quantitative data on outcomes, there is little, if any. However, the SMT believes that pupil involvement in the teaching and learning process will be a high impact lever for change in the whole school. Because of the nature of the project it is too soon to see improved outcomes based on external examinations at the end of Key Stages. However the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher believe that achievement, particularly for the target group of pupils, will be raised in the long term from the bottom up, and driven by pupils:

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'Grainthorpe' Secondary School

"If this is about transforming the learning of the children who are at the bottom end of that gap then this project has got a much better chance of having a really significant, lasting effect and narrowing the gap than a smaller project concentrating on about half a dozen kids. It's root and branch in the school. It's part of a wider drive of what we're doing." (Headteacher)

The focus on how pupils learn is conceived as having had an impact on teachers' understanding of how pupils learn most effectively and feedback from pupil researchers has been received positively:

"We asked the pupils to name some teachers they felt might respond well to the project and they came up with quite a long list, including some interesting people. There's one long standing member of staff who has been here 25 years, who's a Grainthorpe institution and cares desperately about the school but is incredibly grumpy sometimes… for him to sit down in here at lunchtime to come in and sit with the pupils and let them explain what they wanted to do, to observe the learning, sharing their observational grid and listening to their feedback was very positive." (Headteacher)

The pupil learning activity added to the school's continuing CPD activity:

"The staff who were observed by these children said it was a remarkable experience for them and were surprised about what the pupils picked up and how sharp they were. Because the staff realised how sharp these pupils are, it has impacted on the teaching process. There was a tendency to see the pupils as passive in the process, that we do good to them but actually, what our pupils have shown the staff is that they know what's being done to them." (Deputy Headteacher)

This has led to a new marking policy that is now more of a two-way dialogue between pupils and teachers.

Pupil researchers' observations of classroom learning and the efforts made by teachers were seen as being key to the continuing development of the project, creating active and co-operative learners through having a greater understanding of what actually goes on in a classroom:

A further perceived impact has been to build on the school's on-going process of trying to involve parents with the school more. The EM activity is seen as creating a positive attitude among pupils towards the school:

"There's a real pride in the school, and the pupils do come from backgrounds where their parents didn't have faith in schools, but their parents are discovering a new Grainthorpe. We had open evening… we went into Yr9 assembly and ask for volunteers to give up two hours of their time to show a Yr6 pupil and their parents around the school and we had 180 out of 210 pupils volunteer."

'Grainthorpe' Secondary School

Some of the project's impact has been completely unexpected.
"If I am really honest, the reason we started was that when we went through the documentation it seemed a really good place to start, but where we are now, the project has gone in a completely different direction because the pupils have led it, and what we have now is the opportunity to review some of our policies and procedures which will impact on all children." (Senior Leader)

Vignettes

The KS3 pupils felt that what they were doing was important in making the school a better place, and encouraging new pupils to attend:
"I pay more attention to how much we've actually got to get done, and how much is involved in the lesson. It's so much more important than it used to be before I got involved in this."

"The most difficult thing was having the meeting with teachers. It was quite weird because we normally only see them in lessons. It was strange just to sit down and talk to them."

"I was really quiet the first meeting, I wasn't really putting much in but now I put in much more."

"What we've enjoyed the most is the professional atmosphere in the Boardroom at [the local] football club; being given the chance to take charge and make a change; seeing how other pupils in other year groups behave and learn and working with people I didn't know on the project."

"I think it'll change the way that other schools see this school, and make parents want to bring their children here."

"The best thing of all is knowing we are part of an important project which could change how our school works... [it] really turned into something that will change the school for the pupils and teachers."

The Yr10 and 11 pupils mainly focused on what the process had done for them individually, such as developing their confidence, looking good on their CVs, and preparing them for doing future presentations and attending job interviews:
"I think it's made me more confident about meeting the staff and the presentation as well. It just gives you key tips on how to do things when I get older. If I'm in an interview, make sure you're confident talking to the person, looking at them so they know who you're talking to. It's just given me a load of confidence."

Key Facilitators and inhibitors

'Grainthorpe' Secondary School

Flexibility - The Senior Management Team said that one of the main reasons they got involved with the EM was because it fitted in well with the way they worked and fits well with their ethos. In addition they said:
"We were being trusted as professionals to develop a project that worked for our pupils... and that would be of genuine benefit to our school community and we wouldn't have to fit within given parameters which was very refreshing. The fact that we weren't being asked to write a thousand word report on this that and the other… made it do-able so we could spend the time working with pupils and not have to generate a mountain of paper." (Deputy Headteacher)

External links - The involvement of a link person at the DCSF was very useful and supportive, particularly when the school considered the project's longer-term impact on teaching and learning:
"Our adviser has been great, she has been very good."

The pairing with another school in the area, described as 'outstanding' had not worked as neither Grainthorpe nor the link school was sure what to do to assist each other.

Funding - Lack of funding was a problem. The LA had agreed to provide some money but this never arrived.

Sustainability

Last year was just the start of the process. All the pupils have discussed the next stages of the project and will roll it out via assemblies to the whole school. They plan to recruit and train new researchers from Yr7. The staff and management describe their involvement with the EM as the beginning of a journey that they believe will continue to transform their school. Their main concern about sustainability is financial:
"A little bit of funding would have been nice. It's probably cost us a couple of thousand pounds and we wanted to do it properly so it cost us money. For our kids, who don't go anywhere… to see them walk into a boardroom and take their seats, it was a wow experience for them… so we needed to spend some money." (Headteacher)

'Grove Hill' Secondary School

Grove Hill
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Grove Hill School is an 11-16 all girls' comprehensive school with Mathematics and Computing specialist status, located in the North East of the country. Deprivation and unemployment are common across the area. Almost half of the pupils are drawn from Super Output Areas (SOAs) which are in the most deprived 10% of SOAs nationally. About a quarter of Grove Hill's pupils are entitled to FSM. Over 80% of the pupils are of white British heritage and the school has pupils of 32 different nationalities who speak 27 different languages. Pupil mobility is around 15% annually.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	38%	30%	46%
2008	33%	30%	48%
2009	51%	37%	50%
2010	43%	42%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

The EM activity at Grove Hill School began in 2008. The school initially proposed two activities. Both were based on need identified by the school, in part through its longer term planning and in part as a response to its 'satisfactory' Ofsted inspection in 2007. The urgency of the second activity was emphasised by a disappointing fall in attainment levels at the end of KS4 in 2008 – which was more than well recovered in 2009.

First proposed activity: Teaching and learning in science - The first proposed activity was to increase interactive and participatory learning. The activity was focused on teaching and learning developments in science aiming to improve standards through pupil engagement and an enjoyment of learning. The new science course was to be delivered to the whole of the Yr7 year group. For monitoring purposes a target group of pupils whose KS2 APS were below average was chosen. Historically, pupils with these characteristics had often become stuck and disengaged. Objectives for this activity included:

- engagement – through active pupil participation
- personal Learning – through use of 'learning log' and diagnostically marked progress books
- confidence building/pride in work through completion and presentation of a full investigation of pupils' choice to 'show off' all 5 skills (independent learning)
- a solid foundation of skills for Yrs 8 and 9 and for KS4 coursework.

- a better understanding of how scientists work
- improved teaching through co-planning and focused learning objectives.

The success criteria were to include:

- improved skills – evidence available in progress books
- pupils producing a full investigation
- pupil survey results confirming that pupils enjoy the lessons.

The overall approach represented a significant break with previous practice for the Science Department. A new head and a new second in charge of the department were committed to moving away from book and worksheet based learning to a skills based curriculum. The arrival of several new staff in the department reinforced that opportunity. EM funding allowed the school's Senior Leadership and the Science Department to move away from a piecemeal approach to curriculum redesign in which staff had to find occasional evenings and lunchtimes to plan new work schemes. Instead they were able to meet as a group on Saturdays in a local hotel and to plan the new schemes collaboratively with a much shorter lead in time to their introduction. The main aims of the new curriculum were to raise the quality of teaching and learning and so improve pupils' engagement, personalise pupils' learning, build confidence and skills in scientific methods and create a better understanding of how scientists work. A feature of this first activity was the parents' evening on science. This happened very soon after a general parents' evening and drew a large crowd that was keen to see their daughters' science experiments live.

Second Proposed Activity: Tracking and intervention - The second proposed activity was 'to track the pupils' progress and intervene promptly if they fall off trajectory'. The original intention was to monitor and evaluate the progress of 82 'middle ability' girls in Yr8. The 'middle' group had been identified as historically failing to make appropriate progress. Through tracking these girls more regularly in Yr8, the school intended to intervene and so maintain the expected rate of progress.

Objectives for this work included:

- tracking the progress of middle ability Yr8 girls in the core subjects of English, maths and science
- ensuring relevant intervention is in place at an early stage
- becoming aware of any issues hindering pupil progress revealed by scrutinising the tracking /intervention process.

The main measure of success would be that fewer pupils in the middle ability range failed to make the expected rate of progress. The school nominated one of its middle leaders who had shown an interest in data management and analysis to lead this activity. In a context influenced by the school's marked dip in 2008 performance, it soon became clear to the project leader and the senior leadership that the activity

'Grove Hill' Secondary School

was too narrowly focussed. Their initial work quickly revealed that the school needed to make more fundamental cultural and technical changes across the range of its data processes. The questions raised included:

- how robust is our data?
- should more robust and regular assessment apply across the school?
- who owns the sense of progress for the pupils?
- are targets really challenging?
- do subject leaders and other staff really know which pupils are below trajectory?

The school used the momentum gained from the first stage of this EM activity and adapted the following stages to a more fundamental review of its tracking and target setting. The success of that change of direction is reported in later stages of this case study.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

Staff and pupils at Grove Hill are convinced that the activities sponsored by the EM are having and will continue to have a positive impact on pupil engagement and attainment.

- Yr7 (now Yr8) pupils spoke with enormous enthusiasm about the science curriculum, its grip on their attention and their continuing interest.
- Staff from the Science Department described how EM funding had created an opportunity fundamentally to change the science curriculum and its demonstrable impact as target pupils began to deploy skills not yet common in Yr10 and Yr11 at Grove Hill.
- Senior leaders confirmed that EM activity has been a catalyst in transforming the collection, analysis and use of performance data across the school. Targeting and addressing underachievement are significantly improved and this is being reflected in pupil attainment.

First activity: Teaching and Learning in science - The focus on Yr7 for the first activity means that there will be no end of Key Stage data in the near future to confirm the initial progress being reported by the Science Department. Staff report progress on all three objectives set for this activity.

- Engagement – pupils speak openly about their enjoyment of lessons while staff describe not only the pupils' enjoyment but also their own pleasure in the new approach and pupils' reaction.
- Personal learning – the use of personal learning logs was slow to start and it became evident that use of the logs needed modelling. Pupils are now using them successfully and taking increased responsibility for their own learning.

'Grove Hill' Secondary School

- Solid foundation of skills – the development of skills in scientific enquiry has been a key outcome of this activity, with evidence of Yr7 band B pupils producing investigation work equivalent to that of most Yr10 pupils.

Second activity: tracking and intervention - The tracking and intervention activity is widely regarded by the senior leadership of the school as having had an important effect on the use of pupil performance data across the school:

"Our tracking was not as good as it should have been. We do have a lot of disadvantaged children in Grove Hill and the EM activity helped us to highlight the gap and brought it to the fore more quickly than we would otherwise have managed." (Headteacher)

Early work on tracking in the EM activity focussed on a group of girls in Yr8. The project leader's initial audit led her to brief the leadership team and the School Standards Adviser that there were wider issues about data tracking across the school:

"...in the sense that we were very data rich but did not understand what the data was telling us and what we should do about pupils not making progress." (Project Leader)

A more root and branch review was needed and that would have to be followed by the implementation of an agreed approach across the school. The activity developed beyond its original design to accommodate the newly identified needs.

Vignettes

Pupils from Yr8 at Grove Hill now talk with enthusiasm about their experience of science in Yr7 and their continuing interest in the subject. In a Yr7 survey science was reportedly their favourite subject. The following comments from Yr8 pupils are illustrative:

"In primary school we would just work out of science text books. Maybe there was a week or two with some things on a table in the corner. In secondary you can make your own investigation, your own question, your own experiment."

"The parents' evening was great. The prizes were to spend a day at the [adjacent] University [Medical School] being a doctor. It helped that our parents met our friends' parents there."

"It has really helped us with Yr8 because it gets harder as the year goes on."

Staff also speak positively about the role the EM project has played in their own professional development and in their enjoyment of their work:

"It was important that it was a professional development opportunity. I was able to use this as my project for Leadership Pathways qualification. It fitted in really well. It has helped me to move into assistant headship." (Project Leader)

'Grove Hill' Secondary School

"Skills are transferring; a big benefit is self-assessment and peer-assessment because we've been doing it, taking it out of the teachers' hands. The girls can do self-assessment and peer assessment, and have a vocabulary to do it. It's not just "that's very neat; it's lovely" but "you might have tried…"" (Science Teacher)

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Rooting the work in the school's development - Senior leaders, activity leaders and other staff at Grove Hill are convinced that the EM project has been successful at the school because they were able to develop activities which built on their identified needs.

"It worked for us because it fitted in with what we were doing; it was not a bolt on from somewhere outside. It allowed us to develop, challenged us to see if we could succeed on our terms. If we had failed, it was a project, a trial, we would not have been happy but we would still have learned something useful." (Headteacher)

Funding - Though consistently described as small or marginal, funding was equally consistently identified as an important facilitating factor:

"The story here is that a relatively small amount of money allowed us to do some key things which had a disproportionate consequence. The Saturday mornings we spent together in a decent environment rather than half a dozen evening half hours… we could really get into what we needed to do… brainstorming, training, setting objectives…" (Science Teacher)

The Headteacher and her leadership team committed most of the grant to creating time for the staff involved and to acknowledging their additional responsibilities with an additional payment.

External links - The role of the School Standards Adviser was significantly helpful:
"We had a great adviser, very good at advising and helping us on to the right path; good at asking questions and not directing. 'Have you looked at it from this angle?' 'Have you thought about this?' When I told her we could not carry on with the narrow focus of tracking Yr8 she said 'That's OK if that's what you've learned and need to do.' She also forced us to question ourselves, she would use the paper work to force us to delve deeper in. It was a very honest, supportive culture; we never worried what she might report about us. And now we have a system that owes a lot to the challenge from the adviser." (Project Leader)

National connections gave the EM project what the Headteacher described as a 'helpful aura'. The Project Leader describes them as *"horizon stretching."*

'Grove Hill' Secondary School

Sustainability

The metaphor used in conversations at Grove Hill is that the EM activities were the equivalent of push-starting a car: once done, with careful driving, it need not be done again.

"*Sustainability? We used the EM resources and the aura to get started and things will run now – the buzz and the interest at the science parents' evening were terrific. The staff and children there will make more and more progress. The tracking system is just gathering momentum, and our 2009 results already show what we could do if we focus sharply."* (Headteacher)

"There is a massive legacy. Actually, in science it is a ripple effect because the new approach is not just being introduced year by year from the youngest; it is already influencing teaching and learning in Yr10 and Yr11.   The change in performance monitoring is profound: we have shaken up our data tracking and accountability right down to classroom level, how we collect data, how we use it and what we then do. We are using the data, not just collecting information, we use it to change what we do in and around classrooms". (Project Leader)

Meadow Road
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Meadow Road School is a small comprehensive school located in an ex-mining community in the Midlands in an area of low parental engagement and low aspirations. There are pockets of second and third generation unemployment and 20 % of the school's pupils claim FSM. Many more are eligible but do not claim their entitlement. Almost all (99%) of pupils are white British and the proportion of pupils with SEN is above average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is also above average. Pupils enter the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy. However the school has the highest Contextual Value Added score (CVA) in the county, and has seen rapidly improving GCSE results in the last 5 years.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	41%	47%	46%
2008	46%	48%	48%
2009	42%	51%	50%
2010	47%	55%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

The School started its EM activities in September 2009 and agreed to take part in the project on the basis that they could incorporate it into projects they were already running. The school wanted to raise aspirations and agreed on the following EM objectives:

- to identify and target a small group of Yr11 pupils who are eligible for FSM and have other risks of vulnerability
- to provide more personalised learning opportunities to reduce underachievement
- to provide enrichment activities both within and outside the school day
- to identify staff who will work closely with the selected pupils on a programme of assertive mentoring
- to improve access to out of school activities by improving transport arrangements.

Ten pupils in Yr11 – seven boys and three girls – were identified to take part. They had FSM entitlement and a 50% chance of gaining five A*-C grades at GCSE. Staff were aware that singling out these pupils could be a risk:
"*...putting a beacon on their heads and saying this is an FSM group... one of the biggest issues is the fear of embarrassment from some pupils.*" (Middle Leader).

However, all Yr11 pupils had mentors, alleviating fears that pupils would feel they were being specifically targeted. The school opted to introduce two EM activities.

First proposed activity: Positive mentoring - The school had run a 'positive mentoring' project for some years. Every Yr11 pupil is allocated a personal mentor as an entitlement. The mentor supports them in completing GCSE coursework. Subject teachers and pupils complete a booklet which is used as a basis for discussion about their progress, what additional work they need to do, and what they might need in order to do it. For EM pupils Senior Leaders were used as mentors, with the majority having the same person.

Second Proposed Activity: Skillforce - This provided pupils with opportunities voluntarily to complete a number of vocational qualifications in addition to GCSEs, either after school or during half term breaks. EM pupils had priority in accessing these additional courses and were encouraged to take up their entitlement. Options included:

- ASDAN[12] level 1 qualifications – the equivalent of two GCSE grade B passes. These included work on developing learning skills, working with others and problem solving
- computer literacy courses such as CLAIT (Certificate for IT users) which is a benchmark qualification for IT competence
- adult literacy and numeracy levels 1 and 2. These are GCSE level qualifications, with online tests, giving immediate results for pupils.

All EM pupils were also encouraged to attend extracurricular coursework and subject enhancement sessions provided by the school as well as a 'mock' results day. Success criteria for the EM were that all pupils:

- attain 5 A*-C grades including, where possible, maths and English at GCSE
- attend the curriculum enrichment and enhancement activities for which they had entitlement.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

All ten pupils in the EM group achieved five A*-C grades and, for seven of them, these included English and maths. All pupils completed various activities that were built in to the project for them. Four attended and passed the ASDAN course and attained GCSE equivalent qualifications. Staff who had been involved in the interventions were positive about its effects on some pupils. One teacher was particularly enthusiastic about the impact Skillforce had:

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[12] ASDAN is an awarding organisation that designs and awards qualifications from Entry level to HE level.

'Meadow Road' Secondary School

"… we had a pupil who was a reluctant learner all the way through and we were worried about him because he had the potential to get his five A*-Cs but he was getting nowhere near that and a lot of that was down to his relationships with staff, his lack of motivation, him not seeing the point in what we were doing. But he did the Skillforce and he passed it and he got his two qualifications early and that turned him round. When he'd got his two qualifications in the bag, he then did go on to get his five A*-Cs, including English and maths, and we were over the moon with him. And it wasn't just down to the raw scores; it was down to a complete change in his approach to school. He was suddenly a much more pleasant young man. He realised we had given him something extra, he realised he could get the qualifications we said he could get and he just went on from there." (Middle Leader)

A Senior Leader was also impressed with the impact of a combination of positive mentoring and Skillforce:

"The change I've seen in G... growing in confidence, a self belief, and she's also developed a more positive approach towards school and she believes in the importance of education a lot more than she did. A couple of years ago G could have gone, dropped out of school. I would directly identify the mentoring and Skillforce as impacting on that… she's already been to see me about a referral to Connexions and she's thinking about a career in a caring industry… Her aspirations have lifted."

Mentors who took part in a focus group about the EM agreed that they were pleased with outcomes for the pupils, although they were not convinced that the EM had made a significant difference to what they were already doing.

Vignettes

Learning Mentors - For staff involved in the mentoring process it was a positive one:

"I had a Yr11 form and I only mentored two of the form, although you mentor the whole of your form group anyway… I had two completely different pupils. I had one with a ten A* or A target and she was a little bit like, put off by the fact her targets were so high because she was a good kid in school and worked really hard but didn't think she was going to meet all of her targets in all of her subjects… The other pupil was completely different with C/D targets and wasn't really a worker, preferred knocking around with mates, did no homework or did very little, but the last six months of Yr11 he completely turned around."

Pupils spoke positively of their experiences with Learning Mentors.

"If you've got any problems you can just go to them for help, like catch up on coursework, and they'll tell you what you need to do."

"The mentoring gives you more skills one on one so it gets you used to interviews. Cos you're working one on one with your mentor you get more used to it, you can talk more, there's no-one there to say you've done that wrong. I'm more confident talking to adults I suppose but I've always been confident."

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They also enjoyed Skillforce:

"It's very good. We got set tasks. Some of it's paper work, some of it is making posters, some of it's making things, like we had to make a car and make it move. It were good [sic]. *You can have a laugh with your mates and still do work at the same time."*

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Relevance - The main facilitating factor for the EM in this school was that they were already involved in the activities before the project started:

"We didn't find it massively time consuming, which was our major fear... for us though pupils on FSM have been crucial for years. They have been getting over 100 on CVA which is what a lot of schools would give their back teeth for. What we are seeing is that there is still a gap between FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils and so we were working on this anyway, but this maybe gave us a good cohort of pupils to really focus on." (Headteacher)

External links - Senior leaders commented that while the EM had no direct impact on what they were doing '*It was useful looking at what other schools were doing at the EM Conferences.*'

Other parts of the project were seen as less useful:

"In terms of the EM it never really worked the way it was supposed to. We were partnered with another school and given a partner school and we were asked to be part of it because there were thought to be issues with attainment gaps in some of our vulnerable groups, but in terms of the data on RAISE online it wasn't a real issue. We went along with that because the mentoring was part of what we were doing anyway." (Senior Leader)

Project requirements - The school also found the timing of the Final Report unhelpful as it was supposed to be completed before the cohort's GCSE results were received. Because of this the Final Report was not completed at all.

Crucially the school still is unsure why it was identified for the project.

Sustainability

The EM was incorporated into existing school practice, and was seen initially as not 'adding anything.' However, the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher acknowledged that the project helped to sharpen the focus on particular cohorts of pupils:

"If there is a legacy it's that we pay more attention to pupils on FSM and make sure they form a fair proportion of any strategy." (Headteacher)

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'Meadow Road' Secondary School

"I think there's a wider legacy, it's highlighted vulnerable pupils as well. I think every child who has a vulnerability is within the FSM category anyway." (Deputy Headteacher)

The long-term impact therefore has been to embed a further 'filter' for progress checking within the system:
"It was really a way I suppose of the school starting to have that sub checklist of FSM [pupils]. We check every child anyway but it narrows it down a bit more that we do that extra check for the 20% [making sure] that we've done everything we can for them." (Deputy Headteacher)

"We would expect all our tutors to identify which pupils in their class are entitled to FSM." (Deputy Headteacher)

"We've got more than average on FSM which creates a large vulnerable group for the school that is so easily identifiable that we can work with them fairly quickly and relatively easily… It's given us all a heads up, and focused us onto different groups." (Leader of the Closing the Gap initiative)

The school policy is one of entitlement to positive mentoring and additional vocational options where appropriate, and the school sees these as a successful way for its pupils to continue to make progress.

'Palgrave' Secondary School

Palgrave
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Palgrave is an 11–18 High School and Business and Enterprise College for girls located in the North West of the country. The school is larger than average with just under 1500 pupils on roll, 263 of whom are in the 6th form. Over 40% of pupils are eligible for FSM and 85.9% come from diverse minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for FSM is very high and 64.7% speak a language other than English as their first language. The school has a slightly higher than average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need and a lower than average 'stable' population.

	5 GCSEs at A*-C inc Eng & maths		
Year	School	LA	National
2007	41%	32%	46%
2008	41%	37%	48%
2009	43%	39%	50%
2010	53%	46%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

Palgrave's new Headteacher introduced EM Activities in September 2009 with the aim of encouraging networking with other schools and addressing the attainment gap at KS4 between pupils entitled to FSM and others. The aim was to reduce the gap from 20% to 10%. The school was also concerned about under attainment by white British pupils, in particular those in receipt of FSM. Specifically the school wanted to improve the engagement and attainment of a group of Yr8 pupils on FSM who were underperforming or at risk of underperforming and to improve the quality of teaching in the school (an issue highlighted by Ofsted):
"The new Headteacher wanted to focus on teaching and learning and wanted to interest us in what was happening in other schools and how this might influence our practice, so it came at a time when we were looking at what might be useful to bring things on… I had the responsibility for teaching and learning and, following an Ofsted inspection which gave us satisfactory, this was one of the things that we decided to do." (Deputy Headteacher)

Proposed activity: Learning to Lead – This focussed on the development of a listening campaign, which aimed to:

- develop an ethos in which an understanding of the pupil experience of learning leads to improvement in teaching and learning
- develop the profile of pupils as leaders of learning

'Palgrave' Secondary School

- improve the engagement and attainment of pupils on FSM in Yr8 who were currently underperforming
- increase the number of outstanding lessons taught by staff.

"We decided to focus on a small group of Yr8 pupils and we would involve them in lesson observation with the idea of getting them involved as Leaders in Learning, setting them up as a little leadership team in school, people who were trained, people who could support teachers in their reflection on their own teaching and learning… I decided to start with a little team in Yr8 who I selected because they were on FSM and some of them were underperforming in one or more subjects, some of them were not but I wanted to have a mixed group." (Senior Leader)

Success criteria were:

- the EM cohort will be on target in English, maths and science at half-termly reviews i.e. they will be on course to make two sublevels of progress by the end of the year
- the EM cohort will achieve attitude to learning grades A or B each half term in all subjects
- attendance will be improved and no members of the target cohort will be in the priority attendance group and there will be a significant positive impact upon the number of late arrivals and total time lost (determined on an individual basis)
- perception surveys will show pupils have improved views of school and learning
- there will be an increase in the number of lessons achieving outstanding for Learning and Progress, taught within faculties where pupils have observed and worked with staff.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

A cohort of six pupils was identified, including three girls of white British heritage, two of Pakistani heritage and one of mixed heritage. They were introduced to the EM (as Learning to Lead) and asked if they wished to participate (with parental consent). There were workshops on 'What makes a good lesson?' and 'How do you know if you are making progress in a lesson?'

Following the training sessions the group adapted a lesson observation sheet devised by a local EM school and adapted it to one which was more focused on learning and progress. The Deputy Headteacher was concerned that the process should be non-threatening to staff who were already under a lot of pressure. It was to be formative and to allow for reflection. However, pupils wanted to include things on the observation form that could be perceived as threatening to staff, such as behaviour management:

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"They said that if teachers weren't following the behaviour system properly then it could affect their learning. They wanted to see that if there was an incident it was dealt with. And they wanted to see if pupils were doing well [if] they were praised... [so then] you can explain to a colleague, well this is how we arrived at it rather than it being something that I decided."

The pupils were very enthusiastic. One designed a badge logo which was made up by the D&T department for 'Leaders in Learning' to wear. Following training on how to observe and give feedback appropriately, pupils met the Advanced Skills Teacher who had agreed to have her lesson observed. The AST talked about how it feels to be observed, making the pupils aware of the sensitivity of the process:
"They then observed her and really enjoyed the lesson… one of the comments they made is that they felt she didn't use praise enough and they also felt that she didn't deal quickly enough with some chatter… it was interesting because I recently observed her as part of performance management and I thought that she didn't praise pupils enough and we had a bit of a laugh about it."

A Leader in Learning said '*The teacher that we had was one of my teachers and she's brought what we said into our lessons… it feels like I've improved things, made it better.*'
The plan was for this AST to work through the pupil observation process with someone else in the department and that this would then spread to other departments. However, this was not followed up owing to time constraints and other priorities. As a consequence the Deputy Headteacher felt that while there had been "*some impact on pupils*" such as improved behaviour and attendance, because the project did not continue, *"the impact dispersed."*

Pupil vignettes

The pupils involved did not entirely agree:
"Before, in Yr8, I didn't take any responsibility but with the Learn to Lead they told me you have lots of responsibilities yourself, it's not just the teachers' responsibility and stuff like that."

"It changed my point of view about teachers and it actually changed my behaviour in class. I also used to be not very nice in class but when I saw what the teacher has to do I sorted myself out and I'm better now."

"It was about telling teachers about what we think about them."

"We changed the questionnaire. We got straight to the point about what the teachers were doing."

"We had a lot of responsibility to go in there. It felt quite good."

'Palgrave' Secondary School

"We can help change the way teachers teach."

"In lessons, you can understand how teachers feel when they get really annoyed with the pupils. You can understand how they feel when you're in their position."

"It feels really good because we can help anyone out, we can help anyone in learning, that's what Miss said to us when we started – pupils and teachers."

"Before it started we didn't know each other. We made friends, so I know her and her friends, and her and her friends."

The Deputy Headteacher was surprised to hear what pupils had said about the positive impacts of the project on their attitudes and behaviour.

The pupils also acknowledged that they were unhappy about the project not continuing**:**
"We wondered why it didn't continue cos [sic] *it was helping people. We had the badges, and we had people coming up to us and asking if we could tell the teachers this, or could they do that, and other pupils were asking us about the lessons as well."*

"I was annoyed that it wasn't back on again… I asked if we were going to put it back on."

"When we were doing it my attendance was OK, when we stopped it went down."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Relevance - The key, overall facilitator of the EM was that, to some extent, it fitted in with the school's planned focus on teaching and learning.

External links - The school did not attend EM Conferences or work with its designated partner schools but it did enter an informal collaboration with another school involved in the EM and this had an impact on how the EM plan was conceptualised:
"We'd been given the names of a couple of partner schools but in the end we started to work with [Local High School] a little bit because they'd been in the phase before and they'd done something similar… they sent their resources to me which included a training power point and an observation schedule."

They also found communication with the link at the DCSF very useful in providing a focus to the work and looking at desired impacts.

'Palgrave' Secondary School

Competing demands - Time was a major problem and, owing to other pressures which the school was facing, the EM dropped down the priority list. It was "*…not a high priority as [there was] loads to do – time ran out and it wasn't followed up… In the end certain other things took priority and we didn't give as much attention to it as we'd have liked to.*"

Sustainability

The school's current improvement plans have a strong focus on teaching and learning. The Deputy Headteacher now has the continuation of the EM as part of her performance management targets for the year and says it has been a good pilot for the current Learning to Lead project. The AST whose lesson was observed by pupils is now working with her on Teaching and Learning. They are developing a team of lead teachers as part of the 'Improving Teachers' course whose role is to coach teachers, helping them move from being 'satisfactory' to 'good.' Pupil Learning to Lead teams will work within each faculty and may be involved in a longitudinal study of changes in teaching and learning run by a researcher at a local university:
"The Head and I were talking yesterday about the importance of getting re-started because we want pupil leaders who are able to comment on learning and how it changes as a process so that kind of fits in with it."

'Prestworth' Secondary School

Prestworth
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Prestworth Community College is a specialist 11-18 Performing Arts and Media School located in a small, rural village in the South East of the country. The community the school serves is largely white-British with a small percentage of pupils from ethnic minorities. There is a low rate of pupil mobility, an SEN rate of 2.2% (4% including SA+) and 12% of pupils are entitled to FSM. The college has recently been placed in Special Measures and from September 2010 the school has worked as part of a federation with another secondary school in the area.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	31%	50%	46%
2008	25%	54%	48%
2009	30%	56%	50%
2010	36%	59%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

First Proposed Activity: To track pupil progress and intervene promptly if they fall off trajectory - Prestworth was already developing a tracking and monitoring system. However, to help identify the EM cohort, the monitoring system and database were improved. The college wanted to further develop its tracking and monitoring system, improving the use of assessment data, not just with staff but also with pupils. The college decided to employ an inclusion worker and focus on 20 level 4/5 borderline Yr9 pupils. The inclusion worker was to work with pupils on setting small, sequential, achievable targets and would also work with staff and pupils to help develop a greater understanding of current achievement and set targets. Success criteria for this activity were:

- improving pupils' progress towards end of KS targets
- improving   attendance   (the   college   identified   a   link   between underachievement and non-attendance)
- developing and implementing the intervention.

Second proposed activity: To develop a culture of achievement and 'belonging' in school - A group of Yr11 pupils was identified as having low aspirations, as did their parents. The college wanted to improve their engagement and develop more self-belief with a view to expanding this across the college as a whole. A number of intervention strategies were designed by the college and developed as the project grew. These included one to one mentoring in specific subjects, booster sessions, and the development of the college's Saturday morning curriculum. Pupils were assigned a mentor who met them on a regular basis to discuss progress and encourage them. All these activities were aimed at improving

access to the curriculum and encouraging pupils to overcome their difficulties and improve attainment. Success criteria for this activity were:

- establishing a specific data set
- accelerating pupil performance towards end of KS targets
- improving attendance and motivation
- spreading good practice arising from these activities across the college.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

First activity: Monitoring, tracking and intervention - Difficulties with the second activity (see below) shifted the focus of EM work onto the monitoring, tracking and intervention programme. One of the Deputy Heads explained that this activity was built into his regular remit. The monitoring database was developed and a colour coding system used to identify where pupils are currently and at different times of the year. This allows for easy identification of those pupils who are underachieving or at risk of possible underachievement. Just as importantly, it highlights those pupils who are attaining at a higher than expected level. This data system was being developed before the EM began, but EM work helped the school to focus on a different cohort of pupils.

In the current Yr11 12 of the 24 pupils were coloured blue (unlikely to achieve five A-Cs) on the tracking system:
"Last year and the year before, looking at FSM, there would have been more blue because this level of intervention was not going on. So last year while we did not get that many through it brought out the idea of putting early intervention into place. All this data is there now for Yr7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, so all underperforming pupils are identified." (Deputy Headteacher)

In the first year of the project, there was no visible significant impact on results but:
"If we had not been involved in the project the gap would have been bigger, so although the figures in the raw sense indicated there was no impact I think there was a positive impact." (Acting Principal)

The Director of Learning explained that, as a result of the EM, staff now have *"...the EM kids highlighted. You do know these pupils and although you try and get round to all of the pupils you absolutely make sure you do get to them."* There was a general feeling that the activities have benefited pupils as they have a better understanding of where they are with their achievements and are better informed about how to move forwards. As the activities have developed the college is seeing an improvement in most pupils' attainment. The Deputy Headteacher said that, given the data, *"the current Yr11 should do better than last year and their improvement throughout the year has been quite impressive."* This was due not just to the amount of intervention but to its improved quality and diversity:

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"80% of pupils who have shown progression from Assessment Period 1 to Assessment Period 4, have been involved in some sort of intervention, one-to-one, tutoring, re-setting." (Director of Learning)

The Deputy Headteacher also referred to improved motivation, particularly noticeable before a science exam:
"Last year you just know when they are turning up to the exams they were not engaged in the process. Whereas I have just been down to the exam this morning and the pupils are all gathered around with the Head of Science just trying to get the last few snippets. That was not happening last year. There is a much better atmosphere."

Before work with the EM started the Director of Learning said he used to have a record of pupils' names and Fisher Family Trust grades which he described as *"using a sledge hammer with a very little walnut."* With the development of the new tracking system and the sharing of information and practice across the college, use of data is far more open, detailed and robust.

Through engagement in their work and giving the pupils ownership of it, attendance rates have improved and confidence levels amongst the pupils have also risen:
"The key thing from all of this was that it has made us look, focus and work on small groups of [previously unnoticed] pupils... who are disadvantaged and I think linking with that by monitoring those groups it can have an impact. If there are any issues we can actually make an impact." (Acting Principal)

Second activity: Inclusion for Yr9 - Shortly after the inclusion worker's appointment, she had to take time away from college and remained absent for most of the year. This absence had an impact on the success of this activity. Some progress was made and the inclusion worker met pupils and monitored their attendance and behaviour data. However, this was not sustained owing to the long-term absence.

The overarching feedback from the college about their experience of the EM is positive.

Vignettes

Current Yr11 pupils were asked about their experiences of EM activities. The group had been involved in one or more of the interventions. They talked freely, passionately and enthusiastically about all of the interventions, the teachers and the college:
"I had one-to-one mentoring in English but I stopped after a while because I got more confident in what I was doing and got better grades… before that I was crap, the grades I got were not good and so my tutor, who is a PE teacher, helped me out… I

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was getting a grade D in English and now am a high C, because I did a mock a month ago and my grade improved."

"One of our teachers offered us that he would come in at half term and that we come in and do some maths exams."

"Some of us didn't do a unit two exam because they were away or had to re-sit so the classes were reset so you were just working on that stuff and we knew what we needed."

"I did some coursework and it was at D and E and they were two GCSEs I needed for college. So my tutor worked with me for a few weeks and I re-did some work and got them up to a C and a B and that was thanks to the work, with my tutor pushing me too"

"I got the one to one tuition because I was failing and it was just a push in the right direction."

Throughout these conversations, pupils spoke of some of the teachers and the expectations that they have of the pupils:
"They are pushing us more and try and engage you in lessons more to make you do well."

"I did this essay and it was really rubbish, so I had to do it again and my tutor knew. So he kept pushing me and asking me how it was and making sure I did bring it in."

"In maths there is a whole new, I don't know how to say it, they want you to be there and it gives you that encouragement."

"I think it's been good having them on our back pushing us to do better. If they can help me do it and do well, I will do it."

However, the pupils also knew that being in Special Measures put the teachers under more pressure to make them pass their exams.

There were other comments about how pre-exam time is spent:
"We have an English exam next Tuesday and before it we have a breakfast club for us to come into."

When asked about the changes and experiences as a whole pupils said:
"It makes us feel that they want us."

"It makes us feel like we are worth it and they care."

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Looking to the future, pupils explained that the Connexions team had worked with them and organised work experience. Some pupils were interviewed at the local college but the tutors and mentors had also discussed this with them:
"My tutor is my sports teacher and he knows I want a career in sports so he gives me all kinds of tips and advice on where to look and what to do which is great."

"I have always been confident about what I want to be, but now I feel more confident in the grades I'm going to get to help me."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Staff Buy in - The Acting Principal highlighted staff buy-in as one of the most important factors in implementing the EM:
"It was a relatively big change of philosophy with staff... the way we are going to track these and the way we are going to intervene on a personal level… it was not part of the college ethos as such before and that kind of buy in took six months of the project to sell across all staff."

A small core of staff supported the project and, once impact began to be seen, others became interested. Although money was spent on the Inclusion Worker for one project the main resource required to support the development of the project was time. Looking at the use of data and monitoring the Deputy Headteacher concluded "*Staff as a whole, through subject leaders, are engaged in it and that came through from the EM. People were engaged and could see there was a possibility for impact."*

Parental engagement - One of the largest obstacles that the college has faced was the engagement and limited aspiration of parents. The college has developed a rewards system for pupils who attend revision sessions which require pupils to have a card signed and commented on by parents/guardians.

External links and influences - Because the college is in Special Measures, Ofsted comes in on a termly basis. Constant inspections create tension for senior leaders. However, the Director of Learning said that, for a classroom teacher, work developed through the EM did not create such tension. The college had been to visit a partner school and the visit fostered some enthusiasm and work around the activities but the partnership did not develop further.

Work with a National Challenge Adviser in the first year of the project was disrupted when the Adviser was changed. Although the new Adviser focused on groups of pupils, the approach was slightly different. The EM has not been driven or assisted by the LA or the National Challenge Adviser. The LA has identified that FSM is an important issue but has not produced any strategies to support Headteachers or schools in meeting the challenge.

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Sustainability

The legacy of being an EM school is clearly to be seen at Prestworth and the activities developed are now built into everyday life at the college:
"The EM stimulus and the work that has come out of that have probably had the biggest impact on the school in the last two to three years. To get to the point we are at, and need to move to, we had to have done this work and if we had not done this through the stimulus of the EM we would have been behind." (Director of Learning)

Regarding the future of the activities and the continued use of the EM philosophy, the Deputy Headteacher explained that the college recognised the need to keep looking at this group:
"It's the idea of not having to let pupils underperform... helped us focus on this group as an area where pupils underperform but don't need to underperform... but they are and it's an issue we have to address."

After two years the college feels it is starting to see clearer outcomes from the project. However, they are at a point now where a thorough analysis is again needed:
"...bringing it all together and tying it together coherently is one of our biggest challenges now. My perception is there is an awful lot goes on and I wonder whether we are potentially overloading the kids with the amount of different supports and interventions. We are conscious of that and looking at how we can map all that so we use it most efficiently and also how do we measure what has had impact." (Acting Principal)

The Director of Learning praised the EM project for giving the college a focus and highlighting areas of the college that needed development:
"The EM project started a process that has now mushroomed into this whole college wide process and formalised it. It has made it much better."

The Acting Principal suggests that sustainability of EM activities depends on being able to work out what are the best interventions to run again and which need development. The college now sets an FSM target which it had not done previously and the activities related to the EM around monitoring and tracking have been built into School Development Plans. Although raising expectations of pupils took time, staff do now expect more of them and that has a visible effect on the pupils. However, the college sees that the next major barrier to its work as the expectations of and engagement with parents:
"We now have relatively high expectations but the parents don't expect them to do well and the pupils don't think they will do that well. It was a never ending cycle but with the current Yr10 I think it's broken and they are going to do better." (Deputy Headteacher)

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Federation may have an impact on some EM work. The two colleges will align the way information is shared with parents. It is also expected that the Federation will develop a keener sense of expectation amongst pupils. The Deputy Headteacher was confident that, as long as he remained in post, the tracking system would also remain because it works.

In the early stages of the EM the college questioned the fact that it was *"playing catch up"* with Yr11 pupils and therefore needed to start to look at interventions in earlier years. Consequently the college is developing its 'Opening Minds' curriculum. This identifies children entering the school with low levels of achievement, engagement and confidence and is a good example of how two projects can work together on resolving academic and personal issues to help those from difficult backgrounds.

'Upper Vale' Secondary School

Upper Vale
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Upper Vale is an inner-city community comprehensive school with Specialist Sports and Applied Learning status. In 2005 the school moved into new, Private Finance Initiative (PFI) premises which include a specialist facility for 17 autistic pupils. The school serves an economically challenged area in the South East of the country. Nearly half of the pupils are entitled to FSM. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. The main ethnic groups, other than white British are black or black British-African. Mobility rates are very high and in the top 5% of schools nationally. About a half or more of the pupils on roll, including many of the late entrants, do not have English as their first language. More than 65 languages are spoken in the school.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	**School**	**LA**	**National**
2007	34%	44%	46%
2008	41%	45%	48%
2009	32%	47%	50%
2010	39%	52%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

Upper Vale School initiated its EM activities in 2008. The school was concerned about the plateau of progress for many of its pupils in KS3 and the need to raise standards in English, mathematics and science in Yrs7-9. The school's development plan already included activity targeting pupils in Yrs7 and 8 to ensure greater progress during KS3 and to provide a higher base for progress in KS4. Staff were invited to make an 'application' to play a role in the EM project by describing what they would do tackle issues the school leadership had identified.

First activity – This was to track pupils' progress and intervene promptly if they fall off trajectory. The target group of pupils was to be those who had achieved level 4 at KS2 but not made two sublevels progress during Yr7. A programme focused on English, maths or science would support the pupil and his/her family/carer to promote participation in learning and school life. The school identified 40 pupils, entitled to FSM who had achieved either KS2 APS 27 or level 4 in KS2 SATs and who had made only one sublevel or less progress from KS2 to the end of Yr7. The group had a small majority of boys. The success criteria for this group were:

- raising achievements by 2 sublevels
- improving attitude and self-esteem (monitored through feedback from teachers and mentors)
- pupils having a more focused and positive attitude to learning
- Pupils achieving 95% attendance
- improving levels of family involvement in education.

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The programme was designed around a series of booster classes for pupils and contacts with parents that were intended to boost their role in their children's learning.

Second activity - This was *"to support pupils at important moments in their lives, especially transition points."* The target group of pupils was expected to be predominantly male and the intention was to focus on those whose motivation and interest might dip at the point of transition and whose attainment would stick at level 4. The Yr7 programme was to be directed at continuing the close link between pupil, teacher and family that existed at primary school so that pupils remained engaged in the learning process and were supported in managing the complex nature of Yr6 to Yr7 transition. In the event, the 40 pupils identified for this activity had a small majority of girls; all were entitled to FSM and all had achieved level 4 in English, maths and science. The pupils were to be organised into four groups each with a subject emphasis, the fourth 'subject' being EAL. The success criteria for this activity were:

- pupils' attendance should be above 95%
- pupils' progress should be reflected in their final assessment (at least 2 sublevels up)
- improved attitudes and self-esteem would be demonstrated through participation in school life.

Progress and impact

First and second activities - The EM and associated activities at Upper Vale School were described by the staff involved as a long-term investment. The school's focus on Yr7 and Yr8 reflected its wish to test the value of an intervention early in the secondary school career of its pupils rather than design yet another, later intervention in Yr10 or Yr11. It is therefore too soon to produce evidence of impact on externally measured attainment at the end of a Key Stage. Nevertheless, the staff and pupils involved tell a consistently positive story about the value of the activities. Three distinct groups report improvement in their own skills and understanding alongside both an increased sense of engagement or social capital and improved self-esteem. These three groups are:

- pupils from Yr7 andYr8 who were the central focus of the activity
- pupils from Yr10 who acted as mentors or coaches to the younger pupils
- the staff involved.

There has been an apparently important but collateral impact of the project on relationships between staff and pupils and between younger and older pupils. Younger pupils speak very positively about being able to acknowledge and be acknowledged by staff and older pupils around the school. The staff also commented

on the importance of these chance encounters – a *'Hi Miss'* that could be responded to directly with a name. There is a strong feeling amongst the adults that this social capital will have a positive impact on relationships around the school over time:

"Building social capital – those bonds are huge, I was struck by the connections being built, building community, pupils saying hello to me on the corridor. Somebody out there knows who you are and will look out for you. That social strength added to their academic learning – this programme made it clear to me that if the pupils felt more confident then that showed in their work. It was a safer forum to experiment in and then take that confidence back into the main classroom."

One of the activity leaders goes a bit further in her assessment and at the same time provides a neat summary of what colleagues leading other strands say:

"It is evident from the data that there is a statistical correlation between the pupils who attend the groups and higher numbers of positive referrals for them in the system. Pupils who attend the group and their friends – are demonstrating better social skills compared to their peers; they interact with other group members and with myself in a consistently positive manner, from saying hello in the corridors, to asking for assistance with class work. My impression is that the Yr7 pupils are more confident in both speaking and listening, as well as attempting research and writing, while the Yr8 pupils are less sullen and more focused on their tasks."

During the autumn of 2009, attendance scores were very positive for the pupils who had been participating.

Vignettes

Yr7 and Yr8 - The conversation of pupils in Yr7 and Yr8 at Upper Vale is littered with pleasant anecdotes about the EM activities. They have very few complaints:

"It was good to be chosen, to meet new people, it felt very comfortable" was typical of their view. *"Our parents received a letter saying we had been chosen. My mother thought I was in trouble till she read it. She was very pleased and encouraged me"*

The small group size and the role of the older pupils were particular objects of comment:

"When the teacher asks you a question, you are under pressure, it feels like everyone is looking at you but the Yr11s are more down to earth. There was less pressure with the Yr11s. In my own classroom, I get frightened and like everyone is staring at me and Miss then asks if anyone can help me and it feels awful. They [the Yr11s] have more patience than teachers have because teachers have books to fill in and lessons for all five periods, but Yr11s understand. They know how the school feels and can give you good advice."

"It was a better working environment – people who really wanted to learn. And there was the incentive of a £5 voucher – to spend in Woolworths, WH Smiths or Halfords. That was a surprise, because it was not in the letter."

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'Upper Vale' Secondary School

"It felt like a normal lesson but it was different to a normal lesson. Sometimes the Yr11 helped you and it felt better, more comfortable with other pupils helping you."
"*It felt natural to have the older pupils there. You get to know how they work and use their time. We had Yr11s in the group and we didn't get fractions, I didn't and they didn't either. So we helped one another and can do fractions now."*

"You see one of the Yr11s around school and they say 'Hi' to you. That feels good."

"Confidence will teach you anything you need. You have to have the courage. If you don't have courage inside you to do it you won't be able to do the job you want, like being a lawyer and having to speak up – if you don't have the courage inside you."

"It was fun, it was great, we recommend it to other people, can we do it again?"

Asked whether it was any more than enjoyable, whether it had made any difference, they continued in the same positive vein:
"I'm better at writing and vocabulary. I can now answer questions in class and I can write more fluently – I used to get stuck, so now if I get stuck I can think about it and about different ways to work out the question. When I first, like, came here I was really shy, I hardly answered any questions and now I am much better. I'm more confident now about speaking to the teacher, asking a question or offering an opinion, like in drama."

Yr 10 - Year 10 pupils who were invited to act as mentors and coaches to the Yr7 and Yr8 participants are very clear about the positive effect the experience has had on their subject knowledge and on their confidence:
"I learned a lot, it was for me an experience of how you would teach, we have always been the pupil. It was hard work, in some ways it was – is the word enlightening?"

"I found the experience quite fun, I met the Yr8 and it reminded me how far I had developed myself. I found the experience of being a teacher, well I've always wanted to be a teacher and did not know if I could do it, and I've learned something. It was fun and we had respect for it."

"It was a good experience, fun; I learned something about my subject; I felt a bit better about myself."

"I guess when the kids were showing me their work, I felt that we'd achieved that together. I'd helped… I felt quite proud. The trip to the London Dungeon was good. We don't hang out with Yr7s so it was good to be the responsible people."

"When the teachers were surprised that we knew things 'I didn't know you could do that,' that was good."

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Staff - The staff who led each of the activity strands in Upper Vale's EM project are unanimously positive about its effect on the pupils, on their own work and, gradually, on their colleagues. The incremental point they received was both a valuable and incentivising acknowledgement of their work and at the same time quite marginal:
"The money was a sort of honeytrap. You want to be a great teacher for all your classes, so something is needed to catch your attention when you're busy. The money caught my attention, but I gradually realised how this fitted in to other things I wanted to do, research and development of my own skills."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

Status - The Deputy Headteacher who led the project at the school, sets some store by the status of the project as one of its facilitating features for both staff and pupils. There was a sense, she says, of being involved in something different and important:
"This gave a talented and creative group of teachers the chance to work with pupils outside the constraints of the usual curriculum and timetable. They had, sort of, permission to do that and they knew that there was this interest in how it worked out."

The project allowed the school to combine a significant professional development opportunity for middle leadership with tackling a priority in its own development work.

The status of the project was also important for the pupils who had no inhibitions about their own involvement. In that context linking older and younger children is absolutely key.

External links - The LA purposely played no part in the project once it had acted as broker between the school and the DCSF. The Department's role was appreciated: visits from its adviser were supportive, informed the work and *"certainly ensured it was on the agenda."* The days held in Westminster were also very valuable for sharing knowledge of the national picture and sharing practice, as well as working with schools in different environments. Upper Vale appreciated networking with schools from Liverpool and Hull and made informative visits to schools in Manchester and Hull.

Pupil engagement - The most significant inhibitor to the approach taken at Upper Vale appears to have been pupils' perception of the commitment to after school activity. In broad terms, domestic and social commitments at the end of the school day were a barrier for a significant number of the pupils.
"It was about what the pupils could fit in after school [with their] other commitments, To come after school to an academic club for science or English or maths was new, they thought that only clever kids went to those classes. Some of these youngsters were not committed to coming after school, but they were prepared to adapt in school time because, they seem to think somehow, that is school time not so much their own time." (Activity Leader)

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The school had to adapt to this in part by moving some of the activity into shorter 45 minute lunchtime slots and in part by offering vouchers for after school attendance. The school also actively kept parents involved, reminding them of events and alerting them to absences.

The project was designed to draw parents and carers more closely into their children's learning and the staff were surprised by the extent of pupil resistance to that, apparently a product of adolescent embarrassment about being seen with a parent. The consequence was mixed participation by parents, ranging from avoidance through to sending surrogate aunts, cousins and family friends, right up to enthusiastic participation.

Sustainability

The EM activities have not been retained in quite the same way as originally planned, though their continuing effect is acknowledged by many of the participants – not least the young people who talk about their improved confidence and staff who talk about changes in their professional perspectives. The Deputy Headteacher describes this as *'embedding'*. Reflecting on its engagement with parents and encouragement for them to support their children, the school has adopted a different approach to its induction evening for parents a month into Yr7 by casting them in the role of learners. It was hard to get them to realise that it was not like a regular parents' evening and that it would be difficult if they just wandered around. It was not easy to get them to realise it was a different kind of event and sessions might run, as they do in school, for an hour. The EAL activity has led to improved connections with the EAL Department and "*...a new induction programme for bi-lingual learners in schools looking closely at their learning, learning needs and academic patterns. I have been asked to brief a middle leaders meeting on exactly what we have found out."* (Activity Leader).

In Yr7 the school has again targeted similar children to do numeracy and literature after school. Teaching the Yr10s how to assess younger pupils' work has led to a wide reflection on how teachers approach assessment, particularly of grammar.

There are one to one tutoring uses the same criteria of Looked After Children, FSM and poverty as the basis for pupil selection. The timing of tutor sessions – during the school day – has been significantly influenced by the experience of organising after school events in the EM project.

APPENDIX B: Secondary School Case Studies

'Westleake' Secondary School

Westleake
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Westleake School is an 11-16 comprehensive school in the North of England with approximately 1480 pupils. It has Specialist status in Performing Arts and is also a training school. Although the school is situated in a relatively affluent area, 30% of pupils have FSM and the school has a substantial number of pupils from deprived or very deprived backgrounds. Fewer than half the pupils are white British and amongst the wide range of minority ethnic groups represented there is a high proportion of pupils for whom English is their second language.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	School	LA	National
2007	37%	32&	46%
2008	36%	37%	48%
2009	36%	39%	50%
2010	54%	46%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

Westleake School initiated its EM Activities in September 2009. While the school had been improving since a new management team was appointed in 2007, there was concern that the gap between pupils on FSM and others was not being effectively addressed. The LA had directed the school to become involved in a number of strategies to address this, including the employment of a consultant and participation in the Gaining Ground initiative. The EM was seen as part of an overall drive to improve performance. Several of the whole school changes, initiated to address underachievement in specific groups, had begun to be embedded lower down the school:
"Our strategy in the school was not just to invest in Yr11 because if you're going to make lasting change you invest in Yr7 and 8, but then it's four years before you see results in terms of what the government wants." (Headteacher)

There was concern that the school's GCSE results had plateaued, particularly in GCSE grades A*-C including maths and English:
"We needed to have significant impact on Yr11 but we also wanted to make sure they were embedded all the way down so we set up the EM as an experimental subset of groupings that we could trial things with but really the intention was that it impacted on the whole school." (Deputy Headteacher)

Two year groups – Yr8 and Yr11 – were involved in the project. In Yr8 a group of boys was identified as having 'low aspirations' and as being at risk of becoming disengaged from education as they progressed through the school. They were

expected to gain Ds at GCSE in maths and English. Involvement in the EM was an opportunity to pilot ideas on how to address these issues.

"We had some wobbles because what we were doing was very ambitious… We took a big gamble in that it was whole school, Yr8 and 11 focuses had to impact across the whole school. They were driven to see if we could embed some of the practice very quickly across the whole school." (Deputy Headteacher)

No additional funds were available externally but some money was found from within the school budget to finance additional activities and resources. The Headteacher described this as 'quite liberating' as he felt it gave the school more flexibility in the activities it could choose.

First proposed activity: Single gender maths - The school aimed *to track pupil progress and intervene promptly where it fell below trajectory.* The school had identified what they described as *"anxious able"* pupils who were underperforming in maths compared to other subjects. This underachievement was identified during early entry GCSE results at the end of Yr10. The school decided to set up single gender groups for pupils on the C/D GCSE maths borderline. These would use different strategies to improve confidence in maths and to increase the number of grade Cs achieved in each group at GCSE. The school used existing strategies, such as teacher learning walks and planning and progression sheets, to support the choice of activity and possible trial strategies. The girls' class was taught by the Head of maths, supported by a female Deputy Headteacher. Action research was used within the classes to identify effective strategies with the objective of improving the standard of planning and progress. Although the focus was on anxious, able Yr11 girls in maths the intention was to develop strategies to implement learning from the EM quickly across the Maths Department and, where applicable, the whole school. Success criteria for this project were twofold:

- to improve the planning of lessons with emphasis on pupil progress and consistent outcomes (measured through learning walks, planning reviews and lesson observations)
- to increase pass rates in post early entry C/D borderline, single sex groups in maths.

Second Proposed Activity: Belonging – This activity focussed on *developing a culture of achievement and 'belonging' in the school.* This was combined with broadening pupils' horizons and the offer of a more relevant curriculum. The school used a complex analytical process to decide which pupils to work with. They were D candidates for both English and maths in Yr8. Within that group a smaller group was selected to be involved in the 'Belonging' project. They had a mixture of 'complex characteristics' including low reading age, FSM, a high level of behavioural referrals, low effort scores and some EAL and SEN needs. All these pupils were boys. Humanities and arts teachers trialled strategies, using action research, to interest and engage the boys in learning. They did so knowing that the group was by no

'Westleake' Secondary School

means homogenous. There were regular meetings to discuss what worked and what did not. A joint humanities and arts curriculum was developed using the Hillsborough disaster as a focus that allowed issues such as racism and cultural and religious differences to be addressed within a 'football' framework.

The second part of the project involved extracurricular work based on outdoor activity at a centre for sailing and water based activities. This was to facilitate wider engagement with the school and to help develop positive relationships with teachers, as well as building pupils' leadership and co-operation skills. The success criteria were for pupils to:

- achieve an improved effort score across their subjects
- accelerate progress in targeted subjects
- reduce the number of behaviour referrals during the project
- increase/maintain attendance levels.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

First activity: Single gender maths – This contributed to the school's greatly improved achievement of five A*-C grades, including English and maths at GCSE - from 36% in 2009 to 54% in 2010. There was also a notable improvement in effort grades for targeted girls: average effort grades rose from 1.89 to 1.07 (1 being the highest grade). The corresponding boys' class also had significantly improved results and effort grades.

Second activity: Belonging - Pupils in the Yr8 project produced fewer behaviour referrals than before as well as improving their attendance and reducing the number of recorded 'lates.' Staff and pupils reported changed attitudes towards learning, particularly co-operative learning and willingness to engage in lessons. However, because of the nature of the project its long-term impact is yet to be seen. A crucial part of the EM was staff development and the impact has been far reaching:
"It's not just about maths, it's about how we're delivering, where we're going with it. Things that more experienced teachers do more naturally because they've got the knowledge of that subject. We're now encouraging NQTs to talk about the mathematical journey. It's not just a group of 32 pupils, it's a group that are starting here and going there and this is what we're doing along the way."

The Head of Maths was not sure if this strategy was a panacea but enough questions had been raised to justify continuing to look at gender groupings and report findings to the whole school. The whole process has not just been about positively affecting a few selected pupils; it's about a whole new approach to teaching.
"The biggest thing we've learnt is that you have to unpick each child and their maths individually and then once you have recognised their barriers, their gaps, their subject knowledge, their problems, be it with confidence, pace, with drive, you need

to then find the right way of driving it back up again, be it with subject knowledge, confidence, support." (Head of Maths)

Vignettes

The Yr8 cohort:

"Because we we're going to Stoneleigh, we had something to look forward to in coming to school and it made you want to achieve more in class. Our effort levels are up in most of our subjects."

"My parents feel proud because all my levels and attendance have gone up."

"I'm trying harder in lessons and I've given up bad habits. My parents are proud. My mum had taken everything from me because I was behaving badly. Now I've got them back."

"My levels have gone up. I've been coming earlier to lessons and all and I've been getting higher levels."

"My listening skills and my behaviour are better. In the past I didn't listen a lot and my behaviour was being a bit rude. But now it's all changed. It's like I know education's dead important and I should be really listening. So I've changed a lot. Education's important for my future."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

External links - Regular contact with, and support from a link person at the DCSF was a major factor in facilitating the projects:
"She brought us expertise and was very supportive in a reflexive and quite thorough way and we got some good dialogue there… we needed someone to bounce ideas off in terms of good practice which has now been rolled out to other [local] schools."

The ability to share best practice was mentioned by all of the staff involved:
"We had access to some incredible research based information and we could use that to influence what we were doing."

Flexibility - This was useful, as activities could be chosen which fitted in with the School Development Plan:
"In some senses we used the EM as a Trojan horse… it gave it formality, a name I guess to some stuff that we wanted to try that was actually going to be quite challenging for the staff. Because we were leading with Yr8 and 11 it gave us a chance to be reflective and get used to some of the things." (Headteacher)

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'Westleake' Secondary School

Inspiration - The staff interviewed all said how the project made them refocus on pupils and reflect on the teaching and learning process. Trying out new ideas was a theme which was mentioned by all the staff interviewed. Furthermore, EM activities, alongside other initiatives they were involved with became embedded in the school and changed teachers' attitudes.

Both the EM projects were implemented by experienced members of staff (the Head of Maths and an Assistant Headteacher) which gave the projects status. Currently, senior management are not sure if success can be replicated using less experienced staff. As a training school, Westleake has a large number of NQTs. On one hand this brings enthusiasm to the school but, on the other, it presents challenges, not just for the management but also for the NQTs themselves.

Sustainability

Staff involved in both EM activities are hopeful that this work will continue:
"We've also got the current Yr10, we moved them in Yr9 just after they did their SATs, and we've set the whole year by gender including the high ability groups which has been really interesting because now we've done it for two half terms, the initial feedback is inconclusive. The pupil voice was mixed. The response was good in the groups where the teacher was enjoying it, and not so good in the groups where the teacher clearly didn't like the fact that they'd got this class which was more difficult than the other one, which is not unexpected, but made me realise we've got to focus on identities, we've got to get a group how we want it." (Head of Maths)

Staff have been given specific EM responsibilities and time both for teacher development and training and for the identified pupil cohorts:
"We have someone with EM time on their timetable to work with the two groups now, and we've employed another member of staff who's been through the process to train other staff on effective relationships, developing classroom practice, particularly with difficult classes. We've not just done a project; we've done something that can be sustained. There's a significant improvement… we've rolled it out and it's being sustained, and we've improved the quality of teacher learning but also the pupils' results." (Assistant Headteacher)

The main concern about the sustainability of the work is financial:
"In an age where funding is scarce and there's no flexibility in funding in schools, the DfE needs to think about how it's going to allow schools to develop... with either flexibility in school budgets or small amounts of funding tagged to the [EM] project." (Headteacher)

'Worthingdon' Secondary School

Worthingdon
(This name is a pseudonym to protect respondents' confidentiality)

Worthingdon School is located in the South East of the country and serves a culturally diverse community. It is a larger than average school of 1200 pupils aged 11-18. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds with over half fluent in English but not as their first language. The population is relatively mobile and the number of pupils identified with SEN or statemented is 36%, double the national average. 165 pupils were entered for GCSEs in 2009 of whom 55.2% had SEN. The school has nearly twice as many boys as it does girls.

5 GCSEs at A*-C inc English and maths			
Year	**School**	**LA**	**National**
2007	36%	46%	46%
2008	32%	46%	48%
2009	38%	51%	50%
2010	37%	53%	53%

Extra Mile aims and activity

In previous years the LA has worked hard to reduce the underachievement of pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Its advisers quickly saw a possible relationship between the EM and the work it was doing to improve outcomes for white-British FSM pupils. Although there is not an overall significant FSM achievement gap across the LA, there is a substantial gap affecting white-British FSM pupils:
"[The LA] recognises that this is a key cohort to be working with and it recognised [Worthingdon] as having, percentage wise, the largest number of those within its secondary schools. So we were an obvious partner school to link with… so doing things together [LA, EM and School] came together at the same time." (Deputy Headteacher)

Worthingdon already had a white-British FSM action plan. It also had funding and had created a post at the school to lead on this front. The appointee, Mr. J., viewed the EM as an opportunity to align current practices to develop this work further. He became the EM Coordinator. Two projects were developed with white-British FSM pupils.

First proposed activity: Aspire - The first project involved EM Activity 2 *'To develop a listening campaign which responds to pupils' and parents' perception.'* The school created the 'Aspire project' to raise the aspirations of a target group of Yr7 and 8 pupils and encourage stronger parent/school relationships. Through consultation with heads of years, six pupils were selected whose parents were seen as 'hard to reach.' The key objectives were to engage parents with pupils' work and encourage them to have high expectations and aspirations for their children. The school also wanted to increase contact with these parents and reduce the barriers between them and the school:

> A number of small projects were designed which would be part school and part home developed. The mini projects included a family employment tree which would

encourage conversation about aspirations and future careers. A second project involved making a bird table with the help of the resistant materials department. This encouraged fathers to work with their child on a joint product. The third and fourth projects were around photography and literacy.

Second Proposed Activity: Mentor - This was based on EM Activity 12 *'To support pupils at important moments in their lives, especially transition points.'* Ten FSM pupils in the new Yr7 were selected and matched with ten similar pupils going into Yr10. The Yr10 pupils were thought to have leadership potential and were to be mentors to the Yr7s who were at risk of not making a successful transition. The school hoped for two-way benefits as the Yr10 mentors were predominantly borderline C/D pupils. Increased responsibility could enhance their commitment to school, improve their attendance and raise their aspirations. Five Yr10 boys and five Yr10 girls attended three mentor training sessions, orchestrated through the LA:

"We set up a weekly mentoring session lasting for 45 minutes, they were able to come out of lessons which motivated them a little bit… at the start it was about developing the relationships and then in December there was a mid-term interview with myself and the trainer from the LA to evaluate the relationship and work." (EM Coordinator)

Both the Mentor and Aspire groups benefited from an outward-bound school trip which drew on additional funding secured for the white-British FSM group.

Progress and observed/ perceived impact

First activity: Aspire - The outcomes from the Aspire group were varied. As the course continued the numbers of parents attending the sessions started to drop and by the time the third project began only one parent came. That parent had turned up to every session and gave very positive feedback:

"Both dads came to the bird table project and that really was when the penny dropped. I had a brilliant conversation with one of the dads about the impact it had… for the parents that did come the kids are now getting praise at home. When they have done something well in school they are getting recognition at home. It has made them value achievement more in the classroom… one of the boys has not been great with his behaviour and this has not made him perfect but, by dangling that carrot he is going to grab it because he gets the 'big ups' from his teachers and at home and he will take that." (EM Coordinator)

One of the success criteria was to encourage parents to attend parents' evenings and one of the pupils' parents who did attend actually engaged with the teachers. This was seen to be a result of the Aspire work. The school supported the group with additional administrative assistance. Staff in the office telephoned parents to remind them to attend. However, despite saying they would come, often they did not. Mr. J. pointed out that many of the parents had multiple issues at home to deal with and this limited the impact the course could have. Although the outcomes from Aspire have not been as great as the school had hoped the research and understanding gained about trying to contact, work with and engage hard to reach parents has benefited the school.

'Worthingdon' Secondary School

Second activity: Mentor - Interviews held in December highlighted that one of the mentoring partnerships needed to be reorganised as the mentor had not taken the role on as expected. Other issues around matching personalities were exposed which focused attention on the personal attributes of some of the pupils. Some of the relationships that developed were particularly strong and this became evident during the outward-bound weekend in the Lake District. The support Yr10s offered to the Yr7s during mountain climbing activities was particularly noteworthy:

"…this young man hangs off the coat tails of his mentor… it has had a massive impact on him. The Yr10 says if he sees bullying going on he is prepared to check his behaviour, not associate with that and the Yr7 has explained that when he came to Worthingdon he didn't really go and try and meet people but after developing the relationship he was much more confident to go and build relationships with people in his year he didn't know." (EM Coordinator)

The activity ran for 25 sessions in total, and data showed that the majority of pupils were underachieving at the start of the year but made progress. Several pupils hit the targets they were set at the start of the year. However, this was not solely down to EM work as other interventions are part of the school make up. Other successes included the Yr7 pupils' involvement in extra-curricular activities suggested by Yr10 mentors. The Yr10s' self-esteem grew as a result of the support they were able to give their partners in becoming more actively involved in school life. Attendance rates for Yr10 mentors were excellent and very few sessions were missed over the whole course of the activity.

The school does not view the EM as something that has changed practice dramatically or inspired it to focus on the issue. Some of the projects were designed and partially implemented prior to the EM. However, the EM has brought an additional focus to the school. Where, previously, the focus may have been on behaviour, the EM has added more rigour and access to expertise and support, as well as encouragement to think about the legacy of impact.

Vignettes

The pupils who were involved with the Aspire group explained that, despite some initial worries about their parents coming into school, they enjoyed their experiences and feel that they gained from being included.

"I felt good when I was working with my Dad on the bird table, we haven't done anything like that before."

"…it was strange at first to have my Dad brought into school because we wanted to do something and I wasn't in trouble. That was strange at first but once we got going it seemed OK."

Key facilitators and inhibitors

External support - The support and opportunities linked to the EM were highlighted as a particular strength. They enabled the school and its EM leaders to observe different

practice and gain a greater understanding of the issues and techniques available. The support of the LA was also seen as vital:

"I would say the LA has had a crucial role in helping set this up and that is so they can take it back to other schools." (Senior Leader)

Rigour - The EM increased the school's focus on the selected pupils, on the practices and projects they wished to develop and on the monitoring and tracking of pupils and parents as the project unfolded.

Flexibility - Worthingdon was able to build work it had already begun on the key issues into its EM work. All those involved with it praised this approach. Because the school was able to identify needs and its own key issues, its activities could be tailored to meet its own requirements.

Continuity - The EM Coordinator was already involved in very similar work, so the EM enhanced the opportunities he had to promote it.

Status - The Coordinator said that the nature of the EM and DCSF support gave him greater credibility and leverage in discussion with fellow members of staff, in implementing the project and also in influencing policy and practice at senior leadership level. He was not a member of senior management but the Deputy Headteacher sees no difficulty in delegating work like this to a credible member of staff.

Staff buy in - Many staff understood the communities that pupils came from and were sympathetic to the project. They also appreciated that there will always be challenges. However, the Coordinator's time for this work was limited by the fact that he is a full time teacher and form tutor.

Finding the right language - The Coordinator encountered challenges in explaining the project to parents. Even using evidence and statistics about underachievement of FSM pupils led to some parents becoming quite defensive – "*even though this happened to these children why would it happen to ours?"*

"…how difficult an area it is to talk about. We run a black pupils' achievement project and there is no problem calling it that. But white, working-class, FSM, that whole description and language around that area is still unresolved, there are still real issues about how you tackle that with parents." (Deputy Headteacher)

Sustainability

The school's data indicates that FSM 'drop off' in Yr11 is a significant factor in FSM pupils' underachievement so the temptation is to focus attention on Yr11 pupils. However, the school feels that investment in a longer term solution will be more beneficial than trying to score 'quick wins' with GCSE pupils each year:

"...by tackling it lower down we are doing work to try and prevent the disengagement and underachievement and that still has to be a part of what we are doing… normally if they get

to Yr11, if we haven't lost them and they have got through they work on through." (Deputy Headteacher)

The school knows that, because it was able to develop a project to suit its needs, the EM activities have more sustainability. However, this alone will not keep the focus going:

 "…in the end funding is important. The LA's original piece of work had funding attached to it and that meant that we could appoint Mr. J., that's been a key role because, to be frank, if I was still the lead role we wouldn't be where we are now because there is simply no way I would have had the time and energy to put into it… credibility comes into it as this is a national, government-led thing." (Deputy Headteacher)

The Coordinator felt that the EM was all part of his developing role within the school and with the white-British FSM pupils. The process developed this year through EM activities will be built on in future. The legacy has to continue because the demographics of the school will not change.

"The EM was a [finite] project... but the projects Mr. J. leads on are not finite. That's a piece of work that, as long as we get white-British FSM kids – which will be for ever – that is something we will have to continually work on." (Deputy Headteacher)

The work from the EM has been added to the school's improvement plan under the headings of redefining inclusion and raising aspirations and achievement. However, the LA is piloting the Achievement for All programme and there is a fear that the focus on smaller scale projects can be lost by schools. As well as the competitive market within schools for different initiatives and interventions the LA highlights the financial constraints of the project which may affect its sustainability. But they insist *"the key drivers are narrowing the gap and making sure that all our groups of pupils are achieving and that really would be the main way of sustaining this."*

There are currently only three white-British FSM pupils in Worthingdon's sixth form. This gives the school a further purpose and drive towards working with these pupils.

Acknowledgements

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