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Achievement for All National Evaluation: Final report

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Acronyms used in this report

AfA	*Achievement for All*	NS	National Strategies
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance – a statistical technique	OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
APP	Assessing Pupil Progress – a moderated and structured approach to teacher assessments against National Curriculum expectations	PD	Physical Difficulties
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorders	PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty
BECTA	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency	PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment time – non contact time for teachers to carry out administrative duties related to teaching
BESD	Behaviour, Emotional, Social Difficulties	PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	PS	Point Score – a measure of academic attainment
DCSF & DfE	Department for Children, Schools and Families & Department for Education	SA	School Action
EAL	English as an Additional Language	SA+	School Action Plus
FSM	Free School Meals	SCLN	Speech, Communication and Language Needs
HI	Hearing Impairment	SD	Standard Deviation
ICC	Intra Cluster Correlation	SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
IEP	Individual Education Plan	SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
LA	Local Authority (Formerly local education authorities but now also referred to by many alternative names such as Children's Services)	SIMS	School Information Management System
M	Arithmetic Mean	SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty	SLT	Senior Leadership Team
MSI	Multiple Sensory Impairment	SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)
N	No longer on the special educational needs register	SSEN	Statement of special educational needs
NC	National Curriculum	TA	Teaching Assistant
NPD	National Pupil Database	VI	Visual Impairment

Executive Summary

Achievement for All

The *Achievement for All* (AfA) pilot involved ten local authorities (LAs) selected by the Department for Children Families and Schools (now the DfE). Each LA selected schools to participate and in total there were 454 schools (including primary and secondary mainstream schools, special schools, and a small number of pupil referral units). AfA received £31m funding over a two year period.

AfA was conceptualised as a means to support schools and LAs to provide better opportunities for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to fulfil their potential. There were three main strands:

- **Strand 1: Assessment, tracking and intervention** included, in the initial stages, the use of the Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) approach to track pupils' progress, the setting of curriculum targets and implementation of appropriate interventions to support children and young people to make progress in their learning (National Strategies, 2009).

- **Strand 2: Structured conversations with parents** focused on the use of a clear framework for developing an open, ongoing dialogue with parents about their child's learning. Training was provided for schools, which emphasized the building of parental engagement and confidence via a four-stage model (explore, focus, plan, review) in up to 3 structured conversations per year with parents.

- **Strand 3: Provision for developing wider outcomes** involved schools developing whole school strategies and key actions to support children and young people with SEND to make progress in any two of the following areas: attendance, behaviour, bullying, positive relationships (pupil-teacher and pupil-pupil) and participation in extended service provision.

Schools were given strategic support in their implementation of these three strands by professionals working at local and regional levels.

Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The main aim of the national evaluation project was to examine the impact of AfA on a variety of outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We also aimed to find out what processes and practices in schools were most effective in improving these outcomes.

The evaluation was driven by the following research questions:

1. **What is the impact of AfA on outcomes for pupils with SEND?**
    a. In relation to attainment in English and Maths?
    b. In relation to wider outcomes such as behaviour, attendance, and positive relationships?
    c. In relation to parental engagement and confidence?

d. To what extent is any impact mediated by variation in LA, school and pupil level factors?

2. **What processes and practices are most effective in improving the above outcomes?**
    a. In relation to activity at LA, school and classroom levels?
    b. What contextual and pupil factors influence the relative success of these processes and practices?
    c. How sustainable and transferable are these processes and practices?

In order to answer these questions, we implemented a research design that incorporated quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative component of the evaluation focused primarily upon Research Question 1 and consisted of teacher surveys, parent surveys, attendance and attainment data and school level surveys/data. Our focus was pupils with SEND in Years 1, 5, 7 and 10. In some of our analyses (e.g. academic attainment) we were able to compare data for pupils in AfA schools to national averages for pupils with and without SEND. In others analyses (e.g. behaviour) we were able to compare data for pupils in AfA schools to those in comparison (e.g. non-AfA) schools. The qualitative component of the research focused primarily on Research Question 2 and comprised interviews with local and regional AfA lead professionals, longitudinal case studies of 20 AfA schools (including case profiles of pupils in each school) and ad-hoc data collected informally at AfA launch and update conferences and other events.

Key findings

1. Significant impact upon progress in English and Maths

AfA had a **significant impact upon progress in English and Maths** among pupils with SEND. All four year groups in our target cohort made **significantly greater progress during the course of the pilot compared to pupils with SEND nationally** over an equivalent period of time. Additionally, in several of the analyses the progress of the AfA cohort was also **significantly greater than that made by pupils without SEND nationally**. The effect sizes associated with these differences ranged from small to very large, but in all cases they were big enough to be practically meaningful (for instance, pupils in Year 10 were on course to achieve a greater number of A*-C GCSEs). In this sense, **the AfA pilot proved to be very successful in narrowing the well established achievement gap between pupils with and without SEND**.

2. Significant improvements in positive relationships, and reductions in bullying and behaviour problems

The AfA pilot was successful in improving wider outcomes such as behaviour, attendance and positive relationships. Our analyses of teacher survey data demonstrated that **AFA led to significant improvements in positive relationships, and reductions in bullying and behaviour problems** among pupils when compared to those in non-AfA schools. These findings were partially supported by parental survey data. Analysis of attendance patterns for children classified as persistent absentees (e.g. those with less than 80% attendance) in the year prior to the AfA pilot indicated **dramatic improvements in attendance** by the end of the pilot – an average increase of just over **10%**. Our parent surveys demonstrated that parental engagement with schools also improved over the course of the AfA pilot. However, the change in parental engagement was not statistically significant. This non-significant finding was most likely an artefact of the reduced sample size for this analysis

(especially given the clear trend of greatly increased parental engagement and confidence that emerged in our case studies).

3. Increased awareness of and focus on SEND

The quantitative findings outlined above were verified by the perceptions of a range ofrespondents in our qualitative case studies. Additionally, the qualitative data provided indications of impact in areas not assessed by our outcome measures. For example, many schools reported an **increased awareness of and focus on SEND and inclusion issues** throughout the whole school, with **a greater emphasis on understanding and addressing pupils' wider needs**. Teachers began to take **a more active role in the assessment and monitoring of the pupils with SEND** in their classrooms. In several schools it was felt that the additional information and knowledge about pupils that emerged from the structured conversations with parents enabled teachers to **change their expectations and recognise the full potential of their pupils.** This resulted in **more personalised teaching and learning** approaches. Continuing professional development (CPD) and training opportunities associated with AfA, particularly around the structured conversations, were seen as valuable by teachers and were applied more widely in day-to-day interactions with staff and non-AfA parents.

4. Schools played an important role

Our multi-level analyses demonstrated that the impact of AfA on the range of outcomes highlighted above was mediated by variation at both school and pupil levels. Individual differences between pupils always accounted for the largest proportion of variance in outcomes, but differences between schools also played an important role, accounting for between 2.9% and 20.2% of the variance in our multi-level models. Through these analyses, we were able to establish that in schools where there were improvements in one or more of the range of outcomes measured at the pupil level (e.g. academic attainment) the following things were important:

(i) The AfA lead was the Head Teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
(ii) Teachers were more frequently involved in reviewing individual pupil targets
(iii) Parents were more frequently involved in reviewing individual pupil targets
(iv) A greater range of methods of communicating information to parents about pupils' progress were used
(v) A greater range of professionals had access to pupil information
(vi) 2 or 3 structured conversations were completed for a larger proportion of pupils
(vii) And, the structured conversation model was implemented with greater fidelity

Our qualitative case studies supported the above findings and provided further details of the key processes and practices across the three strands of the project. In relation to assessment, tracking and intervention for pupils with SEND, schools developed, refined and modified their existing systems. **Successful schools 'made the most of the data'**; that is, they used it at a variety of levels and for a variety of purposes. The use of data within school through effective assessment, tracking and monitoring enabled them to evaluate interventions and make decisions about which to continue funding. Data-led professional conversations between members of the senior leadership teams and class teachers in schools ensured that children who were not making expected progress were identified and appropriate classroom support given.

5. Structured conversation success

In terms of the structured conversations with parents, schools used the suggested model of practice as a vehicle for changing home-school relationships**. Success was seen where a collaborative relationship – involving a two-way exchange of information, ideas, aspirations and concerns** – was formed. Schools expressed determination to involve the most 'hard to reach' parents, and were extremely creative and flexible in the approaches they used in this regard. Finally, in relation to developing provision for wider outcomes, schools implemented an extraordinary range of approaches and strategies. A recurrent theme was that the nature of the work undertaken was determined very much by local contexts and circumstances and the needs of pupils within each school.

6. Inter-related nature of AfA

A further fundamental principle that emerged from both the quantitative and qualitative strands of the research was the inter-related nature of the different components of AfA. Schools quickly drew links within and between each of the three strands, and the nature of developments in their provision reflected this with, for example, structured conversations being used to discuss wider outcomes such as attendance. This principle was also borne out in our quantitative analyses; thus, pupils' positive relationships were shown to contribute to their academic progress. Likewise, school processes and practices relating to assessment, tracking and intervention and structured conversations with parents were associated with changes in wider outcomes such as behaviour.

7. Importance of school characteristics

Our multi-level analyses demonstrated that schools characterised by **higher attendance and achievement**, **stronger home-school relations prior to the start of AfA**, and **smaller pupil populations** tended to achieve better outcomes. Conversely, schools with **larger proportions of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL)**, or at the **latter stages of SEND provision, e.g. School Action Plus (SA+), Statements of Special Educational Needs (SSEN),** made progress, but not of the same magnitude. Our qualitative case studies reaffirmed the importance of such contextual factors. Furthermore, they demonstrated that where AfA was successful, it was seen as **an opportunity to build on existing good practice** rather than having to do something very different. It enabled the development of a more inclusive ethos and positive attitudes towards embedding support for children with SEND across the school. There has been an **attitudinal shift** as a result of AfA running in schools, with **class teachers taking responsibility for teaching all of the children in their classroom** rather than focusing on the majority and leaving children with SEND to teaching assistants or other professionals.

8. Importance of pupil characteristics

Changes in outcomes also varied as a function of a variety of factors at pupil level. Our quantitative analyses demonstrated that, generally speaking, pupils with **stronger positive relationships**, who **attended school more regularly**, and with **higher levels of academic achievement at the beginning of the AfA pilot** experienced better outcomes. Pupils at **SA+** or with **SSEN** generally experienced less improvement when compared to others, as did pupils eligible for **FSM**. In terms of identified primary need, there were few consistent findings across outcomes. However, of particular note are pupils with **Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)**, who experienced accelerated academic progress, but were also at greatly increased risk of less positive wider outcomes than other

learners; this pattern also applied to a lesser extent to pupils with **Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)**.

We do not have sufficient data to form firm hypotheses regarding the reasons why certain groups of learners experienced relatively less progress in certain outcomes. The findings may be a reflection of certain established relationships – for example, the less positive outcomes for pupils eligible for FSM may be underpinned by the deeply entrenched relationship between poverty and poorer educational outcomes. Likewise, the nature of the difficulties experienced by pupils with BESD means that wider outcomes such as developing positive relationships and improving behaviour may be more challenging. Similarly, pupils at the latter stages of provision, such as SA+ and SSEN, typically have more complex difficulties, regardless of the area of primary need. As such, we would perhaps not expect to see as much progress for such pupils when compared to those at SA.

The key issue here is that there are certain groups of learners who may be considered 'vulnerable' or 'at-risk', even in the context of a highly successful intervention such as AfA. **Schools may wish to focus additional provision and resources on these groups of pupils in particular when continuing their implementation of the programme**.

9. Schools' intent to sustain AfA

Given the success of the project, the sustainability and transferability of the work undertaken beyond the immediate lifespan of the pilot (and, indeed, the target cohorts) is of paramount importance. The **overwhelming majority of schools gave clear indications of their intention to sustain AfA**, and in some cases, to extend the processes and practices developed in the pilot to other groups of pupils (and parents). This, of course, is another indication of the perceived success of the project itself. A central issue from the outset has been the relative importance of funding. Clearly, this has been an enabling factor; for instance, it has allowed schools to experiment with different interventions that were not previously part of their repertoire, and engage in practices that are human resource-intensive (such as the structured conversations with parents). However, there has also been a theme of focusing on sustainability from the outset; thus, **schools strategically invested the funding that was made available to them in areas that would be beneficial in both the short and long term**, e.g. training of staff. There was also a clear sense that many of the changes brought about through participation in the AfA pilot – such as the development of a more inclusive ethos – were not tied to financial resources.

10. National roll-out recommendations

The findings of this national evaluation suggest that the AfA pilot has been successful in improving a range of outcomes for children and young people with SEND. **The decision to bring the AfA approach 'to scale', first proposed in the recent SEND Green Paper (DfE, 2011), has therefore been vindicated**. However, it is important to note that transferring the learning from this pilot to a national roll-out will not be straightforward. It is perhaps inevitable that aspects of the AfA approach adopted in the pilot will be modified, adapted and/or diluted in schools across the country. As such, it may be helpful to consider the 'must dos' that our various analyses suggested were necessary conditions for success:

1. **Effective strategic support** should be in place beyond the school level that supports and challenges schools, promotes communication and sharing of ideas and practice between them, and helps to develop thinking about how SEND is defined and understood (including raising aspirations).
2. AfA is most successful where it is seen as a **means to extend or enhance existing good practice**. It is important that it is promoted as such and not viewed as a 'bolt on' approach.
3. **Good practice can be prompted and sustained by enhancing communication and sharing of ideas and practice between schools.** This provides opportunities for staff to learn and benefit from the work being carried out elsewhere **through the sharing of resources and expertise.**
4. The **AfA Lead in a given school should be the Head Teacher or a member of the SLT**. School leadership for AfA gives it credibility and buy-in for all staff and helps to drive implementation forward.
5. Leadership in participating schools should ensure that the more **human resource-intensive elements of AfA (for example, structured conversations with parents) are fully supported**, particularly in the early stages of implementation before processes and practices become fully embedded.
6. The **implementation of structured conversations with parents should be faithful to the original guidance**; schools should aim to conduct **at least two conversations per year** with parents where this is feasible and appropriate to individual needs and circumstances.
7. Assessment, tracking and intervention for pupils with SEND should be characterised by:
    - **Frequent involvement of class/subject teachers** in reviewing individual targets
    - **Frequent involvement of parents** in reviewing individual targets
    - A range of stakeholders having **access to relevant pupil information/data**
    - A **comprehensive range of interventions**, whose success is routinely monitored
    - **Use of data at a range of levels** (e.g. pupil, class, school) and for a **variety of purposes** (e.g. to inform target setting, to explore progress patterns among potentially vulnerable groups of learners)
    - **Monitoring systems that take into account individual pupils' needs** – for example, use of P/National Curriculum (NC) levels and sub-level data may miss smaller, but nonetheless important steps forward made by certain groups of learners.
8. Developing provision for wider outcomes should be **determined by local contexts and circumstances**, and the needs of pupils within each school. Schools may benefit from **more explicit guidance and training** in relation to developing positive relationships, improving attendance, reducing behaviour problems, eliminating bullying, and promoting wider participation. The relationship between each of these outcomes should also be emphasized.
9. **The inter-related nature of the three strands of AfA should be emphasized**; this will help to ensure that schools take a holistic, rather than piecemeal approach to implementation.
10. Schools should ensure that provision is put in place such that **groups of potentially vulnerable learners (e.g. those at SA+, and/or those with BESD) have the support they need** to achieve their potential.
11. The **'key teacher'** – a pupil's class teacher in primary schools, or personal tutor or head of year in secondary schools - should act as a **main point of contact with parents**, in addition to the SENCo.

Chapter 1: Overview of the Achievement for All (AfA) national evaluation project

Brief description of Achievement for All

The *Achievement for All* (AfA) pilot involved ten local authorities (LAs) selected by the Department for Children Families and Schools (now the DfE). Each LA selected schools to participate and in total there were 454 (including primary and secondary mainstream schools, special schools and a small number of pupil referral units) involved over the two-year period.

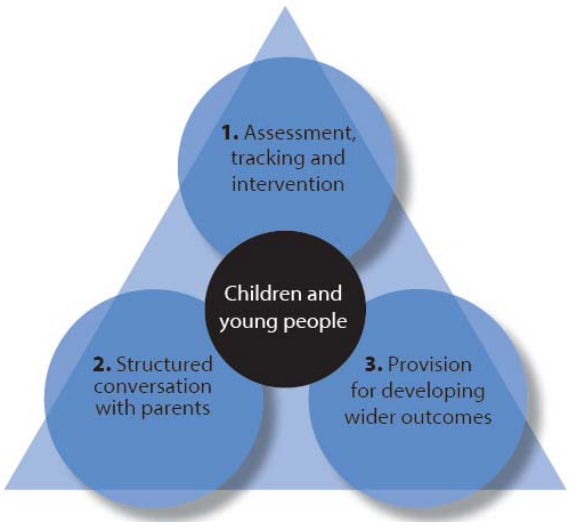


Figure 1: *Achievement for All* logo found on all guidance for schools and LAs (DCSF, 2009a, 2009b)

AfA was conceptualised as a means to support schools and LAs to provide better opportunities for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to fulfil their potential. The emphasis throughout the project was on the importance of leadership and building upon existing good practice within schools to improve outcomes for such children and young people. There were three main strands:

- **Strand 1: Assessment, tracking and intervention** included the use of Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) to track pupils' progress, the setting of curriculum targets and implementation of appropriate interventions to support children and young people to make progress in their learning (National Strategies, 2009). This built on a previous pilot called Making Good Progress and further training for schools and LAs was provided in relation to the use of Progression Guidance (DCSF, 2009d). Some LAs started to make use of (or built upon existing systems for) Information Management Systems (such as Tracker and Assessment Manager).

- **Strand 2: Structured conversations with parents** focused on the use of a clear framework for developing an open, ongoing dialogue with parents about their child's learning. This addressed an issue raised in the Lamb Inquiry Report about parents lacking confidence in the SEND system (DCSF, 2009c). Training was provided for 'key teachers' (members of staff who knew and understood the pupil well and had regular contact with them, and also critically held an influence over provision arrangements for that pupil, e.g. Year 1 and 5 class teachers in primary schools) in AfA schools in the appropriate conduct of a structured conversation, which emphasized the building of parental engagement and confidence via a four-stage model: (i) *explore* (e.g. active listening), (ii) *focus* (e.g. identifying priorities), (ii) *plan* (e.g.

agreeing targets) and (iv) *review* (e.g. clarifying next steps). The guidance provided to schools indicated that up to three structured conversations per school year would be conducted with the parents of each pupil with SEND.

- **Strand 3: Provision for developing wider outcomes** involved schools developing whole school strategies and key actions to support children and young people with SEND to make progress in any two of the following areas: attendance, behaviour, bullying, developing positive relationships (i.e. pupil's relationships with their peers and teachers) and participation in extended services provision. There was a high degree of flexibility inherent in this strand of the project. Although there were suggested activities for each of the areas of focus, there was an emphasis on tailoring implementation to meet local and individual needs. Hence, schools were given freedom to explore new and innovative approaches to improve wider outcomes for learners with SEND.

Schools were given strategic support in their implementation of these three strands by professionals working at local and regional levels. At the local level, each participating LA appointed an AfA lead to co-ordinate the project. The LA leads were each supported by a small team of lead/advisory teachers, who worked directly with clusters of schools. At the regional level, the project was supported by a team of advisors from the National Strategies. There was also input from the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), who organised launch and update conferences for schools and were instrumental in promoting the leadership aspect of AfA.

Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The main aim of the national evaluation project was to examine the impact of AfA on a variety of outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)[1]. We also aimed to find out what processes and practices in schools were most effective in improving these outcomes.

The evaluation was driven by the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of AfA on outcomes for pupils with SEND?
    a. In relation to attainment in English and Maths?
    b. In relation to wider outcomes such as behaviour, attendance, and positive relationships?
    c. In relation to parental engagement and confidence?
    d. To what extent is any impact mediated by variation in LA, school and pupil level factors?
2. What processes and practices are most effective in improving the above outcomes?
    a. In relation to activity at LA, school and classroom levels?
    b. What contextual and pupil factors influence the relative success of these processes and practices?
    c. How sustainable and transferable are these processes and practices?

[1] The AfA project (including our national evaluation) focused upon two cohorts of pupils. Cohort 1 were pupils with SEND in participating schools who were in Years 1, 5, 7 and 10 at the beginning of the 2009/10 school year. Cohort 2 were pupils with SEND in participating schools who were in Years 1, 5, 7 and 10 at the beginning of the 2010/11 school year. The quantitative data reported in this evaluation relates primarily to Cohort 1. The qualitative data reported relates to both cohorts.

Research design

In order to address the above questions, our research project had both a quantitative component and a qualitative component:

Quantitative component

This component of the research primarily focused upon Research Question 1 and consisted of teacher surveys, parent surveys, attendance and attainment data, and school level surveys and contextual data.

Teacher and parent surveys

We conducted online[2] surveys of teachers and parents of children and young people with SEND in participating schools in relation to outcomes for Strands 2 (structured conversations with parents) and 3 (provision for developing wider outcomes). A review of the literature on the outcomes targeted in these two strands revealed that there were no suitable existing measures that could be used 'off the shelf', and so the evaluation team developed bespoke surveys for use in the project. These were piloted, refined, and analysed in relation to their psychometric properties. Our analyses (see Appendix 1) suggested that both the teacher and parent measures were fit for purpose.

The teacher survey covered pupils' positive relationships, behaviour and bullying. The parent survey also covered these areas, and additionally wider participation and parental engagement and confidence. Both surveys followed a traditional 'Likert scale' format in which respondents were required to read statements (e.g. '[Pupil name] is called names or teased by other children') and indicate the extent to which they accurately described the pupil in question on a four-point scale.

We surveyed teachers and parents of pupils with SEND in target cohorts in AfA schools and comparison schools (these were other schools in the 10 LAs who were not implementing AfA). The surveys were conducted a three time points – at the beginning (Jan 2010), one year in (Jan 2011), and at the end (June 2011) of the AfA pilot. In order for us to be able to examine changes in scores, our analyses made use of surveys about pupils for whom we had returns at both the beginning and end of the pilot. For the teacher survey we had a final sample of N = 4,990[3], of whom 4,794 were for pupils in AfA schools and 196 were for pupils in comparison schools. For the parent survey we had a final sample of N = 307[3], of whom 294 were for pupils in AfA schools and 13 were for pupils in comparison schools. As a result of the extremely low response rate from parents in comparison schools, our final analysis only made use of parent survey data for pupils in AfA schools.

Attendance and attainment data

Attendance data was provided by participating LAs and enabled us to calculate the percentage attendance for each pupil in the target cohort in year prior to the AfA pilot (2008/09) and during the two years of the pilot (2009/10 and 2010/11), which we used to examine changes in attendance patterns. Our final sample for this analysis was N = 8, 850, of whom 8, 656 attended AfA schools and 194 attended comparison schools. Of the pupils attending AfA schools, we performed further analyses on the N = 550 with attendance rates of less than 80% ('persistent absentees') in the year prior to the AfA pilot. Academic attainment data was collected on our behalf by colleagues at the

[2] Hard-copy and telephone surveys were also been made available in order to ensure that people without access to the internet were able to participate in the research. Additionally, parent surveys were translated into the nine most commonly spoken languages other than English across the 10 participating Local Authorities.

[3] Actual numbers varied across analyses due to missing data for individual items/subscales.

National Strategies at three key time points – at the beginning (December 2009), one year in (December 2010), and at the end (July 11) of the AfA pilot. In order to assess the relative academic progress made by pupils in the sample, we drew upon national statistics supplied by the DfE. This meant that we were able to compare changes in Maths and English scores for pupils in AfA schools to pupils with and without SEND nationally in England. Our final samples for the analyses of Maths and English scores of pupils in AfA schools were N = 11,096 and N = 10,996 respectively. National statistics supplied by the DfE were based upon data from c. 730,000 pupils in primary schools (650,000 pupils without SEND, and 80,000 with SEND) and c. 1,010,000 pupils in secondary schools (910,000 pupils without SEND, and 100,000 with SEND) in England.

School level surveys and contextual data

We were also interested in the way in which school-level *contextual and compositional features* (e.g. size, urbanicity) and *AfA implementation processes and practices* (e.g. fidelity to the structured conversation model) impacted upon progress in the pupil-level outcomes noted above. For the former, we drew upon data from a range of sources (e.g. EDUBASE, participating LAs). For the latter, we created an online school level survey, which was conducted twice – in the late spring of 2010 and 2011 – and completed by the AfA lead in each participating school. Our analyses are based upon a final sample of N = 371 AfA schools for the 2010 survey and N = 334 AfA schools for the 2011 survey.

Explanatory notes about statistical terms

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, we deal with the measurements that we have made throughout the study (see above) by using different statistical techniques. These help us to understand (a) whether any effects we have noticed are due to chance, and (b) the relative size and/or practical significance of any effects observed. The box below explains the terms that we use in these chapters to help the reader make sense of the data. We also provide the main interpretation for each of the findings in text boxes. Data tables and technical details of the analyses carried out in each chapter are in Appendix 4 – Data Tables/Analyses.

Statistical significance – although each of the analyses outlined below work in different ways, they all rely on the concept of 'statistical significance'. For any given effect/difference/pattern observed, an indication is given of the probability ('*p*') of the result being due to random variation/chance. An acceptable level of probability is less than 5% (expressed as '*p* <. 05').

Effect size – the use of statistical significance alone is not enough to determine whether a given finding is important because the size of the sample used is so influential. For example, when using a large sample, very small differences in the data can lead to a statistically significant finding. To deal with this issue, it is also necessary to consider the 'effect size'. This gives an indication of the *size* of the effect/difference/pattern observed. We used a number of effect size indicators in this study, which are noted in the descriptions of our analytical techniques below.

Statistical tests – we used a variety of different statistical tests to analyse our data. The first stage was to examine the *impact* of AfA at a basic level. To do this, there were some cases where we were able to compare the progress of pupils in AfA schools and those in comparison schools on a given outcome (e.g. teacher-rated behaviour); for these we used *analyses of variance (ANOVA)* and/or *independent t-tests*. In cases where we were able to compare the progress of pupils in AfA schools to known averages in the population on a given outcome (e.g. academic progress in English), we used *one sample t-tests.* Finally, there were some cases where – because of a lack of available comparison data – we were only able to examine the progress made by pupils in AfA schools on a given outcome (e.g. parental engagement and confidence); here we used *analyses of variance (ANOVA)* and/or *related t-tests*. In each of these types of analysis we used an effect size indicator called *'Cohen's d'*, and in some cases the '*U3 index'.*

The tests noted above were useful in determining whether AfA had an impact on the variety of outcomes measured. However, we were also interested in exploring what factors at LA, school and pupil level were the most influential in determining pupils' progress. Differences between LAs (e.g. those in urban vs. rural areas), schools (e.g. overall attainment) and pupils (e.g. type of SEND) could all be important in this regard. In particular, at the school level, it was important for us to capture the influence on pupil outcomes of differences between schools in the way in which they implemented AfA (e.g. the proportion of pupils for whom 2 or 3 structured conversations were completed).

The technique we used to do this is known as *multi-level modelling*. This statistical approach acknowledges the way in which pupils are clustered within schools, which themselves are clustered within LAs. The analysis can tell us how much variation in a given outcome (e.g. academic progress in Maths) is attributable to differences at each level (e.g. pupil, school, LA) – this can be expressed as a percentage known as the *intra-cluster correlation* (ICC). Into this analysis we can then insert variables that we have measured at each level, to see how much they influence the outcome in question, i.e. whether or not the AfA school lead being a head teacher or part of the SLT changes pupils' progress in Maths. The amount of influence that each of these variables yields is expressed as a *co-efficient* value. In this way, multi-level modelling is a very good technique for examining natural variation. For example, it can help us to determine whether or not the AfA school lead being part of the SLT changes pupils' progress in Maths, or whether pupils in Year 10 made relatively greater progress in English than those in Year 7. Both the ICC and co-efficient values in multi-level models can be thought of as effect size indicators.

Qualitative component

This component of the research primarily focused upon Research Question 2. Our qualitative data collection comprised the following:

Interviews with local and regional lead professionals

We conducted interviews with lead professionals who were supporting schools to implement AfA. This included National Strategies[4] regional advisors, LA AfA project leads, and a representative sample of lead/advisory teachers. These interviews primarily focused upon strategic support for AfA implementation.

School case studies

Longitudinal case studies of 20 AfA schools[5] (2 in each LA) were conducted, with approximately 5 visits to each school. The focus in the case study visits changed to capture the implementation and development of AfA in each school. Generally speaking, initial case study visits explored background, context and setting up (including identification of pupil/parent case studies). These were followed by visits that focused upon implementation of each strand of AfA. As the second year of the project started we reviewed progress with our schools and explored issues around beginning work with Cohort 2. The final case study visits focused upon perceived impact and sustainability of AfA.

As is typical in case study work we used a variety of data collection methods, including *interviews* and/or *focus groups* (with AfA school leads, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, head teachers/senior managers, key teachers, support staff, pupils, and parents), *observations* (of lessons, AfA-related activities, and other relevant events) and *analyses of school documentation* (such as AfA implementation plans).

Pupil case profiles

Using the methods outlined above, data was also collected on 87 pupils across the case study schools in order to build case profiles that could illustrate how AfA was being used to meet the individual needs of a range of children and young people.

Additional qualitative data

Informal data collection at a range of events provided us with a broader view of progress in AfA implementation, including some of the early challenges and successes. These included:

- The 10 launch conferences, 10 spring update conferences and further events hosted by the National College for School Leadership in each LA.
- Information from a parents' reference group
- A Head Teachers' forum meeting in one LA.

[4] Up to the spring term of 2010/11, when National Strategies was discontinued.

[5] At the start of the project there were 20 case-study schools but one school dropped out of the project part way through. All 20 schools contributed to the initial case study visits and further case study visits were possible in the remaining 19 schools.

Chapter 2: Professionals, systems and networks supporting AfA schools

Highlights of Chapter 2

The **strategic support provided by lead professionals at local and regional levels played a crucial role in getting AfA "up and running"**. The project became a **central hub in participating LAs** through which a number of key agencies (e.g. school improvement, educational psychology) were drawn together, triggering **changes in practice in relation to multi-agency working that extended beyond participating schools and will be sustainable into the future**.

A fundamental element of the strategic support for AfA was to support and challenge schools. Support was provided through **launch and update conferences organised by NCSL**, **training for school staff**, and other, bespoke methods (such as weekly "surgeries"). Schools were challenged to **reflect on their provision in relation to SEND** and were held to account where agreed actions had not been followed through. Throughout the early stages of implementation they were also encouraged to view AfA as an initiative that could **build upon and extend existing good practice**.

Promoting communication and sharing of ideas and practice between schools was another key aspect of the support provided for schools. Existing school clusters were rejuvenated and galvanised through AfA, and provided **opportunities for staff to learn and benefit from the work being carried out elsewhere in their LA**. **Sharing of resources and expertise** were also commonplace, and were seen as a means of providing better value for money.

The strategic support offered by lead professionals at local and regional levels in the AfA pilot also helped to **develop thinking about how SEND is defined and understood**. There was **shift in responsibility**, so that SEND provision was the role of the class teacher and not just the SENCo. Tensions and issues around identification, assessment and provision were brought sharply into focus, explored and debated. Furthermore, **schools and parents were challenged to raise their aspirations and expectations for children with SEND**.

<u>Recommendations for practitioners:</u>

- **Effective strategic support** should be in place beyond the school level that supports and challenges schools, promotes communication and sharing of ideas and practice between them, and helps to develop thinking about how SEND is defined and understood (including raising aspirations).
- **Greater shared responsibility around SEND provision** should be developed, both within (e.g. class teacher *and* SENCo) and beyond (e.g. input from key agencies such as school improvement and educational psychology services) schools.

Before we explore how AfA was implemented and the impact that it had in participating schools, it is important to first provide some context relating to the support infrastructure that was put in place to aid schools throughout the pilot. In this chapter we present the key issues that emerged in the course of our interviews with local and regional AfA lead professionals on this topic, in addition to some of the feedback provided by staff in AfA schools.

Developing strategic support for AfA

At the heart of AfA is the notion that provision for children with SEND needs to mirror the diverse range of outcomes targeted within the project. Effective provision covering a wide range of academic and non-academic outcomes is best facilitated by collaborative, "joined up" work involving a number of key agencies. In addition to the strategic support funded directly through the project (e.g. NS Regional Advisors, LA AfA Leads, LA Advisory/Lead Teachers), LA Leads involved colleagues from school improvement, SEND, educational psychology, and other key services in their planning of AfA implementation. The project was seen as a focal point for drawing such agencies together and triggering changes in practice regarding multi-agency working within LAs. This kind of systemic change provides an example of where the impact of AfA could extend beyond schools involved in the pilot and could be sustained after the project concludes.

> *"It's certainly giving us the opportunity to… galvanise Local Authority services right across the area."* (LA Lead C)

> *"There have been links with services… but little real strategic contact. But… we're now moving forward and this has been triggered by AfA."* (LA Lead I)

Supporting and challenging schools

A fundamental element of the strategic support for AfA was to "support and challenge schools" in their implementation. In terms of support, every LA provided the basic training for school staff in the three strands of the project (e.g. training for the structured conversations with parents), and each LA hosted two AfA conferences. However, in addition, some LAs provided further opportunities for schools. For example, in LA A the project leader held a weekly "surgery" where school AfA leads could drop in and discuss progress, raise queries and seek advice.

In terms of challenging schools, both the LA Leads and NS Regional Advisors played a crucial role in monitoring progress made by schools in relation to their implementation plans and holding them to account where agreed actions had not been followed through, or in providing an appropriate steer at key decision points in the project. For example, LA I prioritised school visits based upon perceived progress (with schools felt to be falling behind or becoming disaffected targeted for early visits); one NS regional advisor relayed an example of helping schools make more informed decisions about which wider outcomes to focus upon in Strand 3.

> *"We're getting them to reflect back on what can be done differently."* (NS Regional Advisor 3)

Encouraging schools to build on existing practice and other initiatives

One of the early challenges for some schools was the perception was that AfA was simply another new centrally launched educational initiative that they had to "bolt on" to existing work. However, the strategic support developed for AfA sent a clear message that the philosophy underpinning the project placed a strong emphasis on building upon existing practice rather than attempting to "reinvent the wheel". Schools were asked to consider what work they were already undertaking

"AfA affords authorities the time - through the funding - to look at developing practices built upon good practice which could actually then become part of the embedded culture and ethos of the school." (NS Regional Advisor 3)

that was relevant to the outcomes specified in AfA, and how they might use their funding to facilitate further development in these areas. Many schools therefore saw this as an opportunity to consider some of the key priorities outlined in School Improvement Plans and think about how they might address these using the resources provided by AfA. The 10 spring update conferences in early 2010 emphasised this approach and encouraged schools to share their creativity and flexibility in provision for SEND and how AfA could be more easily assimilated into existing structures and practices within schools.

"We're hoping that AfA will support us in… developing more coherence between strategies and projects." (LA Lead E)

Promoting communication and sharing of ideas and practice between schools

Developing school clusters

One way in which the development of good practice in improving outcomes for children with SEND was facilitated was through the development of support for school networks, clusters and families of schools. In many LAs existing networks were utilised, so this was not necessarily something "new" that came about as a result of AfA, but an example of how the project has built upon foundations that were already in place. AfA provided the opportunity, through additional funding, resources and strategic support, to allow school networks to galvanise and flourish. In concrete terms, these networks provided opportunities for AfA leads and key teachers to both learn from the practice of others and disseminate their outstanding work to colleagues.

"Teachers from other schools can go… and feel part of an outstanding environment." (NS Regional Advisor 3)

"AfA provides the opportunity to… showcase some of the excellent work… but then also to learn from one another." (LA Lead D)

Many schools said that they *"enjoy the cluster network and they get a lot out of it"* (Lead Teacher, LA H). Benefits included *"outside agencies coming in to speak to you"* (AfA Lead, School 8, LA D) and opportunities for *"talking to other AfA leads and finding out what they've done"* (AfA Lead, School 7, LA D). Others believed "*it was good really because you chat to others and then you are quite pleased with what you have done, and it sort of boosts your confidence and you pick up ideas and its good networking"* (AfA Lead, School 3, LA B).

"It was really useful because it was the first time we got to work with other schools and discuss things that everyone was sort of wondering like, how do you assess wider outcomes, talking about that. It was nice because the table I was on, there was a huge mainstream school, 'School Z', there was a PRU, there was the special school 'School Y' and then there was 'School X', another mainstream, so we were all sort of talking about, even though we are all very different, all had the same common things that we picked up on." (AfA Lead, School 6, LA C)

Not all clusters were useful, however, and it appears that careful consideration needs to be given to how these are arranged so that may be most effective. These difficulties with "relevance" were overcome through the sharing of minutes between clusters.

Pooling of resources and expertise

Some groups or clusters of schools chose to pool their resources: *"AfA has enabled larger, more expensive initiatives to take place and has encouraged schools to work together to provide more opportunities"* (LA Lead, LA C). One group of schools shared funding to retain the services of an experienced SENCo: *"the family SENCo has been there for a number of years but he's just retired; we put some of our money aside to actually keep him on board to oversee things because he's so skilled and he knows the family so well and all of us, all of the SENCos and the heads all work together really well and know each other well so that's very supportive"* (AfA Lead, School 17, LA I). In one LA, a "placement school" system was developed where individual members of staff could spend time at another school that was considered to be at the forefront in the promotion of a key AfA outcome.

Different models of support

Although the 10 LAs involved in the AfA pilot generally followed the guidelines produced by DfE closely, local circumstances in some dictated that different models of strategic support be adopted. One particular issue was the recruitment of advisory/lead teachers at LA level to work with schools. This proved difficult at the onset because schools are understandably reluctant to allow their best practitioners to be seconded. In LA E the response to this challenge was to adopt a different model of practice for this aspect of the project. Placement opportunities were offered to secondary schools on a pro-rata (size of school) basis, in accordance with numbers in targeted cohorts. For example, a school with a cohort of 300 Year 7 students would have 10 teacher placements across two terms and each placement would include 12 half-day sessions in a placement school in addition to one day of coaching/own school support. This meant that the placement school would have some of their own coaching time to use in the AfA school.

Developing thinking about how SEND is defined and understood

> *"What AfA is doing is actually thrashing some of this out and getting LAs and schools to reflect on their definition and identification of SEND."* (NS Regional Advisor 2)

The introduction of AfA led to something of a paradigm shift in thinking about what educators mean when they talk about "special educational needs and disabilities". Traditionally, there has been an expectation that schools know who their children with SEND are and can convey this information to others who need it. However, the work around AfA has challenged this notion, and highlighted some important issues. Firstly, the population of children with SEND is very fluid and open to change. This issue became regularly debated during the early stages of the pilot. Secondly, SEND is contextual in nature – a pupil may have SEND in one school but when they move schools they are no longer considered to have SEND. This is because the definition of SEND is comparative rather than being objective and absolute. Identification of SEND at transition points (e.g. Year 6 to Year 7) can therefore be fraught with difficulties as professionals and parents worry about how a child's previously met educational needs will be met in a new school. One LA lead told us that there is a sudden rise in referrals for Statutory Assessments for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils (LA D). Thirdly, there are differing agendas related to definition of SEND (for instance, the way that funding is allocated by LAs may depend on how many pupils schools report as having SEND; or, the way that schools perceive OFSTED inspections as

seeking out a quota of children who may have SEND). This tends to affect how many children in a given school are considered to have SEND. Fourthly, some schools are reluctant to tell parents that their children are following Code of Practice processes around SEND at the School Action (SA) and School Action Plus (SA+) stages of provision. They prefer to not increase parental anxieties by saying that the children were just a little below expected levels of attainment than the others and needed a bit of extra help. Finally, deciding what constitutes each category of primary need can in itself be problematic without a comprehensive assessment that usually only occurs if a child is to receive a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SSEN). This means that the same child could be placed in two or more categories for effectively the same educational difficulties. For example, a child who does not achieve the expected level of attainment in writing may be classified as having general learning difficulties (Moderate Learning difficulties (MLD) or Severe Learning difficulties (SLD)), dyslexia (Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)), a language difficulty (Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SCLN)), or their lack of progress may be due to emotional difficulties that would place them in the Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties (BESD) category. Many of these issues found in AfA schools echo points made in the OFSTED SEND review (OFSTED, 2010).

Raising aspirations and expectations for children with SEND

Central to the challenge of narrowing the achievement gap for children and young people with SEND is changing aspirations and expectations held by the professionals who work with them. Strategic support for AfA worked towards changing these expectations through challenging discussions with schools in relation to their monitoring, tracking and intervention for children (Strand 1). Early evidence suggested that the mandatory termly teacher assessments of children's academic attainment in English and Maths pushed schools to think much more closely about how such data is collected, how its accuracy and reliability are assured, and how it is used to set appropriate targets for children that can be supported by intervention in the classroom. Discussion with strategic support helped schools consider whether progress children were making was as good as it could be. If progress was not as expected, schools were asked to consider why that might be, and what interventions they could into place to change a particular child's trajectory.

> *"It's about saying, is this progress as good as it should be? And if it isn't, why isn't it? And what are we doing about it?"* (NS Regional Advisor 2)

The data provided by AfA schools to National Strategies enabled us to examine changes in SEND provision for pupils in light of the issues raised above. Although provision for most children remained stable (for example, those reported to be at SA+ at the beginning of the pilot were most likely to remain at this stage of provision) throughout the pilot, 5.6% of pupils in the target cohort were no longer considered to have SEND by their schools by the final wave of data collection. The majority of these pupils had previously been at the SA stage of SEND provision. This trend may have resulted from the developments in thinking around how SEND is defined and understood that were triggered by the AfA pilot, which in turn enabled schools to target provision more effectively and efficiently for their most vulnerable learners. At the same time, with a renewed focus on SEND, alongside the training and support brought about through the AfA pilot, class/subject teachers' pedagogical practice may have become more inclusive in meeting the diversity of pupil needs in the classroom. Thus, what was required to meet the needs of certain pupils was no longer considered to be 'different and/or additional', as it had become embedded in everyday practice. It was no longer necessary to define these pupils as having SEND in order to meet their learning needs and ensure adequate progress through Quality First Teaching.

Chapter 3: Setting up AfA in schools: barriers and facilitators

Highlights of Chapter 3

Schools began the AfA pilot with an understandable feeling of trepidation. The project set a high benchmark in terms of expectations placed upon schools. However, the majority were **extremely positive about the aims and objectives of the project**, which they felt were in line with their own priorities and **provided opportunities to experiment and innovate**. Early progress in implementation was greatly facilitated by such enthusiasm, but crucially this was accelerated in schools where the **project lead was the head teacher or part of the SLT**. This meant that AfA was given high priority and could be driven forward.

Another facilitator of early progress in implementation was the **alignment of AfA with existing systems, processes and practices in schools**. Where the project was seen as a means of developing and enhancing what was already in place, schools met required milestones and agreed targets with greater ease. Alongside this, the project funding allowed schools to **release key members of staff to complete project tasks** (such as structured conversations with parents), **invest in resources to support provision**, and **develop new interventions** that were not previously part of their repertoire. Many schools used this funding in **ways that they knew would be sustainable** beyond the life of the pilot. Finally, the **training** made available for schools in each of the three strands was also seen as very valuable, both in terms of developing staff skills and in energising and enthusing schools.

However, there were also several barriers to successful implementation for participating schools to overcome. Among some staff, AfA was seen as the latest in a long line of educational initiatives; this created a malaise and a **resistance to invest time and energy** in an approach that might quickly be replaced. Similarly, there were early concerns about **capacity** in schools, particularly in relation to the more human resource-intensive aspects of the project, such as the structured conversation with parents. However, **AfA leads worked hard to overcome these barriers** and as such they did not significantly hinder implementation progress in most schools.

<u>Recommendations for practitioners:</u>

- AfA is most successful where it is seen as a **means to extend or enhance existing good practice**. It is important that it is promoted as such and not viewed as a 'bolt on' approach.
- The **AfA Lead in a given school should be the headteacher or a member of the SLT**. School leadership for AfA gives it credibility and helps to drive implementation forward.

In this chapter we examine how participating schools went about setting up AfA, and some of the barriers to and facilitators of progress in implementation. In doing this we primarily draw upon themes that emerged in interview data provided by AfA leads and key teachers in our case study visits, although we also make use some of the quantitative data generated in our school level surveys.

Getting going

Participating schools began the project with an understandable feeling of trepidation. The AfA pilot set a high benchmark in terms of expectations placed upon schools within a short period of time, and this was reflected in early concerns expressed by many staff. Nonetheless, schools felt positive about the project, and saw it as way to build upon good practice within their existing provision. The resources provided through project funding and training opportunities allowed them to put into practice ideas that they had previously not been able to bring to scale. It is worth noting, however, that some schools struggled to deploy their allocated resources within the tight timescales prescribed within the pilot, particularly, small schools with limited staff capacity.

> *"AfA has taken the school to the next level… [as it] builds on what we are already doing.*" (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I)

A key facilitator of early implementation was drawing upon "*eager staff who want to try out new ideas and are motivated*", and who are "*willing and able to change or modify their practice*" (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I). Reactions from staff were on the whole very positive, although there were some concerns about teachers being taken away from the classroom (for instance, to conduct structured conversations with parents). However, the role of lead teachers was considered vital to striking a balance: "*the kind of school we are, we are involved in a number of initiatives and things which sometimes take some of my staff outside school, you know, if you've got lead teachers for this and that, then they are already out for things and therefore, you've got to balance that*" (AfA Lead, School 9, LA E).

> *The fact that they can already see some quick wins and gains means… they've taken it on.*" (AfA Lead, School 9, LA E)

By the end of the first year, the case study schools appeared to have mostly recovered from the initial trepidation about the project timescales and reported that "*now [we] feel like they've caught up… and [we're] quite happy*" (Lead Teacher, LA H). Schools continued to be positive about AfA, viewing it as a way to extend or enhance existing provision and/or as a vehicle for school improvement: *"Our SEF says AfA is what's driving our school forward to improve more long term, so we're building everything on it … it's been a really positive experience because it has re-launched us, it has redirected us and it's affected everything else we do, tuning everything else up"* (AfA Lead, School 15, LA H). The **flexibility of the project** was welcomed, particularly the opportunity *"to think outside the box and do things outside the norm because…. it gives licence and the financial support to do it which*

> *"It's the first initiative that said 'right…what are you going to do? We'd like these outcomes but you get on with it.'…'we'd like to see parents fully engaged and we'd like to see the children improve, but how you do it is totally and utterly up to you. Here are the people you can call in for help if you want.' And that's what's makes it exciting, you're totally in control again. So it's down to schools…to take it and to go all out because if you go all out with one thing everything else pulls with it."* (AfA Lead, School 15, LA H)

is fantastic" (AfA Lead, School 16, LA H). Some schools adapted AfA, recognising that, "*It has some strengths to it that we have used, but we have tended to take the bits that work for us as opposed to taking it wholesale*" (Key Teacher, School 20, LA J).

School leadership for AfA

The importance of school leadership in the implementation of AfA was emphasized from the outset and featured strongly in the NCSL launch events and follow-up conferences (indeed, NCSL were instrumental in promoting and supporting the leadership aspect of AfA). Indeed, one of the key principles of AfA outlined in the guidance for schools is the engagement of school leaders in shaping and developing an inclusive ethos (DCSF, 2009). In our school level surveys, we asked AfA leads if they were part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to gauge whether schools were following this guidance and treating the project as a school development/improvement issue (or, conversely, if they were treating it solely as an SEND issue). **The results of the first school survey demonstrated that 91% of AfA leads were head teachers or members of the SLT, making them well placed to drive forward implementation throughout their schools.** By the second school survey this proportion had dropped slightly to 85%; this may be an indication that as the project became more embedded in schools during the second year of the project responsibility for it was handed over to members of staff outside of the SLT. We also asked the AfA leads to identify the primary roles that they had within the school. The largest proportions of roles were Deputy or Assistant Head Teachers (50%), followed by SENCOs or inclusion managers (18%) then by Head Teachers (15%). Overall, these proportions remained stable into the second year of the AfA pilot.

Our case study data indicated that schools which flourished early on in the pilot were those that highlighted the importance of a strong leadership team. In School 15 (LA H) the head teacher was the AfA project lead, the Year 1 key teacher was the deputy head and SENCo, and the Year 5 key teacher was Key Stage 2 manager – meaning that the project was being led by an experienced, influential core group of staff within the school. In contrast, in some schools the AfA lead was a class teacher and not part of the SLT. Typically, this led to a slower start to the project in both planning and implementation. Although the majority of staff at such schools were very positive about AfA, there were still a few who saw it as yet another scheme and extra workload for them (see "initiative overload/malaise" theme below). Without the influence yielded by being a school leader, AfA leads in these schools seemed to struggle to convince such staff of the benefits of involvement and "get them on board".

> *"I think our leadership team is pretty well sorted. But you see we're fortunate in the sense that our Year 1 teacher who's the deputy head and the Year 5 teacher who's a Key Stage 2 manager, so you have experienced teachers straight away involved in it, in the leadership team. So when we met we were talking about it and we made it happen."* (AfA Lead, School 15, LA H)

The importance of strong leadership for AfA within participating schools is a theme that we return to in later chapters, in which we examine its influence on pupil outcomes.

School leadership involvement in and support for AfA was seen as a key facilitator of early implementation and a success in embedding the approach across the school.

Timescale and pressure

An issue consistently raised by schools during the early days of the pilot was the sheer pace and associated timescales set by the DCSF. There was a perception of a fast pace to get things going that placed a high demand on schools and support materials were being developed "just in time". Secondary schools in particular were struggling to meet deadlines. Despite enthusiasm for AfA, there was widespread concern at the amount of unforeseen paperwork and administration that was standing in the way of the initial implementation and progress. There was a feeling among some teachers that everything should have been started earlier (e.g. the pilot was announced after schools had already completed planning cycles for 2009/10, LA support staff were not all in place at the beginning of the pilot, and school packs and information were not ready in time). However, despite these early teething problems, by the end of the first year of the pilot the vast majority schools appeared to be getting on track with things on the whole and committed to the project.

> *"Time, it's the timeframe that is…nothing's going to stop us getting up and running 'cause we will get up and running… but whether we're going to get up and running as quickly as… you would... we haven't had time to do everything because being a small school the responsibility falls on less shoulders, you can't spread the load."* (AfA Lead, School 4, LA B)

Initiative overload, malaise and resistance

An initial barrier to early implementation in some schools was the view that AfA was simply the latest in a long line of government initiatives that they were asked to implement. This mindset produced some resistance to investing time and energy because the belief was that another new initiative would take priority before AfA had become fully embedded. For example, one teacher commented that AfA was *"another initiative"* (AfA Lead, School 2, LA A). It is also worth noting that those that shared this view also focused upon the finite funding lifespan of the project and during the early stages of the pilot were raising concerns about sustainability and transferability. As the pilot continued, this early concern petered out in many schools.

> *"I suppose with everything else in school it's time isn't it? ... I think a lot of people get a lot of things thrown at them and you know, a lot to balance, you know, a lot to sort of juggle, I think that's the big issue, I don't think people are unwilling."* (AfA Lead, School 13, LA G)

However, the majority of AfA school leads responded positively to this challenge, which was reflected by the numbers who actively engaged with the programme, attending events like those organised by NCSL: "*this one we can tailor very specifically, so we're looking at it in a completely different light. And for once we actually felt this is something we can see will make a difference with the children and we're not doing it just because we are told this is what we have to do*" (AfA Lead, School 11, LA F). Some schools hoped to overcome staff resistance by keeping the profile of AfA low and initially involving only limited staff: *"I've been very careful the way we've introduced it gradually as opposed to do a major launch. Simply because of this sort of initiative fatigue that you know 'Oh God! Not another one, here we go again. So we've done it very carefully to make sure it's been received positively"* (AfA Lead, School 19, LA J). Other schools encouraged staff to *"see it much of an extension of what they do already"* (Key Teacher, School 8, LA D) and *"what we've tried to do is to build it into what we were doing … so that it as far as possible we could get it to underpin the work of the school as opposed to sitting separate"* (AfA Lead, School 10, LA E).

'Fit in' not 'bolt-on'

A key facilitator of implementation for many schools was how good a fit there was between AfA and their existing aims and provision: *"it's not been a huge culture shift"* (AfA Lead, School 10, LA E) and *"we were in a really fortunate position that priority areas for us fitted perfectly with AfA so actually it was a bit of a bonus"* (AfA Lead, School 1, LA A). Where early AfA implementation went well, the project was seen as something that could be assimilated into existing structures and practices rather than as a "bolt on". This involved thinking about the project as an opportunity to refocus on some of the most vulnerable learners in the school and work creatively to promote better outcomes for them by enhancing existing provision. For example, one head teacher spoke of using AfA funding to enhance provision under the Extended Services initiative, in which his school were also participating. In concrete terms, this meant that key staff could be paid to work outside of school hours to support pupils with SEND in after-school activities.

> *"In many ways what Achievement for All has done is fitted in to best practice in the school, so many of the systems that were already set up in school were complemented by AfA and at the same time AfA was complemented by the things we already had set up in school."* (Head Teacher, School 9, LA E)

Implementation of AfA was facilitated in schools where it was perceived as a means to enhance existing processes and practices around SEND provision.

Concerns about capacity

Despite general enthusiasm for the project, and particularly the structured conversations with parents, there were some early concerns expressed about teachers *"taking that time out of the classroom"* (Key Teacher, School 20, LA J); although *"having money to release staff to carry out AfA work/structured conversations was great … it meant the teacher's classes were regularly without their class teacher, which led to parent unrest!"* (Lead Teacher, LA C). One teaching union was concerned in the early stages of the project about the additional demands that AfA placed upon teachers, with *"so much running around and paperwork"* (Key Teacher, School 16, LA H), and *"would rather put time and energy into talking to and working with students"* (Key Teacher, School 9, LA E). However, this was a localised issue that was resolved quickly.

Staff turnover and capacity were problems for some schools, with secondary schools in particular challenged by "*the sheer volume of children on the project and the number of adults involved in working with the child throughout a day*" (Lead Teacher, LA I). However, solutions were found for example providing teaching cover for those structured conversations taking place during the school day. Where teachers were able to work outside of school hours to meet with parents unable to make appointments during the school day, additional payments have been made. The costings of the structured conversation were based on 1 hour preparation, 1 hour for the actual meeting and 1 hour to follow-up.

Training and skills

The training made available for schools was seen as *"valuable"* (AfA Lead, School 19, LA J), particularly when it was of a practical nature; in some cases, *"it inspired us*" (Key Teacher, School 5,

LA C). One school spoke at an LA spring update conference about teacher training and skills prior to AfA. There had been a lack of confidence amongst teachers about meeting the needs of a wide range of children with AfA within their school. AfA had brought this into focus and staff worked together with training from the LA to contribute to the overall school development plan to improve Quality First Teaching, develop personalised interventions, improve children's social skills, and raise pupil self-esteem. Not all training was as helpful, however, and some schools were concerned about the time spent out of the classroom; despite this, some schools reported the developmental nature of training, *"it would be perhaps useful to have more AfA training as we go along"* (AfA Lead, School 7, LA D).

Funding

A key facilitator of implementation for many schools was the funding associated with the AfA pilot and the freedom to spend this *creatively*. Some schools used this to pay for teachers to be covered while they were released to complete AfA-related tasks: *"release time"* (Key Teacher, School 7, LA D). Some schools used it as an opportunity to build capacity: "*update the training"* (AfA Lead, School 15, LA H). Other schools used project funding to encourage teachers to work more flexibly - *"as a bit of a softener.... I kind of pay the staff for staying after school and people doing the structured conversations outside school hours… so that's … given them a little bit more incentive to get on with it"* (AfA Lead, School 16, LA H). Another school used the funding to *"extend opportunities and for further development within the school development plan around nurture groups, breakfast clubs, resources… and it's funding opportunities for the children who are within the cohort on free school meals to access extra-curricular activities and adventure opportunities"* (Lead Teacher, LA H).

Focusing on sustainability from the outset

An initial concern about the project that was shared by a variety of stakeholders was that the funding was tied to a relatively short period of time, *"what happens when the money stops"'* (AfA Lead, School 15, LA H). A worry expressed by many schools was that progress made during the two-year period might not be sustainable or transferable in the longer term (for example, some schools expressed concern that the structured conversations with parents may not be feasible once there was no longer funding available to release Key Teachers from their teaching).

> *"It is a huge undertaking, unless we can streamline it, I am not sure how sustainable it is once the funding is removed. Because the leadership role is about, at secondary level at least, about taking all the information, going and assimilating it and getting it moved on and that is a big job. And I think it is a leadership job, because someone has to have the purse strings to make things happen, where there is not purse, I don't know how that works."* (AfA Lead, School 12, LA F).

> *"It's not about a set of materials, it's about an approach and that's where the sustainability aspect of it will come in."* (NS Regional Advisor 3)

In response to this, a key element of the strategic support for AfA was in helping schools to explore ways of sustaining changes in practice from the very beginning of the project. Some schools focused on sustainability from the outset, aware that *"obviously there's not going to be any money around whatever happens. But we're using the funding that we've got to build to the future in a sustainable way" (*AfA Lead, School 15, LA H); this has included *"buying really good resources that are going to have a good long life"* (AfA Lead, School 16, LA H). For example, in

relation to the structured conversations with parents, schools were asked to consider ways in which they might retain the "spirit" of work undertaken during AfA in their future interactions with parents. At a general level, this might be in reviewing how the school might continue to encourage parental engagement and confidence. At a more specific level, it could be in making sure that key staff are in contact with parents at regular intervals and make use of the skills developed through the training held in each LA (for instance, attending, paraphrasing, use of silence, summarising, and giving information).

Chapter 4: Implementation and impact of AfA Strand 1 (assessment, tracking and intervention)

Highlights of Chapter 4

Participating schools developed their routine use of data to inform target setting and intervention further through Strand 1 of AfA. **Sharing of data and targets**, particularly with parents, was very common. **Data was used to inform provision at pupil, classroom and school levels** in very diverse ways. There was a clear sense that work on **assessment, tracking and intervention through AfA had enabled learners with SEND to make good progress**. However, as would be expected some groups of pupils made greater progress than others, and the use of reporting mechanisms based solely on NC levels and sub-levels was considered questionable in certain contexts. Our analyses of impact suggested that **pupils in all four year groups of the AfA cohort made considerable academic progress in both English and Maths during the pilot**. In all cases this progress was significantly greater than pupils with SEND nationally, and for pupils in Years 1, 5 and 10 it was greater than for pupils without SEND nationally over an equivalent period of time.

Our multi-level analyses demonstrated that **schools played an important role in determining changes in academic progress for pupils**. Some of the school level factors that were associated with accelerated progress in at least 2 analyses included:

- **Lower proportions of pupils at the latter stages of SEND provision (e.g. SA+ or SSEN)**
- **Higher academic achievement (e.g. % pupils achieving Level 4 in English/Maths)**
- **More frequent teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets**
- **Increased fidelity to the structured conversation model or higher proportions of pupils for whom 2 or 3 structured conversations were completed**

At the pupil level, groups of learners who experienced accelerated progress in at least 2 analyses included those who **attended school more regularly**, those with **stronger positive relationships**, and those with **BESD** or **ASD**. Groups of learners who experienced relatively lower levels of progress included those at the **latter stages of SEND provision** (e.g. SA+ or SSEN), **females**, and those with **SLD**.

Most schools reported that the enhancements to existing systems and practices that came about through Strand 1 of AfA had become well embedded and were therefore seen as **sustainable beyond the lifespan of the pilot**.

<u>Recommendations for practitioners:</u>

Assessment, tracking and intervention for pupils with SEND should be characterised by:

- **Frequent involvement of class/subject teachers and parents** in reviewing pupil targets
- A range of stakeholders having **access to relevant pupil information/data.**
- A **comprehensive range of interventions**, whose success is routinely monitored .
- **Use of data at a range of levels** (e.g. pupil, class, school) and for a **variety of purposes** (e.g. to inform target setting, explore progress patterns among potentially vulnerable groups).
- **Monitoring systems that take into account individual pupils' needs** (i.e. use of P/NC and sub-level data may miss small but important steps forward made by certain pupils).

In this chapter we focus on how schools went about implementing Strand 1 of the AfA pilot (assessment, tracking and intervention) and the impact this had on pupils' academic outcomes. In doing so we draw upon a variety of sources – including our school case studies, school level surveys and academic attainment data provided by National Strategies.

Implementation of assessment, tracking and intervention

Work in this strand saw schools' routine use of data to inform target setting and intervention develop further. Assessment of and planning for individual pupils was central to this and training was organised around a process called Assessing Pupil Progress. The basic principles of this involve breaking down the tasks involved in learning component skills and identifying the next teaching steps for an individual pupil. There is a need to assess where the pupil is, to plan for teaching and then to monitor progress. Our second school level survey indicated that this approach was used in the vast majority of schools (96.7%) and in most of these cases (97.9%) was well embedded in the school, being used with pupils beyond the AfA pilot cohort. Schools typically used software to help with tracking, the most commonly used approaches were Target Tracker (30.8%) their own bespoke system (28.4%) or Assessment Manager (17.4%) to record data. A further quarter of schools used other systems, such as CASPA, CAPTURE, itrack, EAZ MAG, the Primary Progress toolkit, and SIMS. In around two-thirds of schools (68.6%), teachers were reported as always reviewing termly targets on a termly basis. Sharing of academic targets and data with parents was also a common feature - in 84% of schools the targets set were shared with them, using a variety of strategies, including the structured conversations (98.2%), teacher-parent meetings (93.4%), written reports (91%), comments in passing (80.8%), emails and/or text messages (30.8%) and online reporting (3.3%). The subsequent planning of interventions primarily involved the class/subject teacher (96.4 %) and/or the school SENCo (95.5 %), although encouragingly, parents (56.8%) and pupils themselves (40.1%) were also involved in some schools. 39.5% of schools involved other individuals (in addition to teachers) in planning interventions, including teaching assistants, senior members of school staff, and external specialist professionals (e.g. educational psychologists). The interventions themselves were most frequently specific work with pupils (e.g. 1:1 tuition) (97.3%), supplemented by adjustment of curriculum planning and teaching strategies to address gaps in learning (95.5%), use of specialist resources or guided group work to construct inclusive learning sequences (68.6%) and listening to pupils and adapting programmes accordingly (56.9%).

Work at classroom and pupil levels

The use of APP in the classroom was seen as *"very good for tracking progress and highlighting gaps"* and for planning future intervention practices. For example, School 15 (LA H) used an electronic folder on the staff computer network for each child in the AfA cohort, which included all targets and other relevant information. Teachers had target sheets to hand on which they could highlight the targets they were working on, which could then be used to guide their daily provision (e.g. "I can" statements for Year 1 pupils) (School 15, LA H). As the AfA lead of School 3 (LA B) put it,

> *"To aid planning and provision and to look at the curriculum, in Year 1 for example we had…a higher than usual number of children coming up from Foundation Stage below the level of six that's required, so you know, we really used that to look at the curriculum in Year 1 for that first term and really look at closing those gaps and making sure that the teacher was using the Foundation Stage to plan from as well as the Year 1 curriculum."* (AfA Lead, School 1, LA A)

teachers were using APP *"to think about what they're actually teaching and adapt what they're teaching to what is needed by the pupils".*

> *"For children on School Action, we'd look at their provision map and say 'OK, well they're getting a literacy intervention, their maths is fine so they don't need anything there, what else do we need to make sure they're getting?'"* (AfA Lead, School 1, LA A)

Some class teachers used data in order to, *"identify where more support is needed and what are the resources that pupils need at a classroom level"* (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I), to inform pupil IEPs, and to organise teaching assistant input (School 10, LA E). As the assessment and tracking process took place on a regular basis (e.g. half-termly), staff highlighted the advantage of having plenty of data to map progress across time, and *"if things are going wrong… if a child isn't progressing you can find out why, rather than wait 'til the end of the year"* (AfA Lead, School 15, LA H).

> *"The heads of year and year learning coordinators use the data and they're printed out and there's a system where the children that have gone down… or under achieving, are highlighted, then interventions are put in place."* (AfA Lead, School 3, LA B)

Transition is traditionally more difficult for disabled pupils and those with SEN and data was also used at the start of school year to allow teachers to get to know their new cohort better (e.g. pupils' specific needs, what aspects of provision had worked in previous years and what had not, discussion with pupils' previous teachers, and subsequent planning of provision) (School 3, LA B). Staff therefore had the opportunity to get to know their cohorts both "*vertically*" (from one year to the next, or looking back over previous years) and "*horizontally*" (across the same year from one subject to another, e.g. Maths and English). Other examples of uses of data in the classroom included motivation building through subtle competition (School 4, LA B) and to set groups and differentiate within lessons (School 7, LA D).

Data collected through Strand 1 of AfA was also used during structured conversations with parents. Some schools reported that this boosted parental engagement in their children's learning. In one school, target setting was shared among staff and parents through online reporting. Individuals logging in were able to see a pupil's current academic level, the targeted level and a commentary on what needed to be in place to allow progress to the next level/sub-level (School 4, LA B). Similarly, School 8 in LA D devised its own pupil tracker with academic and pastoral data. Whilst the use of ICT as a facilitative tool in the assessment and tracking process was successful in the main, in some instances the use of electronic forms of reporting were seen to be difficult (School 3, LA B).

Work at school level

Assessment and tracking was also used to plan support at school level. Schools were enthusiastic in developing their provision mapping, including both academic and behaviour targets, and presenting them in an accessible way that enabled all staff to monitor progress and guide

> *"In terms of the strategic leadership of the school …we meet with our School Improvement Partner termly and she looks at pupil progress data ... we look at the emerging trends, in terms of each year group to see whether there's any patterns or under achievement. We talk to the teachers about what the priorities have been, who the target groups are and why and …we'll talk about individual children, their performance, what are the potential barriers for learning for individual children …there are systems in place that never used to be in place before."* (AfA Lead, School 10, LA E)

intervention. This was reinforced by frequent teaching and learning meetings where best practices to support pupils with SEND were discussed (School 12, LA F). Tracking systems were used in such meetings to share levels of progress within schools among teachers and management, and plan interventions at school as well classroom level. Schools also used their data to inform analysis at school management level; for example, cross-checking progress made against other background variables such as free-school meal eligibility, care status (School 4, LA B; School 16, LA H), and ethnic minority status (School 10, LA E).

A striking feature of schools' work on assessment, tracking and intervention was the diversity of ways in which academic data was used to inform provision for pupils with SEND.

Perceptions of impact

Several schools reported that AfA had enabled pupils with SEND to make progress and had succeeded in "closing the gap" (e.g. in academic attainment, between those pupils with and without SEND). Most schools however, felt that progress was mixed, with some suggesting that this was due to the wide variation in the needs of pupils identified as having SEND. A key concern of several schools was that progress made by AfA pupils was at times too small to be measured by typical indicators of change, such as reaching a higher level. The use of APP and more effective tracking systems supported the identification of the "smaller steps" required to make progress, allowing the setting of realistic targets and the recognition of achievements. This meant that although some pupils were not necessarily closing the achievement gap, they were still "on target" in terms of achieving their potential: *"We are really pleased with what has happened and if you look at the progress that some children have made, it might seem very tiny and that, and not always very measurable. It is really real and quite dramatic"* (AfA lead, School 10, LA E). Indeed, some schools reviewed and modified their tracking systems in response to these kinds of concerns: *"It raised some issues that have become invisible through our ordinary tracking systems, whereby not all of our reporting systems are appropriate to SEND students, so there is a set of criteria that for a lot of students they are never going to hit that criteria… I think that because of AfA and because we were looking more closely at that we have started the procedures to have a separate set of criteria for our SEND students"* (AfA lead, School 8, LA D). Many schools also identified improvements in non-academic areas such as confidence, self-esteem and social interaction, and although it was felt that these achievements were equally valuable and may contribute to academic attainment, it was believed that they were not necessarily measurable: "*Monitoring for us is seeing the progress of the child, to be able to stand up and talk in a group, to be able to come to school with a smile on your face because you've got confidence in what you're doing"* (AfA lead, School 11, LA F). Several schools also reported that they had begun to use tracking systems more effectively,

> *"The gap is a lot closer and they're mingling in now. If you rank them you know it's not just a chunk of AfA children at the bottom they're mingled in."* (Key Teacher, School 11, LA F)

> *"At senior management level, we have always done a lot of analysis of data but now we actually are asking the teacher to take more of a part in the process…. they tended to rely on us to say what the issues were rather than finding out themselves… there is more of an emphasis on teachers finding out about the children themselves."* (AfA Lead, School 7, LA D)

increasing the focus on learners with SEND and their wider needs, and encouraging teachers to take on more responsibility for setting targets and monitoring the progress of such pupils in their own classrooms.

Teacher frustration regarding reporting mechanisms based solely on national curriculum levels and sub-levels was evident in some schools. Alternative or supplementary methods of reporting small step progress may be needed within schools if they are to monitor the outcomes of provision effectively.

Quantitative analysis of the impact of AfA on pupils' academic progress in English and Maths

We now turn to our analysis of the impact of AfA on pupils' progress in English and Maths during the course of the pilot. The data underpinning this analysis was collected on our behalf by colleagues at the National Strategies in December 2009[6] and July 2011 from participating schools and pertains to pupils in Cohort 1 – that is, pupils with SEND in Years 1, 5, 7 and 10 at the start of the 2009/10 school year.

About the data

Pupils' scores were generated from Key Teacher assessments, and were reported as P Levels, National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. We converted these into a "points score" (PS) (see Appendix 2) so that we had a continuous scale along which pupils' progress could be measured. The points score scale ranges from 1 (equivalent to P Level 1) to 65 (equivalent to National Curriculum Level 10a/GCSE A*+), with 2 points of progress being equivalent to 1 sub-level of progress on the National Curriculum (e.g. moving from 2c to 2b). The scale allowed us to statistically analyse the academic attainment data and make comparisons between different subjects (e.g. English and Maths) and different groups of pupils (e.g. males and females, those at different stages of SEND provision).

In order to contextualise the progress made by pupils over the course of AfA, we asked the following key questions:

- How much progress was made by pupils in the 19 months between the baseline and final assessments?
- How does this compare to the average progress made by other pupils with SEND nationally over an equivalent period of time?

[6] Many pupils (c.80%) in Year 1 were assessed using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles in the autumn term 2009/10. Data produced using this system is incompatible with the metric used for other pupils (P levels/NC levels/GCSE grades). Therefore, we used data collected in the spring term 2009/10 (where P levels or NC levels were used) (March 2010) as the baseline for Year 1 pupils so that they could be included in our analysis of academic progress. As this means that progress for Year 1 pupils has only been measured over 16 months rather than 19, we have adjusted our national comparison data accordingly for this group.

- How does this compare to the average progress made by pupils without SEND nationally over an equivalent period of time?

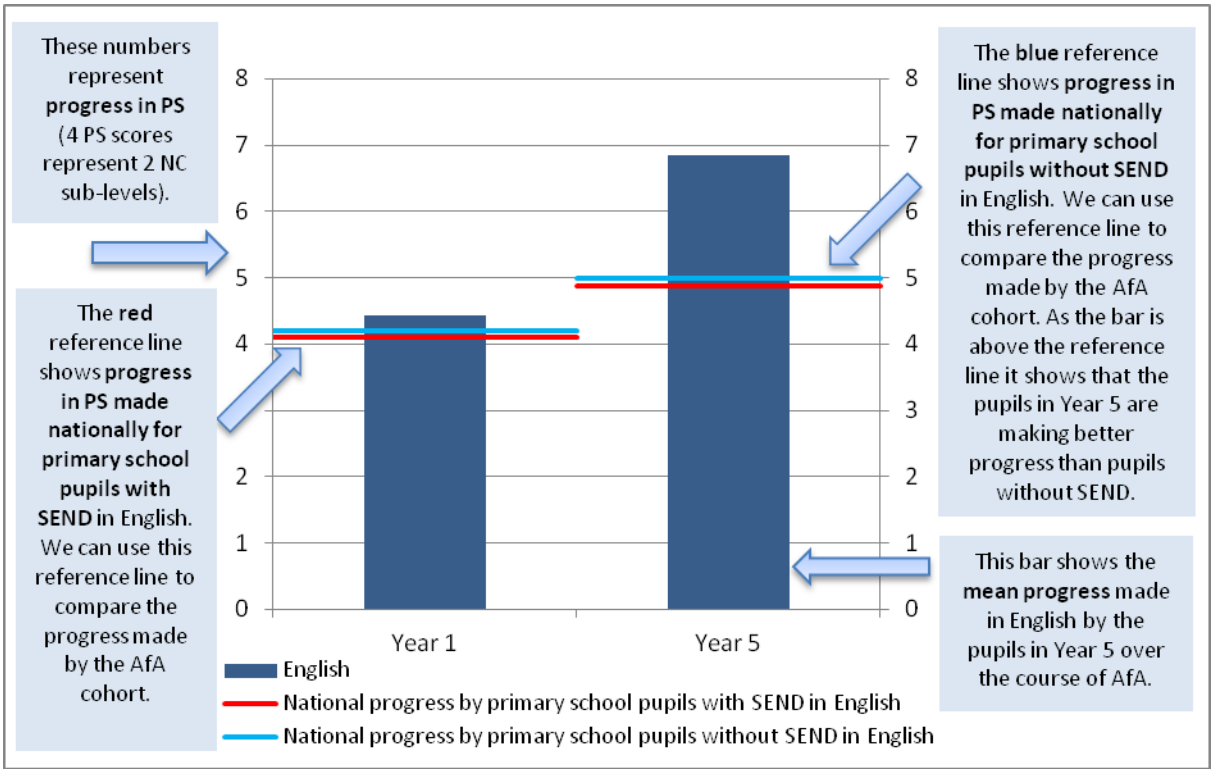
To answer the second and third questions, we used comparative data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) held by the DfE to calculate an average rate of progress for pupils in primary and secondary schools. We calculated the average progress made by pupils nationally in primary schools by looking at the difference between pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and end of Key Stage 2 assessments (c. 650,000 pupils without SEND, and c. 80,000 with SEND). For secondary schools, we looked at the difference between the end of Key Stage 2 and end of Key Stage 4 assessments[7] (c. 910,000 pupils without SEND, and c. 100,000 with SEND). Having worked out these differences we then divided the figures by the number of months between each assessment to give us an average rate of progress over a 19-month period. For example, the NPD data showed that pupils without SEND nationally make on average 17.5 points in progress on the PS for Maths during the 60 months from the end of Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 4. This equates to 5.5 points in progress over 19 months[8]. These national averages provided useful reference points for comparison. However, they also allowed us to conduct one sample t-tests to let us know whether the progress made by pupils in the AfA sample was statistically significant when compared to that made by pupils with and without SEND nationally.

Interpreting the comparison graphs

We present data showing the academic progress of pupils with SEND in AfA schools during the pilot in the form of a bar chart with reference lines indicating how much progress pupils with and without SEND make nationally over an equivalent period of time. The SEND group includes pupils with statements as well as at school action plus and school action, including, therefore, pupils with the most complex needs. This allows the progress of AfA pupils to be compared with their peers across the country quickly and easily – if the top of a bar meets a reference line, then pupils in AfA schools are making the same progress as the group represented by the line (e.g. all pupils with SEND nationally). If the top of the bar is higher than the reference line, they are making more progress than the reference group. If the top of the bar is lower than the line, then they are making less progress.

[7] Data was only used for pupils in the NPD for whom both relevant assessments (e.g. KS1 and 2, or KS2 and 4) were present; any pupils for whom one or more assessments were missing (e.g. because of absence, a school failing to register a level, or the pupil working below the NC Levels) had to be excluded from the analysis.

[8] NB: Calculating our comparison figures in this way assumes that progress is linear; that is, pupils make roughly equal progress from one year to the next. As we know that this is not always the case (for example, pupils' progress tends to be slower in the first couple of years at secondary school), the figures derived should be treated with caution and are used purely as a point for basic comparison.



The impact of AfA on pupils' progress in English

The sample used in this analysis were pupils with SEND in Years 1, 5, 7 and 10 at the start of the 2009/10 school year who were attending mainstream schools and for whom we had scores at both the beginning and end of the project (N = 10,996). All four years groups saw statistically significant improvements in their English PS scores during the AfA pilot (see Table 1).

		PS English
Year 1	Spring 2010	7.48 (1.47)
	Summer 2011	11.91 (3.03)
	Progress	4.43 (2.56)
Year 5	Autumn 2009	16.06 (3.93)
	Summer 2011	22.91 (4.67)
	Progress	6.85 (2.84)
Year 7	Autumn 2009	22.97 (4.71)
	Summer 2011	27.99 (4.71)
	Progress	5.01 (3.56)
Year 10	Autumn 2009	30.36 (8.50)
	Summer 2011	37.02 (8.29)
	Progress	6.66 (7.77)

Table 1 Average progress in English made by pupils in AFA Schools during the pilot (figures in brackets are standard deviations).

The average amount of progress in English during the AfA pilot was **5.74 PS** - this is equivalent to just under 3 NC sub-levels.

36.9% achieved or exceeded expected levels of progress for all pupils nationally (based on the aspiration of 4 PS or 2 NC sub-levels or progress per school year).

The progress made in English by pupils in primary and secondary schools during the AfA pilot is shown below (Figure 2 and Figure 3). Reference lines on each figure show the mean progress made by pupils with and without SEND nationally to allow for comparison (as noted earlier, reference lines for pupils in Year 1 have been adjusted to reflect the fact that their baseline was 3 months later than those pupils in other year groups).

Pupils in Year 1 made better progress over 16 months than pupils with and without SEND nationally and pupils without SEND nationally. These differences were both statistically significant; the associated effect sizes were small. The same effect was seen for the progress of pupils in Year 5 over 19 months; however, in this case the associated effect sizes were very large. Pupils in Year 7 made better progress over 19 months than pupils with SEND nationally but made worse progress than pupils without SEND nationally. These differences were both statistically significant; the associated effect sizes were small and medium respectively. Pupils in Year 10 made better progress over 19 months than pupils with and without SEND nationally. These differences were both statistically significant; the associated effect sizes were medium and small respectively.

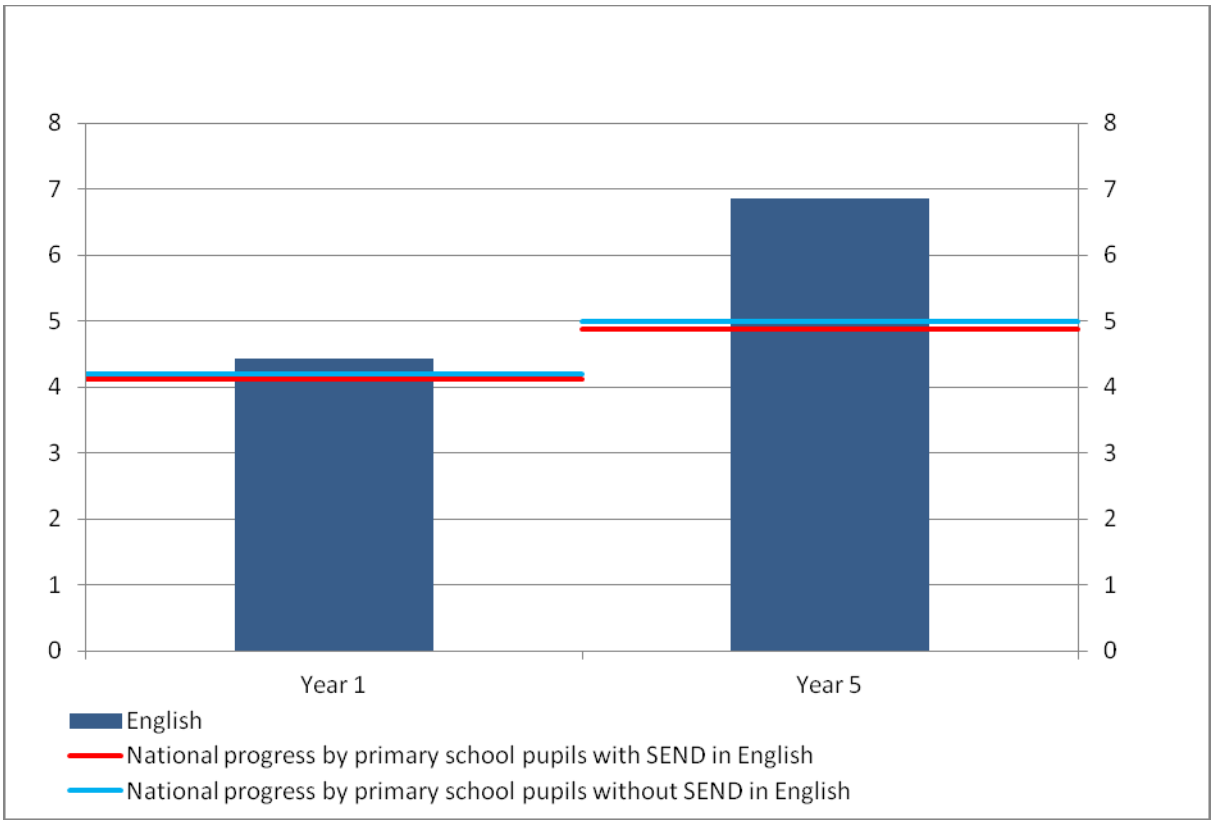


Figure 2 Mean point score progress in English in AfA primary schools

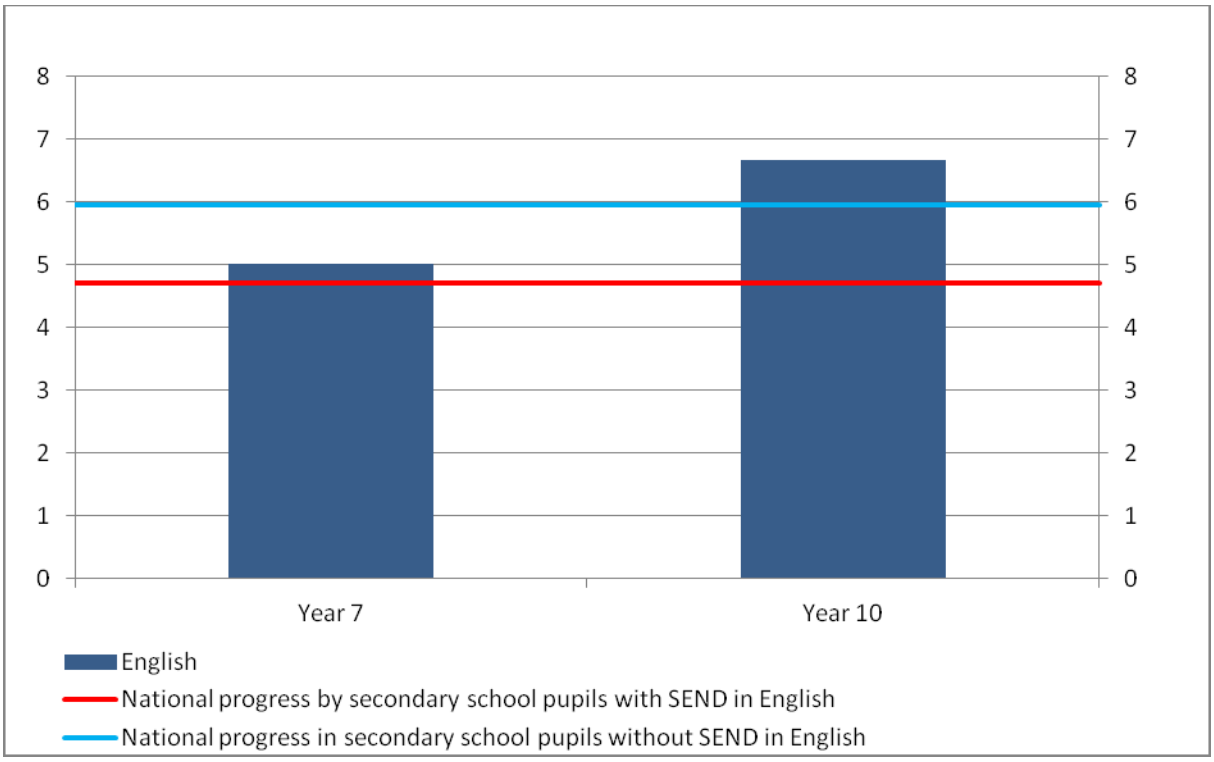


Figure 3 Mean point score progress in English in AfA secondary schools.

Pupils with SEND in each of the four year groups in AfA schools made **significantly better progress in English than pupils with SEND nationally** during the course of the pilot. Pupils in Years 1, 5 and 10 also made **significantly better progress than pupils without SEND nationally**. The effect sizes associated with these differences ranged from small (e.g. Year 1) to very large (e.g. Year 5).

The impact of AfA on pupils' progress in Maths

The sample used in this analysis were pupils with SEND in Years 1, 5, 7 and 10 at the start of the 2009/10 school year who were attending mainstream schools and for whom we had scores at both the beginning and end of the project (N = 11,096). All four year groups saw statistically significant improvements in their Maths PS scores during the AfA pilot (see Table 2).

		PS Maths
Year 1	Spring 2010	7.79 (1.58)
	Summer 2011	12.82 (3.10)
	Progress	**5.03 (2.82)**
Year 5	Autumn 2009	17.00 (3.76)
	Summer 2011	23.49 (4.79)
	Progress	**6.49 (3.23)**
Year 7	Autumn 2009	23.66 (5.21)
	Summer 2011	28.39 (6.01)
	Progress	**4.73 (4.24)**
Year 10	Autumn 2009	28.81 (9.01)
	Summer 2011	34.82 (10.01)
	Progress	**6.01 (8.12)**

Table 2 Average progress in Maths made by pupils in AfA schools during the pilot (figures in brackets are standard deviations).

The average amount of progress in Maths during the AfA pilot was **5.57 PS** – this is equivalent to just under 3 NC sub-levels

41.5% achieved or exceeded expected levels of progress for all pupils nationally (based on the aspiration of 4 PS or 2 NC sub-levels of progress per school year).

The progress made by pupils in Maths in primary and secondary schools during the AfA pilot is shown below (Figure 4 and Figure 5). Reference lines on each figure show the mean progress made by pupils with and without SEND nationally to allow for comparison (as noted earlier, reference lines for pupils in Year 1 have been adjusted to reflect the fact that their baseline was 3 months later than those pupils in other year groups).

Pupils with SEND in Year 1 in AFA schools made better progress over 16 months than pupils with and without SEND nationally. These differences were both statistically significant; the associated effect sizes were large and medium-large respectively. The same effect was seen for the progress of pupils in Year 5 over 19 months; however, in this case the associated effect sizes were very large. Pupils in Year 7 made better progress over 19 months than pupils with SEND nationally but made worse progress than pupils without SEND nationally. These differences were both statistically significant; the associated effect sizes were both small. Pupils in Year 10 made better progress over 19 months than pupils with and without SEND nationally. These differences were both statistically significant; however, the associated effect sizes were both small.

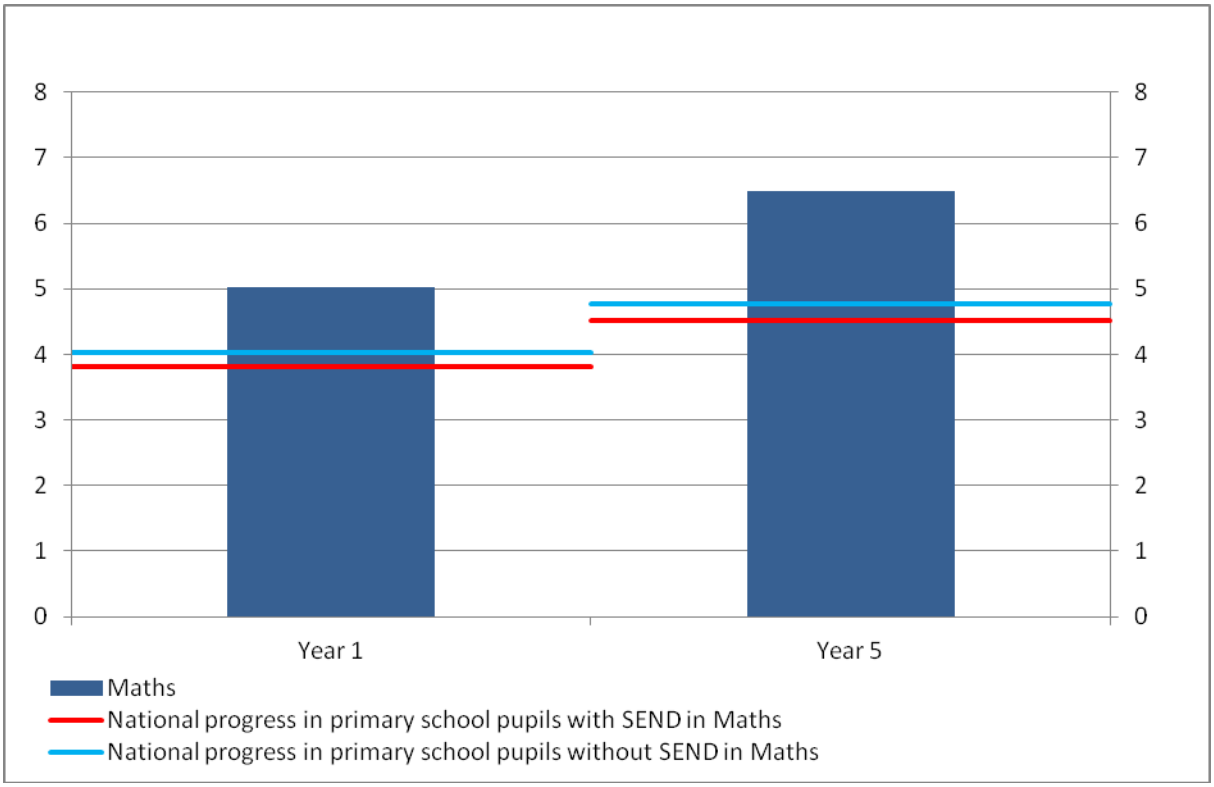


Figure 4 Mean point score progress in Maths in AfA primary schools

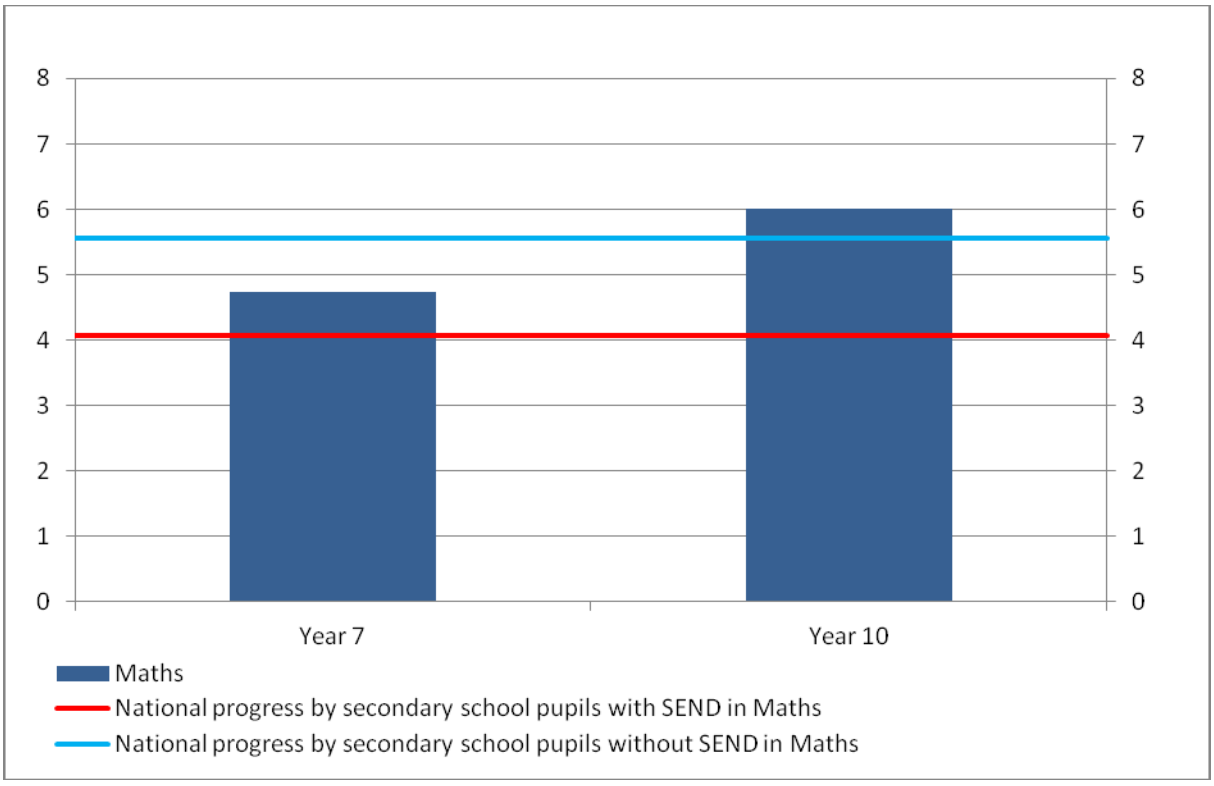


Figure 5 Mean point score progress in Maths in AfA secondary schools.

Pupils in each of the four year groups made **significantly better progress in Maths than pupils with SEND nationally** during the course of the pilot. Pupils in Year 1, 5 and 10 also made **significantly better progress than pupils without SEND nationally**. The effect sizes associated with these differences ranged from small (e.g. Year 10) to very large (e.g. Year 5).

The role of LA, school and individual differences in the academic progress of pupils with SEND

English

We performed two multi-level analyses – one for data from primary schools, and the other for data from secondary schools. The first stage of our analyses involved producing 'empty' models to allow us to determine the proportion of variance in changes in English made by pupils with SEND that is attributable to differences between LAs, schools and individuals. The results of this empty model are shown in Table 3:

		English
Primary	LA	0.3%
	School	**19.2%**
	Pupil	**80.4%**
Secondary	LA	3.2%
	School	**10.1%**
	Pupil	**86.7%**

Table 3 Percentage of variance in changes in English for pupils with SEND during the AfA pilot attributable to differences between LAs, schools and individuals (statistically significant findings in bold).

Several key trends are evident in this table. Firstly, in all cases, the influence of differences between LAs on changes in pupils' academic attainment was minimal and not statistically significant. This does not mean that the support provided by LAs has not been important, but rather that the LAs were not sufficiently different from one another to produce an effect on change at the individual level. Differences between schools were more important, explaining between 19.2% (primary) and 10.1% (secondary) of the variance in changes in pupils' academic attainment. Finally, the largest proportion of variance in scores was always attributable to individual differences between pupils. The proportions of variance explained at both school and pupil levels were statistically significant in the primary and secondary school models.

The next stage in the analysis was the production of a 'full' model, in which key explanatory variables were included at each level. The aim of this full model was to identify which variables at each level might be important in determining changes in pupils' English. At the school level, these included both *structural, compositional and contextual variables* (e.g. school size) and AfA *implementation* variables (e.g. fidelity to the structured conversation model). At the pupil level, the explanatory variables included a range of *socio-demographic* (e.g. eligibility for FSM) and *other* (e.g. SEND primary need) characteristics. A full list of all school and pupil level variables included in the analysis can be found in Appendix 3.

In the *primary* model, the school and pupil level explanatory variables that reached (or approached) statistical significance are presented in Table 4. In interpreting the data, the reader is reminded that the English PS scale score ranges from 1-65, and that the average change score in AfA primary schools was 5.82 (with a standard deviation of 2.97). The co-efficient score represents the amount of change in the response variable (in this case, pupils' English PS scores at the end of the AfA pilot) associated with changes of 1 unit in each explanatory variable. At the school level, for example, we can see that for each 1% increase in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 in English and Maths, there was an associated 0.028 increase in pupils' English PS scores at the end of the AfA pilot. Likewise, at the pupil level, we can see that having primary need identified as SpLD was associated with a 0.4 increase in pupils' English PS scores at the end of the AfA pilot when compared to the reference group of MLD.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	School size	-0.002
	% pupils achieving Level 4 in Eng/Maths	+0.028
Pupil	Year group (compared to 'Year 1')	+0.923 (if 'Year 5')
	Ethnic group (compared to 'White British')	+0.531 (if 'black') -2.441 (if 'Chinese')
	Language group (compared to 'English')	+0.803 (if 'other')
	Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	-0.418 (if 'yes')
	SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.387 (if 'SA+') -1.958 (if 'ST')
	SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD') [9]	+0.400 (if 'SpLD') -2.247 (if 'SLD') +1.181 (if 'BESD') +0.782 (if 'PD') +2.435 (if 'unknown')
	Positive relationships score at baseline	+0.283
	% attendance (09/10)	+0.018
	English PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.880

Table 4 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' English during the AfA pilot (primary schools)

Primary schools with foundations of **higher academic achievement** and those with **smaller pupil numbers** experienced greater progress in English amongst their pupils. Changes in English progress varied among different groups of pupils in primary schools. Children **with more complex needs** (e.g. those at SA+ and with SSEN), and those with **SLD** made relatively less progress. Children identified as having **BESD**, **SpLD** and **PD** all made relatively greater progress, as did those with **higher positive relationships** scores at baseline and those who **attended school more regularly**.

[9] For SEND primary need see 'Acronyms used in the report' p. 11

In the *secondary* model, the school and pupil level explanatory variables that reached (or approached) statistical significance are presented in Table 5. This table is interpreted in the same way as the primary school data (Table 4). The reader is reminded that the English PS scale score ranges from 1-65, and that the average change in PS score in AfA secondary schools was 5.82 (with a standard deviation of 6.07).

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	% of pupils at SA+ or SSEN	-0.220
	% absence	-0.633*
	Aggregated positive relationships at baseline	-4.007
	Aggregated bullying at baseline	-5.019
	Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+2.236 (if 'often')
	School-parent relationships prior to start of AfA (compared to 'very poor')	-6.231 (if 'poor')
	Fidelity to the structured conversation model (0-36)	+0.348
Pupil	Year group (compared to 'Year 7')	+1.970 (if 'Year 10')
	Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.735 (if 'female')
	SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-1.143 (if 'SA+') -3.010 (if ST')
	SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	+1.978 (if BESD') +3.612 (if 'ASD') +3.760 (if 'MSI')
	Behaviour score at baseline	-1.224
	% attendance (09/10)	+0.063
	English PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.614

Table 5 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' English during the AfA pilot (secondary schools)

'*' = marginal, non-significant trend ($p < .10$)

Secondary schools showing **greater fidelity to the structured conversation model** and those whose teachers were more **frequently involved in reviews of targets** saw greater progress in English amongst their pupils. Changes in English progress varied among different groups of pupils in secondary schools. Children at the **latter stages of SEND provision** (e.g. those at SA+ and with SSEN) made relatively less progress, as did those with **higher behaviour problems** scores at baseline. Pupils with **ASD**, **BESD** and **MSI** all made relatively greater progress, as did those who **attended school more regularly**.

Maths

As in the previous analysis, we created separate multi-level models for data from primary and secondary schools. The empty models are presented below in Table 6:

		Maths
Primary	LA	0.1%
	School	**17.8%**
	Pupil	**82.1%**
Secondary	LA	1.2%
	School	**3.8%**
	Pupil	**95%**

Table 6 Percentage of variance in changes in Maths for pupils with SEND during the AfA pilot attributable to differences between LAs, schools and individuals (statistically significant findings in bold).

Several key trends are evident in this table. Firstly, in all cases, the influence of differences between LAs on changes in pupils' academic attainment was minimal and not statistically significant. This does not mean that the support provided by LAs has not been important, but rather that the LAs were not sufficiently different from one another to produce an effect on change at the individual level. Differences between schools were more important, explaining between 17.8% (primary) and 3.8% (secondary) of the variance in changes in pupils' academic attainment. Finally, the largest proportion of variance in scores was always attributable to individual differences between pupils. The proportions of variance explained at both school and pupil levels were statistically significant in the primary and secondary school models.

The results of the full primary model are shown below in Table 7. Interpretation of this table is the same as in previous multi-level analyses. The reader is reminded that the Maths PS scale score ranges from 1-65, and that the average change score in AfA primary schools was 5.86 (with a standard deviation of 3.15).

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	% pupils eligible for FSM	+0.020
	% pupils achieving Level 4 in Eng/Maths	+0.034
	% absence	+0.68
Pupil	Year group (compared to 'Year 1')	-0.840 (if 'Year 5')
	Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.358 (if 'female')
	Ethnic group (compared to 'White British')	+0.588 (if 'mixed')
	Language group (compared to 'English')	+0.600 (if 'other')
	SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.696 (if 'SA+') -2.053 (if 'ST') -1.437 (if 'unknown')
	SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	-1.899 (if 'SLD') +1.237 (if 'BESD') +1.298 (if 'HI')
	Positive relationships score at baseline	+0.786
	% attendance (09/10)	+0.040
	Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.822

Table 7 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' Maths during the AfA pilot (primary schools).

Primary schools with a foundation of **higher academic achievement** saw greater progress in Maths.

Progress in Maths varied among different groups of pupils in secondary schools. Those at the **latter stages of SEND provision** (e.g. those at SA+ or with SSEN) made relatively less progress, as did pupils with **SLD**. Those identified as having **BESD** or **HI** made relatively greater progress, as did those with **higher positive relationships scores** at baseline and those who **attended school more regularly**.

In the *secondary* model, the school and pupil level explanatory variables that reached (or approached) statistical significance are presented in Table 8. Interpretation of this table is the same as in previous multi-level analyses. The reader is reminded that the Maths PS scale score ranges from 1-65, and that the average change score in AfA secondary schools was 5.37 (with a standard deviation of 6.50).

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	% pupils at SA+ or SSEN	-0.505
	% pupils at SA	-0.114
	Aggregated positive relationships at baseline	-5.077*
	Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+2.701 ('if 'often')
	Frequency of parental involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+1.285 (if 'often')
	Range of methods of communication used to inform parents of their child's progress (total count 0-8)	+0.741*
	% of pupils for whom 2 or 3 structured conversations completed in 10/11	+0.057*
Pupil	Year group (compared to 'Year 7')	+1.338 (if 'Year 10')
	Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.968 (if 'female')
	SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-1.216 (if 'SSEN')
	SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	+0.857 (if 'SpLD') +1.662 (if BESD') +3.558 (if 'ASD') +3.563 (if 'MSI')
	Behaviour score at baseline	-1.350
	Positive relationships score at baseline	+1.069
	% attendance (08/09)	+0.076
	Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.793

Table 8 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' Maths PS scores during the AfA pilot (secondary schools).

'*' = marginal, non-significant trend ($p < .10$)

Secondary schools that **involved parents more often in reviewing academic targets**, carried out a **greater proportion of 2 or 3 structured conversations a year** and used a **wider range of methods to inform parents of pupil progress** saw greater progress in Maths.

Progress in Maths varied among different groups of pupils in secondary schools. Those at the **latter stages of SEND provision** (e.g. those with SSEN) made relatively less progress. Pupils identified as having **SpLD**, **BESD**, **ASD** or **MSI** made relatively greater progress, as did those with **higher positive relationships scores** and **less behavioural problems** at baseline and those who **attended school more regularly**.

Sustainability of work on assessment, tracking and intervention

The work around assessment, tracking and intervention for pupils with SEND built upon existing systems that schools had in place. Most of the case study schools reported that they would maintain the developments, refinements and modifications that they had made as a result of their participation in the AfA pilot: *"Because we've got information on the children, we can anticipate the types of needs, the type of resources we might need and adapt our services around it"* (AfA Lead, School 20, LA J). They also reported that the changes they had made were likely to be useful for *all* pupils. For instance, in School 12 (LA F), the modified tracker system developed through the AfA project was trialled with all pupils in Year 9 and has proven to be very valuable in helping pupils and parents in choosing options for Key Stage 4.

> *"I have to say that it will be at the expense of other things. We just haven't got that extra money that we had from AfA. I have been very grateful for the funding, and it's allowed us to get things embedded and we will continue most of AfA. Certainly the AfA philosophy will continue. Some of the things we will have to - because of the cost of it - we will have to look at. But the practices, the staff will still run their courses… because we see there's a need for it. So that has shown us that. And we will keep going all that we can. Conversations will always take place now. The philosophy and the principle is embedded. It's the time element really, staffing that will be hard to keep going."* (AfA Lead, School 11, LA F)

Schools reported that they would also like to maintain the more effective interventions that they had adopted as part of their work in this strand of the project. Whilst some felt that this may be difficult due to funding, time and staffing constraints, others were planning to adapt interventions or find alternative sources of funding. Several schools had focused on sustainability from the outset (a theme that we will return to later in the report), and invested in staff training and reusable resources.

> *"I think it has always been there in the back of my mind about how this will carry on. I think right from the very beginning it would have been foolish not to think that. So it has always been part of a long term plan but even more so now because come summer the funding is not going to be there. That does not worry me too much now to be honest because I know we have things in place that we can still run with. Actually some of the best parts of the AfA project have not been financially based, truth be told it has been about relationships, all the free things really."* (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I)

Chapter 5: Implementation and impact of AfA Strand 2 (structured conversations with parents)

Highlights of Chapter 5

Schools implemented **2 or 3 structured conversations with a large proportion of parents** of children with SEND in the target cohorts, and their **completion rate increased in the second year of the AfA pilot**. Their efforts to engage 'hard to reach' parents met with success. The number of schools who reported not being able to complete a single structured conversation with at least one parent **reduced by nearly a third**. There was a **trend towards a greater completion rate for structured conversations in schools where the AfA Lead was a head teacher or a member of the SLT**. Both **completion rates** and **reported improvements in parental relations** were also correlated with **fidelity to the structured conversation model** and training provided.

The structured conversations were perceived as a very useful vehicle for **changing the dynamic of school-parent relationships**. They enabled a more **holistic view** of individual children and their needs to develop, and led to a shift in parental engagement in many schools. **Parents felt that they were listened to and given a voice**. As a result, genuine **partnerships** were forged between school and home.

Most schools perceived Strand 2 to be the most successful aspect of the entire AfA pilot. The proportion of schools reporting excellent relationships with parents increased by **36% (from 12% to 48%)**, and the proportion reporting poor relationships with parents decreased by **9.5% (from 11% to 1.5%).** Our parent survey followed this trend, demonstrating an increase in engagement and confidence during the pilot; however, this was not statistically significant.

Parental engagement and confidence increased particularly for pupils with **SpLD** or **BESD**. There were relative decreases for those in **Year 7** and at **SA+**.

In terms of sustainability, more than **90% of participating schools reported that they intended to continue using the structured conversation model** after the conclusion of the AfA pilot. Schools plan to use the model flexibly, based upon local circumstances and individual needs.

<u>Recommendations for practitioners:</u>

- Leadership in participating schools should ensure that the more **human resource-intensive elements of AfA, for example the structured conversations with parents, are fully supported**, particularly in the early stages of implementation before processes and practices become fully embedded.
- The **implementation of structured conversations with parents should be faithful to the original guidance**; schools should aim to conduct **at least two conversations per year** with parents where this is feasible and appropriate to individual needs and circumstances.
- The **class teacher in primary schools, or tutor or head of year in secondary schools should act as a main point of contact** with parents, in addition to the SENCo.

In this chapter we focus on how schools went about implementing Strand 2 of the AfA pilot (structured conversations with parents) and the impact this had on school-parent relationships and parental engagement and confidence. In doing so, we draw upon a variety of sources – including our school case studies, school level surveys, and parent surveys.

Implementation of structured conversations with parents

The AfA guidance set out an ambitious target that up to 3 structured conversations would be conducted with parents of all children with SEND in target cohorts by the end of each school year. Our school level surveys asked schools how well they had met this expectation. Figure 6 shows the proportion of parents with whom 3, 2, 1 or 0 structured conversations had been completed in the second year of the pilot. Overall, the data indicates an improvement over time, with a much greater proportion of parents taking part in 3 structured conversations in 2010/11 than in 2009/10. In both school years the proportion of parents who had not taken part in any structured conversations was low – less than 6%. The number of schools who reported being unable to conduct a single structured conversation with at least one parent reduced over time – from 144 in 2009/10 to 103 in 2010/11 – suggesting that schools efforts to engage with harder to reach parents were becoming more successful. There was a trend towards a greater completion rate in schools where the AfA lead was a member of the SLT (see Figure 6), although this was not statistically significant. When the AfA lead was a head teacher, on average 54.8% of parents participated in 3 structured conversations at the school, compared to 32.5% where he/she was a SENCo and 29.9% where he/she was a class teacher.

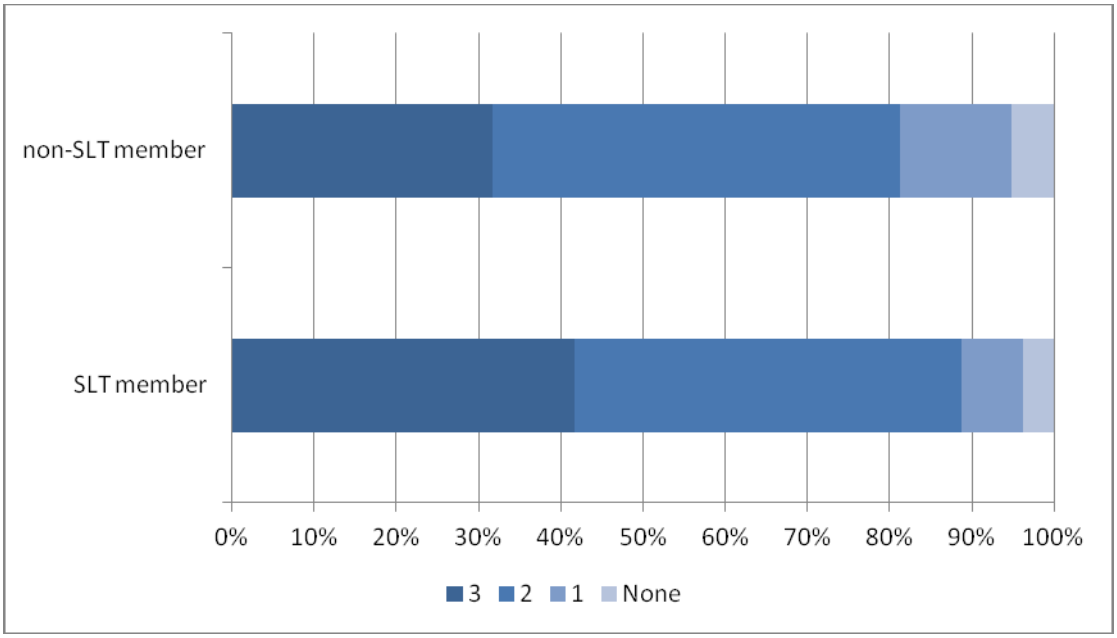


Figure 6 Proportion of structured conversations completed during the second year of AfA by school lead membership of SLT

Data from the second school level survey showed special schools (63%) and primary schools (41%) completed 3 structured conversations with the largest proportion of parents, with lower proportions in both secondary schools and PRUs (both 30%). Similarly, only 1% of parents in special schools and 3% in primary schools had not participated in a single structured conversation, compared to 8% of

pupils in secondary schools. All parents of pupils attending PRUs at had at least 1 structured conversation.

Schools' **completion rate for structured conversations improved** over the course of the AfA pilot. Their **efforts to engage with harder to reach parents** contributed to this success.

Training and fidelity to the structured conversation model

Training for the structured conversations was offered in each LA by the University of East London and 62.9% of schools reported attending this. 57.2% of schools had LA level training and 31.7% used additional forms of training, mainly in the form of in-house cascading back to other staff, cluster group training within LAs or led by Lead Teachers in LAs, and/or peer training by other key teachers (e.g. observations of other teachers conducting a structured conversation).

Our school level survey also examined how closely schools followed the original structured conversation guidelines (e.g. the amount of time set aside, agreeing and setting actions and targets following each conversation). Schools' responses to these questions were summed to arrive at an overall 'fidelity score' ranging from 0-36, with higher scores indicative of greater adherence to the guidelines. In both school level surveys, schools on average reported relatively high levels of fidelity, although scores were slightly higher in the second year of the pilot (30.33) than in the first (29.81). The more closely a school was able to adhere to the process of the structured conversation the more likely they were to hold more structured conversations. Schools' fidelity scores were significantly positively correlated with the proportion of parents with whom 3 structured conversations had been completed, and negatively correlated with the proportion for whom 2 or 1 structured conversations were completed.

Changing school-parent relationships through structured conversations

A key element in this strand of AfA was, *"designated time to get to know what parents feel and take onboard their hopes and aspirations for their children"* (Key Teacher, School 18, LA I). It was felt that the structured conversations offered school staff something new and unique that enabled them to get to know about their pupils' needs, aspirations and lives beyond school in much more depth than they had previously, contributing to a more "holistic" view. They also provided schools with *"a really valuable way of thinking about children's progress', which has had an impact on their practices and provision"* (AfA Lead, School 19, LA J). The process of having three conversations per year was seen by some schools as a chance to formulate a joint working agreement with parents in which they could map progress throughout the year.

> *"The structured conversations give you a wider picture of each child and actually some of the children were very active at home and doing a whole variety of things. One child in particular, she's a really skilled musician and we didn't know that …and actually found out quite a lot about individual children."* (Key Teacher, School 9, LA E)

"It challenges the concept that some students have that traditionally parents were only brought in when a student was in trouble. Our key teachers have been at pains when this was started to speak to the students and say, 'you are not in trouble - we want to celebrate how well you are doing and we want your parents to come in'. They feel really special that this is happening about them and they are really proud and they will go and seek out their key teacher and say 'I haven't forgotten it is next week'. And it is really positive." (AfA Lead, School 8, LA D)

Schools also reported a change in the general culture of parental engagement through the structured conversations. Whilst some parents were previously very reluctant to approach schools, this new way or working provided something of a paradigm shift (one school in particular reported an increase in the involvement of fathers in their children's education – School 8, LA D). Many parents began to view their child's school as collaborating with them in their child's progress, listening to their views, and working in their best interests. As a result, schools noticed that some parents felt more *"comfortable coming in to school and asking about things"* (Key Teacher, School 7, LA D), to the extent that they were viewed as a genuine *"point of contact"* for support and advice (AfA Lead, School 19, LA J). Overall, the structured conversations acted as *"a really good vehicle to get positive relationships going"* (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I). There was evidence that this culture shift spread, with other parents (beyond the AfA cohort) feeling more encouraged to come forward and talk to teachers (school 7, LA D), and benefits being seen for other children (e.g. in one school, teachers helped an older sibling of a child with SEND after they managed to initially engage the parent through the structured conversations (School 9, LA E).

"I think the strategy for getting parents to talk about their child first rather than us jumping in is interesting, you know, I think that's a really good idea that we can fly with." (AfA Lead, School 10, LA F)

The structured conversations enabled schools and parents to find common ground and work together on solutions to ensure that pupils made good academic progress. However, they were also used to deal with issues such as confidence, social and emotional skills, and other broader factors that affect both home life and school based learning (e.g. bed-time routines for younger pupils). Schools were able to use the information acquired through the conversations to extend or adapt their provision, or put additional support systems in place for pupils and their families. Examples of work undertaken following structured conversations included the revision of Individual Educations Plans (IEPs) to include jointly negotiated targets (School 9, LA E); a family care worker visit from the Joint Access Team to the family of a child with severe disabilities to provide advice on support issues (School 18, LA I); and the introduction of drum lessons for a pupil with problems of co-ordination and anger management (School 16, LA H). One school (school 16, LA H) were planning evening classes for parents, as they have found during structured conversations that this is something that many parents felt they would benefit from. Finally, in one case, the structured conversations led to a mother deciding to take further qualifications and become a teaching assistant (School 5, LA C).

Parents' views

Parents had a similarly positive experience of the structured conversations. They felt very appreciative of the time devoted to them to raise their concerns and aspirations, share their ideas, and feel *"more included in the whole picture"* (Parent, School 8, LA D). There was also *"a real sense of parents getting a better understanding of about what their child needs"* (Parent, School 18, LA I).

"It is like they seem to have more of a personal view about him which I prefer because I like the feedback off them… I thought they were really good. To be honest I have always been scared of teachers, I don't know why but. I am really quite impressed". (Parent, School 8, LA D)

"It allowed me to voice any concerns or any suggestions." (Parent, School 7, LA D)

The conversations empowered parents generally through creating a more balanced dynamic between home and school, and providing them with more information about the range of provision available: *"We had a meeting in January with the teacher who asked us what we wanted for Chris. We were not aware what was available so you can't really ask for something when you don't know if it is available or not"* (Parent, School 17, LA I). As a result, parents of pupils with SEND were able to play a more active role in contributing to decisions about their children's education.

Engaging hard to reach parents

Despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback on this strand of AfA, some schools expressed concerns about the most 'hard to reach' parents. One school (Key Teacher, school 8, LA D) commented on five parents who were *"absolutely too busy - or not interested"*. Several other schools reported concerns about parents who don't turn up to take part in the conversations and as a result expressed some frustration at the amount of useful teacher time wasted through non-attendance. However, schools also expressed determination to engage such parents by whatever means possible. For example, one school used the positive experience of those parents who *had* attended structured conversations to try and facilitate engagement among parents in the community who *hadn't* (school 18, LA I). Other examples of successful strategies included picking parents up to bring them to school (School 4, LA B); conducting the conversations on home visits; and, holding meetings at the times most convenient to the parents (e.g. in the evening) (School 6, LA C). As mentioned earlier, data from our school level surveys indicated that these strategies were successful, with the number of schools who reported being unable to conduct a single structured conversation with at least one parent reducing over time.

Perceived impact

"We were all a little bit sceptical at first… but once we got into it and we got the response from parents and realised how much more information it was giving us and what a better link it was creating, it was like the road to Damascus really. We realised, why haven't we done this before? This is having such a major impact, this is so important…. and it's not just with the child's individual development, it's this whole idea of liaison between home and school and making parents feel positive about what the school is doing for their child. Very much more this partnership role. So I think that's probably the biggest ... of all." (Key Teacher, School 11, LA F)

This strand of AfA was one of the resounding successes of the project for schools and parents alike. As one school put it, it has been *"the most powerful part of the project"*, and *"an absolute roaring success"* AfA Lead, School 18, LA I). At the school level, our surveys asked schools to rate the quality of relationships with parents both prior to and at the end of the pilot (on a 4-point scale from 'very poor' to 'excellent'). **These ratings improved significantly; for example the proportion of schools reporting 'excellent' relationships with parents increasing from 12% to 48%, and conversely the proportion reporting 'poor' relationships with parents reducing from 11% to 1.5%.** Ratings at the end of the pilot were

significantly positively correlated with the proportion of parents with whom 3 structured conversations were completed, and negatively correlated with the proportion for whom 1 or 0 structured conversations were completed; thus, parental relationships were reported to be better in schools where more structured conversations had been completed. School relationships with parents prior to AfA were *not* associated with the number of structured conversations completed (meaning that it was not necessarily schools which already had good relationships with parents that managed a greater completion rate).

The introduction of **structured conversations has been associated with improved parental relationships in schools**.

The feedback provided in our case study schools provided a more detailed account of the mechanisms underpinning the perceived improvements noted above. The structured conversations gave teachers the opportunity to focus on the positive achievements of pupils rather than the negative aspects typically discussed during parent-school meetings. Parents were given a "voice" and felt more able to discuss their concerns in a non-threatening situation: *"There have been changes in the way we work. I think particularly in the way of gaining the views of parents, starting with the views of parents as opposed to the school thrusting the agenda. Trying to get a gauge of where their thinking is and what they feel their children need…. and they're taking more of an ownership and it's written down, so they kind of feel an ownership for it. They can look back and see what targets their child's being set"* (AfA Lead, School 10, LA E). Teachers found that they had the time to listen to parents rather than just talk and that this resulted in a greater understanding of the perspectives of both parents and pupils; indeed, in one school (School 20, LA J) the structured conversations were renamed as "listening conversations" to reflect this change in the dynamic of school-parent interactions.

> *"I used to run all the IEP meetings and then I would feed back to the class teacher, I have now got class teachers running the structured conversations and they are coming back to me. So it is actually a much better management structure."* (Lead Teacher, LA J)

A further benefit was that teachers became more aware and understanding of their pupils' needs and potential as a result of the additional background information that emerged during the structured conversations, resulting in a greater sense of professional responsibility and ownership in the classroom. Thus, the structured conversations played a central role in ensuring that meeting the needs of children with SEND was not solely the remit of SENCOs or TAs. Additionally, in many cases parents developed a greater understanding of SEND and associated school processes, which enabled them to work with teachers on the setting of more focused, achievable targets. This resulted in shared aims and co-operation between school and home, allowing the reinforcement and consolidation of skills across both settings. As one AfA lead put it, *"it was all about parental involvement and a better understanding of the SEND system, because I do think SEND has a stigma and I think parents new to the system get very worried and don't really necessarily understand the system properly and because you have the time to do it, people were able to explain it fully and then talk about how it was going to help their child and that this wasn't just a label that their child was going to be stuck with"* (AfA Lead, School 5, LA C).

Quantitative analysis of the impact of AfA on parental engagement and confidence

We now turn to our quantitative analysis of the impact of AfA on parental engagement and confidence during the course of the pilot. This analysis makes use of the engagement and confidence strand of our parental survey, and considers the change in scores on this section of the survey from the beginning to the end of the pilot (N= 283). As there were insufficient survey returns from parents in comparison schools, our analysis considers only parents of pupils in AfA schools. Furthermore, the lower survey response rate associated with the parent sample precluded the use of multi-level modelling; we therefore use a single-level regression model when examining factors contributing to changes in scores. As a result of these factors, the findings outlined below should be treated with caution, and considered exploratory rather than definitive.

As with the other strands of our surveys, parental engagement and confidence scores can range from 0-3. There was an increase over time (M = 0.04, SD = 0.59); however, our analysis showed that this trend was not statistically significant.

The role of individual differences in changes in parental engagement and confidence

As noted above, the sample of parents for whom we had survey returns at both the beginning and end of the AfA pilot was insufficient for multi-level modelling. As a result, we were unable to examine school-level factors that may have been associated with increased parental engagement and confidence. Instead, we ran a single-level regression model, the results of which allowed us to examine factors at the pupil level (e.g. age, primary need) contributing to change.

The model was statistically significant in predicting parental engagement and confidence, and pupil variables together accounted for 43% of the variance in scores at the end of the pilot. In practice, this means that the various individual differences between pupils (e.g. SEND primary need) included in our analysis played an important role in changes in parental engagement and confidence. The pupil level explanatory variables that reached (or approached) statistical significance are presented in Table 9.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
Pupil	Year group (compared to 'Year 1')	-0.511 (if 'Year 7')
	Ethnic group (compared to 'White British')	+0.582 (if 'Asia')
		+0.929 (if 'unclassified')
	SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.144 (if 'SA+')
	SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	+0.172 (if 'SpLD')
		+0.241 (if 'BESD')
	Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.023
	Engagement and confidence score at baseline	+0.460

Table 9 Pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in parental engagement and confidence during the AfA pilot

Parents of children with **SpLD** and **BESD**, and parents of **Asian** ethnicity reported greater than average increases in engagement and confidence. Parents of children in **Year 7** and those at **SA+** reported relative decreases.

Sustainability of the structured conversation model

Our second school level survey indicated that an overwhelming 93.41% of participating schools intended to continue using the structured conversation model after the conclusion of the AfA pilot. This gives a clear indication of the success of this strand of the project, particularly given the commitment of human resources required. Of those schools planning to continue this strand of AfA, 39.42% planned to continue using the structured conversation model as specified in the guidance for schools (e.g. 3 per year; one per school term). Very small proportions of schools reported that they planned to complete 2 (3.21%) or 1 (5.13%) structured conversations per year with parents of children with SEND. A larger proportion – 19.23% - reported that they intended to use the model flexibly rather than complete a fixed amount per year with parents of all pupils with SEND. Examples included conducting a structured conversation when a given pupil moved onto the special needs register, and completing more structured conversations with parents of pupils with greater or more complex needs. In relation to the latter, 54.5% of schools wished to continue structured conversations for pupils with statements of SEND and 62.3% with pupils at School Action Plus, and only 30% wished to do them with all pupils with SEND.

Our qualitative case study data supported the above findings and highlighted several important further issues relating to sustainability. As above, schools indicated that they wanted to continue using the structured conversation model as they felt it had been the most effective strand of AfA. As reported earlier, parents were also very positive about their experiences. Several teachers felt that the relationships that they had developed with parents through the AfA pilot would be maintained even if the formal structured conversations were to cease. However, this was not always the case: *"If those structured conversations just suddenly stop, then it kind of detracts from everything we've done and all that relationship building… we've got to start thinking about the legacy of AfA because that has been a definite positive"* (AfA Lead, School 8, LA D).

Although most schools observed that time constraints and a lack of funding for supply cover to enable teachers to be released from the classroom threatened the sustainability of the structured conversations, they planned to maintain them in a modified form. Proposed changes included reducing the length of conversations, particularly those following the initial meeting, and holding two rather than three a year. For example, *"it could be that the parent eventually says 'well, I'm happy with just the evenings again because we've got this link going so I don't need that much time.' I wouldn't have thought you'd have a structured conversation with a Year 1 parent that in Year 6 you'd still be doing that. You'd like to think that it all got… to a point with them where a quick phone call or a chat now and again was sufficient and they were happy with it"* (AfA Lead, School 15, LA H).

Other suggested adaptations/modifications included reducing the number of pupils involved (for example, conducting structured conversations with parents of pupils at SA+ or with SSEN), use of teacher planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time for meeting parents, and in one secondary school, training TAs to carry out the structured conversations. However, this was planned in such a way that teachers would still be centrally involved in the process: *"English staff and Maths staff are approached before the conversations take place, so we know exactly where that student is up to, exactly where they need to be,* [and] *some steps for progress that that the parents could help with. That's not going to change … the information's going to come from teachers but its going to be facilitated by people who know those students best"* (AfA Lead, School 8, LA D).

In terms of transferability, a mark of this success and perceived impact of this strand of AfA was seen in the fact that some schools expressed plans to roll out structured conversations with parents of children without SEND or even across the whole school (School 20, LA J). Several schools felt that it was the skills, principles and ethos of the structured conversations that were particularly important, and planned to extend training to all staff so that these could be integrated into existing systems (e.g. Parents' Evenings) and embedded more broadly into daily school practices: *"There's the ideas we can take forward, the way we speak to the parents and ask for their ideas and the whole way of communicating with the parents – lots of ideas we can take forward"* (AfA Lead, School 10, LA E).

More than **90% of participating schools reported that they intended to continue using the structured conversation model** after the conclusion of the AfA pilot. Schools plan to use the model flexibly, based upon **local circumstances** and **individual needs**.

Chapter 6: Strand 3 Wider Outcomes

Highlights of Chapter 6

Schools responded very positively to the flexibility inherent in Strand 3 of AfA. They saw each of the **5 wider outcomes as being closely related** (for example, developing positive relationships as a means of improving behaviour), and indeed drew links between their work in these areas and other strands of the project (for example, promoting wider outcomes such as attendance by focusing on them during structured conversations with parents). For each of the 5 outcomes a **range of strategies and approaches were reported**; a recurrent theme was that the nature of work undertaken was determined very much by local contexts and circumstances and the needs of pupils within each school.

Taken as a whole, our data suggested that **AfA led to demonstrable improvements in a number of wider outcomes for pupils with SEND**. Our multi-level analyses showed that schools played an important role in determining changes in each of these outcomes. Some of the recurrent themes (that appeared in at least two of our multi-level models) across these analyses were:

School level

- **Setting/context/foundations that enabled/influenced change:**
  - **Stronger school-parent relationships prior to the start of AfA**
  - **Higher proportions of pupils from potentially vulnerable groups (e.g. English as an additional language, SA, SA+ and SSEN)**
  - **Higher academic achievement**
  - **Overall school attendance**
  - **Aggregate outcome measures at baseline**
- **AfA implementation activities that appeared to facilitate positive outcomes:**
  - **AfA lead membership of the SLT**
  - **Increased frequency of teacher and/or parent involvement in reviewing APP targets**
  - **Structured conversation practice: higher proportions of pupils for whom 2 or 3 structured conversations were completed and/or fidelity to the structured conversation model**
  - **More comprehensive range of APP interventions used**
  - **Larger range of individuals who have access to pupil information**

Pupil level

- **Groups of learners more likely to experience relatively better outcomes:**
  - **Girls**
  - **Those with higher Maths or English PS scores at the start of AfA**
- **Groups of learners more likely to experience relatively worse outcomes:**
  - **Pupils with BESD**
  - **Older pupils**
  - **Pupils eligible for FSM**

The above trends resonate strongly with the qualitative data gathered throughout the course of the project. The importance of AfA being driven forward by the head teacher and SLT in schools was re-affirmed, as was the notion of the AfA initiative being most effective when it is built upon strong foundations (for example, school-parent relationships) and existing good practice (as evidenced by academic achievement). At the level of implementation, the emergent theme of the centrality of parental engagement and involvement and the use of the structured conversation model as a vehicle for encouraging and supporting this was clearly evidenced. Furthermore, the concept of each of the three strands of AfA being inherently 'intertwined' was borne out. However, despite these very promising findings, there were groups of learners who made less progress than others – in particular, pupils whose primary need was identified as BESD and those eligible for FSM.

Recommendations for practitioners:

- Developing provision for wider outcomes should be **determined by local contexts and circumstances**, and the needs of pupils within each school. Schools may benefit from **more explicit guidance and training** in relation to developing positive relationships, improving attendance, reducing behaviour problems, eliminating bullying, and promoting wider participation. The relationship between each of these outcomes should also be emphasized.
- **The inter-related nature of the three strands of AfA should be emphasized**; this will help to ensure that schools take a holistic, rather than piecemeal approach to implementation.
- Schools should ensure that provision is put in place such that **groups of potentially vulnerable learners (e.g. those at SA+, and/or those with BESD) have the support they need** to achieve their potential.

In this chapter we focus on how schools went about implementing Strand 3 of the AfA pilot (provision for wider outcomes) and the impact this had on a range of outcomes. In doing so we draw upon a variety of sources – including our school case studies, school level surveys, teacher and parent surveys, and attendance data provided by participating LAs.

Implementation of provision for wider outcomes

The AfA guidance required schools to select two of five wider outcomes (developing positive relationships, improving behaviour, eliminating bullying, increasing attendance, and improving wider participation) upon which they would focus their provision during the course of the pilot. In our school level survey we asked AfA leads to report which wider outcomes they had chosen – this is displayed in Figure 7 and Table 10:

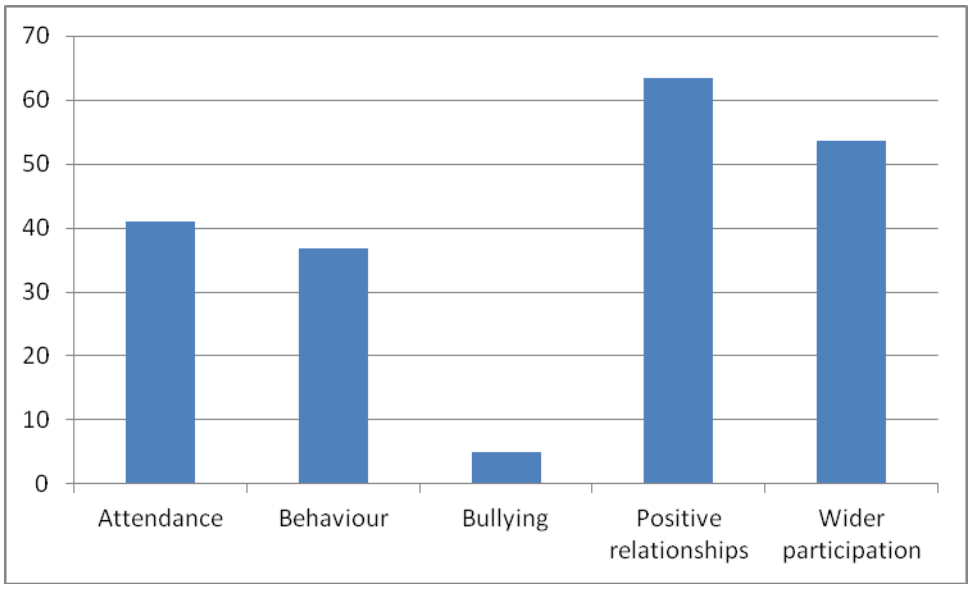


Figure 7 Proportion of schools choosing focusing on each wider outcome during the AfA pilot[10]

Most LAs advised schools to conduct a gap analysis to identify areas of need when selecting the wider outcomes or to focus on extending areas already identified as priorities: *"We suggested that they look at their school improvement plan and they focus on things that are already a focus for the school, so that they're not doing two…they're not doing things additional for AFA and that this is part of their whole school development plan"* (LA Lead, LA J). Some schools' selections were informed by LA assessment of need (e.g. *"all our PA schools, persistent absences, have been told they must use and target attendance as one of the strands"* – LA Lead, LA H) or LA-wide objectives, whilst others were encouraged to focus on a specific outcome as part of a cluster group of schools so that resources could be shared. Several schools viewed the outcomes as mutually supportive and inter-related, and focused on addressing individual pupils' needs rather than targeting just two specific outcomes.

[10] As each school was required to nominate 2 outcomes, the sum of the % proportions is 200

	Attendance	Behaviour	Bullying	Positive Relationships
Behaviour	10.5%	-		
Bullying	0.9%	1.2%	-	
Positive Relationships	13.8%	17.7%	2.4%	-
Wider Participation Activities	15.9%	7.5%	0.6%	29.6%

Table 10 Pairings of wider outcomes chosen by AfA pilot schools

The most popular wider outcomes were positive relationships (63.5%) and wider participation (53.6%). These two were also the most common "pairing" chosen by schools (29.6%), followed by behaviour and positive relationships (17.7%). However, one very noticeable overarching theme from our case study work was how schools drew clear links between the variety of outcomes, and across into the other strands of the project. They saw the outcomes as inter-related rather than discrete. This might help to explain the popularity of work on developing positive relationships and wider participation, since provision in these areas could conceivably underpin other outcomes. Schools reported that this was indeed the case, and they were able to use activities and strategies associated with certain wider outcomes as a vehicle to make improvements "across the board". For example, in School 15 (LA H), a pupil that received LSA support on speaking targets was improving her attendance. The pupil was very shy and would not come to school if she thought she might have to read in the class, but as her confidence in reading improved, her attendance also increased. Another school (school 18, LA I) felt that through their providing several extra curricular activities, children's attendance would increase on days that those activities were running. In School 16 (LA H), drama provision designed to develop positive relationships boosted the confidence of "quieter children", encouraging their wider participation in school life. School 17 (LA I) suggested that their after-school provision has improved pupils' behaviour at home. In an example of interlinked practice between Strands 2 and 3, School 10 (LA F) tried to improve attendance and behaviour by specifically targeting these two areas during the structured conversations with parents.

> *"It is up and running. I think in each of the 3 projects, which we will be seeing over the next couple of days the maths project, the book club and the planters building project. In each of those cases there is potential for more and so I think we have only just started scratching the surface really. But I think that is good, I think we are heading in the right direction"* (AfA Lead, School 12, LA F).

Schools drew clear links between the different wider outcomes and strands of AfA, and many saw **work in one area directly impacting in others**.

Strategies and approaches used by schools to promote wider outcomes

A key emergent theme was the flexibility afforded within Strand 3 of AfA. Schools responded well to this as it enabled them to set up strategies and approaches that were appropriate to their contexts and circumstances and the needs of their pupils. This is reflected in the wide and varied examples provided by schools of work undertaken in promoting wider outcomes. The reader is also referred to Appendix 5, which provides quantitative indications of the proportion of schools undertaking exemplar strategies and approaches for each outcome specified in the original guidance for schools.

Developing positive relationships

Developing positive relationships was the single most popular wider outcome chosen by participating schools, at least in part because it was perceived to underpin other outcomes, such as improving behaviour. Several schools already had strategies in place relating to positive relationships (e.g. Social and emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)) upon which they could build during the AfA pilot. Some of the specific strategies used included the use of "buddies" and mentors (School 12, LA F; School 15, LA H), building friendships during lunch times (School 3, LA B), teamwork building, social skills training, circles of friends, and various opportunities derived from the SEAL programme (e.g. assemblies - School 7, LA D) or Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. Additionally, several schools reported that staff had undertaken continuing professional development in relevant areas to give them ideas of how to build positive relationships (e.g. training courses on mental health). Finally, one school developed a project to promote emotional wellbeing, involving a counsellor to work with groups of children (School 11, LA F).

> *"We felt that if we developed the positive relationship side and children feeling confident with each other and what to do in different situations, that might then help them with dealing with things in the playground and their perception of being bullied, which is often a perception and not necessarily what's happening. And also we felt that with all the other work that we're doing hopefully there would be an impact on attendance as well."* (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I)

School 18 (LA I) set up a group called "Diversity", designed to raise the profile of children with SEND by encouraging *"them to nurture their self esteem by talking about the issues that come across and the barriers to learning that they have on a daily basis"* (AfA Lead). The group (Year 1 and Year 5 pupils) ran on a weekly basis during lunch time, during which children had "tell time" and celebrated successes for all children, but particularly those with SEND. The same school involved parents for certain playtime sessions where children and parents learned games together, an approach that they considered would, *"engage parents and support children at the same time"* (AfA Lead). One school reported a parental need for help with positive relationships, and felt that by engaging parents and supporting them, they could help to tackle a "deadlock" of disaffection (School 12, LA F). A Key Teacher in School 11 in the same LA also implied that some parents needed support *"to look at things in a much more holistic manner"* (Key Teacher, School 11, LA F). Other schools also reported involving parents in their strategies to build positive relationships (school 8, LA D).

Improving wider participation

Schools focusing upon the wider participation of pupils with SEND were extremely active, offering a range of clubs before and after school and during lunchtime. The "wide awake" club, for example, was a free breakfast club, created through project funding, and was offered to pupils in the AfA cohorts as well as others in the school (School 15, LA H). Some of the older pupils at this school were used as mentors for the younger ones, helping them academically, socially and emotionally. School 17 (LA I) liaised with the extended school co-ordinator in order to provide activities that would keep children with emerging behaviour difficulties engaged with school. School 12 (LA F) started a Maths club and a book club, which encouraged parents to participate with their children so as to provide a common approach between school and home and make Maths more enjoyable through play activities. Similarly, the book club aimed to encourage parents to become more actively involved in the development of their children's literacy. These joint school-home activities were helping to boost parent engagement, presenting further evidence of the 'convergent' character of the three strands of AfA.

> *"They have also been given some maths games and it is brilliant. It is like a board game you have all these numbers and these cars and you have to add or subtract whatever to make these numbers, but because it is a board game you can do it with your whole family. The pupil loves it and it is a bit of sort of friendly competition between him and his brother as well."* (Parent, School 12, LA F)

> *"Children who are reluctant to come to school, on those days that these things are happening, you always see them here because it is their day that they want to be here. Then that has a knock on effect because that increases confidence and they come the next day and so evidentially it has increased our attendance figures of SEND children."* (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I)

Increasing attendance

Strategies to improve attendance included breakfast/wide-awake clubs (School 15, LA H), rewards for children who have attendance problems (School 10, LA E), focusing on attendance in discussions with parents (School 10, LA E) and actively involvement of an educational welfare officer (School 6, LA C; School 20, LA J). Staff were particularly creative in developing their own bespoke strategies for individual pupils. For example, in one school (School 11, LA F) a Key Teacher devised a chart with the task of getting ready for school broken down into five targets for a boy whose punctuality had become a cause for concern. When the pupil in question met his targets for whole week, his achievement was celebrated by the school during assembly. School 2 (LA A) offered hairdressing lessons *"first thing in the morning – that tends to be a crowd puller"* (Key Teacher) to deal with pupils arriving late and/or or unauthorised absences in the mornings. Another school (School 20, LA J) put together an action plan in co-operation with the education welfare officer, who was actively involved in attendance meetings. School 7 (LA D) already had a number of attendance strategies and personnel in place (e.g. school health advisor, school liaison officer) but

> *"Our Office Manager who came up with the idea of a Snappy Attendance and went out and bought this life-size crocodile outfit that members of staff take turns in wearing (which is rather hilarious) and snappy goes out in the yard and gives out raffle tickets for prizes and then every Friday we have an attendance cup which Snappy gives out. So it is all really big fun and the children are really competitive over it."* (AfA Lead, School, 18 LA I)

reported that AfA, *"has actually accelerated the need to implement the strategies"* (AfA Lead). Some of their AfA funding was used for the school liaison officer to be involved in several panels (e.g. health and punctuality panels), often involving parents.

Improving behaviour

Many schools attempted to improve behaviour by boosting self-esteem, changing children's attitudes, and establishing positive relationships. For example, in School 16 (LA H) children with SEND were involved in a project outside of school working with other people in order to build their confidence and team-work, and improve their social skills. Another school (School 15, LA H) reported that behaviour problems in their school were seen as an issue relating to self-esteem and confidence rather than disruptiveness. They used AfA funding to train a Teaching Assistant (TA) in art therapy; this was put into practice with a girl with a limited vocabulary, who found a new way of expressing her emotions. The school viewed this training and the skills acquired by the TA as sustainable and were optimistic that it would help other children with similar difficulties. Other strategies used by schools to improve behaviour included use of circle time (School 15, LA H) and SEAL (School 15, LA H; School 17, LA I; School 7, LA D). School 17 also explored the use of nurture groups, parent support advisors and setting aside school nurse time for pupils to talk about their worries and concerns.

> *"It's about giving pupils opportunities to shine in other ways and develop their strengths in other things, but also providing activities that will develop confidence - I think that's a big thing".* (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I)

Eliminating bullying

This was the least popular wider outcome chosen by participating schools. However, our case study work suggested that this was not because it was seen as a less important issue, but rather that it was felt that work in other areas (e.g. positive relationships) would naturally lead to reductions in bullying and victimisation. One concrete example of work on this outcome is seen in School 18 (LA I), who had a day "off timetable", available to a whole year group, that focused on bullying. Students participated in designing a poster, developing an assembly presentation, and other activities focusing on the issue of bullying. The school also included work in this area in a quiz they ran as part of a lunchtime club, also ran workshops on defining "bullying" and discussing which different acts constitute bullying. Another school developed various anti-bullying initiatives such as "frequent bully" tutor groups and a bullying survey (School 4, LA B).

Perceived impact

Most schools felt that they had made some progress in developing provision for wider outcomes, although it was not as straightforward to implement as the other two strands of the AfA pilot. There was a perception that fewer support mechanisms were in place and that AfA-specific training had generally not been available for this aspect of the project: *"A lot more direction from the DfE needed to be placed within the Strand 3 because it has come on in the last term but it's taken schools a number of months to actually get their head around what they needed to do within Strand 3 and a lot of them were focusing on things that would not really have that much of an immediate impact… I would have thought that you need to be much more directed and schools understanding of what initiatives, strategies and focus could have been developed further"* (Lead Teacher 1, LA H).

Although most schools felt that Strand 3 had been effective, they generally found it difficult to measure or provide tangible evidence of impact. Some believed that it was difficult to separate the impact of AfA from that of other initiatives, particularly given that school strategies and approaches to developing provision for wider outcomes often drew upon said initiatives (e.g. using SEAL materials to develop positive relationships). Others felt that it was too early to assess impact: *"I don't think we've seen the greatest impact yet because those things are going to take time. Now that they're there, embedded and in place, now is the time when we will start seeing the positive impact of all those things. So that's the frustrating part really because you want to see the impact now and you can't, you have to be a little bit patient"* (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I). Several schools were able to identify anecdotal examples of successes for individual pupils, such as improved attendance or behaviour (e.g. School 16, LA H); others reported broader, school-level impact including greater inclusion, and more focused and efficient use of resources.

Quantitative analysis of the impact of developing provision for wider outcomes

We now turn to our analyses of the impact of AfA on each of the wider outcomes outlined above during the course of the pilot. The data underpinning these analyses are drawn from our teacher and parent surveys, school level surveys and attendance data provided by participating LAs.

The impact of AfA on the positive relationships of pupils with SEND

Changes in pupils' positive relationships during the AfA pilot (as reported in the teacher survey) were compared between those attending AfA schools (N=4,562) and those attending comparison schools (N = 193). Given the relatively small number of respondents in the comparison school sample, results should be treated as indicative rather than definitive. Figure 8 shows the amount of change in each group, and demonstrates that pupils in AfA schools experienced an increase in positive relationships (M = 0.09, SD = 0.59), relative to a slight decrease in the comparison group (M = -0.01, SD = 0.59). Our analysis confirmed that this difference between pupils in AfA and comparison schools was statistically significant. The associated effect size was small, and was equivalent to a 7-percentile-point gain in positive relationships as a result of attending an AfA school.

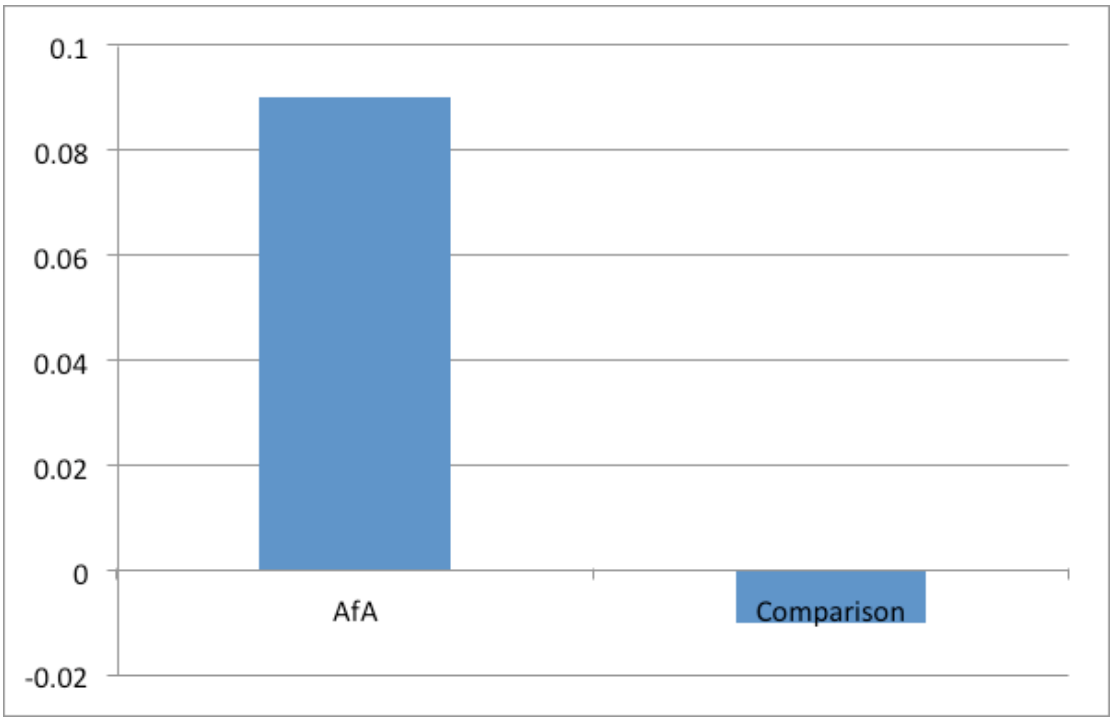


Figure 8 Changes in positive relationships of pupils with SEND in AfA and comparison schools (teacher survey)

We are also able to analyse the impact of AfA on pupils' positive relationships via our parent survey; however, as noted previously, the greatly reduced sample size (N = 294) and lack of a comparison group mean that the parent survey findings should be interpreted with caution. The parent survey results demonstrated an increase in positive relationships during the course of the AfA pilot (M = 0.07, SD = 0.47). Our analysis confirmed that this improvement was statistically significant; the associated effect size was very small.

AfA led to clear improvements in positive relationships for pupils with SEND. This effect was evident in both the teacher and parent surveys.

The role of LA, school and individual differences in changes in positive relationships for pupils with SEND in AfA schools

We performed two multi-level analyses using data from the teacher surveys – one for primary schools, and the other for secondary schools. As in our analyses of academic data (see Chapter 4) we first produced 'empty' models to allow us to determine the proportion of variance in changes in positive relationships made by pupils with SEND that was attributable to differences between LAs, schools and individuals. The results of this empty model are shown in Table 11:

		Positive Relationships
Primary	LA	0%
	School	**14%**
	Pupil	**86%**
Secondary	LA	0%
	School	**11.4%**
	Pupil	**88.6%**

Table 11 Percentage of variance in changes in positive relationships for pupils with SEND during the AfA pilot attributable to differences between LAs, schools and individuals (statistically significant findings in bold).

Schools have played an important role in determining changes in teacher-reported positive relationships for pupils with SEND.

Several key trends are evident in this table. Firstly, in all cases, the influence of differences between LAs on changes in pupils' positive relationships was minimal and not statistically significant. This does not mean that the support provided by LAs has not been important, but rather that the LAs were not sufficiently different from one another to produce an effect on change at the individual level. Differences between schools were more important, explaining between 14% (primary) and 11.4% (secondary) of the variance in changes in pupils' positive relationships. Finally, the largest proportion of variance in scores was always attributable to individual differences between pupils. The proportions of variance explained at both school and pupil levels were statistically significant in the primary and secondary school models.

The next stage in the analysis was the production of a 'full' model, in which key explanatory variables were included at each level. The aim of this full model was to identify which variables at each level might be important in determining changes in pupils' positive relationships. At the school level, these included both *structural, compositional and contextual variables* (e.g. school size) and *AfA implementation* variables (e.g. fidelity to the structured conversation model). At the pupil level, the explanatory variables included a range of *socio-demographic* (e.g. eligibility for FSM) and *other* (e.g. SEND primary need) characteristics. A full list of all school and pupil level variables included in the analysis can be found in Appendix 3.

In the *primary* model, the school and pupil level explanatory variables that reached (or approached) statistical significance are presented in Table 12. In interpreting the data, the reader is reminded that the positive relationships scale score ranges from 0-3, and that the average change score in AfA primary schools was 0.15 (with a standard deviation of 0.56). In the table below, the 'co-efficient' score represents the amount of change in the response variable (in this case, pupils' positive relationships scores at the end of the AfA pilot) associated with changes of 1 unit in each explanatory variable. At the school level, for example, we can see that for each 1% increase in the proportion of pupils for whom two or three structured conversations were carried out at the school, there was an associated 0.002 increase in pupils' positive relationships scores at the end of the AfA pilot. Likewise, at the pupil level, we can see that having primary need identified as ASD was associated with a 0.196 decrease in pupils' positive relationships scores at the end of the AfA pilot.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	% of pupils at SA+ or SSEN	-0.012
	Aggregated positive relationships at baseline	-0.176
	Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-0.520 (if 'often') -0.568 (if 'always')
	Frequency of parental involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+0.431 (if 'rarely') +0.497 (if 'often') +0.426 (if 'always')
	Progression guidance targets are shared with parents	-0.130 (if 'yes)
	Range of communication methods used with parents (0-8)	-0.041
	Range of people who have access to pupil information (total count 0-6)	+0.024*
	% of pupils for whom 2 or 3 structured conversations completed in 10/11	+0.002
	Year group	-0.045 (if 'Year 5')
	SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.104 (if 'SSEN') -0.465 (if 'unknown')
	SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	-0.196 (if 'ASD') -0.253 (if 'BESD') +0.147 (if 'unknown')
Pupil	English PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.011
	Positive relationships score at baseline	+0.430

Table 12 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' positive relationships during the AfA pilot (primary schools).

'*' = marginal, non-significant trend (p<.10)

Primary schools who **involved parents in reviewing learning targets more frequently**, and who completed a **greater proportion of 2 or 3 structured conversations with parents** experienced greater increases in teacher-reported positive relationships among their pupils.

Some groups of pupils in primary schools experienced relative decreases in positive relationships during the pilot. These were pupils with **ASD** or **BESD**, and those for whom stage of **SEND provision was unknown**.

In the *secondary* model, the school and pupil level explanatory variables that reached (or approached) statistical significance are presented in Table 13. In interpreting the data, the reader is reminded that the positive relationships scale score ranges from 0-3, and that the average change score in AfA secondary schools was 0.13 (with a standard deviation of 0.59). Interpretation of Table 13 is as above (see previous model).

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	% pupils at SA+ or SSEN	+0.019*
	Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+1.334 (if 'often') +1.204 (if 'always')
	Frequency of parental involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+0.230 (if 'often')
	APP targets shared with parents (compared to 'no')	-0.458* (if 'yes')
	Fidelity to the structured conversation model (0-36)	+0.042
Pupil	SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	-0.141(if 'BESD') +0.244 (if 'HI') -0.203 (if 'PD')
	SEND provision (compared to SA)	+0.202 (if 'unknown')
	% Ethnic group (compared to 'White British')	-0.437 (if 'Chinese')
	Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	-0.107 (if 'yes')
	Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.009
	Positive relationships score at baseline	+0.364

Table 13 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' positive relationships during the AfA pilot (secondary schools).

'*' = marginal, non-significant trend (p<.10)

Secondary schools that reported **greater adherence to the structured conversation model**, and those in which **teachers reviewed pupil targets more frequently** and **shared this information with parents more often** experienced greater increases in teacher-rated positive relationships among their pupils.

Some groups of pupils in secondary schools experienced relative decreases in positive relationships during the pilot. These were pupils with **PD** or **BESD**, and those who were eligible for **FSM**.

The impact of AfA on the wider participation of pupils with SEND

This analysis makes use of the wider participation strand of our parental survey, and considers the change in scores on this section of the survey from the beginning to the end of the pilot (N = 239). As there were insufficient survey returns from parents in comparison schools, our analysis considers only parents of pupils in AfA schools. Furthermore, the lower survey response rate associated with the parent sample precluded the use of multi-level modelling; we therefore use a single-level regression model when examining factors contributing to changes in scores. As a result of these factors, the findings outlined below should be treated with caution, and considered exploratory rather than definitive.

Parents of pupils in AfA schools reported a slight increase in wider participation activities (M = 0.02, SD = 0.67); however, this trend was not statistically significant.

The role of individual differences in changes in wider participation

As noted above, the sample of parents for whom we had survey returns at both the beginning and end of the AfA pilot was insufficient for multi-level modelling. As a result, we were unable to examine school-level factors that may have been associated with increased wider participation. Instead, we ran a single-level regression model, the results of which allowed us to examine factors at the pupil level (e.g. age, primary need) contributing to change.

The model was statistically significant in predicting wider participation, and pupil variables together accounted for 34% of the variance in scores at the end of the pilot. In practice, this means that the various individual differences between pupils (e.g. SEND primary need) included in our analysis played an important role in changes in wider participation. The pupil level explanatory variables that reached (or approached) statistical significance are presented in Table 14.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
Pupil	SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	-0.396 (if 'ASD') -0.390 (if 'PD')
	English PS baseline score (1-65)	-0.028
	Wider participation score at baseline	+0.397

Table 14 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in wider participation during the AfA pilot

Certain groups of pupils experienced relative decreases in wider participation as reported by parents. These were pupils with **ASD** and **PD**, and pupils with a **lower English PS** at baseline.

The impact of AfA on the bullying of pupils with SEND

Changes in bullying of pupils during the AfA pilot (as reported in the teacher survey) were compared between those attending AfA schools (N = 4,377) and those attending comparison schools (N = 194). Given the relatively small number of respondents in the comparison school sample, results should be treated as indicative rather than definitive. Figure 9 shows the amount of change in each group, and demonstrates that pupils in AfA schools experienced a slight decrease in bullying (M = -0.04, SD = 0.68), relative to an increase in the comparison group (M = 0.15, SD = 0.59). Our analysis confirmed that this difference between pupils in AfA and comparison schools was statistically significant. The associated effect size was small, and was equivalent to an 11-percentile-point reduction in bullying as a result of attending an AfA school.

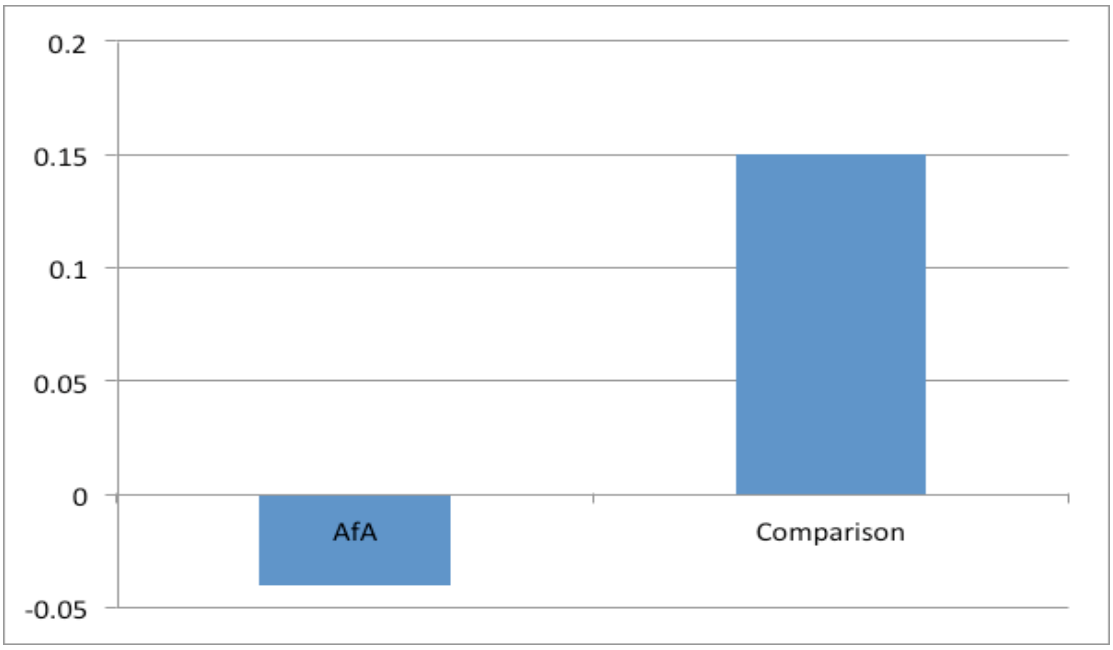


Figure 9 Changes in bullying of pupils with SEND in AfA and comparison schools (teacher survey).

We are also able to analyse the impact of AfA on bullying of pupils via our parent survey; however, as noted previously, the greatly reduced sample size (N = 294) and lack of a comparison group mean that the parent survey findings should be interpreted with caution. The parent survey results demonstrated an increase in bullying during the course of the AfA pilot (M = 0.10, SD = 0.51). Our analysis confirmed that this change was statistically significant; the associated effect size was very small. This anomalous finding is perhaps explained by the increased role parents were taking in their children's education, which could feasibly increase their awareness of issues such as bullying.

AfA led to reductions in teacher-reported bullying of pupils with SEND. However, data from the parent survey suggested that bullying had in fact increased. This may be a reflection of the sample of parents who responded to the survey (e.g. parents with greater concerns about their child may have been more motivated to respond to the survey).

The role of LA, school and individual differences in changes in bullying of pupils with SEND in AfA schools

As in the previous analysis, we created separate multi-level models for data from primary and secondary schools using the teacher survey data. The empty models are presented below in Table 15:

		Bullying
Primary	LA	0%
	School	**20.2%**
	Pupil	**79.8%**
Secondary	LA	3.9%
	School	**10.2%**
	Pupil	**85.9%**

Table 15 Percentage of variance in changes in bullying of pupils with SEND during the AfA pilot attributable to differences between LAs, schools and individuals (statistically significant findings in bold).

Schools have played an important role in determining changes in teacher-reported bullying of pupils with SEND.

Differences between LAs were not responsible for changes in bullying. Differences between schools were more important, explaining between 20.2% (primary) and 10.2% (secondary) of the variance in changes in bullying of pupils with SEND. Finally, the largest proportion of variance in scores was always attributable to individual differences between pupils. The proportions of variance explained at both school and pupil levels were statistically significant in the primary and secondary school models.

The results of the full *primary* model are shown below in Table 16. In interpreting the data, the reader is reminded that the bullying scale score ranges from 0-3, and that the average change score in AfA primary schools was -0.07 (with a standard deviation of 0.65). Interpretation of Table 16 is the same as in the previous multi-level analyses.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	% of pupils at SA	-0.007
	% pupils speaking EAL	+0.003
	Frequency of parental involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-0.575 (if 'rarely') -0.422 (if 'often') -0.364 (if 'always')
Pupil	Year group	+0.065 (if 'Year 5')
	Language group	-0.118 (if 'Other')
	% attendance (09/10)	-0.005
	English PS baseline score (1-65)	-0.013
	SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	+0.213 (if 'BESD') -0.156 (if PD')
	Bullying score at baseline	+0.300

Table 16 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in bullying of pupils during the AfA pilot (primary schools).

Primary schools who **involved parents in reviewing APP targets more frequently** experienced greater decreases in teacher-reported bullying among their pupils.

Changes in teacher-reported bullying varied among different groups of pupils in primary schools. Pupils with **BESD** experienced relative increases in bullying, while pupils with **better attendance** and higher **baseline English scores** experienced relative reductions.

The results of the full *secondary* model are shown below in Table 17. The reader is reminded that the bullying scale score ranges from 0-3, and that the average change score in AfA secondary schools was 0.02 (with a standard deviation of 0.74). Interpretation of Table 17 is the same as in the previous multi-level analyses.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	% pupils eligible for FSM	+0.027*
	AfA lead membership of SLT (compared to 'no')	-0.331*
	Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-0.895* (if 'often')
Pupil	Year group (compared to 'Year 7')	-0.073 (if 'Year 10')
	Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	+0.102 (if 'yes')
	% attendance (08/09)	+0.006
	Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	-0.006
	SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	+0.095 (if 'BESD') +0.190 (if 'PD')
	Bullying score at baseline	+0.287

Table 17 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in bullying of pupils during the AfA pilot (secondary schools).

'*' = marginal, non-significant trend (p<.10

Secondary schools in which the **AfA lead was a member of the SLT** experienced greater reductions in bullying among their pupils. This was also the case where **teachers were more frequently involved in reviewing APP targets.**

Changes in teacher-reported bullying varied among different groups of pupils in secondary schools. Pupils in **Year 10** and those with **higher maths baseline scores** experienced relative decreases in bullying, but those with **BESD** and eligible for **FSM** experienced relative increases.

The impact of AfA on the behaviour of pupils with SEND

Changes in pupils' behaviour during the AfA pilot (as reported in the teacher survey) were compared between those attending AfA schools (N = 4,426) and those attending comparison schools (N = 194). Given the relatively small number of respondents in the comparison school sample, results should be treated as indicative rather than definitive. Figure 10 shows the amount of change in each group,

and demonstrates that pupils in AfA schools experienced a slight decrease in behaviour problems (M = -0.02, SD = 0.66), relative to an increase in the comparison group (M = 0.15, SD = 0.63). Our analysis confirmed that this difference between pupils in AfA and comparison schools was statistically significant. The associated effect size was small, and was equivalent to a 10-percentile-point reduction in behaviour problems as a result of attending an AfA school.

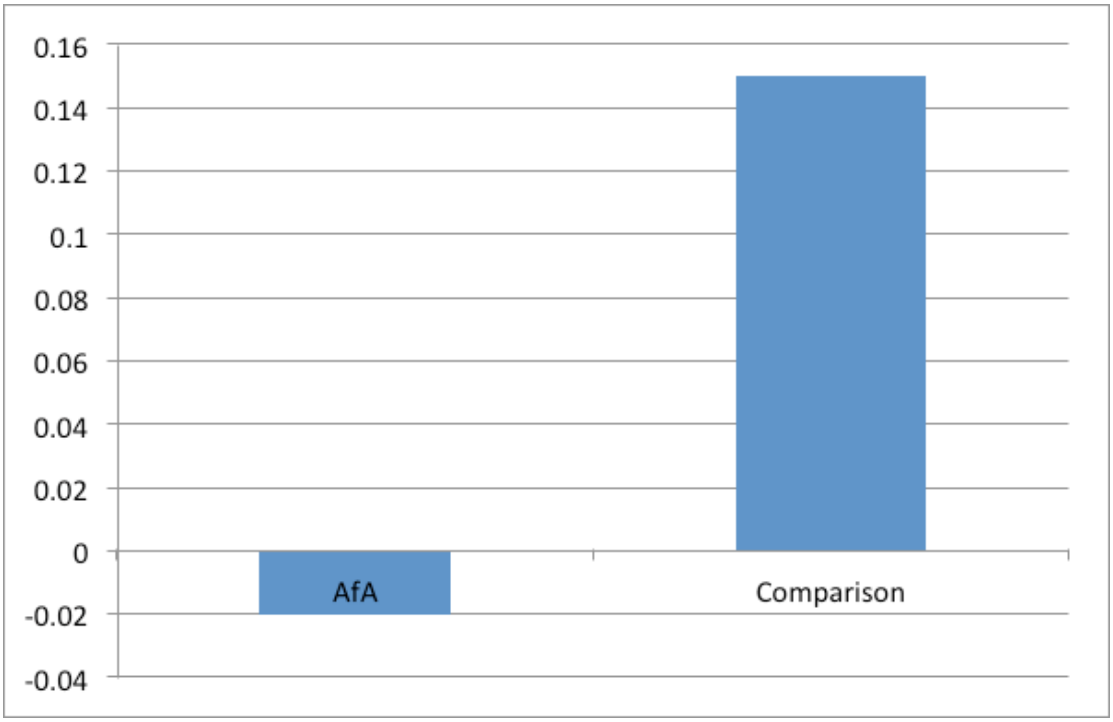


Figure 10 Changes in behaviour problems of pupils with SEND in AfA and comparison schools (teacher survey).

We are also able to analyse the impact of AfA on the behaviour of pupils via our parent survey; however, as noted previously, the greatly reduced sample size (N = 294) and lack of a comparison group mean that the parent survey findings should be interpreted with caution. The parent survey results demonstrated a reduction in behaviour problems during the course of the AfA pilot (M = -0.03, SD = 0.41). However, this trend was not statistically significant.

AfA led to reductions in teacher-reported behaviour problems among pupils with SEND. This trend was also seen in data from the parent survey (albeit not to a statistically significant level).

The role of LA, school and individual differences in changes in behaviour of pupils with SEND in AfA schools

As in previous analyses, we created separate multi-level models for primary and secondary schools using data from the teacher survey. The empty models are presented below in Table 18:

		Behaviour
Primary	LA	0.2%
	School	**11.8%**
	Pupil	**88%**
Secondary	LA	0%
	School	**15.7%**
	Pupil	**84.3%**

Table 18 Percentage of variance in changes in behaviour of pupils with SEND during the AfA pilot attributable to differences between LAs, schools and individuals (statistically significant findings in bold).

Schools have played an important role in determining changes in teacher-reported behaviour of pupils with SEND.

Differences between LAs were not responsible for changes in behaviour problems. Differences between schools were more important, explaining between 11.8% (primary) and 15.7% (secondary) of the variance in changes in bullying of pupils with SEND. Finally, the largest proportion of variance in scores was always attributable to the pupil level (that is, individual differences between pupils). The proportion of variance explained at both levels was statistically significant in the primary and secondary school models.

The results of the full *primary* model are shown below in Table 19. The reader is reminded that the behaviour problems scale score ranges from 0-3, and that the average change score in AfA primary schools was -0.06 (with a standard deviation of 0.62). Interpretation is the same as in previous multi-level analyses.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	% of pupils achieving Level 4 in Eng/Maths	-0.006
	AfA lead membership of SLT (compared to 'no')	-0.132
	Range of APP interventions used (total count 0-5)	-0.074
	% of pupils for whom 2 or 3 structured conversation completed in 10/11	+0.002
	Aggregated behaviour problems score at baseline	-0.153
Pupil	Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.066 (if 'female')
	Year Group	+0.021* (if 'year 5')
	SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	+0.112 (if 'SSEN')
	SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	+0.326 (if 'BESD') -0.200 (if 'PD')
	Behaviour problems score at baseline	+0.486

Table 19 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' behaviour problems during the AfA pilot (primary schools).

'*' = marginal, non-significant trend (p<.10)

Primary schools with **higher average teacher-reported behaviour problems** at the beginning of the AfA pilot experienced greater decreases in said problems among their pupils. Schools where the **AfA lead was a member of the SLT**, and those who implemented a **more comprehensive range of APP interventions** also saw greater reductions.

Changes in teacher-reported behaviour problems varied among different groups of pupils in primary schools. Whilst **girls** experienced relative reductions in behaviour problems, pupils with **BESD** experienced relative increases.

The results of the full *secondary* model are shown below in Table 20. In interpreting the data, the reader is reminded that the behaviour problems scale score ranges from 0-3, and that the average change score in AfA secondary schools was 0.05 (with a standard deviation of 0.71). Interpretation is the same as in previous multi-level analyses.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	Range of APP judgement moderation methods used (total count 0-5)	+0.166*
	Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-0.996* (if 'often')
	School-parent relationships prior to start of AfA (compared to 'very poor')	-0.653* (if 'poor')
Pupil	Year group (compared to 'Year 7')	-0.037 (if 'Year 10')
	Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.125 (if 'female')
	Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	+0.08* (if 'yes')
	Language group (compared to 'English')	-0.171* (if 'other')
	Maths PS score at baseline (1-65)	-0.007
	English PS score at baseline (1-65)	-0.004
	% attendance (08/09)	-0.004
	SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.185 (if 'SSEN')
	SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	+0.167 (if 'BESD') -0.279 (if 'ASD')
	Behaviour problems score at baseline	+0.453

Table 20 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' behaviour problems during the AfA pilot (secondary schools).

'*' = marginal, non-significant trend (p<.10)

Secondary schools where **teachers were more frequently involved in reviewing APP targets** experienced greater decreases in teacher-rated behaviour problems among their pupils. This was also the case in schools that reported **better school-parent relationships** prior to the start of the AfA pilot.

Changes in teacher-reported behaviour problems varied among different groups of pupils in secondary schools. **Year 10** pupils, **females**, those with **SSEN** and those with **ASD** all experienced relative reductions in behaviour problems, as did pupils with **better baseline attendance** and **academic performance**. Pupils with **BESD** and those eligible for **FSM** experienced relative increases in behaviour problems.

The impact of AfA on the attendance of pupils with SEND

Changes in attendance were compared between pupils attending AfA schools (N = 9,116) and those attending comparison schools (N = 223) in Years 5, 7 and 10[11] using data extracted from LA census records. Mean percentage attendance was calculated per pupil at baseline (2008/09 - the year prior to the AfA pilot) and in the second (2010/11) year of the AfA pilot to allow us to examine changes over time. The attendance period covered in each case was the first two terms of the school year. Overall changes in attendance patterns were calculated by subtracting attendance rates for 2008/09 from those for 2010/11. Data for both AfA and comparison pupils demonstrated a 'ceiling' effect at baseline (2008/09), with more than 20% of the sample having attendance rates greater than 98%. This meant that there was relatively little room for meaningful improvements in attendance across the sample as a whole. Figure 11 shows the amount of change in each group, and demonstrates that pupils in AfA schools experienced a slight decrease in % attendance (M = -0.35, SD = 9.92), relative to a marginal increase in the comparison group (M = 0.48, SD = 7.06). However, this difference between the groups was not statistically significant.

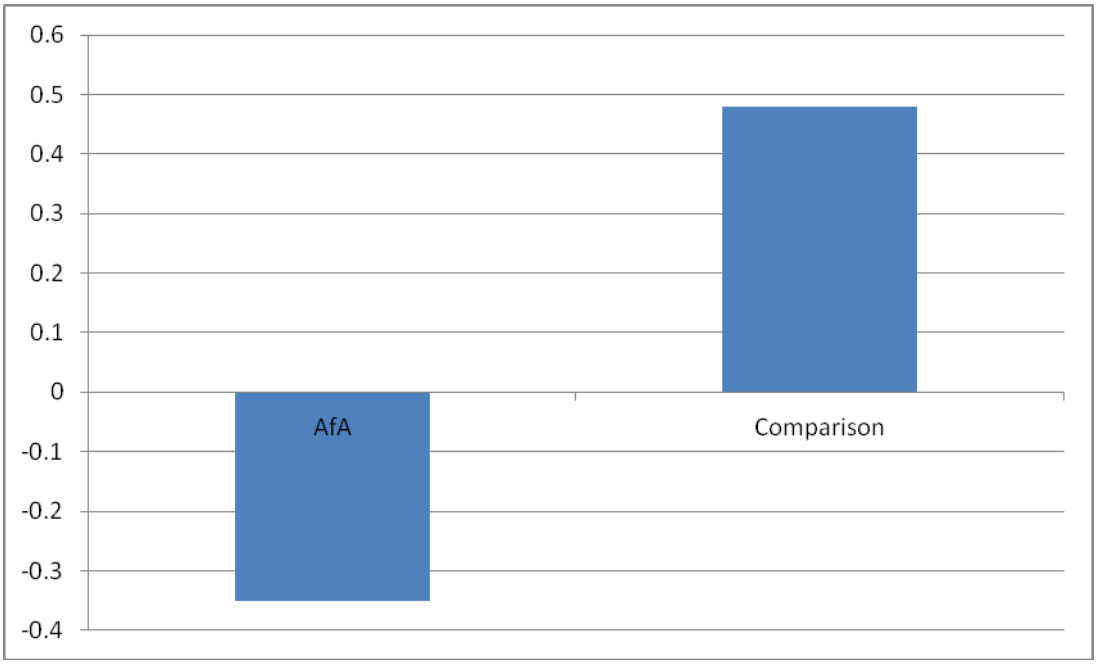


Figure 11 Mean percentage change in attendance among pupils with SEND in AfA and comparison schools

In view of the fact that the overall attendance data demonstrated a ceiling effect at baseline, an additional analysis was conducted that focused specifically on those pupils in AfA schools whose attendance records during the baseline period (2008/09) was less than 80%, meaning that they would be classified as *persistent absentees*. 550 pupils, representing just under 6% of the sample, met this criteria. Improvement in attendance for this group during the course of the AfA pilot was dramatic – an average of 10.13% from 2008/09 to 2010/11. Figure 12 shows the average improvements in attendance among persistent absentees in the three year groups for whom data was available. Our analysis showed that these improvements were statistically significant. However,

[11] Baseline attendance data was not available for Year 1 pupils, who were in Reception in 08/09.

caution is required in attributing these changes specifically to AfA due to the lack of appropriate comparison group[12] and/or national data.

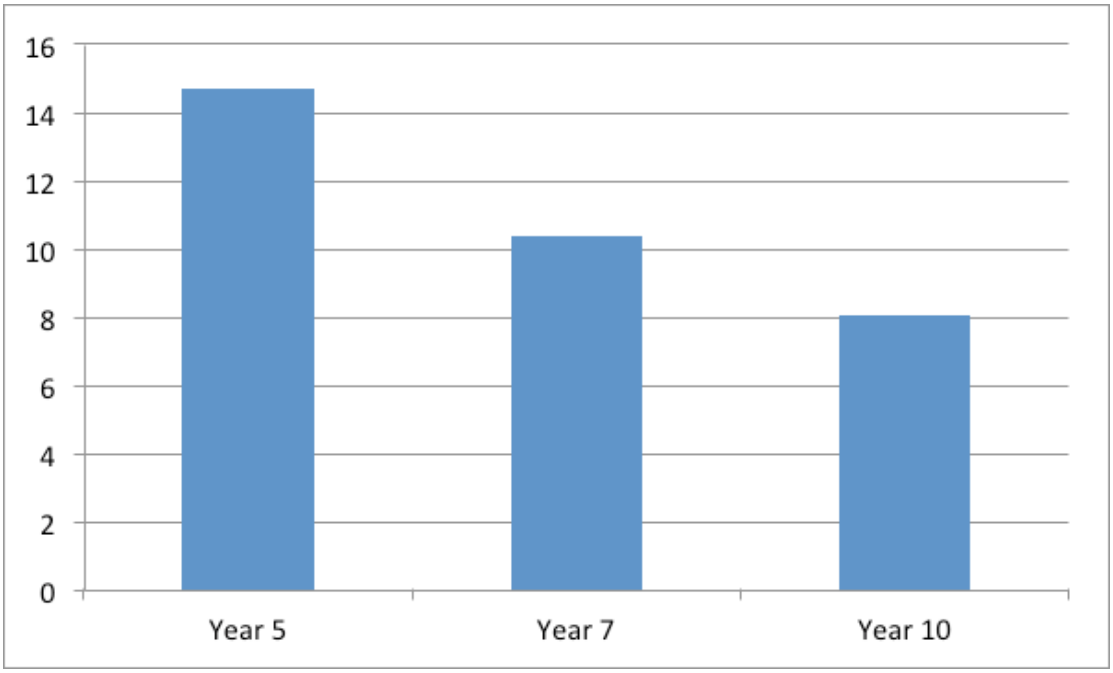


Figure 12 Improvements in percentage attendance among persistent absentees during the course of the AfA pilot

There were **dramatic improvements in attendance among persistent absentees** during the course of the AfA pilot.

The role of LA, school and individual differences in changes in the attendance of pupils with SEND in AfA schools

As in previous analyses, we created separate multi-level models for data from primary and secondary schools. The empty models are presented below in Table 21:

		Attendance
Primary	LA	2.5%
	School	**3.2%**
	Pupil	**94.3%**
Secondary	LA	1.8%
	School	**2.9%**
	Pupil	**95.3%**

Table 21 Percentage of variance in changes in behaviour of pupils with SEND during the AfA pilot attributable to differences between LAs, schools and individuals (statistically significant findings in bold).

[12] There were insufficient numbers of persistent absentees in the non-AfA sample to allow for comparative analysis.

Differences between LAs were not responsible for changes in pupil attendance. Differences between schools were more important, explaining between 3.2% (primary) and 2.9% (secondary) of the variance in changes in attendance among pupils with SEND. However, it is notable that these proportions are much smaller than those found for changes in positive relationships, bullying and behaviour problems. This is further evidence of a lack of overall variation in children's attendance patterns, with the overwhelming majority of children attending school regularly. Finally, the largest proportion of variance in scores was always attributable to the pupil level (that is, individual differences between pupils). The proportion of variance explained at both levels was statistically significant in the primary and secondary school models.

The results of the full *primary* model[13] are shown below in Table 22. Interpretation of Table 22 is the same as in previous multi-level analyses.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
School	School size	-0.002
	% eligible for FSM	-0.029
	% absence	-0.081
	Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-1.086 (if 'often')
	Range of people involved in planning APP interventions (total count 0-5)	-0.336
Pupil	Ethnic group (compared to 'British')	-1.739 (if 'Asia')
	FSM eligibility	-0.063* (if 'yes')
	SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	+1.277 (if 'SLCN')
	PS English at baseline	+0.126
	Attendance at baseline	+0.417

Table 22 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' attendance during the AfA pilot (primary schools)

'*' = marginal, non-significant trend (p<.10)

Primary schools with a greater percentage of pupils eligible for **FSM** and of a **larger capacity** saw relative reductions in attendance by the end of the AfA pilot.

Pupils with primary need identified as **SLCN** improved their attendance by the end of the AfA pilot, as did those with **higher English and maths PS scores at baseline**.

The results of the full *secondary* model are shown below in Table 23. Interpretation of Table 23 is the same as in previous analyses.

[13] The primary attendance model only makes use of data from pupils in Year 5 at the start of the AfA pilot. This is because no baseline (08/09) data was available for pupils in Year 1.

Level	Variable	Co-efficient
Pupil	Year group (compared to 'Year 7')	-0.474 (if 'Year 10')
	Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	-2.284 (if 'yes')
	English PS score at baseline (1-65)	+0.242
	SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	-1.503 (if 'BESD') -8.954 (if 'VI')
	Attendance at baseline	+0.480

Table 23 School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' attendance during the AfA pilot (secondary schools).

No school level variables independently contributed to changes in attendance at secondary schools.

Pupils in **Year 10**, those who were eligible for **FSM**, and those with **BESD** and **VI** all experienced relative reductions in attendance.

Sustaining provision for wider outcomes

Most schools reported that they intended to continue at least one of the interventions that they had implemented as part of their attempts to develop provision for wider outcomes. Although it was generally felt that it might be too costly to continue all interventions, schools were prepared to find alternative funding from within their budgets to maintain those strategies that they perceived to be effective, or which were linked to a school priority: *"because we found things like… the behaviour management has made such a difference, we will continue"* (AfA Lead, School 11, LA F). These were often initiatives that would benefit a broader range of pupils rather than one-to-one interventions for specific pupils in the AfA cohort.

> *"Strand 3 can continue because… the money side of things isn't actually the key to what we've been doing, it's more about the activities. We haven't thrown money at it and that's what's made it successful. I guess the money side of things has been time for release in order to plan but that can continue because now that the structure is there, the framework is there which we've been released for to design and make, that's there now and it's part of the furniture so we won't need that, I don't think."* (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I)

Several schools had focused on building sustainability from the outset and invested in reusable resources or training and skill development for a range of staff. Other schools selected or developed sustainable, low-cost strategies – for example, monitoring and promoting attendance – which they were easily able to embed: *"it is free, it is no hassle, it is part of our weekly and daily routines now"* (AfA Lead, School 18, LA I).

Chapter 7: Case study profiles of schools and pupils

Highlights of Chapter 7

Taken as a whole, the case studies of schools and pupils outlined above broadly support both the quantitative and qualitative findings outlined in the previous chapters of this report. In particular, the case studies provided further illustrations of the following:

- AfA was seen as an opportunity **to build upon existing good practice**
- **School leadership (e.g. head teacher) involvement** helped to drive the project forward
- Schools' **use of data to inform assessment, tracking and intervention evolved** through the AfA pilot
- The **structured conversations** with parents were extremely well received and considered to be perhaps the **most successful element** of the entire project
- Schools implemented a wide range of strategies and **approaches to promote wider outcomes for pupils with SEND, each of which were tailored to specific contexts and needs of pupils**
- Perceptions of impact **covered a wide range of academic and non-academic** outcomes
- **Schools planned to sustain AfA** after the conclusion of the pilot

This chapter provides case study profiles drawn from the 19 AfA case study schools, involving 87 pupils in total. Five case study schools are described to illustrate how the general principles of AfA implementation outlined in the previous chapters play out in individual schools and for individual pupils. Each case study is structured under the following headings:

- Contextual background
- Starting up
- Implementing AfA
- Perceived impact
- Sustaining into the future
- Exemplar pupil profiles

School 1, LA A

Contextual background

School 1 is a small primary school situated amongst dense social housing and commercial property in the centre of a city. There are a high proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities, with over half being from a Bangladeshi background. The majority of pupils are learning English as an additional language, and many pupils in the lower years are only just starting to do so. This complicates the identification of special educational needs, but as this is a well-established pattern, the school has developed a clear set of procedures to meet the challenge. The overall proportion of children in the school recognised as having SEND is in line with the national average; however, this is skewed towards those with statements, which is twice the national average. Almost half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, well above the national average, and pupil mobility is also particularly high. The Head Teacher is fairly new to the school and staff turnover is high. However, the last OFSTED report was very positive in that pupils (including those on the SEND register) were found to be making good progress (although there are relatively few pupils reaching the highest standards in Maths and Science), whilst writing standards were unsurprisingly below national levels.

> *"The heart of AfA is… putting responsibility [for children with SEND] back with the class teacher…and to actually say these children are your responsibility, I'm here to support you, I'm here to make sure that they're getting the right support but the everyday teaching and learning is down to you."* (AfA Lead)

Starting up

The AfA lead and various Key Teachers feel that the project is essentially building upon and extending existing good practice. This belief is supported by the extensive range of interventions that the school was running for pupils with SEND prior to their involvement in AfA. The AfA lead is also the school's Inclusion Manager, whose role includes monitoring provision for children from ethnic minority backgrounds and children who are gifted and talented as well as for children with SEND. Her hope is that after the AfA pilot concludes, provision for children with SEND will be more embedded throughout the school, and that class teachers will be aware and informed enough to ensure key inclusive principles (such as differentiation) are consistently applied in their lessons.

> *"The TAs have been doing lots of work with the children, so we've been able to send them on training and so it's actually gone really well."* (Key Teacher)

Implementing AfA

Assessment, tracking and intervention monitoring have allowed the Inclusion Manager and the Head teacher decide which interventions will be implemented, how to fund them and how to allocate staff to them each term. These decisions are evidence-based with data collected during any intervention with clear targets, beginning and end points. This enables an informed decision from the school leadership team about whether or not to continue a programme and which groups of pupils might benefit from it. AfA has had an impact on this process in that additional funding has allowed the school to experiment with new approaches, and to extend successful interventions by training more staff. For example, "Talking Partners" has been successfully piloted in Year 1 and "High Five" has been introduced to Year 5.

"All data is looked at, leading us to identify where extra support is needed and obviously there is a conversation around the data as raw data does not always tell the whole story." (AfA Lead)

Meetings regarding the progress of each pupil have been held each term and attended by the class teacher, Head teacher and the Inclusion Manager. These meetings provided an opportunity to look at academic data and to expand the picture for each child in terms of those aspects that are harder to "measure".

Feedback from the school about the structured conversations with parents has generally been very positive. The training was useful in terms of how to word questions and draw information from parents. However, some Key Teachers felt that the Structured Conversation training did not need to occupy a whole day. The Structured Conversations completed have been seen as very beneficial by all school staff. They have helped teachers to engage parents and learn more about children's home lives and, according to the AfA lead, the process has improved the confidence of Key Teachers to come up with new ideas and solutions for their pupils. There were difficulties in getting certain parents to attend Structured Conversations, particularly those who have had negative dealings with government agencies concerning immigration or educational welfare. The AfA lead used various strategies to overcome this barrier (including offering home visits) and all parents have now had at least two Structured Conversations.

"What we were seeing last year was a pattern, children who were socially excluded or getting to trouble frequently at lunchtime were on and off the special needs register and it was often that they just didn't have the right skills to be in the playground…so we are trying to make sure that they are having a fun time, not excluded." (AfA Lead)

The wider outcomes selected by this school are wider participation and positive relationships. Wider participation was selected because although staff felt that there was a good range of extra-curricular activities on offer, the clubs tended to be attended by the same children and rarely those who would most benefit from them. Progress on this front has been best in Year 5, where all pupils in the AfA cohort regularly attend at least one after-school club. Year 1 has presented more of a challenge, partly as these children have younger siblings who cannot attend the clubs and require parents to come in for collection at the end of the formal school day.

Positive relationships were selected because the AfA lead noticed that children with SEND seemed to struggle with peer interactions during break and lunch time. They were more likely to be isolated, and supervising staff did not seem to have the necessary awareness of the children's individual needs to facilitate the children's access to the games that their peers were playing. It was decided that one crowded playground was unlikely to suit all the children and so the school invested some of their AfA funding in developing "The X" – a room that the school opened for children who were socially excluded (or at risk of becoming socially excluded).

Teachers wanted to make "The X" more child-focused by finding out what children wanted for this area. Attending "The X" was also used as a behavioural reward for non-AfA pupils, providing both a high status to the room and providing positive role models for children with social or behavioural difficulties. Different children attended on different days, and there was one member of staff supervising approximately ten children. Combined with the extra facilities such as a pool table, these conditions seem more conducive to pro-social interaction. However, the AfA lead reported

that the same children were still having friendship problems and that new ideas as to how to make use of "The X" would be helpful. The way that the school considers use of this facility is consistent with their approach to SEND provision more generally – they are prepared to constantly re-appraise their interventions and strategies in the light of evidence as to what is best for their pupils.

Perceived impact

Disentangling the impact of AfA from that which has resulted from existing practice has been difficult for the school to reflect on. However, one notable example cited by School 1 is seen in the progress made by two boys allowing them to be taken off the SEND register. These children were part of the "Talking Partners" intervention as the school had had serious concerns about their speaking and listening skills. A TA took them out of class as a pair and encouraged each child to listen actively by paying attention to key indicators of attention such as eye contact and appropriateness of response whilst the other talked or read from a book. The school were pleasantly surprised at the effectiveness of "Talking Partners". They had initially thought that bringing the speaking and listening skills of these boys in line with the class would have taken longer than two terms. However, by the end of the intervention pupils were in line with national expectations.

> *"We've had an intervention going on for children with speech and language issues. They were the really quiet ones in the class that never speak, but now I just find that they are so different. One of the children particularly, his mum was just so worried about his confidence… it's been fantastic actually, watching them – they've been able to talk more and engage more – it's amazing."* (Key Teacher)

Sustaining into the future

In developing "Talking Partners", School 1 was able to afford to train a TA to deliver it. This has provided some stability with language interventions in the school during a period of time where the relevant external agency (LA Speech and Language team) changed personnel three times. The capacity of the school to respond to language difficulties has increased with resources now available for all school staff to use with other children presenting similar difficulties.

Sustainability was more of an issue for maintaining structured conversations. Although staff have received training and developed skills, the conversations themselves are time-intensive. Funding supply teachers to cover lessons has been necessary in some cases, particularly as the school has tried to be flexible in the times/dates offered to parents. Funding teacher cover several times each term is expensive and not sustainable. The AfA lead is hopeful that an alternative way of arranging structured conversations twice a year will be reached, as both the teachers and the senior leadership team see the benefit in carrying on this contact with parents. One option being considered at the time of the final case study visit was adding a structured conversation timeslot before parents' evenings.

"Samuel" - Year 5 - School Action Plus – BESD

Samuel can be disruptive in lessons, confrontational with teachers and has been involved in physical fights with peers. He lives with his mother, who previously struggled to motivate him to come in to school and received support from the Educational Welfare Officer to this end. During the Structured Conversations last year, Samuel's class teacher gave his mother some strategies for getting him into school in the morning. In return, his mother was able to tell the teacher why she felt Samuel was having problems at school, which she chiefly attributed to the total lack of contact with his father. Both parties have said that the opportunity to talk about him at this depth has been very helpful.

One intervention that School 1 implemented was to encourage Samuel to attend after school activities. This was in response to him often being isolated at break-times and in class, which was felt to be one of the triggers of his confrontational behaviour. Samuel attends the after school clubs regularly and he says that he enjoys the clubs and is especially enthusiastic about film club. His attendance has improved since the start of AfA – which may well be more connected to having more fun at school than any specific strategies being employed.

At the end of the first year of AfA the project lead still felt that he was isolated when not in managed situations such as lessons or "The X". Recently, School 1 used AfA funding to train a TA in an intervention called 'Circle of Friends'. This involved talking to the class when Samuel was out of the room about how people have different circles of helpers around them including family, close friends, and those who are paid to help such as teachers and doctors. The pupils could then choose whether or not they wanted to be part of a "circle of friends" around Samuel – most of the class did. Samuel chose a different set of people from this pool each day for activities with a TA and to socialise with at lunchtime, where his behaviour had historically been at its poorest. The children have helped Samuel to work on his behaviour targets. Since the intervention began, he has been far better behaved at lunchtimes, and has been socialising with children that were previously afraid of his robust playing style. During the final case study visit, Samuel reported that he felt that his behaviour had improved and that getting prompts from his friends had been the most useful source of support to him in controlling his behaviour.

"*Support from my friends* [has helped me to improve my behaviour]*… they tell me when I'm misbehaving."* (Samuel)

"Tara" - Year 1 - School Action – SCLN

Tara had problems with her tonsils from birth and only began to speak when she was 4 years old. She has seen several speech therapists and still has regular medical appointments. When she began school she was behind her classmates in terms of speech and also more broadly in terms of emotional and academic competence. The developmental gaps between her and her peers meant that Tara struggled to make friends at school. Along with other small-group work that the school undertook with Tara, the "Talking Partners" intervention in Year 1 really helped her and she is now in line with national expectations in reading, writing and numeracy. Tara's progress is also thanks to the extra tuition arranged by her mother, who feels that paid extra tuition is something that the school would have a lot of demand for were it to be offered after regular hours. Tara is still struggling to make a consistent friend, but teachers are helping her mother to identify potential friends that can be invited to the family home. The school have also appointed a peer mentor for Tara to help her mix with the other children in her class. There is progress on this front, but according to Tara's mother it is slow because her communication in conversation is still delayed.

"She is catching up but she is still a little behind… she has improved quite a lot really… spelling, writing… her speaking is getting quite good now, so everything is coming up at once – its good." (Tara's mother)

School 15, LA H

Contextual background

School 15 is an average sized primary school on the fringe of a town. The school received an outstanding grade in their most recent Ofsted report. The numbers of children eligible for free school meals and who have SEND are much lower than found nationally. Although the Head teacher reports that School 15's SEND provision was always good, they were constantly looking at ways to improve and this influenced their decision to participate in the AfA pilot.

Starting up

The school have a very positive outlook regarding the AfA pilot. Staff were enthusiastic and perceive it as something very new and innovative, "*not just another scheme*". They see AfA as a way to build on existing good practice; the extra funding has enabled them to set up new resources and to experiment with new ideas and approaches. AfA has run very well in the school, primarily as a result of the personnel and the backing and enthusiasm from experienced teachers. School 15's Head teacher is the AfA school lead and used to be a SENCo, the Year 1 Key Teacher is also the deputy head and the current SENCo, and the Year 5 Key Teacher is the Key Stage 2 manager. This locates AfA well within the school leadership team.

> *"I think initially when you get a new initiative people go 'oh my goodness it's another thing', but I think because it is so tailored to what we need to do and because you can use the funding to meet those children's specific needs… it has really transformed what we have been able to provide."* (Key Teacher)

Implementing AfA

School 15 are very data orientated and well organised. They have their own comprehensive system of monitoring attainment developed prior to the AfA pilot. This has been tailored and adapted in line with AfA Strand 1 guidance. Electronic and hard copy folders for each child's records have been created and are updated termly. As well as pupil information these folders contain information about each national curriculum area; teacher assessments of the child's attainments; and, the child's personalised "I can" targets. The Key Teachers complete a target sheet on a daily basis with the child's "I can" targets and highlight the ones they have been working on and this is linked to the AfA lead's computer. This procedure keeps teachers focused as to what individual children need and they have all the records to hand. They have also been using *Target Tracker* more regularly since the AfA pilot began.

> *"I think there were one set of parents that have never turned up to any meetings [prior to AfA] and I think that is a real success that they have come to every single AfA meeting. They are never going to be easy to reach... but actually I think we have been able to meet them where they are and focus on that. That's been a real success because I was quite sceptical about whether they would engage with the programme. They seem to have taken a lot more interest in their child because of it. I think that's a massive impact on that child and that child's experience of school is going to be much more positive."* (Key Teacher)

Despite having good relationships with parents already, the Structured Conversations strand of AfA is seen as a very different approach and is letting School 15 *"re-focus on the parents"* (AfA Lead). The

school believes this strand will have the biggest impact for them and have said it has *"made a big difference"* and has, *"broken barriers"* with parents and they have *"seen more honesty from some of the parents"* (AfA Lead). It has also *"changed the perception"* of parents and how schools engage with them (Key Teacher). Parents reported that it was useful to be able to spend a lot of time speaking to their child's teacher. They were able to get their points across, felt understood and that as a result they were better informed regarding their child's progress. The school also used the third Structured Conversation of the first year of AfA as a "hand-over", with both the current and incoming Key Teacher present. This process provided continuity for the parents and meant that new Key Teachers came into their role better informed and with relevant training and experience.

> *"We have got one child as well who's got emotional and behavioural difficulties. She has been doing drawing and talking therapy and we've seen that change from quite negative drawings, you know last week she was drawing rainbows. So, we would never of been able to deliver that without AfA. That has had an impact on her academic work because, in herself she is so much happier and has worked through some things, just by drawing."* (Key Teacher)

School 15 are particularly excited about the free reign and flexibility of Strand 3 of AfA. They are focusing on improving attendance and behaviour. It is allowing them to explore new areas and the additional funding has been particularly useful here. The school have used the money to send the Year 1 and Year 2 teaching assistants on an art therapy course, which the school are calling "draw and talk". They are using it with the younger pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties who find it hard to express themselves verbally and talk about emotions and issues at home. The class TA works one-to-one with the pupils once a week for 12 weeks and the pupils are asked to draw whatever they want. They then talk about what they have drawn. This enables pupils to discuss issues that they may have previously struggled to discuss. The school have also focused on closer monitoring of attendance and greater communications about issues with parents. Every child in the AfA cohort has their daily attendance recorded and monitored regularly, with further action taken where necessary.

Perceived impact

The AfA pilot is perceived to have had considerable impact upon School 15's existing process and practices relating to SEND. It has *"changed the way we run the school and the way that people operate and the way they are deployed, we have totally redeployed our teaching assistants into a more effective role"* (AfA Lead). AfA has also had an impact on how the school identify pupils with SEND: *"The register is updated every two or three weeks just to make sure we've got it exactly right"* (AfA Lead). School 15 noted that there were pupils on the SEND register who probably should not have been and that AfA has given them a clearer focus on accuracy of identification and the support that needs to be put in place for pupils. This has allowed a more targeted use of resources.

> *"We've totally re-launched the way that we teach. We got rid of Key Stage One and two managers as an artificial structure really… We have a Quality First teaching co-ordinator now. Quality First came out of Achievement for All because it was part of the training staff liked that a lot."* (AfA Lead)

"We look at AfA as a turning point… I know we've had a fair bit of money out of it, but those impacts will be long lasting and change the direction of the school. Of any project I've ever been involved in it's been the best one." (AfA Lead)

The attitude of staff towards parents has changed and they are looking closer at individual pupil needs. The Structured Conversations have given the staff *"a more holistic approach, because you've got the time, we're sitting down with parents and we're saying, tell us what its like at home and what happens and when you read with them' and we're getting a really good picture of what's going on, so you can then understand where that child's coming from"* (Key Teacher). The Key Teachers are commenting they are getting much more information from parents using the Structured Conversation model. From the parent perspective, the conversations gave them the opportunity to have an extended discussion about their child's progress and needs and felt that they were listened to and their opinions considered. In terms of how the Structured Conversations impacted on their children, there were mixed feelings. Some parents reported that together they had picked up on previously unaddressed issues and worked on ways to tackle them at school and home. However, one parent, said*, "I don't honestly think it's directly helped her, I know they've sent the staff on lots of training courses to improve their way of coping with it, but as directly as to how it's actually helped my daughter, I'm not convinced at the moment"*.

"The impact of 'drawing and talking' has been more dramatic than anything because the children who we refer to it will keep that going. We have already built that into our budget for next year – the TA will be doing it. The others will have training, but she will take the lead and she will work with the children. The sort of children we would have work are those that have behaviour or anger issues, can't concentrate, social problems at home, or are mixed up and confused. It really has a good impact so we have one thing out of AfA for sure. It is a weapon in your armoury really to tackle everything." (AfA Lead)

Attendance has improved in School 15: *"We have evidence that there has been a good impact on attendance, there is no doubt about that. The children on the SEND register who would normally have worse attendance and late arrivals, the late arrivals are virtually nil and then attendance at one point was ahead of the school average"* (AfA Lead). Although behaviour was not a problematic issue for the school, the "draw and talk" therapy was reported to have worked well with the younger pupils who had difficulty expressing themselves. The school also used a yellow card system to flag poor behaviour, and they have seen a reduction in the number of yellow cards issued. Overall, there is a feeling that confidence and enjoyment of school had increased and that this was having 'knock on' effects on academic performance.

Sustaining into the future

Sustainability was always at the forefront of School 15's planning. From the onset of the pilot, there were high expectations for what AfA could do for the school. Using this enthusiasm the staff worked hard to embed it within the school while support, training and funding was available. The pilot funding was a great facilitator, but planning was in place to develop processes and practices the staff knew they could sustain after the pilot. It was *"about trying to put the money into resources -*

"It's been going really well so now everything is pretty much embedded. It's not really looking back at what we've already done, it's looking forward to next year and the long term - how we are going to sustain what we do. But also bearing in mind there's not going to be any money around whatever happens. But we're using the funding that we've got to build to the future in a sustainable way." (AfA Lead)

particularly the people - and giving them the skills that you can deploy... so that the system that we have in the end is sustainable. Whatever happens, we can still monitor like this, do it effectively, still deploy people as and when we can because they'll still be working here, and use whatever budget we happen to have effectively" (AfA Lead). School 15 have prioritised AfA in the School Development Plan, SEND policy and attendance policy.

The school plan to sustain the Structured Conversation model, which they see as *"as part of our armoury… every time someone goes on the SEND register we'll have a Structured Conversation meeting"* (AfA Lead). However, they are unsure that the Structured Conversation model could be sustained in its current format as it is seen as expensive. School 15 plan to use a streamlined model – funded through their SEND budget – in which they target parents who are in greater need. They also plan to complete a Structured Conversation with all parents when their child moves on to the school's SEND register at the beginning of a school year and a second one to track progress. Additional brief catch-up conversations and telephone calls to supplement these practices will be done on an ad-hoc basis. School 15 also recognise that the need to have Structured Conversations for each pupil should naturally reduce over their time: *"I wouldn't have thought you'd have a Structured Conversation with a Year 1 parent and that in Year 6 you'd still be doing that, you'd like to think that it all got… to a point with them where a quick phone call or a chat now and again was sufficient and they were happy with it"* (AfA Lead).

The processes and practices set up in the other strands of AfA are also set to continue, although as above in some cases these will be streamlined versions in order for them to be sustainable within School 15's existing budget.

"Jenny" - Year 5 - School Action – SLCN

Jenny has a stammer and receives support from a speech therapist. She is reluctant to speak in class (for example, contributing to oral discussions and reading aloud in class) and join in school life. As a younger child, she was bullied because of her stammer. This resulted in a reluctance to come to school, which in turn affected her academic performance. During the structured conversations, the importance of her attending everyday was highlighted and a number of approaches to help her with her confidence were devised. For instance, Jenny's mother pointed out that her daughter does not like to be forced into reading aloud. The school also worked on ways to improve Jenny's self-esteem - providing confidence building experiences with a TA and encouraging her to attend a drama club after school. Her attendance has subsequently improved. Jenny's mother commented that she now seems much happier to go to school and she has now volunteered to read aloud and talk in class.

Despite School 15 conducting a structured conversation 'handover' between the Year 5 and 6 teachers, some of the approaches and support systems that had benefitted Jenny in Year 5 were not fully implemented this year. This caused an initial set back and at one point her mother wanted to take her out of the school. At the first Structured Conversation in Year 6, these issues were raised and were eventually resolved. However, the self-esteem and confidence building work that Jenny had been doing with a TA were discontinued in favour of an increased focus on academic attainment. She was not enjoying school as much in Year 6 because she felt that the behaviour in her class was too raucous and noisy. In response she was strategically seated next to her best friend to give her more confidence. Academically, Jenny has exceeding her set targets by the end of the AfA pilot - she was at level 5 in English and maths. However, this is attributable at least in part to external tutoring organised by her mother.

"Back in Year 4 her attendance was really bad. She didn't want to come to school, sometimes she'd come to school crying… and this year, they seemed to be concentrating on her confidence, building that and not forcing her to do anything, and its made a real difference." (Jenny's mother)

"Robert" - Year 5 - School Action – MLD

Robert's main difficulty has been with reading and he was initially thought to be dyslexic. The focus in strand 1 of AfA has been on his reading and writing. During the structured conversations, targets and approaches to help Robert with his reading were discussed. However, his mother found this process difficult as she couldn't understand his problems and thought that the conversations were, *"more sort of Robert's Key Teacher telling me what he needs because obviously they see it more"*. Robert works at least three times a week in the morning with a TA and uses the *Toe-by-Toe,* which is an individual programme designed for pupils that have dyslexia. Although he acknowledges that the scheme is helping him with reading bigger and more complex words, Robert is worried that he is missing out on other things going on in class whilst he is withdrawn. He also works on *Toe-by-Toe* at home with his parents. Robert's mother has noticed steady improvements, stating that he enjoys reading much more now and that his confidence has improved. His parents are kept informed of his progress through parents evening, written reports and the Structured Conversations.

In Year 6 Robert continued using *Toe-by-Toe* and his mother again commented on the positive impact it had on his attainment and confidence. Robert's behaviour and attitude to school had, however, "gone downhill" and *"he's just ready to go to senior school now, I think he's outgrown that school"*. In a recent visit, he was on report for behaviour; his mother said the general behaviour of the class was poor that year, which she attributed to a lack of consistency in reprimanding misbehaviour. School 15 responded by monitoring Robert's behaviour and holding more frequent discussions between his mother and class teacher.

"The structured conversations obviously helped… and it's brought up the thing, but it's a shame that it took until Year 5 for something to be done because obviously if it's helping him along… it would be better if the younger ones get the chance to have the extra help to start with." (Robert's mother)

School 17, LA I

Background

School 17 is a small junior school, with approximately 150 children, situated in an urban area. The majority of pupils are of white British background and live in the immediate vicinity of the school. The number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is slightly above the national average. In the most recent OFSTED report the school received a "good" grade[14] overall.

Starting up

School 17 considered themselves to very inclusive already, but there was hope amongst staff that AfA could be used as a vehicle *"to move us along"* in terms of extending and embedding effective practice. The Head teacher's view was that there would always be room for improvement in the school, and that AfA could be useful in this regard. Other members of staff were very supportive of the pilot, stating that it was *"well received, as we feel it can really help to support these children with needs"*, and that it could help in *"supporting the practice that is already in the school"*. The AfA lead is also the SENCo, a part-time class teacher, and the Deputy Head teacher. She has said on several occasions that being a part of the senior leadership team was important as this enabled her to drive forward decisions that needed to be made regarding SEND.

Implementing AfA

School 17 have always been very data-focused, with a Key Teacher reporting *"I think one of the strengths of the school is the tracking"*, and they have a well established tracking system in place. At the beginning of Year 3, the academic progress of each pupil is compared with the national average. Graduated additional support is then targeted towards the children who are falling behind. Progress is monitored every 6 weeks and staff decide whether the children have met targets or not. Staff then meet in year group teams to discuss the children who have not met their targets and to look at possible reasons for this. This information is then discussed in the senior management meetings and the allocation of support via the provision map is changed accordingly.

> *"We had really good ways of monitoring our data anyway, so we didn't really have to change anything but we just had to hone in on those kids, so it wasn't a challenge to do that because we were doing it anyway."* (AfA lead)

The school have created their own spreadsheet based on the National Strategies Progression Guidance documents. Green colour coding is used for children on track to make or exceed 2 sub-levels of progress in a year, orange for those who are only just going to make the required progress and red for those children who not going to make their targets (and therefore require an intervention). As well as charting progress over time, the spreadsheet allows comparison with age-related expectations. This dual analysis is useful because some children will have started at the school at a particularly low developmental level and would not meet the age expected, but they could be making significant progress against their own baseline. Although the school claim that they have always done this kind of tracking and that AfA is not something that is particularly changed practice, the AfA lead did state that the pilot has *"embellished the support that we have already had because we have paid extra attention to those children and really targeted our personnel at them."*

[14] OFSTED grades are 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

The reaction of teachers in School 17 towards the Structured Conversations has been very positive; the teachers *"love doing them and they can't wait to do the next one"*. This is because they have provided the teachers with a wealth of information that has been useful in understanding where the child is coming from and how their home life is impacting upon school. One Key Teacher noted that the Structured Conversations were *"one of the bigger successes and the thing that I get a lot out of. And the parents say they get a lot out of when I have spoken to them; that they had a chance to be listened to."* These conversations have fed into the classroom and made a real difference to the children. The school also feels it is good for the children to see their parents and teachers speaking to one another and therefore beginning to work together in partnership as they can both encourage the children in the same way, adopting a consistent approach at home and school.

> *"Parents have definitely opened up and you can go away with a much clearer view of what this parent has to deal with at home. It is not just about getting to know the child and the fact that he may like to do Judo or whatever. It is more about the whole picture, like this child has not slept for the last week because he has these anxieties and this parent has therefore not slept for a week. That would not have come out before. We are going to try and build in longer times, if we can do that*." (AfA Lead)

> *"Speaking to the parents you really kind of get a feeling of how it is for them at home… I feel I understand the children more and that is really helpful to build up relationships in class*." (Key Teacher, Year 5)

Some Key Teachers have volunteered to use their own PPA time in order to hold the Structured Conversations. This expanded the available time and teachers did not feel pressured to finish the conversation prematurely. The training that was undertaken and a template that the AfA lead set up were key facilitators for this strand. The team did report running into some difficulties in getting a number of the parents sufficiently engaged in the school to initially agree to having a Structured Conversation. In general, they found that telephone calls proved to be the best means of arranging meetings. In some cases the teachers decided to catch the more "elusive" parents whenever they came on to the school site for a Structured Conversation "on the spot", as they felt they might not have attended a meeting otherwise.

> *"If there are opportunities that are in school, it is saying to these children are you interested? Sometimes it takes someone to say to those kids 'is this something you have thought of?' as they may not necessarily think of it."* (Key Teacher)

The primary focus in Strand 3 has been on improving wider participation activities for the AfA cohort. School 17 have always had a lot of clubs on offer for their children, but AfA has prompted them to target children with SEND who may have otherwise missed out. During the Structured Conversations, teachers have found out more about the children's interests and, in partnership with the parents, have tried to encourage the children to take part in specific after school clubs that are on offer: *"we talk to the kids, we say 'look these are all the activities going on this term, which are you going to do?'"* (AfA Lead).

During the structured conversations, several parents stated that their children wanted to play the guitar. These families were not be able to afford to buy one, so the school used some of the AfA funding and purchased a number of guitars for this group of children to use. A Key Teacher reported that this has really helped improve their self-esteem.

Perceived impact

The school feel that AfA has had considerable impact - the AfA lead noted that it has raised standards within the school, and that the impact has not just been upon pupils but also members of staff. All staff in the school, including those who were initially less inclusive in their teaching practices, now actively include children with SEND in after school clubs and school sports teams. Initially some teachers felt that the project would be a lot of extra work for little benefit and this generated some resistance. In the final case study visit, these teachers said that it has been a worthwhile project, which had not required a great deal of additional work, *"because it's just your good practice anyway, tweaked a bit."* The main area of success has been Strand 2 - through the Structured Conversations, parents and teachers have developed a trusting relationship, and children have seen parents and teachers working together, impacting positively upon their work in the classroom.

> *"It's just the same as we've done anyway, a bit more tweaked and it's just a case of me making sure that I keep my eye on those children with special needs."* (AfA Lead)

Sustaining into the future

School 17 are fairly confident that most aspects of AfA will continue beyond the pilot. They feel that AfA is sustainable as it has not dramatically changed the school. In relation to Strand 1, *"the tracking was already in place, so that's easy to sustain".* In Strand 3, *"the wider outcomes are something we've always pushed anyway, so we'll just keep doing that"*.

Given the success of Strand 2, the school have thought about how to maintain the structured conversations, and have changed the structure of parents evening. They now run over 2 nights, with the Structured Conversations happening alongside the "normal" parents evening. They have also been inspired to make the parents evening slots longer and have more *"structured conversation inspired"* conversations within these times. They have decided to reduce the number of children for whom structured conversations are held, but with the proviso that any parents in need of a longer time could have one timetabled. A Key Teacher reported that *"it does make our evening a bit longer but that doesn't matter you know…for the sake of a few evenings a year… or we can do it in our PPA time and I'd happily do that".*

One issue that they felt may be more problematic was personnel. The school have been able to employ more teaching assistants to support children with SEND but this may not be sustainable in the longer term, meaning that the academic progress of this cohort may suffer.

“Elliot” - Year 5 – School Action – MLD/HI

Elliot was described by both his parents and teacher as being an "outdoor child". He is very sporty and attends a couple of after school activities. If he is in a classroom for too long he can become frustrated and he particularly struggles with his writing. He also had experienced some difficulties in social relationships and self-esteem. Over the course of the AfA pilot, Elliot’s Key Teacher has seen considerable change in him in terms of improvements in self-esteem and academic progress. His teacher attributed this to the Structured Conversations that she had with his parents. Although Elliot’s mother initially stated that she just wanted her child to be happy, she was challenged by the teacher that her child was really capable of achieving something – thus improving her aspirations. Elliot’s Key Teacher also reported that he was aware that his mother and teacher had been talking and were working together. His mother stated that in the structured conversations the school are *“always quite eager to hear what I have to say or if I have any ideas to help them. So yeah they are very good like that. We help each other on the way. Like I say, they do listen to a lot. I have got to say they are quite happy to take on board everything that I am saying because it sort of makes their job that little bit easier as well”.* According to his Key Teacher, Elliot may achieve level 4 in his writing by the end of Year 6, and there has been a vast increase in his self-esteem, accompanied by a shift in mindset whereby he now believes he is capable of achieving and succeeding. He has spent some time working with the senior teaching assistant, which has really helped him in this regard.

"They know what sort of thing he is interested in, so if anything comes up [new clubs or activities]… *they always put it to him*." (Elliot’s mother)

“Ben” - Year 5 – School Action Plus – SLD/VI

Ben is a year older than his classmates, having repeated his reception year. He has severe learning difficulties and visual impairment. A statement of SEND was applied for, but was turned down as it was felt that his needs were being met and he was successfully included in the school prior to AfA. He has remained at School Action Plus. However, a challenge was to find suitable activities or clubs with which Ben could successfully engage, given the complexity of his needs. Through the structured conversations, the school found that his parents have bought him a bicycle (although he has difficulty riding it). The school are therefore going to set up a cycling club which has been tailored towards him (although it will be open for all children to attend).

His mother reported that the structured conversations have been beneficial as they are *“not structured in the sense that we’ve got an agenda and we follow this, it’s basically a conversation and…we’re keeping each other informed of what’s happening in school and at home”.* His mother also said that Ben is constantly making steady improvements in his general development and that his confidence has continued to grow, which she attributes to his happiness in being part of an inclusive school.

"The other children have built up relationship with him and he’s just another boy in the class [despite having more complex needs], *rather than him being seen as something different*." (Ben’s mother)

School 6, LA C

Background

School 6 is a Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in an urban area. There are approximately 50 pupils on roll, who are unable to attend mainstream schools due to their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. These problems have resulted in school refusal and disaffection. The AfA lead for the school is very passionate about the pilot and stated that *"it fits with what we already do".* AfA has provided them with the funding to maintain their good practice and also provided the opportunity for development. School 6 are very positive about the project, highlighting the importance of the flexible approach it offers, which allows them to focus on their own particular areas of need. This is particularly important as they feel they need more flexibility given the very different context that the PRU presents.

> *"We've had to bend, make things fit in our situation, as with anything, the model, the original AfA model is quite mainstream I think, we've had to adapt it to fit us and that's common I think for other pupil referral units."* (AfA Lead)

Starting up

A challenge to the project at the end of the first year of AfA was that a number of key staff involved in the project left the school. This posed some difficulties in terms of maintaining momentum and consistency. However, the new AfA school lead has enhanced the profile of the project within the school and staff are now more aware of, and involved with, the project. There have also been considerable changes in the pupils attending the school; a number of pupils left at the end of year one of the project and are now being offered alternative provision elsewhere. This has presented a challenge for the school as in effect they are starting the project all over again with new pupils.

Implementing AfA

School 6 felt that AfA had made their provision more organised, particularly around assessment and intervention. It had provided a focus and these have become more rigorous as a result of AfA. Staff at the school, however, acknowledge that tracking and monitoring of pupils remains a work in progress. There have been problems in being able to obtain information about pupils from their previous school, especially in terms of what academic level they were working at. They therefore take a baseline measurement in the first week when a pupil arrives at the PRU, and use this information to generate a personalised timetable for each student.

> *"Some of us decided to go out to actually visit the parents as a means of engaging them. From a personal point of view, one set of parents who did come in for the meeting after that, whenever I have contacted them to have a conversation about anything in the centre I felt much more comfortable speaking to them because we'd had that initial meeting and I felt that helped really in terms of my relationship with the parents."* (Key Teacher)

Staff at School 6 have been generally very positive about the structured conversations. There is a hope that these conversations will ultimately help to improve attainment and attendance as the pupils begin to see the staff and parents working together. Teachers are keen to implement them and where these conversations have taken place they have received positive feedback from parents. As some parents have been difficult to engage, a number of strategies have been used:

- The school set aside a day for parents to come in for the conversations, which form part of their termly review,
- Key Teachers have agreed to go to parents' homes in order for the conversation to be carried out.
- Where this has not been possible they have conducted some over the telephone.

The impact of the school's willingness to 'go the extra mile' has been positive, with parents reporting that they appreciated these efforts.

"There's a lad here for instance, whose parents were disengaged with school life generally. They had no time for us on our first few interactions. After the Structured Conversation led by a Key Teacher, and seeing what the school's done, they are now very happy for phone calls and discussions. So, that's really where I would say it's had a major effect." (AfA Lead)

School 6's main focus for Strand 3 of AfA has been developing positive relationships. The school have partnered with a special school that is also involved in the pilot. Pupils have constructed bird boxes, bird tables and bird and squirrel feeders, which are erected in the special school's garden. The project has had benefits for the children at the special school who have enjoyed interacting with older children. Benefits are also evident for the children from School 6 who have been able to use their practical skills to make a positive impact on the community. The Key Teacher that accompanied these pupils on the visits has commented that although these pupils sometimes display challenging behaviour in their school, they have had no problems when helping other children and seeing the impact that their work has had upon others. The pupils have really enjoyed being part of this project.

"The developing relationships with others, I think that the link that we've got with the local special school has been brilliant. There's just huge benefits - emotional intelligence, engagement and then coming back into the centre and actually being able to improve their behaviour and their focusing on their lessons." (Key Teacher)

School 6 have also used AfA funding to start an accredited horticulture project designed to develop positive relationships. Pupils are learning how to grow vegetables and plants, and then local primary schools are coming in to the school, where pupils at the centre will teach them how to plant and grow the plants. School 6 hope to develop this into a community-wide project so that their pupils can develop positive relationships with the community. They envisage this as being sustainable beyond the lifespan of AfA.

"Achievement for All is basically what all schools should be doing; it's just shining a light on certain areas." (AfA Lead)

The pilot funding has also allowed the school to set up a nurture room, which can be used when children need to calm down, or to provide a space if they need to talk or catch up on work. The pupils at the school helped to set up the room, doing some of the painting and decorating, for which they gained wider skills accreditation. This space has impacted upon the pupils in a positive way and helped to give them ownership of the room. The project continues to be a success and according to the AfA lead it has been *"brilliant for the children, they have really enjoyed the hands on work"*. This project has involved around 3 groups of children, some designing the areas to be renovated, others doing the gardening and planting and others using their carpentry skills to make the raised beds. The AfA lead reported that these students involved in all 3 projects really feel like they are really making a difference and are able to help other people. The school are keeping diaries of the things that they are doing, and recording comments the children make in order to assess the impact.

Perceived impact

School 6 noted that the impact of AfA is difficult to demonstrate, as their pupils are a naturally very transient population. The impact of the Structured Conversations has however, been noted by the school, particularly in terms of staff changing the way they interact with parents. Structured Conversation meetings are now being merged with academic progress meetings. A Key Teacher also noted that there are now fewer "difficult" parents. The school still acknowledges that engaging with parents is still a work in progress as disengagement continues to be a deeply engrained problem.

Sustaining into the future

Teachers at School 6 feel that everything that they have planned around AfA has been for the purpose of making it sustainable, believing that this is the main point of the project. The school do not feel there will be a problem next year when the funding ceases, as all of their projects are already up and running. These projects will be able to sustain themselves - for example, their chickens are generating eggs which have been sold; this money has not only covered the cost of buying the chickens but also their food costs. The school aims to continue their link with the local special school, and hopes to establish new projects there. A Key Teacher noted that the general idea of working in partnership with other schools is sustainable and they are now empowered to set up similar links with other schools. The school will also carry on with the Structured Conversations and have incorporated them in to termly assessment meetings. The basic principles of AfA are therefore already embedded into school practice.

> *"Everything that we have tried to do; it's been the idea that is has to be sustainable."* (Key Teacher)

> "*The principles of AfA are embedded within the school practice… it's actually mentioned in our school development plan. So yes, it's going to stay with us, the general sort of principles of AfA....and the three strands… I think that they're just naturally there."* (AfA Lead)

As pupils at School 6 only attend until a new educational placement can be found, their cohorts are "transient". This creates a unique set of challenges for AfA, but also for our research team in developing pupil profiles.

“Ahmed” - Year 10 – Statement of SEND – BESD/SLD

Ahmed attended School 6 for around 2 years. When he initially came to the school, staff described him as rude and aggressive. There was no real communication with his parents as English was not their first language. Although letters did go home, they were not understood as Ahmed only translated the "message" he wanted to convey. Through the AfA pilot, he was given extra literacy support and School 6 merged the Structured Conversation into an arranged review meeting with his father. He was then involved in making chicken coups and doing some gardening for the special school project. The project required him to develop and use communication skills in real world settings such as the local garden centre, where pupils and staff would go to purchase the equipment they needed. There is now better communication with Ahmed’s parents, which has really impacted upon him – for instance, he is now talking about going to college.

"He’s just evolved into this polite, well-adjusted pupil with manners." (Key Teacher)

“Daniel” - Year 10 – School Action Plus – BESD/MLD

Daniel initially had home tuition, as he had such a negative relationship with staff at School 6. The school noted that he thrived on things that were practical but struggled with anything else. After speaking with his parents, they encouraged him to get involved in the horticulture project. This project has had a real impact on him; his Key Teacher reported that he has started his own gardening project at home. He has bought himself a collapsible green house and is growing vegetables. He has also taken some tomato plants from school to grow at home, and even talked about keeping chickens himself. The AfA lead noted that his *“enthusiasm is spilling over into his home life… I think Daniel has definitely benefited from AfA”.* At school there has been a notable improvement in his relationships with staff. School 6 also report that since speaking to his parents and getting them more actively involved, Daniel is trying harder and he has even changed the way he dresses and now comes into school smarter.

"He has come on leaps and bounds certainly in terms of relationships" (AfA Lead)

School 8, LA D

Background

School 8 is a larger than average secondary school in a generally disadvantaged urban area, with double the national average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school strives to provide a culture of high aspiration and achievement, and received a grade of "good" in a recent OFSTED inspection, as well as receiving a number of awards, such as *Investors in People* and *Sportsmark.* The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is significantly higher than in most schools. School 8 is ethnically diverse, with 25% of pupils of Bangladeshi origin and 20% of Pakistani origin. The school has lower than average numbers of pupils identified as having SEND or with a statement of special educational needs.

Starting up

The AfA lead is the Assistant Head for Inclusion at the school. She is supported by an Operational Manager who oversees the day-to-day running of the project. Year Managers at the school are non-teaching members of staff, whose responsibility lies with pupils' welfare and academic development. Given their well-established role in the school, it was decided that they would be most suitable as Key Teachers. Year Managers with responsibility for year groups outside the target cohort volunteered to be Key Teachers, enabling a smaller Key Teacher-to-pupil ratio. However, this led to a delay in starting AfA, as permission for this alternative Key Teacher model had to be sought from the LA. The Head Teacher was on the local steering committee for AfA when it first started and has been committed throughout to making the project a success in the school.

Implementing AfA

AfA was seen as an extension of existing provision, and as such became quickly embedded in the school's ethos. It has become "*an integral part of everyday school life*" and "*has been really embraced.*" (AfA Lead) For example, the work of pupils involved in AfA has been celebrated in a morning briefing as part of the "Friday feeling meeting", ensuring that all staff are aware of it.

> *"It's been brilliant, it's been a real positive experience for us as individuals so I think it's been part of our professional development if you like."* (Key Teacher)

The school already used data extensively to inform practice from the classroom through to strategic planning level, including training Key Teachers in APP and using APP as part of their Assessment for Learning procedures. "Challenge targets" are set for all pupils and a traffic light system is used identify concerns as soon as they arise. A specific AfA tracker was devised by the Year Managers to track pupils in the project. This tracker adds to the academic data that was previously collected, and contains personal and social data; attendance; attitude to learning; interventions provided; whether or not structured conversations have taken place; and, the best way to contact parents. The tracker is used widely throughout the school and has become a rich source of information for all staff.

> *"It's enabled us to really get to know these students, to get to the reasons why maybe they don't achieve, and then to set targets and enable them to achieve."* (AfA Lead)

To promote achievement in Maths and English, LA D funded the "Lesson Study" initiative. This is a collaborative project between teachers and pupils that aims to find and deliver the best strategies for learning in a particular class. There was considerable enthusiasm for this in School 8, and a DVD has been made to showcase techniques and strategies.

The structured conversations with parents are seen as the main area of success in the project. Indeed, not only is overall engagement felt to be much improved, but there are a number of parents who are engaging with the school for the first time. There has been a knock-on effect for pupils, who now see a partnership between school and home. Parents have reported learning more about their children's educational needs and the support available through the school. Most structured conversations have taken place on weekdays, although some have taken place at weekends and during school holidays in order to accommodate parents' needs. This flexibility is seen as a particular strength and something that has enabled more parents to be reached. As English is a second language for many parents at School 8, the home-school liaison officer has been employed for additional hours using project funding to support those lacking in confidence or language skills to participate fully. While the vast majority of parents have engaged in the structured conversations, there remains a small number who have not been reached, despite wide-ranging efforts on the school's part.

> *"The fact that parents are coming into school, and students know they are coming in for this meeting, that is not only building a relationship with the student in school, but the parents of the student and with the Year Manager. So it has a knock on effect to everything because it is not just about their academic levels - it is about the whole student and whole picture."* (AfA Lead)

> *"It's changed the way I deal with parents, with the children in my cohort and also it's made me pull in parents for meetings when there aren't problems and issues but just to say 'your child's doing really well and have you got any questions?'"* (Key Teacher)

The school chose to focus on bullying and positive relationships for Strand 3. The activities undertaken include taking all AfA pupils off timetable for a whole day to focus on bullying prevention through activities such as drama, workshops and poster design, with the intention of promoting student voice. The older pupils were initially more reluctant to participate, but one strategy that has met with great success has been to involve them as mentors with the younger AfA pupils. One current Year 11 pupil remains very supportive of the younger pupils with whom he worked during the anti-bullying day. Lunchtime clubs have been organised for Year 7 pupils in AfA, which have been well attended, particularly by boys, and there has been a very successful "Come dine with me" activity which was enjoyed by a diverse group of pupils and which involved parents attending. There has been a much improved uptake of such opportunities in the second year of AfA, with lunchtimes sessions to discuss topics of concern to the students, such as examination stress; this has had a noticeable positive impact on their attitude to learning.

Perceived impact

The Head Teacher has taken a keen interest in AfA throughout and considers that it is vital for this sort of project to be led by the Senior Leadership Team*, "I think it shows the drive and importance in the eyes of the other staff as well."* The AfA lead feels that the project has had a significant impact, with the additional funding crucial in allowing new approaches to be trialled.

The engagement of parents is considered the most powerful element of AfA, especially as *"they are more willing to come in, because they've already been in they feel comfortable, they feel secure in the environment, and they've already built up a relationship with school."* This has in turn impacted on the pupils, due to their parents' increased involvement in their education. Parents have been empowered by involvement in the structured conversations, and as a consequence have become more proactive in discussing their child's needs.

> *"I think some training issues have been identified through this because we've looked more carefully at the AfA cohort and then when we looked outside of the cohort we saw that those anomalies are happening elsewhere as well so then it becomes a whole school issue*." (AfA Lead)

Although there is an established system of target-setting at the school, the increased focus on children in the AfA cohorts made staff realise that the existing challenge targets for *"attitude for learning"* were not always suitable for children with SEND. The subsequent amendments made have also been extended to all pupils, demonstrating a whole-school impact. Similarly, the closer focus on the pupils with SEND has enabled staff to think more carefully about the reporting system, with a consequential effect on all pupils in the school.

Academic impact remains difficult to assess at cohort level, with a broader effect felt by staff: *"I'm not sure it's closing the gap but I'm sure it's helping the parents understand it and its giving the students the encouragement"* (Key Teacher). Nevertheless, there are individual success stories, such as a pupil for whom small group work has made possible far greater progress than had been anticipated. Indeed it is felt that small group work has been especially beneficial for many of the AfA pupils in both academic and social terms.

> *"Positive relationships has an impact on all of outcome areas and that's why we're doing it holistically."* (AfA Lead)

The wider outcomes of bullying and positive relationships have been dealt with together, as a more holistic approach was preferred. Activities in KS3 and KS4 are felt to have been very successful and pupils now seem to have a better understanding of the issues surrounding bullying and interact more successfully with their peers, something that has been noted by teaching staff not directly involved in AfA. While it is considered difficult to measure success in this strand, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence to support it.

Sustaining into the future

The Head teacher has decided to fund AfA in its entirety for an additional year, *"it's been a good exercise to be engaged in and we believe that we can sustain that."* It is felt that the reporting and target-setting will be able to continue as a natural evolution of systems already in place. Lesson-study is to be extended across the school, and the Strand 3 initiatives will also continue. The structured conversations will be extended to all year groups on a termly basis, with TAs trained to provide the additional personnel needed, as it is felt in the school that TAs often know pupils best and can provide a continuous point of contact for parents.

> *"We need to really acknowledge the fact that teaching assistants probably know these kids better than any other members of staff because they've seen them in different situations all day."* (AfA Lead)

“Andrew” – Year 8 – Statement - BESD

Andrew has difficulties managing his temper and outbursts have, in the past, resulted in temporary exclusions. Throughout AfA, Andrew has spent time with his Key Teacher discussing his difficulties and various strategies have been put into place, such a yellow and red card system, which allows him to take time out of the classroom without having to explain to the teacher when he feels that he can no longer cope or is close to losing his temper. He had a specially designed timetable that was aimed at allowing him to integrate as much as possible, especially in areas in which he could experience success. Nevertheless, Andrew’s behavioural difficulties have led to him spending relatively little time in class with his peers, and his Key Teacher is disappointed that as a consequence he has not been able to make the progress of which he is capable. During the second year of AfA, Andrew’s behaviour resulted in transfer to a local PARE (pupils at risk of exclusion) school; this is a temporary measure and it is hoped that he will return to School 8 after a term.

Andrew returns to School 8 on a weekly basis to meet with his Key Teacher and continue with strategies to help him address his anger. He also works closely with a TA for whom he has great respect, and he has generally responded well to the one-to-one support that she can offer.

Parental involvement and engagement have been particular areas of perceived success. Just before starting at secondary school, Andrew went to live with his father who was unaware that he had a statement for his behavioural problems. Through the structured conversations, Andrew’s father has been able to gain a greater understanding of his son’s difficulties and the support available in school. Andrew has recently returned to live with his mother. Both parents now work closely with the school to support their son and appreciate being able to “work as a team” with the key staff, whom they can contact easily if they are worried about something. Andrew has responded well to his parents coming in for the structured conversations and enjoys knowing that both parents have this close working partnership with the school.

"I’d worked with the educational psychologist; we were doing some narrative therapy work. Andrew started to really open up and talk about how he feels and how he's controlling his anger." (Key Teacher)

"Now without the meetings and us talking to each other, with all the other people that are helping him, we wouldn’t have got to this." (Andrew’s father)

“Faryal” – Year 11 – School Action Plus - VI

Faryal copes well in school and is making good academic progress, but needs help with enlarged print and also having her work read back to her. Faryal has good relationships with her peers and staff: she has enjoyed working closely with her AfA Key Teacher and feels that this one-to-one support has been of great benefit when there is an aspect of her work with which she is struggling. She feels that the school communicates her achievement and targets well to her and she likes the “traffic-light” system that is used to track progress. To help her with independent study, the school gave Faryal a laptop in Year 10. Both she and her father believe that this has been of great benefit, as she can enlarge her work in class when necessary.

Faryal’s father is very supportive of the school and feels that the structured conversations have enabled him to understand any areas of difficulty she has academically and how he can help his daughter with her studies at home. Attendance has been of concern, especially as Faryal is shortly to take her GCSEs, but this has improved recently following the involvement of the school liaison officer, who has also been able to translate for Faryal’s father during structured conversations, as English is not his first language. He has appreciated the opportunity to plan his daughter’s targets with the school.

"I can know how Faryal’s work is progressing, that we can take action - how we could help her, how we could help her engagement. It’s important." (Faryal’s father)

Chapter 8: Conclusions

In this chapter we draw together and synthesize the main findings of our national evaluation of the AfA pilot and consider the implications for future policy and practice in this area.

> *"It has made us remember that every child is an individual"* (Key Teacher, School 7, LA D)

Reminder of research aims, questions and design

The main aim of this national evaluation project was to examine the impact of AfA on a variety of outcomes for children and young people with SEND. We also aimed to find out what processes and practices in schools were most effective in improving these outcomes. The evaluation was driven by the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of AfA on outcomes for pupils with SEND?
    a. In relation to attainment in English and Maths?
    b. In relation to wider outcomes such as behaviour, attendance, and positive relationships?
    c. In relation to parental engagement and confidence?
    d. To what extent is any impact mediated by variation in LA, school and pupil level factors?
2. What processes and practices are most effective in improving the above outcomes?
    a. In relation to activity at LA, school and classroom levels?
    b. What contextual and pupil factors influences the relative success of these processes and practices?
    c. How sustainable are these processes and practices?

In order to answer these questions, we implemented a research design that incorporated quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative component of the evaluation focused primarily upon Research Question 1 and consisted of teacher surveys, parent surveys, attendance and attainment data and school level surveys/data. In some of our analyses (e.g. academic attainment) we were able to compare data for pupils in AfA schools to national averages for pupils with and without SEND. In others analyses (e.g. behaviour) were able to compare data for pupils in AfA schools to those in comparison (i.e. non-AfA) schools. The qualitative component of the research focused primarily on Research Question 2 and comprised interviews with local and regional AfA lead professionals, longitudinal case studies of 20 AfA schools (including case profiles of pupils in each school) and ad-hoc data collected informally at AfA launch and update conferences and other events.

Key findings

AfA had a significant impact upon progress in English and Maths

AfA had a significant impact upon progress in English and Maths among pupils with SEND. All four year groups in our target cohort made **significantly greater progress during the course of the pilot than pupils with SEND nationally** over an equivalent period of time. Additionally, in several of the

analyses the progress of the AfA cohort was also **significantly greater than that made by pupils without SEND nationally**. The effect sizes associated with these differences ranged from small to very large, but in all cases they were of a magnitude likely to be practically meaningful. In this sense, **the AfA pilot proved to be very successful in narrowing the well established achievement gap between pupils with and without SEND**.

> *"I think AfA has enabled us to focus on narrowing the gap for the pupils rather than just supporting pupils. I think what we have been guilty of perhaps is identifying SEN and supporting them in school but not challenging their potential and I think AfA has actually taken our good practice and challenged it and made us take that step a bit further."* (Lead Teacher, LA I)

Improvements in positive relationships, and reductions in bullying and behaviour problems

In relation to improving wider outcomes such as behaviour, attendance and positive relationships, the AfA pilot can also be considered successful. Our analyses of teacher survey data demonstrated **significant improvements in positive relationships**, and **reductions in bullying and behaviour problems** among pupils in AfA schools when compared to pupils attending non-AfA schools. These findings were partially supported by parental survey data, although a significant increase in bullying that emerged in these analyses countered the trend towards improvements in wider outcomes. In terms of attendance, a 'ceiling effect' was evident in our data, with most children attending school regularly; this made it difficult to establish improvements in attendance for the target cohort as a whole. However, analysis of attendance patterns for children classified as persistent absentees (e.g. those with less than 80% attendance) in the year prior to the AfA pilot indicated **dramatic improvements in attendance** by the end of the pilot – an average increase of just over 10%.

Improvements in parental engagement and confidence

Our parent surveys demonstrated that parental engagement also improved over the course of the AfA pilot. However, this change was not statistically significant. This is likely to be related to reasons relating to how we collected the data:

- It could be an artefact of sampling issues (e.g. parents who returned surveys throughout the pilot are likely to be those more actively engaged with their child's school)
- It could be because a relatively small sample of parents who completed all stages of the survey (technically, this gives a lower statistical power and the analyses are less sensitive to change).

The quantitative findings outlined above were verified by the perceptions of a range of informants in our qualitative case studies.

Wider benefits of AfA

The qualitative data provided additional indications of impact in areas not assessed by our outcome measures. For example, many schools reported an **increased awareness of and focus on SEND** and inclusion issues throughout the whole school, with a **greater emphasis on understanding and addressing pupils' wider needs**. Teachers began to take a **more active role in the assessment and monitoring of the pupils with SEND** in their classrooms. In several schools it was felt that the additional information and knowledge about pupils that emerged from the structured conversations enabled teachers to change their expectations and recognise the full potential of their pupils,

resulting in more personalised teaching and learning approaches. CPD and training opportunities associated with AfA, particularly around the structured conversations, were seen as valuable and were applied more widely in day-to-day interactions with staff and non-AfA parents.

> *"The key is all about confidence and I think that's what AfA does, it gives parents and the children a bit of confidence that perhaps they wouldn't normally have."* (Key Teacher, School 12, LA F)

Schools also emphasised the broader benefits of AfA for children in the target cohorts. They reported that **pupils were more confident, both in class and in social interactions**. A more positive attitude towards and engagement with school was seen in many cases, with pupils reportedly happier and less anxious about school. Both pupils and parents appeared to like having a key teacher who was supportive and interested in the child's progress and who was a "named contact" for parents, who were not always confident about contacting school.

School processes and practices important in improving pupil outcomes

Our analyses demonstrated that the impact of AfA on the range of outcomes highlighted above was mediated by variation at both school and pupil levels. Individual differences between pupils always accounted for the largest proportion of variance in outcomes, but differences between schools also played an important role, accounting for between 2.9% and 20.2% of the variance in our multi-level models. The influence of differences between LAs was minimal and not significant in any analysis; this does not mean that the support provided by LAs was not been important, but rather that the LAs were not sufficiently different from one another to produce an effect on change at the individual level.

Our exploration of the implementation of AfA revealed a range of processes and practices that were important in improving pupil outcomes. Through our multi-level analyses, we were able to establish that there were improvements in one or more of the range of outcomes measured at the pupil level (e.g. academic attainment) in schools where:

(i) The AfA Lead was the head teacher or a member of the senior leadership team (SLT)
(ii) Teachers were more frequently involved in reviewing individual pupil targets
(iii) Parents were more frequently involved in reviewing individual pupil targets
(iv) A greater range of methods of communicating information to parents about pupils' progress were used
(v) A greater range of professionals had access to pupil information
(vi) 2 or 3 structured conversations were completed for a larger proportion of pupils
(vii) The structured conversation model was implemented with greater fidelity

Our qualitative case studies supported the above findings and provided further details of the key processes and practices across the three strands of the project. In relation to assessment, tracking and intervention for pupils with SEND, schools developed, refined and modified their existing systems. **Successful schools 'made the most of the data'**; that is, they used it at a variety of levels and for a variety of purposes. The use of data within school through effective assessment, tracking and monitoring enabled them to evaluate interventions and make decisions about which to continue funding. Data-led professional conversations between members of the senior leadership teams and class teachers in schools ensured that children who were not making expected progress were

identified and appropriate classroom support given. The data used is a mixture of both hard academic data and softer data, such as pupil views.

In terms of the structured conversations with parents, schools used the suggested model of practice as a **vehicle for changing home-school relationships**. Success was seen where a collaborative relationship – involving a **two-way exchange of information, ideas, aspirations and concerns** – was formed. Schools expressed determination to involve the most 'hard to reach' parents, and were extremely creative and flexible in the approaches they used in this regard. Finally, in relation to developing provision for wider outcomes, **schools implemented an extraordinary range of approaches and strategies**. A recurrent theme was that the nature of the work undertaken was determined very much by local contexts and circumstances and the needs of pupils within each school.

> *"I think it's been a bit of an eye opener, how valuable the input from parents has been. I said that really carefully because that makes us sound like we never value parents ... And I always felt that we did, and we always went to the effort, especially with a special needs child, to talk to parents. But I don't think the parents ever felt that their views were really, honestly wanted. …And then when we turned it round and said, no we really would like to know what you think, don't just smile politely and say everything is fine, then they started telling us information, which is really useful, which we didn't know beforehand."* (Key Teacher, School 11, LA F)

A further fundamental principle that emerged from both the quantitative and qualitative strands of the research was the inter-related nature of the different components of AfA. Schools quickly drew links within and between each of the three strands, and the nature of developments in their provision reflected this with, for example, structured conversations being used to discuss wider outcomes such as attendance. This principle was also borne out in our quantitative analyses; thus, pupils' positive relationships were shown to contribute to their academic progress. Likewise, school processes and practices relating to assessment, tracking and intervention and structured conversations with parents were associated with changes in wider outcomes such as behaviour.

Our multi-level analyses demonstrated that schools characterised by **higher attendance** and **achievement**, **stronger home-school relations** prior to the start of AfA, and **smaller pupil populations** tended to achieve better outcomes. Conversely, schools with larger proportions of pupils eligible for **FSM**, speaking **EAL**, or at the **latter stages of SEND provision** (e.g. SA+, SSEN) were somewhat less successful. Our qualitative case studies reaffirmed the importance of such contextual factors. Furthermore, they demonstrated that where AfA was successful it was seen as **an opportunity to build on existing good practice** rather than having to do something very different. It enabled the development of a **more inclusive ethos and positive attitudes towards embedding support for children with SEND across the school**. There has been an attitudinal shift, with class teachers **taking responsibility for teaching all of the children in their classroom** rather than focusing on the majority and leaving children with SEND to teaching assistants or other professionals.

Pupil factors important for improvement in outcomes

Changes in outcomes also varied as a function of a variety of factors at pupil level. Our quantitative analyses demonstrated that, generally speaking, pupils with **stronger positive relationships**, who **attended school more regularly**, and with **higher levels of academic achievement** at the beginning of the AfA pilot experienced relatively better outcomes. Pupils at **SA+** or with **SSEN** generally experienced less positive outcomes, as did pupils eligible for **FSM**. In terms of identified primary need, there were few consistent findings across outcomes. However, of particular note are pupils with **BESD**, who experienced accelerated academic progress, but were also at greatly increased risk of less positive wider outcomes; this pattern also applied to a lesser extent to pupils with **ASD**.

We do not have sufficient data to form firm hypotheses regarding the reasons why certain groups of learners experienced relatively less progress in certain outcomes. The findings may be a reflection of certain established relationships – for example, the less positive outcomes for pupils eligible for FSM may be underpinned by the deeply entrenched relationship between poverty and poorer educational outcomes. Likewise, the nature of the difficulties experienced by pupils with BESD means that wider outcomes such as developing positive relationships and improving behaviour may be more challenging. Similarly, pupils at the latter stages of provision, such as SA+ and SSEN, typically have more complex difficulties, regardless of the area of primary need. As such, we would perhaps not expect to see as much progress for such pupils when compared to those at SA.

The key issue here is that there are certain groups of learners who may be considered 'vulnerable' or 'at-risk', even in the context of a highly successful intervention such as AfA. **Schools may wish to focus additional provision and resources on these groups of pupils in particular when continuing their implementation of the programme**.

Schools' intention to sustain AfA

Given the success of the project, the sustainability and transferability of the work undertaken beyond the immediate lifespan of the pilot (and, indeed, the target cohorts) is of paramount importance. The **overwhelming majority of schools gave clear indications of their intention to sustain AfA**, and in some cases, to extend the processes and practices developed in the pilot to other groups of pupils (and parents). This, of course, is another indication of the perceived success of the project itself. A central issue from the outset has been the relative importance of funding. Clearly, this has been an enabling factor; for instance, it has allowed schools to experiment with different interventions that were not previously part of their repertoire, and engage in practices that are human resource-intensive (such as the structured conversations with parents). However, there has also been a theme of focusing on sustainability from the outset; thus, schools strategically invested the funding that was made available to them in areas that would be beneficial in both the short and long term, e.g. training of staff. There was also a clear sense that many of the changes brought about through participation in the AfA pilot – such as the development of a more inclusive ethos – were not tied to financial resources.

> *"It's gone really, really well, the whole school has benefitted, the attitude of the staff has changed and we're getting a lot of feedback from the parents which has been very positive and I think the children are really enjoying it."* (AfA lead, School 11, LA F)

Implications for policy and practice

The findings of this national evaluation suggest that the AfA pilot has been successful in improving a range of outcomes for children and young people with SEND. **The decision to bring the AfA approach 'to scale', first proposed in the recent SEND Green Paper (DfE, 2011), has therefore been vindicated**. However, it is important to note that transferring the learning from this pilot to a national roll-out will not be straightforward. It is perhaps inevitable that aspects of the AfA approach adopted in the pilot will be modified, adapted and/or diluted in schools across the country. As such, it may be helpful to consider the 'must dos' that our various analyses suggested were necessary conditions for success:

1. **Effective strategic support** should be in place beyond the school level that supports and challenges schools, promotes communication and sharing of ideas and practice between them, and helps to develop thinking about how SEND is defined and understood (including raising aspirations).
2. AfA is most successful where it is seen as a **means to extend or enhance existing good practice**. It is important that it is promoted as such and not viewed as a 'bolt on' approach.
3. **Good practice can be prompted by enhancing communication and sharing of ideas and practice between schools.** This provides opportunities for staff to learn and benefit from the work being carried out elsewhere **through the sharing of resources and expertise.**
4. The **AfA Lead in a given school should be the head teacher or a member of the SLT**. School leadership for AfA gives it credibility and helps to drive implementation forward.
5. Leadership in participating schools should ensure that the more **human resource-intensive elements of AfA (for example, structured conversations with parents) are fully supported**, particularly in the early stages of implementation before processes and practices become fully embedded.
6. The **implementation of structured conversations with parents should be faithful to the original guidance**; schools should aim to conduct **at least two conversations per year** with parents where this is feasible and appropriate to individual needs and circumstances.
7. Assessment, tracking and intervention for pupils with SEND should be characterised by:
    - **Frequent involvement of class/subject teachers** in reviewing individual targets
    - **Frequent involvement of parents** in reviewing individual targets
    - A range of stakeholders having **access to relevant pupil information/data**
    - A **comprehensive range of interventions**, whose success is routinely monitored
    - **Use of data at a range of levels** (e.g. pupil, class, school) and for a **variety of purposes** (e.g. to inform target setting, to explore progress patterns among potentially vulnerable groups of learners)
    - **Monitoring systems that take into account individual pupils' needs** – for example, use of P/National Curriculum (NC) levels and sub-level data may miss smaller, but nonetheless important steps forward made by certain groups of learners.
8. Developing provision for wider outcomes should be **determined by local contexts and circumstances**, and the needs of pupils within each school. Schools may benefit from **more explicit guidance and training** in relation to developing positive relationships, improving attendance, reducing behaviour problems, eliminating bullying, and promoting wider participation. The relationship between each of these outcomes should also be emphasized.

9. **The inter-related nature of the three strands of AfA should be emphasized**; this will help to ensure that schools take a holistic, rather than piecemeal approach to implementation.
10. Schools should ensure that provision is put in place such that **groups of potentially vulnerable learners (e.g. those at SA+, and/or those with BESD) have the support they need** to achieve their potential.
11. The **'key teacher'** – a pupil's class teacher in primary schools, or personal tutor or head of year in secondary schools - should act as a **main point of contact with parents**, in addition to the SENCo.

There are also several broader issues raised by the findings of this national evaluation. Firstly, in relation to **how SEND is defined and understood**, the AfA pilot brought into focus several key issues. The population of children who are regarded as having SEND is very fluid and open to change. SEND is also contextual and comparative in nature rather than being objective and absolute (for example, a pupil may be considered to have SEND in one school but when they move schools this may no longer be the case). There are also differing agendas relating to identification – for example, the funding models used in LAs may influence how many pupils schools report as having SEND. How much information is provided to parents of pupils is also a key issue – schools will often prefer not to inform parents of pupils following Code of Practice procedures at SA or SA+ because they do not wish to unduly increase parental anxieties. At the same time, however, our evaluation has demonstrated that parental involvement is central to developing effective provision. Put simply, the SEND system is fraught with complexity, debate and tensions; a key challenge for all schools moving forward is to ensure that this does not get in the way of developing effective provision for vulnerable learners.

A further implication of the findings of this national evaluation relates to the **role played by parents in promoting positive outcomes for children with SEND**. Of course, the involvement and engagement of the parents of *all* children and young people is a crucial ingredient for a successful education system, but this is magnified in the case of learners with SEND, who by definition are more vulnerable to achieving poorer outcomes, and whose parents may be more likely to become disengaged and disaffected (DCSF, 2009c). The findings of this study – in which parental involvement was absolutely central to the promotion of a range of academic and non-academic outcomes – reinforce the need to view 'education' as encapsulating school *and* home, and the relationship between them.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Psychometric properties of the Wider Outcomes Survey for Teachers (WOST) and the Wider Outcomes Survey for Parents (WOSP)

As both of the main outcomes surveys used in the national evaluation of AfA were bespoke measures developed for the study, it is important to demonstrate that they exhibit acceptable psychometric properties. This allows us to be more certain of any conclusions that are drawn using data generated by through the surveys.

The normative samples

The normative samples for the WOST and WOSP are the 6,841 and 848 (respectively) respondents from whom completed[15] surveys were received during the first (baseline) wave of data collection in early 2010. These surveys were drawn from more than 400 schools across 10 LAs. This gives us confidence that the normative samples are geographically representative of England. In terms of statistical representativeness, the normative sample for the WOST confers a 1.2% sampling error with 95% confidence intervals for a population of c. 1,690,000 (the estimated total number of children and young people with SEND in England DfE, 2010), whilst the normative sample for the WOSP confers a 3.4% sampling error with 95% confidence intervals for the same population. Finally, comparison of the composition of the normative samples for the surveys to national averages (DfE, 2010) in terms of primary need (e.g. SLD, VI) indicated a high degree of similarity. In all but two cases (MLD and BESD) the proportion of children and young people in each category of primary need were within 4% of those reported nationally.

Our psychometric analysis of the WOST and WOSP made use of the criteria outlined by Terwee and colleagues (2007), who suggested that questionnaires should be developed and evaluated on the basis of the following measurement properties: (1) content validity, (2) internal consistency, (3) criterion validity, (4) construct validity, (5) reproducibility, (6) responsiveness, (7) floor and ceiling effects, and (8) interpretability. The analyses presented below make use of our baseline data unless otherwise specified.

Content validity

Content validity "examines the extent to which the concepts of interest are comprehensively represented by items in the questionnaire" (Terwee et al., 2007, p.35). It is suggested that authors should provide a clear description of the following:

1. *Measurement aim of the questionnaire*. The primary measurement aim of both surveys was evaluative, as we sought to measure the amount of change in our sample on the various wider outcomes (e.g. behaviour).
2. *Target population*. The population for which the surveys were developed was (by proxy) children and young people with SEND.
3. *Concepts*. The WOST was designed to measure behaviour, bullying and positive relationships. The WOSP was designed to measure behaviour, bullying, positive relationships, wider participation, and parental engagement and confidence.

[15] A 'completion threshold' was set, such that no more than 2 items per subscale could be missing in order for that subscale to be considered complete in a given survey.

4. *Item selection and item reduction*. Items were generated and selected using a combination of four methods: (i) discussion and 'brainstorming' among members of the research team, (ii) reference to the AfA guidance for LAs and schools, (iii) reference to existing measures (for some domains – e.g. the 'conduct problems' subscale of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for the 'behaviour' domain), and (iv) reference to the broader research literature pertaining to each of the concepts of interest. The surveys were piloted in autumn 2009 with participants who were not part of the AfA national evaluation. Basic psychometric analysis suggested the surveys were fit for purpose and so they were used in their entirety in the AfA national evaluation, with item reduction occurring largely *post-hoc*. The initial version of the WOST contained 28 items (9 behaviour, 9 bullying and 10 positive relationships), and the initial version of the WOSP contained 44 items (9 behaviour, 9 bullying and 10 positive relationships, 8 wider participation and 8 engagement and confidence). Item reduction techniques were applied and individual items were eliminated if, for example, they were regularly skipped by a large proportion of participants, or if their removal improved one or more measurement properties (e.g. internal consistency). The final version of the WOST contains 20 items (6 behaviour, 7 bullying and 7 positive relationships), and the final version of the WOSP contains 43 items (9 behaviour, 8 bullying and 10 positive relationships, 8 wider participation and 8 engagement and confidence) (see list of items at end of this Appendix).
5. *Item interpretability*. Items in both surveys were carefully written to ensure as low a reading age as possible (this was checked by one of the authors – a senior educational psychologist), and to avoid unnecessary jargon and technical language. Interpretability of items relating to concepts with equivocal meanings (e.g. bullying) was facilitated with the use of clear definitions where appropriate. Finally, the WOSP was translated into the 9 most commonly spoken languages other than English across participating LAs; these were Arabic, Bengali, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, French, Guajarati, Polish, Somali and Urdu.

Internal consistency

Internal consistency is "a measure of the extent to which items in a questionnaire (sub) scale are correlated (homogenous), thus measuring the same concept" (Terwee et al., 2007, p.36). We applied two commonly used techniques to assess the internal consistency of the WOST and WOSP. The first of these, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), is used to examine the proposed structure of a survey by examining how well this structure 'fits' the data that the survey produces. A number of fit indices are used in CFA. Below we present 7 of the most commonly used, noting the desired values/thresholds[16] for each and that corresponding results for the two surveys.

	x^2/df	CFI	TLI	GFI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA
Ideal fit	<2.0	>0.9	>0.9	>0.95	>0.9	≈ 0	≈ 0
WOST	49	0.922	0.909	0.884	0.850	0.035	0.086
WOSP	3.851	0.905	0.898	0.835	0.815	0.028	0.058

The second measure of internal consistency used was Cronbach's Alpha (α). The measures the extent to which items in a (sub)scale correlate with one another. The standard threshold for good

[16] In CFA it is debated whether data must produce an 'exact' (e.g. above or below a given statistical threshold/value) or 'close' fit (e.g. approaching a given statistical threshold/value (Fife-Schaw, 2006). We have used close fit in our interpretation of the CFA analyses of the WOST and WOSP because of the increased likelihood of Type 2 errors associated with the use of exact fit indices.

internal consistency as assessed by Cronbach's Alpha is $\alpha > 0.7$. Below we present the Cronbach's Alpha values for each of the domains in the WOST and WOSP:

	Behaviour	Bullying	Positive relationships	Wider participation	Engagement and confidence
WOST	0.903	0.903	0.920	-	-
WOSP	0.818	0.911	0.905	0.938	0.957

Criterion validity

Criterion validity is "the extent to which scores on a particular instrument relate to a gold standard" (Terwee et al, 2007, p.36). Unfortunately, we were not in a position to assess the criterion validity of our two surveys. This was partly because of a lack of gold standard instruments for some domains (e.g. wider participation), and partly because of the additional data collection burden this would have placed upon respondents. Where gold standard measures are available (for example, the 'conduct problems' subscale of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for the 'behaviour' domain), we plan to assess this measurement property in our future work using the WOST and WOSP.

Construct validity

Construct validity refers to "the extent to which scores on a particular instrument relate to other measures in a manner that is consistent with theoretically derived hypotheses concerning the concepts that are being measured" (Terwee et al., 2007, p.36). To assess the construct validity of the WOST and WOSP, we tested a range of pre-specified hypotheses:

1. *The behaviour, bullying and positive relationships subscales of the WOST and WOSP will discriminate between pupils with BESD, ASD and other SEND.*

This hypothesis provided a good test of the discriminative validity of our measures. SEND theory and research suggests that pupils with BESD and ASD are more likely to experience negative outcomes in relation to behaviour, bullying and positive relationships than other pupils with SEND. Below we present our analysis of the ability of the WOST and WOSP to discriminate between these groups of learners and those with other SEND:

	WOST		WOSP	
	Discriminates between groups?	Statistically significant post-hoc comparisons and effect sizes	Discriminates between groups?	Statistically significant post-hoc comparisons and effect sizes
Behaviour	Yes $F(2,6381) = 595.52$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.157$	BESD > ASD (d=0.55) BESD > OTHER SEND (d=1.02) ASD > OTHER SEND (d=0.47)	Yes $F(2,845) = 40.34$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.087$	BESD > OTHER SEND (d=0.85) ASD > OTHER SEND (d=0.71)
Bullying	Yes $F(2,6381) = 161.03$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.042$	BESD > ASD (d=0.26) BESD > OTHER SEND (d=0.55) ASD > OTHER SEND (d=0.28)	Yes $F(2,845) = 13.599$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$	BESD > OTHER SEND (d=0.44) ASD > OTHER SEND (d=0.54)
Positive relationships	Yes $F(2,6381) = 320.49$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.091$	BESD < OTHER SEND (d=0.72) ASD < OTHER SEND (d=0.84)	Yes $F(2,845) = 36.39$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.079$	BESD < OTHER SEND (d=0.53) ASD < OTHER SEND (d=1.36)

2. *Parental engagement and confidence will decrease as a function of pupil age.*

This hypothesis was based upon research that suggested that many parents become dissatisfied with the SEND system over time. We therefore hypothesized a decline in parental engagement and confidence associated with age, since parents of older pupils would have had lengthier experience in

dealing with said system. The results of this analysis suggested that there was indeed a significant effect of age, $F(3,844) = 19.226$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.068$. Statistically significant post-hoc comparisons and effect sizes are outlined below:

- Year 1 > Year 5 ($d = 0.25$)
- Year 1 > Year 7 ($d = 0.45$)
- Year 1 > Year 10 ($d = 0.82$)
- Year 5 > Year 10 ($d = 0.51$)
- Year 7 > Year 10 ($d = 0.38$)

3. *Behaviour and bullying will be positively correlated; in turn they will both be negatively correlated with positive relationships*

This hypothesis was based upon the proposed relationship between three of our wider outcomes subscales. Specifically, previous theory and research has suggested that children with behaviour problems are also likely to experience bullying, and vice-versa. Likewise, children regarded as having strong positive relationships in school are not likely to experience bullying and/or behaviour problems. Below we present our analysis of the correlations between these three subscales of the WOST and WOSP:

	WOST	WOSP
Behaviour-bullying	0.616 (p<0.01)	0.418 (p<0.01)
Bullying-positive relationships	-0.483 (p<0.01)	-0.405 (p<0.01)
Positive relationships-behaviour	-0.562 (p<0.01)	-0.474 (p<0.01)

Reproducibility

Reproducibility refers to the stability of a measure, and can be assessed by looking at reliability and/or agreement (Terwee et al., 2007). Unfortunately, we were not in a position to assess the test-retest reliability of the WOST or WOSP because we did not have any repeated measures for either survey that fell within an appropriate period of time (1 or 2 weeks is suggested by Terwee et al, 2007). As with criterion validity (above), the test-retest reliability of the measures will be determined in our future work using the instruments.

Although we were not able to examine the stability of our measures over time during their initial development, we were able to examine another important aspect of reproducibility – agreement between raters. Analysis of this was possible for the three domains shared by the WOST and WOSP – behaviour, bullying and positive relationships, and was conducted using Pearson Product Moment Correlations. We set a co-efficient benchmark of 0.27, since this was the average correlation between teacher and parent ratings reported in a meta-analysis of cross-informant ratings for measures assessing similar domains (e.g. behaviour problems) (Achenbach, McConaughy & Howell, 1987). The inter-rater correlation co-efficients for the wider outcomes surveys compared favourably to this benchmark, being 0.483 for behaviour, 0.368 for bullying and 0.344 for positive relationships (all p<0.01).

Responsiveness

Responsiveness is "the ability of a questionnaire to detect clinically important changes over time" (Terwee et al., 2007, p.37). Our ability to assess this in the two wider outcomes surveys was limited somewhat by the lack of test-retest reliability data (see above), since true responsiveness estimates

must be able to distinguish actual change from measurement error (Terwee et al., 2007). Thus, as with test-retest reliability and criterion validity, responsiveness will be determined in our future work using the WOST and WOSP.

Floor or ceiling effects

Floor and ceiling effects refer to situations where high proportions respondents receive either the lowest (floor) or highest (ceiling) possible score on a scale. Such effects can cause problems in terms of the sensitivity and responsiveness of the scale. Terwee et al. (2007) suggest that floor or ceiling effects are present if more than 15% of respondents receive the lowest or highest possible scores. Our analyses of possible floor and/or ceiling effects of the WOST and WOSP are presented below:

	WOST		WOSP	
	Floor	Ceiling	Floor	Ceiling
Behaviour	35%	0.3%	7.7%	0%
Bullying	37%	0.1%	33%	0%
Positive relationships	14%	14%	0.2%	16%
Wider participation	-	-	1.5%	11%
Engagement and confidence	-	-	0.8%	26%

Although there were floor and/or ceiling effects for some domains using Terwee et al.'s (2007) 15% criterion, it is important to note that the implications of such effects for the measurement properties of a given measure depend upon what is actually being measured. So, for example, one would expect to see floor effects for domains such as behaviour and bullying since most children and young people are well behaved and are not bullied. This argument is lent support when we consider that other, well-established measures that assess similar domains also exhibit similar effects. For example, the conduct problems subscale of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire exhibits floor effects of 32.1% (parent version) and 64.2% (teacher) (www.sdqinfo.org).

Interpretability

Interpretability is "the degree to which once can assign qualitative meaning to quantitative scores" (Terwee et al., 2007, p.37). Interpretation is aided by providing information on means and standard deviations of scores of a reference population (in this case, children and young people with SEND) and relevant sub-groups (e.g. different primary needs, age groups, gender groups). In this vein, we provide normative scores for each subscale of the WOST and WOSP by primary need (e.g. ASD, MLD, HI) at the end of this document.

Conclusion

Both the WOST and WOSP demonstrate acceptable psychometric properties. A summary of these is presented below.

1. Normative samples for both surveys can be considered representative of the populations from which they are drawn.
2. Good content validity, with clear and transparent measurement aims, target population, concepts, item selection and reduction procedures, and item interpretability.
3. Good internal consistency, with acceptable data fit established through confirmatory factor analysis (most fit indices approaching or exceeding desired thresholds) and excellent item inter-correlation established through Cronbach's Alpha (all α above .8 (.818-.957)).

4. Strong construct validity, with both measures behaving in a way that was consistent with pre-specified hypotheses concerning certain subgroups and subscales.
5. Respectable inter-rater correlations that exceed the average (0.27) co-efficient for teacher-parent ratings for measures assessing similar domains.
6. Floor and/or ceiling effects (>15%) only typically present in subscales where this would be expected based upon the construct being measured (e.g. behaviour, bullying)
7. Interpretability facilitated by production of normative means for each subscale by primary need.

The credibility of the WOST and WOSP could be further strengthened in the future via data gathering that would allow for analysis of criterion validity, test-retest reliability and responsiveness.

Wider Outcomes Survey for Teachers (WOST)

Behaviour

		Never	*Rarely*	*Sometimes*	*Often*
1	The pupil cheats and tells lies				
2	The pupil takes things that do not belong to him/her				
3	The pupil breaks or spoils things on purpose				
4	The pupil gets angry and has tantrums				
5	The pupil gets in fights with other children				
6	The pupil says nasty things to other children				

Bullying

		Never	*Rarely*	*Sometimes*	*Often*
1	The pupil is picked on by other children				
2	The pupil is hurt by other children (e.g. gets pushed or kicked)				
3	The pupil is called names or teased by other children.				
4	Other children spread unkind gossip about the pupil.				
5	Other children stop the pupil from joining in their games and activities at break-times.				
6	The pupil is actively disliked by other children				
7	Other children stop the pupil from joining in during class activities				

Positive relationships

		Strongly disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
1	The pupil can compromise with other children (e.g. take turns)				
2	The pupil is helpful towards others				
3	The pupil is popular with other children				
4	The pupil can compromise with teachers (e.g. will complete a difficult task before moving on to a preferred activity)				
5	The pupil is kind towards others				
6	The pupil makes friends easily				
7	The pupil can join in other children's activities				

Wider Outcomes Survey for Parents (WOSP)

Behaviour

		Never	*Rarely*	*Sometimes*	*Often*
1	My child does as he/she is asked				
2	My child cheats and tells lies				
3	My child takes things that do not belong to him/her				
4	My child breaks or spoils things on purpose				
5	My child behaves well when unsupervised				
6	My child gets angry and has tantrums				
7	My child gets in fights with other children				
8	My child says nasty things to other children				
9	My child takes responsibility for his/her actions				

Bullying

		Never	*Rarely*	*Sometimes*	*Often*
1	My child is picked on by other children				
2	My child is hurt by other children (e.g. gets pushed or kicked)				
3	My child is called names or teased by other children.				
4	Other children spread unkind gossip about my child.				
5	Other children stop my child from joining in their games and activities at break-times.				
6	My child is actively disliked by other children				
7	Other children stop my child from joining in during class activities				

Positive relationships

		Strongly disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
1	My child can compromise with other children (e.g. take turns)				
2	My child is helpful towards others				
3	My child is popular with other children				
4	My child can compromise with teachers (e.g. will complete a difficult task before moving on to a preferred activity)				
5	My child is kind towards others				
6	My child makes friends easily				
7	My child can join in other children's activities				
8	My child has at least one good friend				
9	My child has a good relationship with at least one teacher				
10	My child can approach groups of children				

Engagement and confidence

		Strongly disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
1	The school gives me information I need about my child				
2	The school involves me in my child's learning				
3	The school tells me about my child's successes				
4	I feel that the school listens to me				
5	I am confident that the school can meet my child's needs				
6	The school involves me in decisions affecting my child's education				
7	I can contact the school easily if I am worried about my child				
8	I have a good relationship with teachers at my child's school				

Wider participation

		Strongly disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
1	My child often attends wider participation activities at his/her school				
2	The wider participation activities on offer are of interest to my child				
3	There is a varied range of wider participation activities available for my child				
4	My child looks forward to taking part in wider participation activities				
5	Taking part in wider participation activities has been good for my child's development				
6	I have been able to access wider participation activities at my child's school				
7	I am happy with the wider participation activities available to me and my child.				
8	My child can access wider participation activities				

WOST norms

Behaviour

Primary need	N	Behaviour			
		Mean	SD	CI lower	CI upper
SPLD	877	.43	.61	.39	.47
MLD	2885	.48	.62	.46	.51
SLD	182	.75	.72	.65	.86
PMLD	31	.64	.59	.42	.86
BESD	1119	1.22	.84	1.17	1.27
SLCD	766	.44	.57	.40	.48
ASD	304	.79	.74	.70	.87
VI	45	.41	.62	.22	.60
HI	101	.45	.68	.31	.58
MSI	10	.45	.69	-.04	.94
PD	144	.35	.54	.26	.44
Other	72	.87	1.33	.70	1.04
Not recorded	305	.45	.60	.38	.52

Bullying

Primary need	N	Bullying			
		Mean	SD	CI lower	CI upper
SPLD	877	2.26	.56	2.23	2.30
MLD	2885	2.20	.53	2.18	2.22
SLD	182	1.94	.55	1.86	2.02
PMLD	31	1.51	.67	1.26	1.75
BESD	1119	1.78	.58	1.75	1.82
SLCD	766	2.12	.54	2.08	2.16
ASD	304	1.71	.58	1.65	1.78
VI	45	2.17	.55	2.01	2.34
HI	101	2.15	.59	2.04	2.27
MSI	10	2.21	.69	1.72	2.71
PD	144	2.35	.52	2.27	2.44
Other	72	1.94	.57	1.81	2.08
Not recorded	305	2.24	.54	2.18	2.30

Positive relationships

Primary need	N	Positive relationships			
		Mean	SD	CI lower	CI upper
SPLD	877	.46	.62	.42	.50
MLD	2885	.47	.57	.45	.49
SLD	182	.54	.63	.45	.63
PMLD	31	.46	.64	.22	.69
BESD	1119	.81	.69	.77	.85
SLCD	766	.44	.55	.40	.48
ASD	304	.63	.65	.55	.70
VI	45	.53	.67	.33	.73
HI	101	.36	.49	.27	.46
MSI	10	.30	.43	-.01	.61
PD	144	.30	.43	.23	.37
Other	72	.55	.63	.40	.70
Not recorded	305	.43	.57	.36	.49

WOSP norms

Behaviour

Primary need	N	Behaviour			
		Mean	SD	CI lower	CI upper
SPLD	120	.54	.42	.46	.62
MLD	279	.55	.47	.49	.60
SLD	16	.65	.54	.37	.94
PMLD	5	1.16	.54	.49	1.82
BESD	91	1.02	.57	.90	1.14
SLCD	97	.61	.45	.52	.70
ASD	33	.96	.59	.75	1.16
VI	5	.73	.88	-.36	1.82
HI	10	.71	.58	.30	1.13
MSI	1	/	/	/	/
PD	19	.52	.46	.30	.74
Other	25	.64	.52	.42	.86
Not recorded	147	.59	.51	.51	.68

Bullying

Primary need	N	Bullying			
		Mean	SD	CI lower	CI upper
SPLD	120	.52	.58	.42	.63
MLD	279	.47	.57	.40	.54
SLD	16	1.02	.81	.58	1.45
PMLD	5	1.50	.90	.39	2.61
BESD	91	.82	.72	.67	.97
SLCD	97	.40	.50	.30	.50
ASD	33	.92	.84	.62	1.22
VI	5	.48	.43	-.06	1.01
HI	10	.80	.92	.14	1.46
MSI	1	/	/	/	/
PD	19	.59	.70	.25	.93
Other	25	.36	.47	.17	.55
Not recorded	147	.63	.68	.52	.74

Positive relationships

Primary need	N	Positive relationships			
		Mean	SD	CI lower	CI upper
SPLD	120	2.51	.43	2.43	2.59
MLD	279	2.46	.45	2.41	2.51
SLD	16	1.97	.49	1.71	2.23
PMLD	5	1.90	.48	1.30	2.50
BESD	91	2.14	.46	2.05	2.24
SLCD	97	2.42	.45	2.33	2.51
ASD	33	1.75	.46	1.58	1.91
VI	5	2.32	.45	1.76	2.88
HI	10	2.18	.62	1.74	2.62
MSI	1	/	/	/	/
PD	19	2.36	.74	2.01	2.72
Other	25	2.13	.66	1.86	2.40
Not recorded	147	2.31	.54	2.22	2.40

Engagement and confidence

Primary need	N	Engagement and confidence			
		Mean	SD	CI lower	CI upper
SPLD	120	2.28	.64	2.17	2.40
MLD	279	2.40	.57	2.33	2.46
SLD	16	2.15	.57	1.84	2.45
PMLD	5	2.18	.46	1.60	2.75
BESD	91	2.23	.62	2.10	2.36
SLCD	97	2.45	.54	2.34	2.56
ASD	33	2.46	.53	2.28	2.65
VI	5	2.35	.46	1.78	2.92
HI	10	2.05	.69	1.56	2.54
MSI	1	/	/	/	/
PD	19	2.65	.63	2.35	2.96
Other	25	2.06	.84	1.71	2.41
Not recorded	147	2.20	.60	2.10	2.30

Wider participation

Primary need	N	Wider participation			
		Mean	SD	CI lower	CI upper
SPLD	120	1.99	.69	1.87	2.12
MLD	279	2.09	.59	2.02	2.16
SLD	16	1.80	.65	1.46	2.15
PMLD	5	2.18	.67	1.34	3.00
BESD	91	1.80	.71	1.66	1.95
SLCD	97	2.10	.55	1.99	2.22
ASD	33	1.59	.68	1.35	1.84
VI	5	1.57	.33	1.16	1.99
HI	10	1.95	.78	1.40	2.50
MSI	1	/	/	/	/
PD	19	2.26	.69	1.92	2.59
Other	25	1.77	.89	1.40	2.14
Not recorded	147	1.92	.66	1.81	2.03

Appendix 2: Conversion chart for academic attainment data[17]

P levels	GCSE	NC	Point Score
1			1
2			2
3			3
4			4
5			5
6			6
7		1c	7
8		1b	9
		1a	11
		2c	13
		2b	15
		2a	17
	G-	3c	19
	G	3b	21
	G+	3a	23
	F-	4c	25
	F	4b	27
	F+	4a	29
	E-	5c	31
	E	5b	33
	E+	5a	35
	D-	6c	37
	D	6b	39
	D+	6a	41
	C-	7c	43
	C	7b	45
	C+	7a	47
	B-	8c	49
	B	8b	51
	B+	8a	53
	A-	9c	55
	A	9b	57
	A+	9a	59
	A*-	10c	61
	A*	10b	63
	A*+	10a	65

[17] GCSE grades in this table are allocated points based on a table sent by NS. These are different to the QCA charts (which have A* at 58 and give alternative courses). National Curriculum level conversion uses information from the National Strategies website.

Appendix 3: List of school and pupil variables included in multi-level analyses

Level		Variables	
LA Level	-	-	-
School Level	School contextual variables	Urbanicity	Urban school Rural school
		School size	Number of pupils on role
		% EAL	% of pupils at school with EAL
		% FSM	% of pupils at school eligible for FSM
		% SA+ and SSEN	% of pupils at school at SA+ or SSEN
		% SA	% of pupils at school at SA
		Primary school achievement	% of pupils at school with NC level 4 or above in English and Maths (2009/10)
		Secondary school achievement	% of pupils at school with GCSE grades A-C (2009/10)
		% overall absence	Average % of overall pupil absence at school
		Aggregated school behaviour baseline	Mean behaviour for school from teacher surveys at baseline (0-3)
		Aggregated school positive relationships baseline	Mean positive relationships for school from teacher surveys at baseline (0-3)
		Aggregated school bullying baseline	Mean bullying for school from teacher surveys at baseline (0-3)
	School AfA variables	Is AfA school lead a member of the SLT?	Yes No
		How are judgements surrounding assessment of pupil progress moderated?	Additive (1-5)
		Are targets set using the progression guidance shared with parents?	Yes No
		Are these targets reviewed by teachers termly?	Never Rarely Often Always
		Are parents involved in reviewing these targets?	Never Rarely Often Always
		Who is involved in planning interventions?	Additive (1-5)
		What form do these interventions take?	Additive (1-4)
		Who has access to pupil information	Additive (1-6)
		How do parents get to know how their children are doing	Additive (1-8)
		How would you describe the school's	Very poor

		relationship with parents prior to AfA?	Poor Good Excellent
		What % of 2 and 3 structured conversations have taken place at the school?	% of pupils at school who had 2 or 3 structured conversations completed (2010/11)
		Structured conversation fidelity	Ordinal scale (0-36)
Pupil	Pupil contextual variables	Gender	Male Female
		Year group	Year 1 Year 5 Year 7 Year10
		Ethnicity	White British Asian Black Mixed ethnicity Chinese Any other ethnic group Unclassified
		Language	English Other language group Unclassified
		FSM eligibility	Yes No
		SEND register	SA SA+ SSEN Unknown No longer SEND
		SEND primary need	SpLD MLD SLD PMLD BESD SCLN ASD VI HI MSI PD Other Unknown No longer SEND
		PS Maths baseline	Ordinal (1-65)
		PS English baseline	Ordinal (1-65)
		Behaviour at baseline	Mean behaviour score on teacher survey at baseline (0-3)

		Positive relationships at baseline	Mean positive relationship score on teacher survey at baseline (0-3)
		Bullying at baseline	Mean bullying score on teacher survey at baseline (0-3)
		% Attendance at baseline	% Attendance at baseline
		Parental engagement and confidence at baseline	Mean parental engagement and confidence score on parent survey at baseline (0-3)
		Wider participation at baseline	Mean wider participation score parent survey at baseline (0-3)
	Pupil AfA target variables	PS Maths Time 3	Ordinal (1-65)
		PS English Time 3	Ordinal (1-65)
		Behaviour at Time 3	Mean behaviour score on teacher survey at Summer 2011 (0-3)
		Positive relationships at Time 3	Mean positive relationship score on teacher survey at Summer 2011(0-3)
		Bullying at Time 3	Mean bullying score on teacher survey at Summer 2011(0-3)
		% Attendance in second year of AfA	% Attendance at second year of AfA (2010/2011)
		Parental engagement and confidence at Time 3	Mean parental engagement and confidence score on parent survey at Summer 2011 (0-3)
		Wider participation at Time 3	Mean wider participation score parent survey at Summer 2011(0-3)

Appendix 4: Data tables/analyses

Data table/analysis: Mean PS progress in English comparisons with national data (chapter 4, page 44-45)

		AfA pupils	Pupils with SEND nationally	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*	Pupils without SEND nationally	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Primary	**Year 1**	**4.43**	4.11	4.24	< .001	0.18	4.20	5.89	< .001	0.25
	Year 5	**6.85**	4.88	37.97	< .001	1.39	4.99	35.85	< .001	1.31
Secondary	**Year 7**	**5.01**	4.70	4.72	< .001	0.17	5.94	14.15	< .001	0.52
	Year 10	**6.66**	4.70	13.45	< .001	0.50	5.94	4.94	< .001	0.19

Data table/analysis: Mean PS progress in Maths comparisons with national data (chapter 4, page 47)

		AfA pupils	Pupils with SEND nationally	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*	Pupils without SEND nationally	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Primary	**Year 1**	5.03	3.81	20.64	< .001	0.87	4.02	17.09	< .001	0.72
	Year 5	6.49	4.52	33.58	< .001	1.22	4.77	29.32	< .001	1.07
Secondary	**Year 7**	4.73	4.07	8.39	< .001	0.31	5.55	10.42	< .001	0.39
	Year 10	6.01	4.07	12.83	< .001	0.48	5.55	3.04	< .001	0.11

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' English during the AfA pilot (primary schools) (chapter 4, page 49)

Empty model: $\beta_{0jk} = 18.08\ (0.275)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0jk} = -0.327\ (2.576)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.161** **0.3%**	**0.335**	.321	**LA Level**	**0.000** **0%**	**0.000**	-
School level	**9.012** **19.2%**	**1.245**	**< .001**	**School level**	**0.820** **12.4%**	**0.162**	**< .001**
				School size	-0.002	0.001	.024
				% pupils achieving Level 4 in Eng/Maths	+0.028	0.009	.002
Pupil level	**37.727** **80.4%**	**1.065**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**5.802** **87.6%**	**0.205**	**< .001**
				Year group	+0.923 (if 'Year 5')	0.059	< .001
				Ethnic group (compared to white)	+0.531 (if 'black') -2.441 (if 'Chinese')	0.314 1.049	.046 .010
				Language group (compared to English)	+0.803 (if 'other')	0.276	.002
				Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	-0.418 (if 'yes')	0.141	.002
				SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.387 (if 'SA+') -1.958 (if 'ST')	0.154 0.310	.006 < .001
				SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	+0.400 (if 'SpLD') -2.247 (if 'SLD') +1.181 (if 'BESD') +0.782 (if 'PD') +2.435 (if 'unknown')	0.218 0.463 0.211 0.782 0.955	.034 < .001 < .001 .040 .005
				Positive relationships score at baseline	+0.283	0.155	.034
				% attendance (09/10)	+0.018	0.010	.036
				English PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.880	0.022	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 17917.456				**-2*Log likelihood = 8134.981**			
X^2 **(67 , n = 1741) = 9782.48,** ***p*** **< .001**							

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' English during the AfA pilot (secondary schools) (chapter 4, page 50)

Empty model: $\beta_{0jk} = 31.796 (0.664)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0jk} = 0.254 (7.569)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**2.054 3.2%**	**1.891**	**.152**	**LA Level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
School level	**6.612 10.1%**	**1.956**	**.001**	**School level**	**0.000 0.00%**	**0.000**	**-**
				% of pupils at SAP or SSEN	-0.220	0.067	.001
				% absence	-0.633	0.343	.037
				Aggregated positive relationships at baseline	-4.007	2.297	.046
				Aggregated bullying at baseline	-5.019	2.227	.016
				Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+2.236 (if 'often')	0.699	.002
				School-parent relationships prior to start of AfA (compared to 'very poor')	-6.231 (if 'poor')	2.819	.018
				Fidelity to the structured conversation model (0-36)	+0.348	0.098	< .001
Pupil level	**56.505 86.7%**	**1.636**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**22.114 100%**	**0.888**	**< .001**
				Year group	+1.970 (if 'year 10')	0.110	< .001
				Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.735 (if 'female')	0.307	.009
				SEND provision (compared to SA)	-1.143 (if 'SA+') -3.010 (if ST')	0.342 0.550	< .001 < .001
				SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	+1.978 (if BESD') +3.612 (if 'ASD') +3.760 (if 'MSI')	0.422 0.865 1.843	< .001 < .001 .021
				Behaviour score at baseline	-1.224	0.277	< .001
				% attendance (09/10)	+0.063	0.018	< .001
				English PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.614	0.023	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 16765.157				**-2*Log likelihood = 7352.356**			
X^2 **(67 , n = 1239) = 9412.80,** ***p*** **< .001**							

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' Maths during the AfA pilot (primary schools) (chapter 4, page 52)

Empty model: $\beta_{0jk} = 18.825\ (0.242)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0jk} = 0.254\ (7.569)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.040 0.1%**	**0.260**	**.442**	**LA Level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
School level	**8.219 17.8%**	**1.159**	**< .001**	**School level**	**0.606 7.5%**	**0.149**	**.323**
				% pupils eligible for FSM	+0.020	0.010	.024
				% pupils achieving Level 4 in Eng/Maths	+0.034	0.009	.001
				% absence	+0.68	0.022	< .001
Pupil level	**37.959 82.1%**	**1.063**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**7.451 92.5%**	**0.261**	**< .001**
				Year group	-0.840 (if 'Year 5')	0.068	< .001
				Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.358 (if 'female')	0.146	.007
				Ethnic group (compared to 'White British')	+0.588 (if 'mixed')	0.347	.046
				Language group (compared to English)	+0.600 (if 'other')	0.311	.027
				SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.696 (if 'SA+') -2.053 (if 'ST') -1.437 (if 'unknown')	0.170 0.344 0.704	< .001 < .001 .021
				SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	-1.899 (if 'SLD') +1.237 (if 'BESD') +1.298 (if 'HI')	0.519 0.234 0.601	.001 < .001 .015
				Positive relationships score at baseline	+0.786	0.172	< .001
				% attendance (09/10)	+0.040	0.011	< .001
				Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.822	0.024	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 18179.855				**-2*Log likelihood = 8642.189**			
X^2 **(67 , n = 1764) = 9537.67,** ***p*** **< .001**							

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' Maths PS scores during the AfA pilot (secondary schools) (chapter 4, page 53)

Empty model: $\beta_{0jk} = 31.189\ (0.473)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0jk} = 0.254\ (7.569)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.917 1.2%**	**0.952**	**.181**	**LA Level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
School level	**2.970 3.8%**	**1.121**	**.006**	**School level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
				% pupils at SAP or SSEN	-0.505	0.092	.016
				% pupils at SA	-0.114	0.057	.092
				Aggregated positive relationships at baseline	-5.077	2.690	.100
				Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+2.701 (if 'often')	0.812	.040
				Frequency of parental involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+1.285(if 'often')	0.557	.074
				Range of methods of communication used to inform parents of their child's progress (total count 0-8)	+0.741	0.285	.061
				% of pupils for whom 2 or 3 structured conversation completed in 10/11	+0.057	0.030	.099
Pupil level	**73.334 95%**	**2.124**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**29.685 100%**	**1.208**	**< .001**
				Year group	+1.338 (if 'year 10')	0.130	< .001
				Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.968 (if 'female')	0.357	.003
				SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-1.216 (if 'SSEN')	0.635	.028
				SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	+0.857 (if 'SpLD') +1.662 (if BESD') +3.558 (if 'ASD') +3.563 (if 'MSI')	0.494 0.496 1.020 2.135	.042 < .001 < .001 .048
				Behaviour score at baseline	-1.350	0.326	< .001
				Positive relationships score at baseline	+1.069	0.377	.002
				% attendance (08/09)	+0.076	0.021	< .001
				Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.793	0.024	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 17342.323				**-2*Log likelihood = 7517.832**			
X^2 (67 , n = 1207) = 9824.49, *p* < .001							

Data table/analysis: Correlates of structured conversation fidelity (chapter 5, page 57)

No. of structured conversations	Fidelity
3	.250*
2	-.175*
1	-.210*
0	-.074
Current relationships with parents	.234*

* significant < .05

Data table/analysis: Mean scores (SD) on parent survey at time 1 and 3 for parental engagement and confidence (chapter 5, page 61)

	AfA	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Time 1	2.32 (0.52)			
Time 3	2.36 (0.62)			
Progress	**0.04 (0.59)**	**1.22**	**.233**	**0.07**

Data table/analysis: Pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in parental engagement and confidence during the AfA pilot (chapter 5, page 61)

Empty model: $\beta_{0i} = 2.254\ (0.036)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0i} = 0.786\ (0.513)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***
Pupil level	**0.378 100%**	**0.032**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**0.214 100%**	**0.020**	**< .001**
				Year group	-0.511 (if 'Year 7')	0.202	.006
				Ethnicity (compared to 'White')	+0.582 (if 'Asia') +0.929 (if 'unclassified')	0.179 0.474	< .001 .026
				SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.144 (if 'SA+')	0.076	.030
				SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	+0.172 (if 'SpLD') +0.241 (if 'BESD')	0.099 0.113	.042 .017
				Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.023	0.013	.039
				Engagement score at baseline	+0.460	0.061	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 537.158				**-2*Log likelihood = 306.790**			
X^2 **(40 , n = 237) = 230.37,** ***p*** **< .001,** R^2 **(237) = 0.434**							

Data table/analysis: Mean scores (SD) on teacher survey at time 1 and 3 for positive relationships (chapter 6, page 72)

	AfA	Comparison	*F*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Time 1	2.06 (0.57)	2.08 (0.58)			
Time 3	2.15 (0.56)	2.07 (0.57)			
Progress	**0.09 (0.59)**	**-0.01 (0.59)**	**5.62**	**.018**	**0.17**

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' positive relationships during the AfA pilot (primary schools) (chapter 6, page 74)

Empty model: $\beta_{ojk} = 2.222\ (0.020)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{ojk} = 0.254\ (7.569)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.000 0%**	**0.002**	**-**	**LA Level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
School level	**0.044 14%**	**0.007**	**< .001**	**School level**	**0.012 5.9%**	**0.004**	**-**
				% of pupils at SAP or SSEN	-0.012	0.003	< .001
				Aggregated positive relationships at baseline	-0.176	0.076	.011
				Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-0.520 (if 'often') -0.568 (if 'always')	0.281 0.278	.034 .022
				Frequency of parental involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+0.431 (if 'rarely') +0.497 (if 'often') +0.426 (if 'always')	0.144 0.130 0.132	.002 < .001 < .001
				Progression guidance targets are shared with parents	-0.130 (if 'yes)	0.070	.033
				Range of communication methods used with parents (0-8)	-0.041	0.019	.017
				Range of people who have access to pupil information (total count 0-6)	+0.024	0.017	.081
				% of pupils for whom 2 or 3 structured conversation completed in 10/11	+0.002	0001	.024
Pupil level	**0.271 86%**	**0.008**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**0.192 94.1%**	**0.007**	**< .001**
				Year group	-0.045 (if 'Year 5')	0.012	< .001
				SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.104 (if 'SSEN') -0.465 (if 'unknown')	0.060 0.131	.042 < .001
				SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	-0.196 (if 'ASD') -0.253 (if 'BESD') +0.147 (if 'unknown')	0.064 0.038 0.052	.001 < .001 .002
				English PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.011	0.005	.014
				Positive relationships score at baseline	+0.430	0.025	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 3779.375				**-2*Log likelihood = 1870.560**			
X^2 (66 , n = 1516) = 1908.82, *p* < .001							

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' positive relationships during the AfA pilot (secondary schools) (chapter 6, page 75)

Empty model: $\beta_{0jk} = 2.222\ (0.020)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0jk} = 0.254\ (7.569)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**	**LA Level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
School level	**0.034 11.4%**	**0.009**	**< .001**	**School level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
				% pupils at SAP or SSEN	+0.019	0.009	.063
				Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+1.334 (if 'often') +1.204 (if 'always')	0.334 0.350	.014 .021
				Frequency of parental involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	+0.230 (if 'often')	0.076	.028
				APP targets shared with parents (compared to 'no')	-0.458 (if 'yes')	0.238	.075
				Fidelity to the structured conversation model (0-36)	+0.042	0.013	.024
Pupil level	**0.265 88.6%**	**0.009**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**0.190 100%**	**0.008**	**< .001**
				SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	-0.141(if 'BESD') +0.244 (if 'HI') -0.203 (if 'PD')	0.041 0.097 0.085	< .001 .006 .009
				SEND provision (compared to SA)	+0.202 (if 'unknown')	0.095	.017
				% Ethnic group (compared to 'White British')	-0.437 (if 'Chinese')	0.233	.030
				Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	-0.107 (if 'yes')	0.033	< .001
				Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	+0.009	0.003	.001
				Positive relationships score at baseline	+0.364	0.028	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 2661.550				**-2*Log likelihood = 1192.336**			
X^2 (67 , n = 1012) = 1469.21, *p* < .001							

Data table/analysis: Mean scores (SD) on parent survey at time 1 and 3 for wider participation (chapter 6, page 75)

	AfA	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Time 1	2.00 (0.61)			
Time 3	2.02 (0.61)			
Progress	**0.02 (0.67)**	**0.36**	**.720**	**0.03**

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in wider participation during the AfA pilot (chapter 6, page 76)

Empty model: $\beta_{0i} = 1.98\ (0.041)$				Full model: $\beta_{0i} = 1.344\ (0.636)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***
Pupil level	**0.458 100%**	**0.039**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**0.301 100%**	**0.030**	**< .001**
				SEND primary need (Compared to 'MLD')	-0.396 (if 'ASD') -0.390 (if 'PD')	0.188	.018
				English PS baseline score (1-65)	-0.028	0.017	.050
				Wider participation score at baseline	+0.397	0.069	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 555.671				**-2*Log likelihood = 332.236**			
X^2 **(41 , n = 203) = 223.44,** p **< .001,** R^2 **(203) = 0.343**							

Data table/analysis: Mean scores (SD) on teacher survey at time 1 and 3 for bullying (chapter 6, page 77)

	AfA	Comparison	*F*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Time 1	0.53 (0.62)	0.43 (0.57)			
Time 3	0.49 (0.61)	0.59 (0.63)			
Progress	**-0.04 (0.68)**	**0.15 (0.59)**	**4.74**	**.003**	**0.28**

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in bullying of pupils during the AfA pilot (primary schools) (chapter 6, page 78)

Empty model: $\beta_{0jk} = 2.476\ (0.023)$				Full model: $\beta_{0jk} = 1.497\ (0.555)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.00 0%**	**0.000**	**-**	**LA Level**	**0.001 0.4%**	**0.003**	**.374**
School level	**0.072 20.2%**	**0.010**	**< .001**	**School level**	**0.045 17.9%**	**0.009**	**< .001**
				% of pupils at SA	-0.007	0.004	.042
				% pupils speaking EAL	+0.003	0.001	.017
				Frequency of parental involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-0.575 (if 'rarely') -0.422 (if 'often') -0.364 (if 'always')	0.217 0.194 0.198	.005 .016 .034
Pupil level	**0.285 79.8%**	**0.009**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**0.206 81.7%**	**0.008**	**< .001**
				Year group	+0.065 (if 'Year 5')	0.013	< .001
				Language group	-0.118 (if 'Other')	0.059	.023
				% attendance (09/10)	-0.005	0.002	.006
				English PS baseline score (1-65)	-0.013	0.006	.015
				SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	+0.213 (if 'BESD') -0.156 (if PD')	0.040 0.093	< .001 .047
				Bullying score at baseline	+0.300	0.028	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 3943.555				**-2*Log likelihood = 2047.083**			
X^2 **(66 , n = 1506) = 1896.47,** p **< .001**							

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in bullying of pupils during the AfA pilot (secondary schools) (chapter 6, page 79)

Empty model: $\beta_{0jk} = 0.554\ (0.055)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0jk} = 1.950\ (0.987)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.016 3.9%**	**0.013**	**.125**	**LA Level**	**0.001 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
School level	**0.042 10.2%**	**0.013**	**< .001**	**School level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**< .001**
				% pupils eligible for FSM	+0.027	0.012	.077
				AfA lead membership of SLT (compared to 'no')	-0.331	0.120	.055
				Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-0.895 (if 'often')	0.429	.086
Pupil level	**0.353 85.9%**	**0.012**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**0.263 100%**	**0.012**	**< .001**
				Year group (compared to 'Year 7')	-0.073 (if 'Year 10')	0.013	< .001
				Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	+0.102 (if 'yes')	0.040	.005
				% attendance (08/09)	+0.006	0.002	.001
				Maths PS baseline score (1-65)	-0.006	0.003	.023
				SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	+0.095 (if 'BESD') +0.190 (if 'PD')	0.051 0.106	.032 .037
				Bullying score at baseline	+0.287	0.029	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 1657.156				**-2*Log likelihood = 1359.963**			
X^2 **(67 , n = 906) = 297.193,** ***p*** **< .001**							

Data table/analysis: Mean scores (SD) on teacher survey at time 1 and 3 for behaviour (chapter 6, page 80)

	AfA	**Comparison**	***F***	***p***	**Cohen's *d***
Time 1	0.62 (0.74)	0.44 (0.64)			
Time 3	0.60 (0.71)	0.59 (0.72)			
Progress	**-0.02 (0.66)**	**0.15 (0.63)**	**13.36**	**< .001**	**0.26**

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' behavior problems during the AfA pilot (primary schools) (chapter 6, page 81)

Empty model: $\beta_{0jk} = 0.567\ (0.026)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0jk} = 0.988\ (0.489)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.001** **0.2%**	**0.003**	**.374**	**LA Level**	**0.000** **0%**	**0.000**	**-**
School level	**0.055** **11.8%**	**0.010**	**< .001**	**School level**	**0.024** **9.8%**	**0.006**	**< .001**
				% of pupils achieving Level 4 in Eng/Maths	-0.006	0.002	.002
				AfA lead membership of SLT (compared to 'no')	-0.132	0.070	.031
				Range of APP interventions used (total count 0-5)	-0.074	0.031	.009
				% of pupils for whom 2 or 3 structured conversation completed in 10/11	+0.002	0.001	.024
				Aggregated behaviour problems score at baseline	-0.153	0.079	.028
Pupil level	**0.411** **88%**	**0.013**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**0.222** **90.2%**	**0.008**	**< .001**
				Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.066 (if 'female')	0.028	.009
				Year Group	+0.021 (if 'year 5')	0.013	.053
				SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	+0.112 (if 'SSEN')	0.065	.043
				SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	+0.326 (if 'BESD') -0.200 (if 'PD')	0.042 0.096	< .001 .019
				Behaviour problems score at baseline	+0.486	0.021	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 4735.110				**-2*Log likelihood = 2109.366**			
X^2 **(65 , n = 1509) = 2625.74,** ***p*** **< .001**							

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' behavior problems during the AfA pilot (secondary schools) (chapter 6, page 82)

Empty model: $\beta_{0ijk} = 0.690\ (0.050)$				Full model: $\beta_{0ijk} = 1.584\ (1.088)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**	**LA Level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
School level	**0.091 15.7%**	**0.024**	**< .001**	**School level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
				Range of APP judgement moderation methods used (total count 0-5)	+0.166	0.058	.052
				Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-0.996 (if 'often')	0.464	.082
				School-parent relationships prior to start of AfA (compared to 'very poor')	-0.653 (if 'poor')	0.230	.052
Pupil level	**0.487 84.3%**	**0.017**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**0.294 100%**	**0.014**	**< .001**
				Year group (compared to 'Year 7')	-0.037 (if 'Year 10')	0.014	.004
				Sex (compared to 'male')	-0.125 (if 'female')	0.042	.001
				Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	+0.082 (if 'yes')	0.043	.026
				Language group (compared to 'English')	-0.171 (if 'other')	0.092	.032
				Maths PS score at baseline (1-65)	-0.007	0.003	.010
				English PS score at baseline (1-65)	-0.004	0.002	.023
				% attendance (08/09)	-0.004	0.002	.023
				SEND provision (compared to 'SA')	-0.185 (if 'SSEN')	0.072	.005
				SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	+0.167 (if 'BESD') -0.279 (if 'ASD')	0.055 0.128	.001 .015
				Behaviour problems score at baseline	+0.453	0.029	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 3544.999				**-2*Log likelihood = 1455.295**			
X^2 (68 , n = 902) = 2089.70, *p* < .001							

Data table/analysis: Mean (SD) % attendance for AfA and comparison schools (chapter 6, page 83)

	AfA	Comparison	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Baseline Sept08-May09	92.32 (8.57)	93.11 (5.61)			
Second year of AfA Sept10-Easter11	91.97 (10.64)	93.57 (6.48)			
Change	**-0.35 (9.92)**	**0.48 (7.06)**	**-1.15**	**.249**	**0.08**

Data table/analysis: Mean (SD) % attendance for AfA and Comparison samples for pupils with persistent absence (chapter 6, page 84)

	Baseline Sept08-May09	Second year of AfA Sept10-Easter11	Change	*F*	*p*	Partial eta Squared
Year 5	70.94 (11.72)	86.13 (10.78)	14.98 (13.91)	80.28	< .001	0.566
Year 7	71.66 (12.78)	82.78 (15.39)	9.91 (17.85)	14.35	< .001	0.259
Year 10	65.38 (16.25)	73.66 (24.59)	8.23 (25.12)	23.29	< .001	0.121
All years groups	**67.97 (14.49)**	**77.97 (21.54)**	**10.02 (22.13)**	**61.37**	**< .001**	**0.184**
Interaction between attendance and year group				**2.57**	**.036**	**.009**

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' attendance during the AfA pilot (primary schools) (chapter 6, page 85)

Empty model: $\beta_{0ijk} = 94.274\ (0.268)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0ijk} = 56.636\ (3.665)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**0.574 1.8%**	**0.358**	**.072**	**LA Level**	**0.624 2.6%**	**0.372**	**.064**
School level	**0.902 2.9%**	**0.423**	**.031**	**School level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
				School size	-0.002	0.001	.024
				% eligible for FSM	-0.029	0.017	.045
				% absence	-0.081	0.033	.008
				Frequency of teacher involvement in reviewing APP targets (compared to 'never')	-1.086 (if 'often')	0.433	.007
				Range of people involved in planning APP interventions (total count 0-5)	-0.336	0.185	.036
Pupil level	**29.789 95.3%**	**1.022**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**23.680 97.4%**	**0.960**	**< .001**
				Ethnic group (compared to 'British')	-1.739 (if 'Asia')	0.838	.019
				FSM eligibility	-0.633 (if 'yes')	0.334	.030
				SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	-2.227 (if 'PD')	0.650	.026
				PS English at baseline (1-65)	+0.126	0.023	< .001
				% attendance (08/09)	+0.417	0.023	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 11740.229				**-2*Log likelihood = 7373.174**			
X^2 (65 , n = 1226) = 4367.06, *p* < .001							

Data table/analysis: School and pupil level variables associated with statistically significant changes in pupils' attendance during the AfA pilot (secondary schools) (chapter 6, page 86)

Empty model: $\beta_{0jk} = 91.345\ (0.746)$				**Full model:** $\beta_{0jk} = 54.184\ (10.680)$			
	Co-efficient β	**SE**	***p***		**Co-efficient β**	**SE**	***p***
LA level	**3.200 2.5%**	**2.382**	**.107**	**LA Level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
School level	**4.262 3.3%**	**1.741**	**.009**	**School level**	**0.000 0%**	**0.000**	**-**
Pupil level	**122.608 94.3%**	**3.651**	**< .001**	**Pupil level**	**84.671 100%**	**3.182**	**< .001**
				Year group (compared to 'Year 7')	-0.474 (if 'Year 10')	0.193	.007
				Eligibility for FSM (compared to 'no')	-2.284 (if 'yes')	0.583	< .001
				English PS score at baseline (1-65)	+0.242	0.051	< .001
				SEND primary need (compared to 'MLD')	-1.503 (if 'BESD') -8.954 (if 'VI')	0.758 2.607	.024 < .001
				% attendance (08/09)	+0.480	0.030	< .001
-2*Log likelihood = 17592.440				**-2*Log likelihood = 10303.732**			
X^2 (66 , n = 1416) = 7288.71, *p* < .001							

Appendix 5: Proportion of schools undertaking exemplar strategies and approaches for each wider outcome specified in the original AfA guidance for schools

Figure 13: Proportion of strategies used by schools to improve attendance

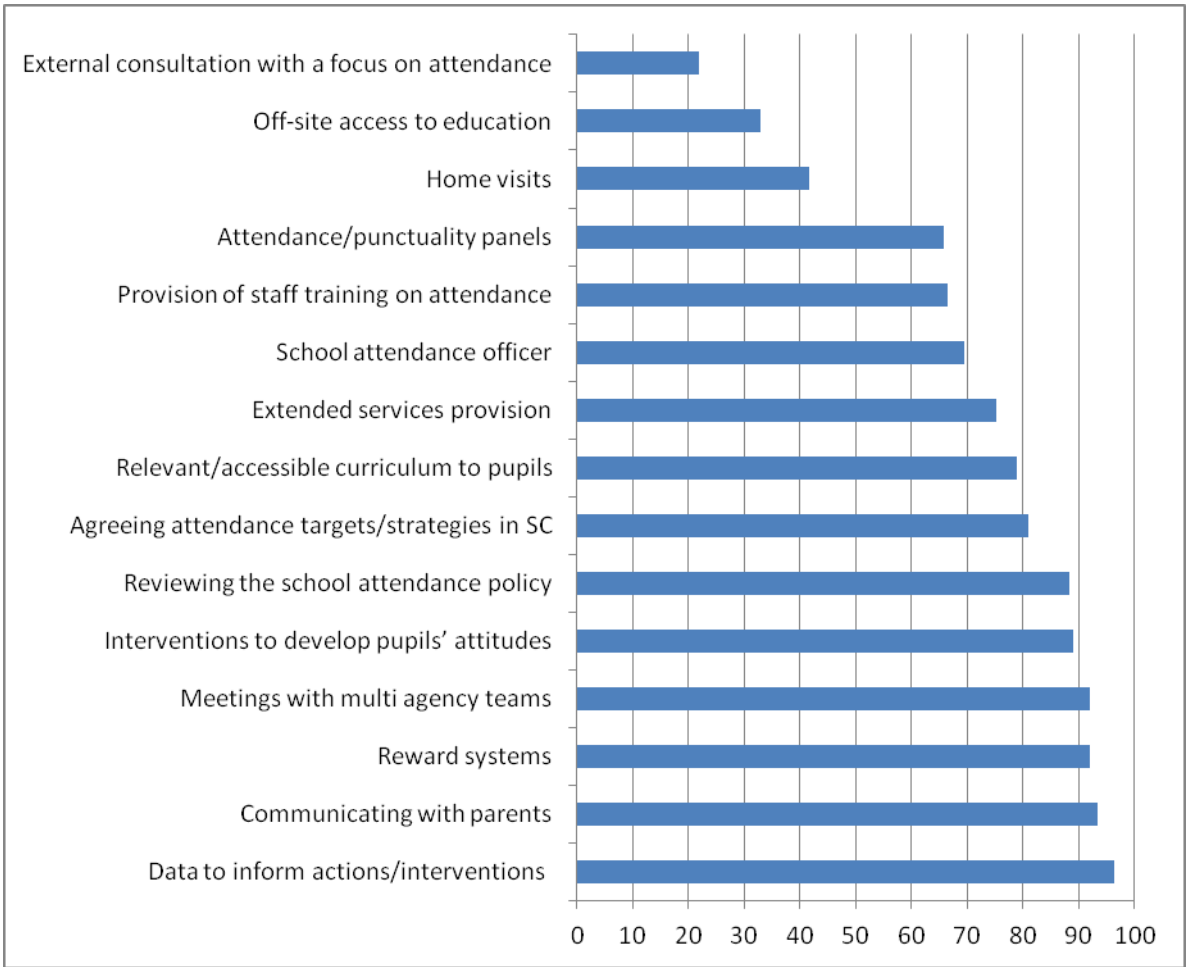


Figure 14: Proportion of strategies used by schools to improve behaviour

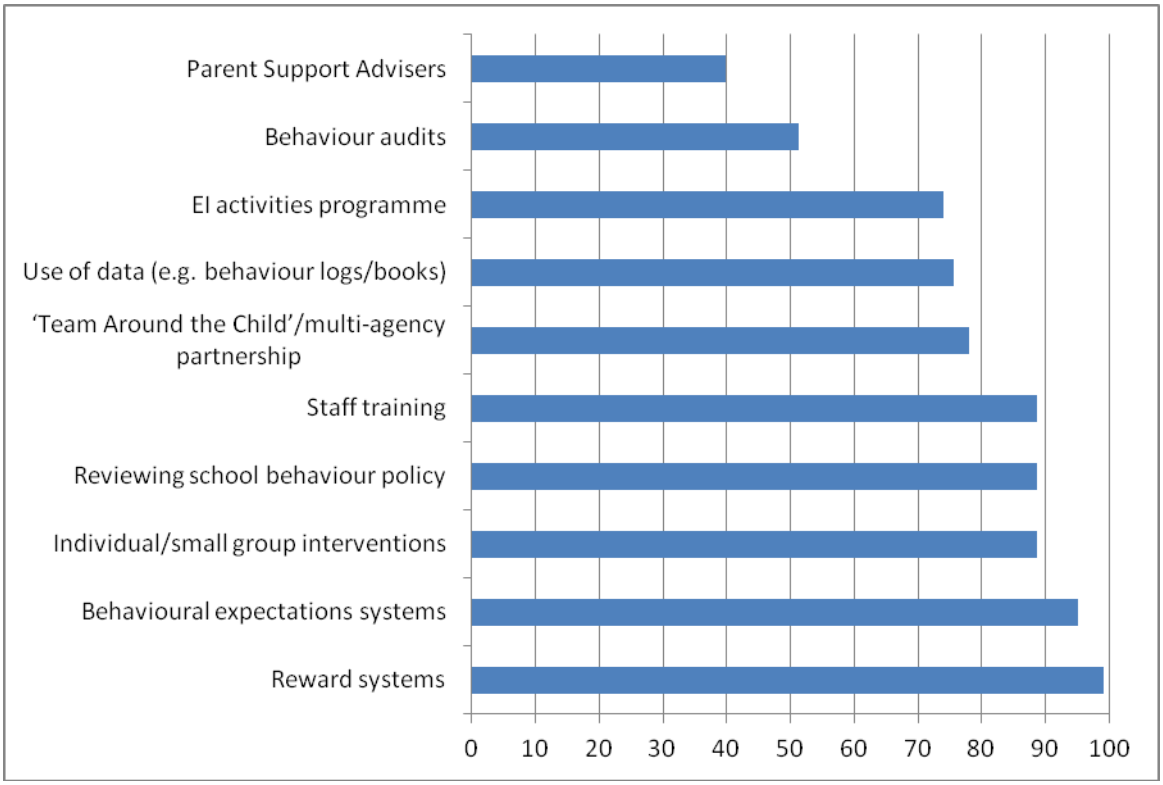


Figure 15: Proportion of strategies used by schools to target bullying

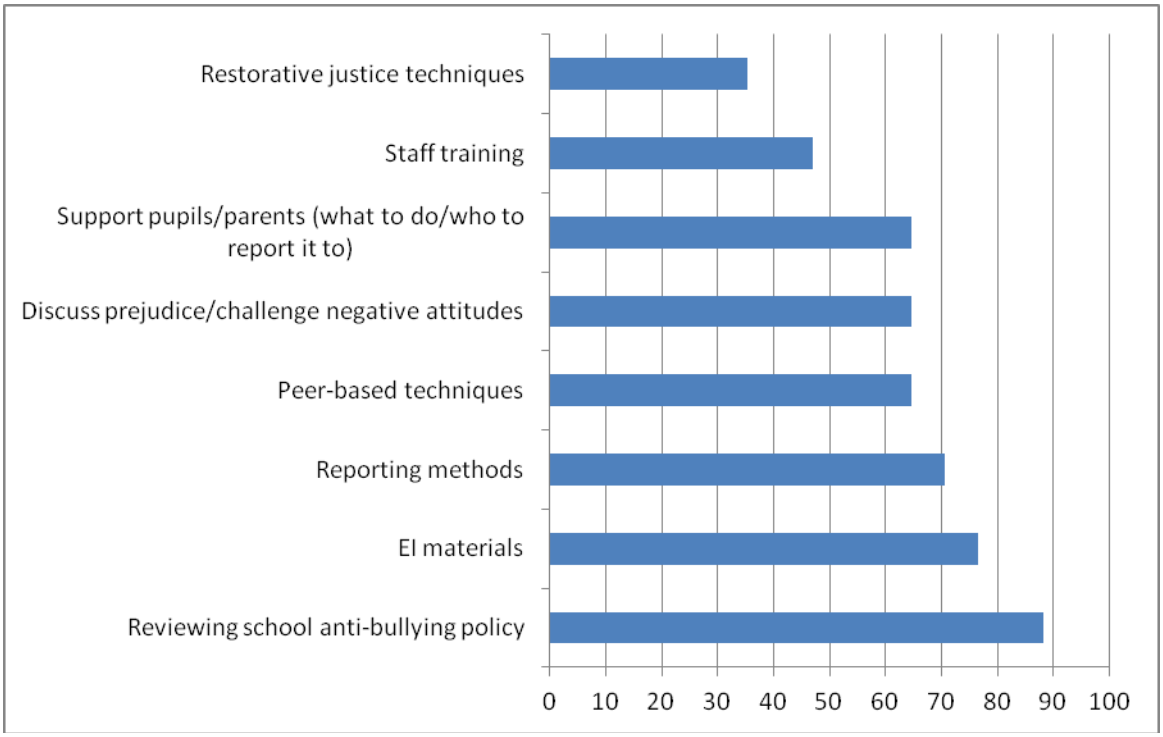


Figure 16: Proportion of strategies used by schools to develop positive relationships

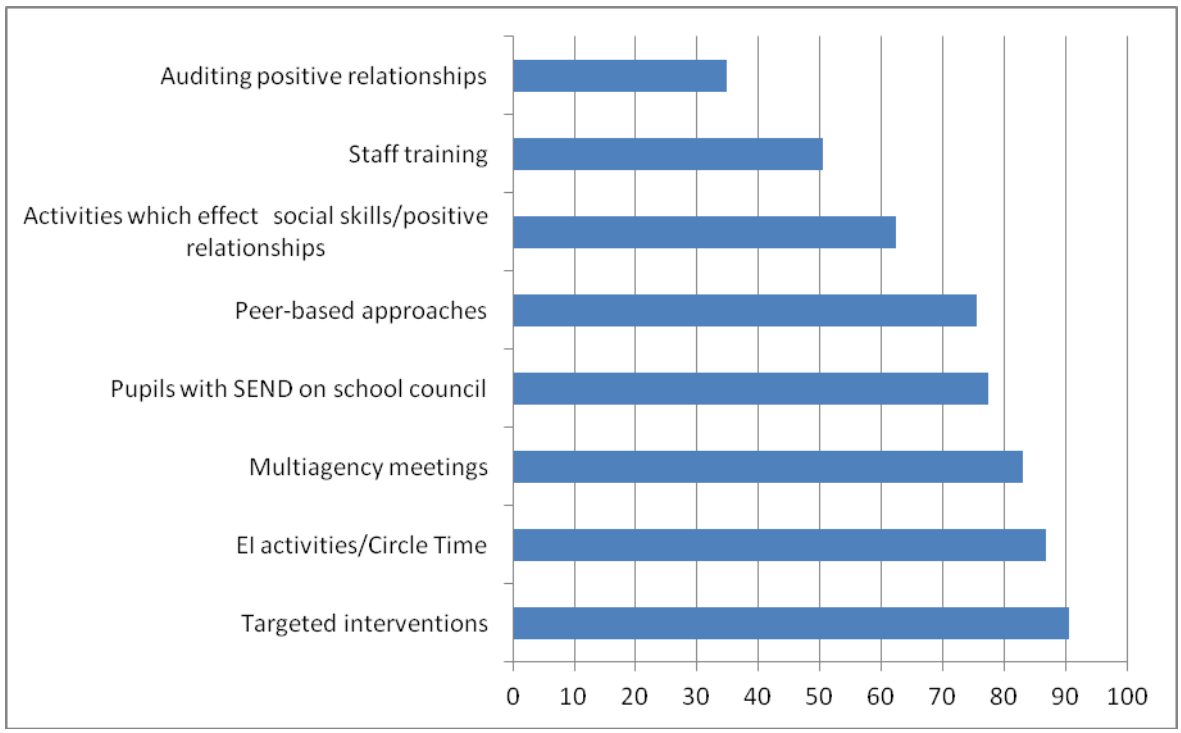
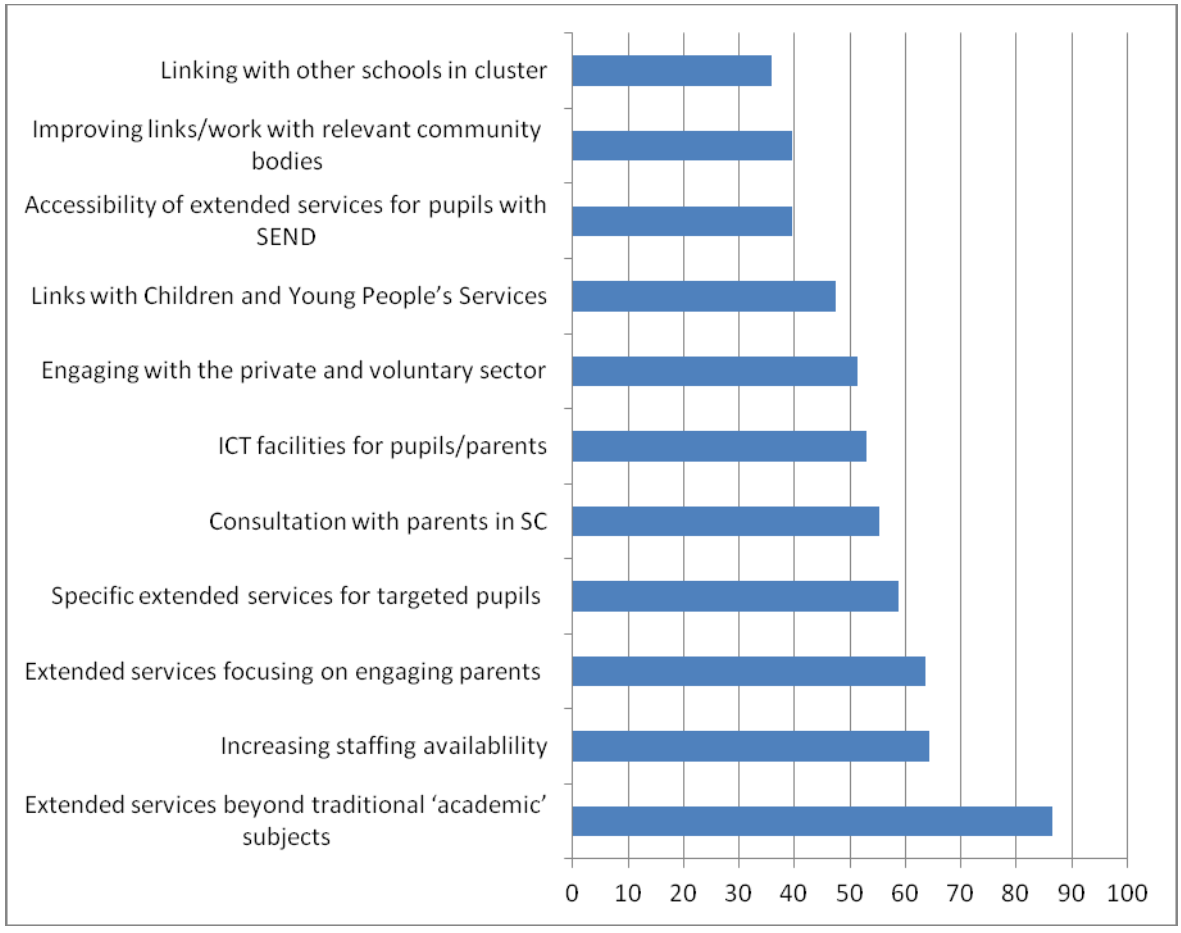


Figure 17: Proportion of strategies used by schools to increase wider participation activities



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