



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

School business manager learning programmes evaluation

**Technical annex - interim report on the
evaluation of the school business
management (SBM) programme**

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Contents

List of tables	4
Preface	5
Structure of reports	5
Chapter 1: Introduction	7
1.1 The evaluation	7
1.2 Objectives and scope	7
1.3 Activities and progress	8
1.4 The report	10
Chapter 2: SBM/D Evolutionary Development and Future Challenges	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 The evolution of the programme	12
2.3 SBM Programme delivery	13
2.4 Policy background and context	13
2.5 Professionalising school business management	16
2.6 Programme development and challenges	17
Chapter 3: Programme Participation and Experience	19
3.1 Introduction	19
3.2 Programme recruitment and withdrawal	20
3.3 Experiences of CSBM participants	25
3.4 Experiences of DSBM participants	30
3.5 Experiences of ADSBM participants	33
Chapter 4: SBM Benefits and Impact	37
4.1 Introduction	37
4.2 Impact evidence in perspective	37

4.3	In-programme gains	38
4.4	Post-programme benefits and impact	39
Chapter 5: Issues and Implications		41
5.1	Introduction	41
5.2	Issues arising for NCTL	41
5.3	Issues arising for the evaluation	43

List of tables

Table 1 SBM enrolment	21
Table 2 Withdrawal from SBM cohorts, at March 2011	22
Table 3 Start surveys	23
Table 4 Percentage distribution of respondents by programme.....	24
Table 5 Percentage distribution of respondents by school phase.....	24
Table 6 Percentage distribution of respondents by school phase.....	25
Table 7 Percentage distribution of respondents by highest qualification	26
Table 8 Percentage distribution of respondents by numbers line managed.....	27
Table 9 Motivation of respondents to undertake the CSBM course	27
Table 10 Concerns cited by respondents over undertaking the CSBM course	28
Table 11 Motivation of respondents to take the CSBM course cohort 1109	29
Table 12 Quality of the CSBM programme	29
Table 13 Percentage distribution of respondents by CSBM completion and	30
Table 14 Percentage distribution in response to the question how many	31
Table 15 Expectations from participating in the DSBM course	31
Table 16 Concerns about participating in the DSBM course.....	32
Table 17 Profile of prior qualifications for ADSBM respondents	33
Table 18 Numbers managed by ADSBM candidates.....	34
Table 19 Expectations of respondents from participating in ADSBM.....	34
Table 20 Concerns for participating in the ADSBM course.....	35
Table 21 ADSBM midpoint reflections on course quality	36
Table 22 ADSBM midpoint reflections on personal feelings	36
Table 23 Achievement at the end of the CSBM course cohort 1109	39

Preface

Since this research was completed and the reports finalised, proposals for how school business management (SBM) programmes will run in the future have changed. They will not move to a licensed approach as set out previously.

This new approach brings the SBM programmes into line with the ambition to create a self-improving, school-led system. It represents an exciting opportunity for the profession to take ownership of its leadership development and ensure that the role of school business managers remains as a critical element of effective school leadership and school improvement.

Content from the Certificate of School Business Management (CSBM), Diploma of School Business Management (DSBM) and Advanced Diploma of School Business Management (ADSBM) will be made freely available with the expectation that a number of training providers will run the programmes independently. NCTL will no longer manage the programmes and accreditation will be overseen by the Institute of Leadership and Management.

NCTL used the findings of the evaluation to further develop the school business manager programmes prior to the decision to make the materials freely available. The reports are now being published in order to share the findings with potential training providers.

Structure of reports

This document is one of a set of reports from the school business manager learning programmes evaluation.

This report is the first of the interim analyses from the research, originally written in 2011 and published now to provide supporting information to the final report.

We recommend that you read all the reports to understand the research fully. These documents are available from gov.uk. The complete set of reports includes the following:

- **Final summary report**

Reviews the evidence from all the research in the light of 3 key questions: the impact on participant development; the impact on participants' schools, and the delivery strengths and weaknesses.

- **Case study report - School Business Manager Programme**

Three case studies focused on the impact of the programmes upon the participants and their role in school or college.

- **Case study report – School Business Director (SBD) Pilot Programme**

Four case studies aimed at providing a cross-section of early experiences in the pilot SBD programme.

- **Case study report - School Business Directors (SBD) in Schools/ Federations in Receipt of a Primary Partnership Grant**

Four case studies aimed at supplementing the early case studies by focussing on those undergoing development as SBDs but also within school collaborations awarded primary partnership grants.

- **Technical annexe – Primary Partnership Data**

High level analysis of the NCTL survey of recipients of primary partnership funding focusing on the understanding the impact of the primary partnership grants.

- **Technical Annexe - Review of SBM/D end of programme satisfaction surveys**

Overview of the end of programme satisfaction surveys administered by NCTL and training providers, completed by participants of the Diploma of School Business Management (DSBM), the Advanced Diploma of School Business Management (ADSBM) and the School Business Director (SBD) programmes.

- **Technical Annexe – Final evaluation report of the school business directors pilot**

The final evaluation of the school business directors pilot, written in 2011, focusing on the experience of the two entry cohorts of the SBD pilot programme.

- **Technical Annexe – Impact Assessment**

An assessment of the impact of the Certificate (CSBM), Diploma (DSBM) and Advanced Diploma for School Business Managers (ADSBM) and the School Business Directors (SBD) Programme on the individuals that had undertaken the learning and on their employing institutions.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The evaluation

In September 2010, the National College for Teaching & Leadership (NCTL), asked HOST Policy Research (HOST) to conduct a three year evaluation of the School Business Management (SBM) programme. Although, an early priority has been to look at the pilot for the School Business Directors (SBD) pilot programme, the focus of this assessment has been progress on the SBM programme.

This report was the first of the analyses across the programme presented to NCTL in May 2011. It is published as a technical annexe to the final report in 2014. It draws on documentary review, discussions with the programme designers (writers) and NCTL, a range of survey data collated and co-ordinated by NCTL, and also feedback from small-scale and early interviews with some past participants. This provides for an early and preliminary assessment of progress against programme goals.

1.2 Objectives and scope

The scope of the evaluation embraces all cohorts within the SBM programme and also the current two cohorts in the SBD pilot. This will more specifically include participants and future graduates of:

- Certificate of School Business Management (CSBM) - from current participants in cohorts 14-16 and local programmes 0910 and 0510.
- Diploma of School Business Management (DSBM) - from current participants in cohorts 11-15 and local programmes 1010, 0510 and 0310.
- Advanced Diploma School Business Management (ADSBM) - from current participants in cohorts 1-4.
- SBD - from pilot programme participants.

Looking across these and future participants the evaluation is expected to address the following questions set by NCTL:

- a) To what extent is the programme meeting its aims and objectives, and any shortfall in quality, coverage and programme reach?
- b) Does the programme give the participant the skills, knowledge and experience to work as an SBM/D in complex settings?
- c) How well is the programme meeting the needs of schools, participants, and school leaders?
- d) Is the programme making a difference in terms of both the professional development of the participant and how this is linked to improvement and capacity building affecting school and pupil outcomes?

- e) How effective is the programme in terms of cost and resources set against its objectives and scope?
- f) What are delivery strengths (and weaknesses) of the programme, and the implications for enhanced coverage, reach and cost-effectiveness?
- g) What additional impact is the programme having on schools' engagement with new initiatives and policies affecting the widening workforce and wider aspects of school improvement, raising and sustaining performance?

NCTL has also set some more specific questions relating to the assessment of the SBD pilot to June 2011 and in particular relating to: meeting sector demand for a higher level programme; the relevance and effectiveness of the SBD competency framework, delivery and learner support (including development and learning coaches), and also the implications for sustainability of the delivery model.

1.3 Activities and progress

The methodology provide for a comparative and staged review of available evidence supplemented by carefully focused and small-scale additional of research within the programme. The rationale underpinning this approach, as agreed in discussion with NCTL, has been to provide for:

- Making best use of existing programme monitoring and participation evidence.
- Minimising the burdens on, and disruption to, programme participants, as well as to schools and other stakeholders.
- Robustly integrating issues of equality and diversity as an explicit dimension to the evaluation to assess the extent, and quality, of the implementation of the equality responsibilities in programme design and delivery, and impact.
- Adopting an incremental and progressive approach to evidence review, taking account of new entrants joining the programmes, and also post-participation recognition of SBM/D added value and impact.

Understanding impact is an important issue for this 'rolling' assessment of the programme. This is built into the staged evidence gathering and assessment, with a focus on proxy impact measures capable of longitudinal analysis, and to support an assessment of distance travelled in school management capacity building and (self-assessed) capabilities.

The precise approach to the evaluation has been re-focused¹ since the original HOST tender to reflect cost pressures and restructuring at NCTL and the evolution of the programme. The revised approach has been set out in the Framework Plan² for the evaluation - agreed in December 2010, and not repeated here. This is currently under further review.

Progress within the adapted approach for the separate activities within the evaluation for the SBD pilot has been set out in two previous reports,^{3,4} and are also not repeated here. The focus of this report is on the first assessment of the SBM cohorts and here progress on the evaluation in the last six months has included:

- **Evaluation liaison, planning and review, and steering:** A series of inputs following the start up of the evaluation and combined with the SBD pilot evaluation. This has included five meetings (September, October, early November, late November, and December 2010), and also an evaluation workshop (January 2011).
- **Baseline review and contextual analysis:** This was completed early in the evaluation and reported to NCTL, and has informed the reshaping of the evaluation as well as contextual analysis of the current report.
- **Systematic review of monitoring information and participant surveys:** This has been centred on collation and formatting for review of the available start and end of programme survey evidence from the in-scope cohorts of SBM. The first inter-cohort analysis is set out in Chapter 3 of this report. Additional inter-cohort monitoring information has been collated on starts and withdrawals, and also reviewed here.

The SBM review has also benefited from inputs within the SBD pilot review and in particular, the conduct of four in-depth case studies of participants and related school experience. Here, three of the four participants were previous graduates of SBM programmes, and their experiences of that activity and its impacts have been drawn on in this report. To date, this is the only participant fieldwork conducted directly by the HOST evaluation team, but this is expected to be extended in June and July with a series specific SBM case studies.

¹ These changes have dropped past proposals for more extensive case study activity, focus group and telephone interviewing, and observation of selected cohort events. The revised emphasis has provided for a sharper focus on the SBD pilot to summer 2011, more streamlined evaluation review stages and wider use of WebEx and telephone conferencing to support this, and making more extensive use of the available survey and monitoring data for staged and comparative review. A longitudinal case study stage has been retained but is more focused.

² D J Parsons and S Burkey, Evaluation study of the school business management programme: Framework plan for the National College. Host Policy Research, December 2010.

³ D J Parsons and A Bloomfield, Evaluation of the SBM/D Programme for The National College, 2010-2013: Preliminary HOST Observations on SBD Developments and State of Play. HOST Policy Research, January 2011.

⁴ D J Parsons and A Bloomfield, Draft Final Evaluation Report of the SBD Pilot: Participation Case Studies. HOST Policy Research, March 2011.

1.4 The report

This is the first of what will be six staged reports providing for a formative assessment of the programme. With much of the evaluation activity since October 2010 centred on the SBD pilot, this is the first report to focus specifically on SBM cohorts. Subsequent interim reports will combine the SBD and SBM analyses but following this introduction this stand-alone review looks at:

- SBM development and performance - providing a contextual review of the evolution of the programme, policy background and programme delivery (Chapter 2).
- Programme participation and experience - Looking at recruitment and retention and drawing on the survey evidence to review distribution and experience in the CSBM, DSBM and ADSBM cohorts - Chapter 3.
- SBM benefits and impact - looking at the limited evidence currently available for SBM impact - Chapter 4.

The report concludes (Chapter 5) with an initial review from this preliminary evidence of issues and implications for SBM.

Chapter 2: SBM/D Evolutionary Development and Future Challenges

Key findings:

- a) The SBM programme has developed a solid legacy and foundation, but is now faced with significant change pressures stemming from raised potential resulting in particular from greater school autonomy and pressure NCTL and school budgets.
- b) The supply-demand context for SBM is changing radically. Enrolment trends suggest demand remains strong for all elements of the programme, but with wider policy and budgetary changes affecting schools (and probably also subsidy levels for SBM) this will not be a reliable guide to future sector responses to the programme.
- c) SBM is well placed to respond to added sector demands for developing wider professionalisation, but this also present delivery tensions for the programme in responding to downward pressure on costs, and lower and/or more targeted direct subsidies from NCTL. The college will need reliable and evolving demand evidence to manage those tensions.

2.1 Introduction

The development of the SBM programmes has occurred during the years since 2001 and this development is on-going with the Masters' Level SBD Programme still in the pilot stages. This development has been evolutionary with a consistent approach to piloting and development and a number of participants who have progressed through the three SBM programmes into the SBD pilot. This chapter draws together some of the key changes and the context in which they have occurred and aims to provide a backcloth to this analysis and the rest of the evaluation. More specifically it looks at:

- The evolution of the programme.
- The policy background and context influencing the programme and its shape.
- How the programme has been delivered and changes in delivery.
- The wider context of professionalising school business management.

The development challenges for the programme continue. In particular, the 2010 election, the Schools White Paper and the reductions in funding have brought some uncertainty and necessary change into a system that had reached a steady state of incremental development. This has implications for both policy and practice with regards to the programme, and this is also briefly reviewed here as a context for the current evaluation and emergent issues.

2.2 The evolution of the programme

In June 2001, the then Secretary of State for Education and Skills pledged to qualify 1,000 SBMs and bursars by 2006. These qualified SBMs were intended to contribute to wider work on the 'remodeling schools' agenda. The expectation was that schools would benefit by making better use of available funding, and by freeing headteachers to focus on the delivery and improvement of teaching and learning and not on more routine aspects of schools finance, resourcing administration.

At this stage the policy context was of increasing resources for individual schools, and the expectation was that these developments in creating an initial professional cadre of SBMs would help schools to make best use of these resources through efficient allocation and management. It was also felt that qualified school business managers would help to embed best business practice within schools - and with the prospective of providing a focus for sharing this experience across schools.

The initial development was the pilot stage of the certificate programme, the CSBM, which was subsequently rolled out nationally in 2003. The diploma course, the DSBM, was developed soon after and through a pilot stage in 2003/2004 with national rollout in 2004/2005. Subsequently, a career pathway for professionalisation and accreditation of SBMs was put in place with the piloting (and later rollout) of the ADSBM. A further development has been to widen access to the profession, with an NCTL initiative which supports external managers to complete the SBM programmes and to help them secure employment within an SBM role.

As the programme has evolved, feedback on its utility and early evidence of impact has been positive. In 2010, PricewaterhouseCoopers reported that:

By the end of 2009, over 5,100 people had completed the CSBM and 1,000 the DSBM...during the period April 2007 and March 2009, [NCTL] delivered over 3,600 CSBM and 1,130 DSBM places. This represents the highest numbers of places since the programme began; however demand remains high as indicated by numbers on the programme waiting list.⁵

It was found that potential improvements were to be found, not just in school finances and effective use of resources, but also in other areas where the SBM could contribute to school business management. In particular, these included health and safety policy and implementation at school, playground development work, school environmental improvement and strategic planning. Where responsibilities for leadership were distributed, associated improvements were found in teaching and learning as a by-product of the freeing of headteachers' time and in financial savings.

⁵ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Cost Benefit Analysis of the School Business Management Programme*, National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, Nottingham, 2010.

2.3 SBM Programme delivery

CSBM, DSBM and ADSBM are currently delivered as a blended programme with high levels of personalisation. This focuses on a variety of activities and inputs delivered through a combination of face-to-face residential sessions, online interactive materials, guided and independent research (and placement) activities and online communities. The SBD Programme is following a similar format for the pilot stage – and its delivery has been separately described within the evaluation.⁶

At this stage in the evaluation, it has only been possible to monitor delivery directly in relation to the face-to-face sessions within the SBD programme and to talk with the writers of that programme. The following section is taken from programme documentation and also a structured interview with two writers of the SBD programme but they also have played leading roles in developments elsewhere within the SBM programmes. In this, it is important to recognise that the SBD programme represents a change in delivery style from the other programmes, in that there is a greater element of personalisation of learning, with assignments reflecting the interests of the individual participants.

A key influence on the SBD programme is that it has been planned with the goal of moving the profession forward. The programme documentation states that it aims to play a part in ‘the maturation and consolidation of the profession’. Those on the SBD programme have been described in previous evaluation reports as often at the leading edge, building the knowledge base of the profession and involved in the dissemination to others through the various learning opportunities provided by the programme. The programme aims to provide structured learning opportunities to help to make a significant contribution to professional knowledge, with assignments being a valuable resource for the future of the profession. Recent assignments and policy studies will go on line as a resource for course members but also for others within the profession. The knowledge base is therefore being developed in part by the participants. The principle of co-construction is therefore wider than securing ‘learner voice’ and related feedback from participants.

2.4 Policy background and context

As noted above, the backcloth for the rationale and delivery of the programme is changing. By the time of the general election in May 2010 the three constituent programmes (CSBM, DSBM and ADSBM) had developed to a mature stage. In this the elements of the programme could be described as having achieved a steady state of

⁶ D J Parsons and A Bloomfield, Evaluation of the SBM/D programme for NCTL, 2010-2013: Preliminary HOST Observations on SBD Developments and State of Play, HOST Policy Research, January 2011.

realising demand. It could also by then demonstrate embedded continuous improvement with normal adaptation and updating occurring but no major revisions of the programme content or its delivery being seen as necessary.

At this time the major development within the programme was in the evolution - and subsequent launch, of the SBD programme. The SBD role included a recognition of the changing agenda for schools with a need to consider system leadership recognising the growing number of schools involved in a variety of partnership and federated models of leadership. At the start of this evaluation, this pilot had recruited two cohorts, and these became a focus for early evaluation efforts by the HOST team.

Within SBM, the picture was one of demand-led evolution building on solid foundations. NCTL plans⁷ for SBM developments in 2009 and 2011 anticipated that these developments would focus on the following issues:

- An updating exercise to ensure programmes are relevant and appropriate to the needs of schools, and with local CSBM programmes delivered in partnership with local authorities and with DSBM places are expanded.
- Completing the SBM career pathway by rolling out nationally the ADSBM and piloting a Master's level School Business Director (SBD) programme.
- Opening up the prospect of personalised learning for participants through flexible entry arrangements and accreditation of prior learning. These were seen as essential for those joining the profession from outside of the education sector.
- Raising sector awareness and including publishing from NCTL research, and the demonstration projects, a toolkit that will provide guidance to headteachers, governors and local authorities on the range of options and models open to schools, when considering the recruitment of an SBM.
- Maintaining the high profile that SBMs had developed through press and specialist media coverage.

The backcloth at the time was of demand-led, robust and confident expansion of the programmes building upon successful evaluation findings and the expectation of continuing levels of public-sector investment in the programme which could continue to support NCTL subsidies for school and individual engagement. The initial expectations of the HOST evaluation indicated the NCTL's view of provision being in what has been described as a steady state for the three established programmes.

This context has changed markedly in the last year against the backcloth of the wider economic context, and the situation facing public finances in general and financing of public services in particular. The May 2010 general election and the coming to power of the coalition government, saw some uncertainty for the programme in the first instance as

⁷ National College, *School Business Management Programme: Impact and Evaluation Report, 2007–2009*.

government re-evaluated priorities and spending commitments, and also the infrastructure for institutional and professional development in education (and elsewhere). At a time of retrenchment in government finance, these and other developments have implications for the programme, with NCTL indicating that there will be a need to reduce subsidy levels and to charge a nominal amount of £400 per participant on the CSBM and DSBM programmes. This will be happening at a time when finances for many schools will be under pressure through reductions in their funding. At present there are uncertainties over the scale of reductions as they apply to individual schools.

In wider education policy terms, there is a remodeled policy emphasis on efficient and effective use of resources, and management capacities, at school level but also significant changes for the SBM and SBD programmes. In particular, the *The Importance of Teaching The Schools White Paper 2010*, published 24 November 2010, aims to enact whole-system reform of education in England. In this the white paper emphasises the importance of school business managers:

School business managers make a significant contribution to the effective financial management of a school, saving on average 20-33 per cent of a headteacher's time and covering their own salary in savings. Obtaining the services (shared or full-time) of a high quality business manager should be a priority for all governors and headteachers, unless there is someone in the management team with the relevant skills to undertake the role.⁸

There is an additional emphasis within the white paper in which the value and benefits of school autonomy are stressed.⁹ This would seem to have major implications for the development of new school systems through the expansion of the academies programme, through federations of academies, through the opening of free schools in response to parental demand. There are implications also for the role of local authorities with the anticipation that school-to-school support will be a feature of many local authority strategies. These changes, and others proposed, will move responsibility to a school level and require more of those skills within the remit of the school business manager within a school or across schools. The focus within the current SBD programme on system leadership and on greater personalisation of learning has therefore proved timely.

The white paper also includes a proposal to create a national network of teaching schools, with public support, and which will take: '...a leading responsibility for providing and quality assuring initial teacher training in their area'. These schools will also be funded to offer professional development for teachers and leaders.¹⁰ The white paper goes on to state that NCTL will be responsible for quality assurance of their (the teaching

⁸ Department for Education, *The Importance of Teaching The Schools White Paper 2010*, paragraphs 8.22, 2010.

⁹ Department for Education, *The Importance of Teaching The Schools White Paper 2010*, paragraphs 5.1-5.44, 2010.

¹⁰ Department for Education, *The Importance of Teaching The Schools White Paper 2010*, paragraphs 2.24, 2010.

schools’) work. This also has some implications for SBM, with possible opportunities for the teaching schools to play a role in the local mentoring of aspiring SBMs.

These and other policy development and changes for the sector have placed the programme in a new and developing context within NCTL, set within more constrained budgetary circumstances and some new priorities. The ‘steady-state’ position for the SBM programmes no longer applies. In addition, the wider impact of policy developments are expected to see changes to school leaders’ views of SBM relevance, needs and programme articulation with new and intensified change pressures on schools and on inter-school collaborations. These pressures are having an impact on the programme and correspondingly on the focus of the HOST evaluation.¹¹

2.5 Professionalising school business management

Underpinning the development of SMB (and SBD) has been a recognition that the skills and knowledge needed in the practice of schools business management are distinctive in their context and the competencies required, and require a development stimulus both for individuals and the school-contexts in which they operate to optimise their value. The developments variously put in place to secure this have been collectively interpreted as *professionalising* school business management, and with the knowledge base underpinning this being directly contributed to by the programme.

The continuing need for such an emphasis is echoed in the schools white paper, which contains many sections with direct or indirect reference to (or implications for) the work of school business management. Underpinning this is the assumption that if schools are to exploit to best advantage the potential freedom and autonomy for all schools, then the opportunity exists for management teams to be strengthened through the involvement at a strategic level of SBD or experienced SBMs. This opportunity is not specific to individual schools, and is raised also by opportunities to engage in inter-school collaboration through academy chains, multi-school trusts and federations or more informally through collaborative agreements for mutual support and maximisation of existing resources.

At the same time, other changes in public finance and in wider agendas reforming public services in England, mean that some of the areas of external and professional support to schools in their management will be changing, and for most schools eroding. Academies and free schools will be expected to be self-directed and fully self-supporting - individually or in collaboration - in their school business management. Those that remain outside academy or independent status, will also be faced with less, or less systemised,

¹¹ These changes to the evaluation strategy are the subject of ongoing discussions between NCTL and HOST Policy Research. As well as exploring the extent to which the SBM/D programmes meet the original goals set under a previous government and the continuing need to consider the added value there is for schools and for participants, there is a need to examine how effective provision is in meeting the developing agenda set by the coalition government.

support from local authorities in business management processes and issues. Consequently, the new era for schools will see demands rising on needing to develop local school business management arrangements internally or through formal or informal inter-school collaborative arrangements.

In all this, there is also likely to be a need to consider the necessary support to schools adopting models of governance involving governing bodies with fewer, and more focused, members by providing them with the necessary financial and attainment information to enable governors to hold the school to account for improvement and children's progress. In this, the outreach role of the programme, and post-graduation professional networks, could be a key element in the drive to provide inter-school support for weaker schools in order to raise their performance.

However these opportunities are developed and harnessed, it is clear that in the new policy environment, the rapidly changing context for schools' organisation has increased the need for a business like approach to the management of resources - financial and human. The future challenges made explicit in the white paper and through the pressure on funding, and cost-effectiveness, in education at all levels, mean there is an even greater need for professionalism in school business management.

Professionalism in the context of school business management, implies a place for a body of professional knowledge as well as a means of accreditation of new entrants. It also implies the need for those who can apply existing knowledge to new circumstances and recognition of the importance of sharing this developmental activity with their colleagues. The established successes and profile of the SBM programme, means NCTL is well placed to provide the means of generating such professional knowledge through participants' school-based personalised projects and a means of dissemination through NCTL website.

2.6 Programme development and challenges

The best use of current expertise could strengthen existing provision for the SBM/D programmes with the use of advocates to collect feedback from participants and the potential involvement in SBD/M programmes of national and local leaders of education with practical knowledge of current issues facing the programme participants. The opportunities to develop and secure this exist, but there are challenges facing NCTL in responding to the changing environment and in ways that are sustainable.

In this, the need for the programmes to respond to a fast changing environment and to maintain quality within a falling resource envelope mean that a key challenge is financial viability of provision. This has implications for programme subsidies, and NCTL is committed to charging a nominal fee for the CSBM and DSBM and is reviewing the need for financial contribution for the other two advanced programmes. This in turn may have a consequence for realising latent demand for the programme.

In particular, schools will also face the challenge of funding SBM/D appointments at a time when overall staffing budgets are under pressure, and often with existing teaching and support staff faced with potential job losses or redundancy. The widespread effects of a reduction in real-levels of school finance means that staff change will be difficult to manage smoothly. This is especially the case in smaller schools, although local cooperative partnerships between schools may create some flexibility and even economies of scale. These challenges mean a greater need for a professional workforce in school business management but at this stage it is not clear how such needs will be met.

Chapter 3: Programme Participation and Experience

Key findings:

- a) Enrolment data confirms continuing demand for the programme, but seems to have peaked for CSBM which may now be approaching a steady state of demand from drawing in 'new' schools and some replacement demand. It is too early yet to make any observations on demand trends about DSBM and ADSBM.
- b) The evaluation will need further management information (MI) to explore equalities characteristics and compliance with both monitoring requirements and programme goals, as well as demand contrasts.
- c) Programme drop-out levels are relative low but with some important and unexplained contrasts between cohorts and with some evidence of higher levels for locally recruited and co-ordinated programmes. Measurement arrangements for drop-out also seem to under-count withdrawal, and may need to be reviewed to provide clearer picture of scale and characteristics.
- d) End of cohort analyses available to the evaluation are, as yet, limited but suggest high satisfaction for CSBM, and with well articulated progression potential to the DSBM course.
- e) The start data is more extensive, and shows participants are more motivated by the enthusiasm to develop skills relevant to the SBM role the process of enhancing qualifications, but with early concerns over the time commitment to complete the programme.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at engagement across the SBM programme, and aspects of participant's experiences on and of the programme. It draws on a combination of NCTL's management and monitoring information - which covers all participants across cohorts, and survey feedback from the in-programme questionnaires and which relate only to those providing responses to start and end-of-cohort questionnaire. End-of-cohort data are so far available for sufficient numbers of respondents only for one cohort. Drawing on these sources, the chapter looks at:

- Overall programme recruitment and enrolments, reflecting demand for SBM and also programme withdrawals.
- Experiences on programme of CSBM participants, and post-participation feedback from one cohort.
- Experiences on programme of DSBM participants.
- Experiences on programme of ADSBM participants.

Demographic profiling of participation is limited, at present to the survey data, and as such cannot provide for demographic details not collected in the surveys. Consequently, profiling data is limited to information on the respondent's location (region), school and role in the school have been captured.

This is the first inter-cohort analysis of these data in this evaluation, and the final chapter also raises some of the issues arising for coverage of the survey data and the potential for further and deeper analysis of the available information.

3.2 Programme recruitment and withdrawal

Enrolment data for the programme are not easy to collate or interpret and in particular because of candidates deferring or transferring between cohorts including infilling those reviewed below. However, overall the cohorts in scope of the evaluation have enrolled a total of 3,831 candidates since May 2009 (Table 1), including those on the DSBM pilot (October 2009).

For CSBM, enrolment numbers seem to have peaked in early 2010, although this may be affected by capacity issues and what appears to be less consistent successes in recruitment to locally co-ordinated SBM delivery (and where NCTL had a limited role in recruitment). However, demand from the sector if maturing, certainly seems to remain buoyant as testified by the 540 recruited to the most recent cohort - November 2010.

It is difficult to assess any demand trends for the less long established DSBM and the ADSBM programmes – although demand for both seems to hold up well. At present the data made available to the evaluation does not provide for demographic or equalities profiles across different cohorts or for aggregated breakdowns by school type. This will be explored further in the next interim report (subject to data availability) but at present this limits the demand analysis, although indicative data for the latter is collated via the start survey (see below).

Table 1 SBM enrolment

Cohort	Status	Enrolment numbers (starts)
CSBM 0509	Completed	357
CSBM 1109	Completed	816
CSBM 0310	-	637
CSBM 0510	Local programme	318
CSBM 0910	Local programme	145
CSBM 1110	-	540
DSBM 1009	Pilot - completed	250
DSBM 0310	Local	80
DSBM 0510	Local and central	257
DSBM 1010	Local and central	272
ADSBM 0110	Completed	95
ADSBM 0310	-	64
All enrolments since May 2009		3,831

Source: Collated enrolment data from inter-cohort registration data, March 2011

As noted in the previous HOST report (on SBD), withdrawal data presents some challenges of collation and analysis. In particular processes for counting deferrals (not allowed for here in Table 2) and those suspending participation temporarily due to personal circumstances make for difficult analysis from the available management information. The data set out below also is current (to March 2011) and as such reflects withdrawals to date for ongoing cohorts with limited comparability across these.

Table 2 Withdrawal from SBM cohorts, at March 2011

Cohort	Status	Withdrawals (%)	Withdrawals (%)
CSBM 0509	Completed	26	7
CSBM 1109	Completed	86	11
CSBM 0310	-	78	12
CSBM 0510	Local programme	40	13
CSBM 0910	Local programme	12	8
CSBM 1110	-	28	5
DSBM 1009	Pilot - completed	31	12
DSBM 0310	Local	21	26
DSBM 0510	Local and central	27	11
DSBM 1010	Local and central	19	7
ADSBM 0110	Completed	9	9
ADSBM 0310	-	4	6
All enrolments since May 2009	Completed	381	10

Source: Collated withdrawal data from inter-cohort MI, March 2011

Overall, it seems that one-in-ten starters have left the programme after enrolment. This is a relatively low attrition rate set against other continuing professional development (CPD) initiatives of this duration, but the validity of this level is open to question. In particular, the data does not take account of deferrals who may, or may not, restart. In practice withdrawals levels do seem to be understated by this method of counting and it is notable that non-completion rates for concluded cohorts seem to be around double this level for CSBM.

On the evidence that is available, there seem to be no overall contrasts as yet between CSBM, DSBM and ADSBM - with none more likely than others to lose starters. However, it does show significant variations between cohorts which are not at yet able to be explained by complimentary data on cohort profile and characteristics.

Consequently, the first of the autumn CSBM cohorts in 2010 (0910) had lost 13 per cent of its entrants within six months, but the second (November 2010). Although, starting only a little later, had seen less than half that level of attrition (5%). The inter-cohorts data are not directly comparable, but when allowing for different durations across the cohorts, the centrally run and delivered programmes typically had attrition rates close to the whole programme average. However, the evidence seems to suggest that locally recruited and co-ordinated programmes lost more starters - and most notably for the 0310 CSBM cohort with a withdrawal rate of a little over a quarter to date (26%).

The rest of the analysis in this section is drawn from numbers of learners completing start and end surveys for the various programmes. The majority of responses are from start surveys and the numbers of respondents per survey are shown in Table 3 below. For the CSBM 1109 cohort there is also an end survey available with enough respondents to allow for some analysis comparing start and end data, which will be covered in the following section. There is also a small number of end-of-cohort returns from 2009 starters in DSBM but these are too small as yet to be worth further analysis and the results here are likely to be skewed by early completers whose characteristics may be different to other participants.

Table 3 Start surveys

Programme	Cohort	Number of respondents
CSBM	0509	644
	1109	923
	0310	536
	0510	315
	0910	130
	1110	468
	Aggregate CSMB	
DSBM	1009	57
	0310	67
	0510	117
	1010	220
Aggregate DSBM		461
ADSBM	0110	77
	0310	48
	1110	40
Aggregate ADSBM		165

Source: HOST review of miscellaneous SBM cohorts survey data,¹² April 2011

The regional split of respondents for each of the programmes is shown in Table 4. For CSBM and for ADSBM the highest proportion of respondents are based in the South East region, while the highest proportion of respondents on the DSBM programme are from the North West. These percentages should be compared with the actual distribution of participants on the programmes and with the number of schools in each region to determine whether the distribution of participants is the same across regions and whether there are any regional factors in response rates.

¹² Survey data are drawn from embedded programme feedback and monitoring arrangements conducted by NCTL.

Table 4 Percentage distribution of respondents by programme

Region	CSBM	DSBM	ADSBM	All programmes
East Midlands	7.7	13.4	10.9	8.6
Eastern	5.6	5.9	10.3	5.8
London	13.5	4.1	7.3	12.0
North East	7.4	11.1	6.1	7.8
North West	13.8	19.7	13.9	14.6
South East	18.1	13.7	23.0	17.8
South West	10.4	13.0	10.9	10.8
West Midlands	11.2	12.1	9.7	11.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	11.4	6.9	7.9	10.7
Unknown	0.9	0	0	0.7
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: HOST review of miscellaneous SBM cohorts survey data, April 2011

The split of respondents by school phase is shown in Table 5. While nearly two thirds of respondents from each of the CSBM and DSBM programmes were from primary schools, nearly half of those on the ADSBM programme were from secondary schools. Further evidence is necessary to understand this important contrast in realised demand. However, if the same trend is reflected in the actual numbers of participants, this may reflect the greater size of school, with a greater potential in the role of SBM and for its development.

Table 5 Percentage distribution of respondents by school phase

Phase	CSBM	DSBM	ADSBM	All programmes
Primary	63.5	63.6	38.2	62.4
Middle	1.5	1.5	3.6	1.6
Secondary	24.1	26.2	47.9	25.5
Special	5.0	5.4	7.3	5.2
Other	5.7	3.3	3.0	5.3
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: HOST review of miscellaneous SBM cohorts survey data, April 2011

The split of respondents by school type is shown in Table 6. Two-in-five of all respondents work at comprehensive schools, but as a further fifth work at schools classed as 'Other' it is possible the self-classification by participants (by school type) may not be completely robust. The data also shows an apparent gap where no DSBM respondents work in federated school arrangements, for example, while no CSBM

respondents work in specialist schools. The use of this classification in this part of the questionnaire may need to be examined for consistency for future respondents.

Table 6 Percentage distribution of respondents by school phase

Type	CSBM	DSBM	ADSBM	All programmes
Academy	1.5	1.1	3.0	1.5
Comprehensive	41.3	28.6	30.9	39.3
Faith	14.4	17.1	20.0	15.0
Federated	18.6	0	3.6	15.6
Grammar	1.2	0.7	1.2	1.1
Other	18.1	39.3	26.1	21.1
Private	0.8	1.1	0	0.8
Selective	0	0.9	0.6	0.1
Specialist	0	9.1	10.3	1.6
Trust	1.8	2.2	4.2	1.9
Unknown	2.3	0	0	1.9
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: HOST review of miscellaneous SBM cohorts survey data, April 2011

The start surveys collect little information by basic demographic characteristics, and it is not possible to comment on the demographic characteristics of respondents by gender, ethnicity or age. This seems to be an important limitation on diversity monitoring and at present, beyond capturing enrolment data, the evaluation is not able to review equality contrasts in participants' experiences of programmes or against Equality and Diversity policy measures.

There are some other limitations in the collated survey data and its use for inter-sector aggregate analysis. In particular, it should also be noted that apart from the metrics noted above, the CSBM start survey for cohort 0509 cannot be compared with the other surveys, as the questions and the response codes are very different.

3.3 Experiences of CSBM participants

The CSBM is the starting point on the qualification ladder and therefore could be expected to have the lowest level of highly qualified participants. Table 7 shows the highest qualification level of the respondents to the start survey, and provides some context for the later responses on expectations and concerns about the programme on starting. It can be seen that a quarter of respondents have GCSEs or O Levels as their highest qualification, while 15 per cent have a first degree or higher level qualification.

Table 7 Percentage distribution of respondents by highest qualification

Highest qualification	Total	Percentage
NVQ Levels 1-3	307	12.9%
GCSE/O Level	593	25.0%
A Level	320	13.5%
Accounting Technician	170	7.2%
First Degree	314	13.2%
Masters Degree	48	2.0%
PhD	4	0.2%
Other	615	25.9%
Unknown	1	0.0%
Total	2,372	100.0%

Source: NCTL 'Starts' Survey data from CSBM cohorts 1109, 0310, 0510, 0910, and 1110

The evidence suggests some polarisation in the qualification profiles between higher and lower qualified starters. However, the classification of the data confuse this analysis since just over a quarter have unclassified qualifications which did not fit into the framework offered in the questionnaire.

The evaluation suggests that there may be considerable value to revisiting and extending this 'highest qualification' classification, of guidance related to it. This would enable both NCTL and the evaluation to be in a better position to explore what is brought together in this 'other' category to have a better understanding of candidates' prior experiences of qualifications and learning.

As a simple and effective measure of personal management responsibilities, respondents were also asked how many support staff they directly line managed (Table 8). The evidence suggests that just over two in five do not have any line management responsibilities while a similar proportion line manage between one and five staff. This data will be affected by the entry profile of participants and in particular by the relative strong focus on primary school participants - where staff numbers will provide little (or no) potential for line management reports. However, the contrasts will affect the ability of some participants to put into practice any learning on management and leadership from the course.

Table 8 Percentage distribution of respondents by numbers line managed

Number of direct reports	Total	Percentage
0	1,015	42.8%
1-5	1,030	43.4%
6-10	204	8.6%
11-20	85	3.6%
21+	37	1.6%
Unknown	1	0.0%
Total	2,372	100.0%

Source: SBM 'Starts' Survey data from CSBM cohorts 1109, 0310, 0510, 0910, and 1110

Respondents were asked about their expectations from the course and learning. While there were extensive free form responses to this question, these are not practical to analyse for this report. The use of those data (and similarly for other areas in the programme) is of very little value to the evaluation although this information may make up a key part of any facilitation with the teaching staff leading the programme. Nonetheless, there were also a number of coded options looking at expectations as shown in Table 9. Here, it can be seen that the most common motivation was the desire to develop professional knowledge and skills, cited by nearly 90 per cent of respondents. This, rather than accreditation of experience gained or securing further qualifications, seems to have been the major rationale for participation. Indeed, the desire to acquire further qualifications was cited by less than a third.

Table 9 Motivation of respondents to undertake the CSBM course

Motivation (prompted)	Total	Percentage
Development of professional knowledge and skills	2,092	88.2%
To obtain a qualification	745	31.4%
Personal development (eg build confidence)	1,122	47.3%
To benefit the school	1,250	52.7%
Other (not elsewhere classified)	71	3.0%

Source: SBM 'Starts' Survey data from CSBM cohorts 1109, 0310, 0510, 0910, and 1110

Respondents were also asked about their concerns about the course, which are set out in Table 10. Around one-in-eight felt they had no early concerns. Among others, the classification adopted does not provide for an objective measure of the levels of 'concern' so it is difficult to place these data in a context of overall satisfaction. Nonetheless, a half of respondents were concerned over the quality of the programme content or organisation - a concern linked to NCTL and delivery.

Other reported concerns were more internally focused on the participant, and included some doubts about their ability to meet the demands of the programme and their own lack of knowledge or experience. Very few were concerned about lack of support while undertaking the learning and nearly one eighth had no concerns at the start of the programme.

Table 10 Concerns cited by respondents over undertaking the CSBM course

Concerns (prompted)	Total	Percentage
I don't have any concerns	284	12.0%
Unclear expectations of the programme	185	7.8%
Lack of own knowledge / experience	531	22.4%
Unsure about ability to meet demands of the programme	1037	43.7%
Quality of programme content or organisation	1180	49.7%
Relevance to own school	90	3.8%
Likely impact in school	158	6.7%
Lack of support from school colleagues	130	5.5%
Lack of support at home	141	5.9%
Other	76	3.2%

Source: SBM 'Starts' Survey data from CSBM cohorts 1109, 0310, 0510, 0910, and 1110

So far, it is possible to compare the start and end surveys only for the 1109 cohort. There were fewer respondents on the end survey than for the start survey at 606 compared to 923, and some differences in the mix of respondents by region. The way questions were posed between the start and end surveys also makes comparing motivations with outcomes slightly challenging. Table 11 shows the profile of motivations for the 1109 cohort. While development of professional knowledge and skills was the key motivation for respondents, other data suggests the increase in technical knowledge at the end was not as strong as other indicators.

Table 11 Motivation of respondents to take the CSBM course cohort 1109

Motivation	Number	Percentage
development of professional knowledge and skills	825	89.4%
to obtain a qualification	283	30.7%
personal development (eg build confidence)	421	45.6%
to benefit the school	492	53.3%
other	32	3.5%

Source: SBM 'End-of-Cohort' Survey data from CSBM cohorts 1109

The key concern among respondents to the start survey for cohort 1109 was the quality of the programme content or organisation. In the end survey there were a battery of questions asking about quality of delivery and learning experience and the mean scores for each of the qualitative statements is shown in Table 12. The main areas of concern seem to be with online support, the training materials and support from the administrative team, while achieving learning objectives, face-to-face sessions, learning with and from others and opportunities for personal reflection scored more highly. The online element may need some review to allow for minor adjustments.

Table 12 Quality of the CSBM programme

Qualitative statement	Mean score
Achievement of the learning objectives	1.657
The quality of the training materials used	1.987
Tutor effectiveness in delivering the face to face sessions	1.696
The quality and effectiveness of facilitator support online	2.043
Pre-course and overall support from the administration team	2.025
Programme material content	1.850
The learning processes overall	1.736
The support provided (eg by facilitators)	1.818
Whole group learning opportunities	1.647
Learning with and from others	1.517
Opportunities for personal reflection	1.586
Online learning and support	1.997
Relevance of the experience to your current needs	1.616

Source: SBM 'End-of-Cohort' Survey data from CSBM cohorts 1109

Overall satisfaction with the CSBM course from respondents from cohort 1109 is very high indeed, and 98 per cent would recommend it to a colleague. Another indication of satisfaction is that nearly three-in-four (73%) would consider undertaking the DSBM.

3.4 Experiences of DSBM participants

The DSBM is a progression from CSBM, with consequently fewer candidates and fewer responses to the course start questionnaire. Table 13 shows the prior qualifications of respondents although the distribution is complicated by the fact that nearly three in four respondents cited more than one 'highest' qualification.

Not all had completed the CSBM, but a very large proportion had done so. The analysis also shows that a third had a highest qualification that was described as 'other', nearly one-in-five had at least a degree level qualification. Respondents need to be made aware of the level of the CSBM within this qualification ladder, as so many have completed that course.

Table 13 Percentage distribution of respondents by CSBM completion and

Qualifications	Total	Percentage
CSBM completion	397	86.1%
Highest qualification		
NVQ Level 1-3	32	6.9%
GCSE/O Level	78	16.9%
A Level	71	15.4%
Accountancy technician	43	9.3%
First degree	81	17.6%
Masters degree	7	1.5%
PhD	1	0.2%
Other	148	32.1%
Grand Total	461	100.0%

Source: SBM 'Starts' Survey data from DSBM cohorts 1009, 0310, 0510 and 1010

As with CSBM, respondents were asked about the numbers of staff they supervised - the results are shown in Table 14. The DSBM candidates are far more likely to have line management responsibility than those taking the CSBM, with only 15 per cent with no staff reporting to them. By contrast, one-in-five is likely to manage 11 or more staff. This suggests an important difference in the participation profiles across SBM, and this may be a practical discriminator in the demand for the Certificate and Diploma programmes.

Table 14 Percentage distribution in response to the question how many

Direct reports	Total	Percentage
0	68	14.8%
1-5	213	46.2%
6-10	83	18.0%
11-20	55	11.9%
21+	42	9.1%
Grand total	461	100.0%

Source: SBM 'Survey' data from DSBM cohorts 1009, 0310, 0510 and 1010

DSBM candidates were also asked about their motivations and concerns on starting the DSBM course. While there were extensive opportunities for respondents to give individual motivations, there were also a series of statements that respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with these. Tables 15 and 16 show the key motivations and key concerns for those starting on the DSBM course.

Table 15 Expectations from participating in the DSBM course

What are your expectations from the DSBM programme?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score
The development of business knowledge and skills	354	100	7	0	1.247
To obtain a qualification	325	121	14	1	1.330
To increase understanding of whole school issues	377	78	5	1	1.197
To increase personal confidence to undertake the SBM role	334	98	22	7	1.354
To improve your leadership skills	381	71	8	1	1.195
To enable greater involvement in strategic leadership of the school	383	70	7	1	1.189
To ensure that the school is providing good value for money	339	106	14	2	1.304

Source: SBM 'Starts' Survey data from DSBM cohorts 1009, 0310, 0510 and 1010

The key expectations are to improve a more strategic perspective in school leadership and management, while gaining a qualification and improving personal confidence are less important drivers for individuals. As with the CSBM 'starts' survey, those enrolling

were asked about their early concerns about the programme. The main reported concern for participants is the time commitment for study - a question that did not feature in the CSBM survey. However, for DSBM this appears to be a common concern with nearly three-in-four respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing this was a concern. The evidence can be looked at in a wider context and surveys of those considering or participating in further training while in employment, undertaken in the past by Learning and Skills Council regional offices, consistently show this to be a concern outside in the education sector as well as within it.

Table 16 Concerns about participating in the DSBM course

What are your concerns about being a participant in the DSBM programme?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score
Lack of knowledge and experience	67	161	176	57	2.484
The ability to meet the demands of the programme	99	195	134	33	2.219
The relevance to your present situation	47	112	159	143	2.863
Time commitments for study	126	205	108	22	2.056
The relevance to the school	30	93	176	162	3.020
The likely impact in school	29	136	182	114	2.826
Lack of support from school	34	82	143	202	3.113

Source: SBM 'Starts' Survey data from DSBM cohorts 1009, 0310, 0510 and 1010

The other key concern, and in common with the CSBM survey, is the ability to meet the demands of the programme. This does provide a broad comparator in the CSBM 'starts' survey, although on this evidence the DSBM participants seem more likely to raise this as an early concern. There appears to be little concern about the support from the school while undertaking the course, but here there is little doubt as to the relevance of the course to the respondent's school.

There are currently no end-of-cohort surveys in scope of this evaluation against which to compare this data. Partial cohorts data will be available for the next report.

3.5 Experiences of ADSBM participants

The ADSBM is the next rung up from the DSBM on the qualification ladder and, consequently, has even fewer candidates and fewer responses to the course start questionnaire. Table 17 shows the prior qualifications of respondents. Not all had completed the DSBM, in fact the comparative figure between those undertaking the DSBM having completed the CSBM and those undertaking the ADSBM having undertaken the DSBM, with 86 and 82 per cent respectively are very similar, and imply that at least four-in-five candidates have taken the previous course.

Table 17 Profile of prior qualifications for ADSBM respondents

Qualifications	Total	Percentage
Completed DSBM?	136	82.4%
Highest Qualification		
NVQ level 1 – 3	5	3.0%
GCSE / O level	8	4.8%
A level	16	9.7%
Accountancy technician	17	10.3%
First degree	36	21.8%
Masters degree	15	9.1%
Other	68	41.2%
Total	165	100.0%

Source: SBM 'Starts' Survey data from ADSBM cohorts 0110, 0310 and 1110

While two fifths had a highest qualification that was described as 'other', nearly a third had at least a degree level qualification. Respondents need to be made aware of the level of the DSBM within this qualification ladder, as so many have completed that course.

Given the higher level of the ADSBM qualification, it is hardly surprising that most candidates manage a large number of staff, with nearly half managing at least 11 (Table 18). However, a handful of participants had no direct reports. For these candidates, there may be an issue of relevance of parts of the course material. However, at these low numbers this does not seem to raise selection issues and may reflect issues such as job changes affecting participants during participation.

Table 18 Numbers managed by ADSBM candidates

Direct reports	Total	Percentage
0	3	1.8%
1-5	46	27.9%
6-10	39	23.6%
11-20	28	17.0%
21+	49	29.7%
Total	165	100.0%

Source: SBM 'Starts' Survey data from ADSBM cohorts 0110, 0310 and 1110

The same questions for expectations and motivations for the course are used in the ADSBM and DSBM questionnaires and the responses for ADSBM are shown in Table 19. The lure of a qualification and the need to develop personal confidence are not key drivers and expectations here, rather the opportunity to improve leadership skills and to develop advanced skills and knowledge are important here, along with the potential to be more closely involved in the strategic leadership of their school.

Table 19 Expectations of respondents from participating in ADSBM

What are your expectations from being a participant on the ADSBM programme?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score
The development of advanced business knowledge and skills	128	37	0	0	1.224
To further improve your leadership skills	134	30	1	0	1.194
To enable greater involvement in strategic leadership of the school	130	32	3	0	1.230
To enable your SBM role to focus the school/federation on key areas for improvement	110	51	4	0	1.358
To increase understanding of whole school responsibilities	99	56	9	1	1.467
To increase personal confidence in the SBM role	101	46	15	3	1.515
To obtain a qualification	95	52	16	2	1.545

Source: SBM 'Starts' Survey data from ADSBM cohorts 0110, 0310 and 1110

Once again the key concern for participants is the time commitment for study (Table 20), echoing concerns for other levels of SBM participation. However, the levels reporting this are a surprise, with just over a quarter (26%) stating they ‘strongly agreed’ with this as a participation concern, and few disagreeing (24%).

Table 20 Concerns for participating in the ADSBM course

What are your concerns about being a participant on the ADSBM programme?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score
Lack of knowledge and experience	11	47	80	27	2.745
The ability to meet the demands of the programme	28	64	58	15	2.364
The relevance to your present situation	4	36	51	74	3.182
Time commitments for study	43	82	30	10	2.042
The relevance of the programme to further develop your skills	4	27	66	68	3.200
The likely impact in school/federation	7	32	84	42	2.976
Lack of support from school/federation	7	32	49	77	3.188

Source: SBM ‘Starts’ Survey data from ADSBM cohorts 0110, 0310 and 1110

The evidence suggests this will have been founded in most cases on realistic expectations of the programme, as over 80 per cent have already been through the DSBM and will have some awareness of the time commitment required. If time pressures are a ‘start-up’ concern, the evidence shows little doubt among participants as to the relevance of the programme for further skill development or the respondent’s present situation. This will also be heavily based on prior experience of the DSBM course. Respondents are also very confident of the support they expect to receive from their schools.

There are two midpoint surveys for the ADSBM course, and while with 57 responses overall, the data is not particularly robust, some inferences can be drawn. Table 21 summarises respondents’ feelings about course materials and support. In particular, it should be noted that they find facilitators knowledgeable about the course content and that they had been developing research skills. However, the tutorial session may need some development and there are some concerns on the quality of support and guidance from facilitators.

Table 21 ADSBM midpoint reflections on course quality

	Mean score
The programme materials are relevant and stimulating	1.842
The programme has helped to develop my research skills	1.667
Facilitators are knowledgeable about the programme content	1.596
Facilitators clearly explain the different elements of the programme	1.912
Facilitators have provided good support and guidance to me so far	2.263
Information and guidance about the assessment process is clear	1.912
The tutorial session offered helpful opportunities for reflection and consideration of future personal needs	2.281
Face-to-face days have met my personal needs and expectations	2.035

Source: SBM 'Mid-point' Survey data from ADSBM cohorts 0110 and 0310

Respondents were rather less happy with their personal development and expectations of the programme at the midpoint. This in particular related to their ability to address any pre-programme concerns they may have had (Table 22).

Table 22 ADSBM midpoint reflections on personal feelings

	Mean score
Meeting my expectations	1.982
Addressing any pre-programme concerns I had	2.351
Enabling me to develop a more strategic leadership role	2.000
Having an impact on pupils/students development	2.263

Source: SBM 'Mid-point' Survey data from ADSBM cohorts 0110 and 0310

Looked at more widely, these concerns may have been set out in detail in the questionnaire or in pre-course preparation, but if reflected in responses to the statements listed above, their pre-course concerns would have been about time commitment and ability to meet the demands of the programme. These respondents are therefore likely to be feeling the mid-point demands and stress of the programme.

Chapter 4: SBM Benefits and Impact

Key findings:

- a) Available impact and benefits evidence for this first interim report is limited, and there is little that can yet be said of how SBM benefits its participants and schools.
- b) Further end-of-cohort survey case study evidence will help to extend this, but the evaluation needs richer evidence and proposes more impact evidence is sought from the programme monitoring surveys and, if possible, a 'graduate' survey.
- c) On the available evidence, CSBM is having most impact on personal gains including confidence raising and personal satisfaction in work. There were also significant impacts for skills and knowledge enhancement.

4.1 Introduction

An important focus for the evaluation is to review the impacts that participation, and the funding and time investments, have had for individuals and schools. This will be a progressive feature of the analysis, building up knowledge as the evaluation progresses and in particular as extended survey data looks at 'distance travelled' for those completing the programme. At this early stage the evaluation can say relatively little but looks briefly at:

- Impact evidence in perspective and how this can be measured.
- In-programme gains and realised benefits, particularly from end-of-cohort surveys of individuals.
- Post-programme benefits and impact assessment for individuals and schools.

The data is so far limited, but includes the available end-of-cohort evidence from the CSBM 2009 starters, and also some reflections from past SBM participants from the SBD case studies (separately reported).

4.2 Impact evidence in perspective

Impact assessment at programme level presents challenges with which NCTL will be familiar. Beyond any issues of causal attribution, these challenges centre on issues of measurement, tangibility and also understanding the enablers to securing positive impact - for participants and schools - and constraints.

How the evaluation has planned to collate and assess such evidence has changed significantly in the last few months, partly to help accommodate the early focus on the SBD pilot. The approach now centres on two main sources:

- More broadly-based and quantifiable evidence on outcomes for participants and schools, as drawn from impact measures from the embedded monitoring in the programme and from the participant end-of-cohort surveys in particular.
- More in-depth assessment of participants' impact experiences, and realised benefits set against their expectations of the programme (ie distance travelled) and also the context and experiences of the school(s) in which they work. These are to be collated from a small number of case studies post-participation and followed up a year later to assess longer term gains.

Neither source has been able to provide rich evidence for this first interim report, and this analysis is consequently limited. The early information that is available is set out in sections 4.3 and 4.4 below. Further end-of-cohort survey case study evidence will be available through the evaluation and will be drawn on (as available) in the second interim report (October 2011). However, the evaluation cautions this is limited evidence - and in particular there is scope to capture more impact evidence from the embedded surveys and also to extend this through 'graduate' surveys where practicable. These issues are returned to in the next chapter.

4.3 In-programme gains

Impact evidence from in-programme gains is limited. Historically, the PriceWaterhouseCoopers report found that although there was limited evidence at that point of direct impacts, there were potential benefits from SBM participation to individuals' confidence and to improvements in school finances, effective use of financial and personnel resources, and in other areas where the SBM could contribute to school business management. Other potential impacts were consistent with programme expectations that a professionalised school business management focus would also indirectly support improvement to teaching and learning by freeing of headteachers' time.

Evidence to take forward this preliminary assessment is limited, and in part simply because the evaluation is not yet able to take account of very much (inter-cohort) end-of-cohort survey data to assess the benefits secured during participation. The data that is available for 2009 entrants is nonetheless positive (Table 23), and suggests significant gains in programme and most widely for personal developments.

Table 23 Achievement at the end of the CSBM course cohort 1109

Achievement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score¹³
Increase in technical knowledge	337	221	46	2	1.526
Understanding schools	383	207	14	2	1.398
Ability to operate as a leader	328	240	33	5	1.530
Profile and influence	321	232	47	6	1.568
Confidence in doing your job	475	109	20	2	1.256
Personal satisfaction	477	111	18		1.243

Source: SBM 'End-of-Cohort' Survey data from CSBM cohorts 1109

Looked at more widely, the data is consistent with the strongest impact being for personal gains - notably for confidence and personal satisfaction in work where over three in four strongly agree this has been an achievement of their involvement in CSBM. Rather fewer 'strongly agree' for other measures centred on skills and knowledge but even here over a half found significant impact. Few participants did not agree that the programme had not supported their development in these areas.

The surveys do not provide for other impact measures, and no assessment of indirect or knock on effects on, for example, school leadership or wider aspects of performance, although it might be premature to expect to collect such evidence immediately after completion. The surveys also do not collate 'diversity' measures so it is not possible to make any assessment of if, and how, these benefits vary by participants' gender, age, ethnicity or any contrasting effects between those with disabilities and those without.

4.4 Post-programme benefits and impact

Three of the four participant case studies conducted by HOST in January 2011 had previously completed SBM programmes. One had progressed across each of the three preceding levels of accreditation and another had undertaken two accreditation levels. Each was well placed to reflect on the experiences they had gained, and did so constructively. While some rationalisation may be involved here, there seemed to be few problems of recall as in each case participation in SBD had followed hard on the heels of SBM.

¹³ The mean score is calculated by allocating values one to four to the categories strongly agree to strongly disagree and then calculating the average score for that variable - the nearer the mean score to one the more respondents agree with the statement, the nearer four the more they disagree with the statement.

Looking at that evidence, there appear to be a number of areas where benefits were identified by those interviewed from SBM engagement. However, the most common effect of participation in SBM was for securing 'soft' impacts on individuals' confidence in themselves and their ability to perform their roles. In addition, the case study data suggested this confidence was echoed in greater engagement pro-activity by participants, with others interviewed in participant schools reporting that SBM participants were more confident to take the initiative in raising issues for discussion (eg at senior management team meetings) or in liaison with external stakeholders and partners.

Beyond this, evidence is limited of post-programme benefits but some of the starts surveys open field comments suggest considerable anticipated potential for future impact. The planned June-July SBM case studies will extend this evidence, and will be added to by later end-of-cohorts evidence for in-programme gains. Overall, however, the evaluation is cautious about how much impact evidence is likely to be gathered without more attention to post-programme benefits from 'graduate' surveys in SBM (and SBD).

Chapter 5: Issues and Implications

5.1 Introduction

This is the first of what will be a six staged and formative reports across the three years of the evaluation. This complements parallel and preliminary evaluation reports for the SBD pilot which have so far been the major focus for the evaluation, to provide for an early review of the SBM progress but also for an assessment of the quality of evidence coverage. This is drawn together here to look at early issues and implications arising from the findings set out in the previous chapters for:

- Issues arising for NCTL.
- Issues arising for the evaluation.

It is hoped that discussion on these conclusions will contribute to the further remodelling of the focus of the evaluation, and the evidence it is able to draw on.

5.2 Issues arising for NCTL

These are very early days for the evaluation. The analysis so far suggests that SBM is well placed, and well regarded by participants, to meet the new challenges it is set to face in meeting both the consequences for NCTL of consolidating provision and increasing cost-effectiveness of delivery, and in addressing the needs of the sector.

Some of the development challenges are set out above and will be well known to NCTL. However, others are uncertain and amount to what the evaluation suggests is a significant change in the supply-demand context for the programme. Against a still uncertain backcloth of the impact of policy, financial and other pressures on schools, it would be premature to go too far beyond this on the implications for NCTL, but two distinctive issues do arise.

The first concerns how NCTL is placed to meet the expectations of a publicly financed programme for meeting its diversity and equality monitoring needs. On the available evidence, we are not yet in a position to look at the available management information to explore the range of contrasts by gender, age, ethnicity and disability within enrolment and withdrawal data. This will be reviewed - as available - in the next report to establish demand profiles by these characteristics. However, we are clear that such data are not available from the survey data. This means that it is not possible to explore in more detail reasons underpinning any contrasts in demand or participation, or to look at how satisfaction, experiences or utility of the programme affects different needs groups.

The evaluation is conscious that NCTL has recognised in the past limitations of its equalities monitoring evidence.¹⁴ However, we would point out the significance of the apparent inconsistency with NCTL's revised Equalities and Diversity Strategy (January 2010). In addition, the absence of equalities metrics in the monitoring surveys will contribute to NCTL not being able to meet its own specific equalities commitments vis-à-vis the programmes, as well as not being able to measure its equalities targets for participation and achievements by those with 'protected characteristics'. We see these as significant limitations on monitoring data which require urgent attention.

The second concerns NCTL's ability to understand the impact that the programme is achieving. As noted in the previous chapter, impact measurement is a difficult area for programme evaluation. However, at present the evaluation suggests NCTL and the monitoring and evidence collection built into the programme, is not well placed to respond to these. Impact measures in the end-of-cohort surveys are limited, and in any event seem better placed to reflect in-programme benefits than wider impacts including for schools. For the reasons outlined above it is also not possible to explore impact contrasts by and of the usual 'diversity' measures. In addition, evidence on post-programme impacts for participants is currently not collected in any systematic way, and the now very small number of case studies allocated to such analysis in the evolving evaluation while providing for robust illustrations for selected individuals will not support a wider impact assessment.

On this evidence, NCTL will be able to speculate about likely programme impacts on individuals and provide for a few specific cases of impacts on schools and individuals, but will not be able to provide a cross-programme assessment. The proposed design of the end-of-cohort survey for the SBD pilot may provide an opportunity to trial a more approach using more robust and systematic impact indicators.

There are also some more specific issues of data quality for the evaluation which are touched on in the final section of this chapter on in the final section of this chapter.

¹⁴ Notably in the equalities impact assessment conducted for ADSBM which stated that the equalities evidence base needed to be improved.

5.3 Issues arising for the evaluation

This is the first inter-cohort use of the SBM survey-based monitoring data by HOST, and this provides an opportunity to review its coverage, comparability and quality. These data have been subject to past reviews by NCTL, with questions, coding and methods of collating data changing within cohorts. This produces some challenges for the evaluation in making comparisons between different entry levels to the programme. In addition, there are some other areas where questions or coding could be improved.

- **Coding for prior qualification levels** - here there is too much scope for participants to choose the 'other' category (over 40 per cent of ADSBM respondents), while the code NVQ Levels 1 to 3 covers a range of qualifications from pre-GCSE level to A Level and could well include Accountancy Technician. In the questionnaires for DSBM and ADSBM, no indication is given of the CSBM or DSBM respectively to help identify whether that is the highest qualification of the individual.
- **Uncoded quantitative responses** - for questions on the number of pupils on roll and the size of school budget, the responses are better and more easily analysed if groups or frequencies of numbers are used, as for the later question on salary bands. In addition respondents are less likely to add information that cannot be analysed (numbers mixed with text or symbols, several different ways of saying don't know), making the data more valuable. From the 1109 CSBM survey, for example, with 923 respondents, only 91 responses would not require data cleansing before analysis could be undertaken for the school budget size question.
- **Motivations for participating** - for the CSBM programme, the statements are marked in the data record as 'on' or 'off', while for later programmes there is a *likert* scale applied, making comparison between programmes difficult. Neither approach is consistent either with the end-of-cohort questionnaire where there is a scale for high to low impact. Motivations for engagement are an important issue in demand analysis and greater consistency of approach here will provide for future comparability, and also for assessing 'distance travelled' for participants completing the programme.

- **Concerns about participating** - while it might be expected that there will be somewhat different concerns between the programmes, the coding for concern for CSBM over 'quality of materials' and 'programme administration' would be useful at all levels, as they would for CSBM, the DSBM and ADSBM concern over 'time commitment'. This would allow better comparisons between programmes, but need not impose a 'one size fits all' approach to coding. As has been highlighted, in surveys of learning activity, time to undertake learning is often seen as a barrier, so understanding the scale of concern over time commitments for all programmes, as well as the reality in the end of programme survey, would be valuable for delivery, support, entry and ongoing advice and guidance for the programme. Evidence from more refined measures as proposed here might in due course contribute to forestalling some withdrawal.
- **Uncoded qualitative answers** - for the 1109 CSBM survey with 923 respondents, there were 360 different responses to the question – again too many to be valuable in capturing a profile of participants. In addition collated in this way, there were 20 different ways to say senior administrator, 15 to say school administrator and over 30 ways to misspell finance officer. This substantially compromises analysis and could be avoided by encoding the responses. We would suggest there is enough information now from the surveys to develop a robust coding and ask respondents which most closely matches their current job title. This will contribute to a better understanding of the nature of demand across the candidate base, and may also help with the ease of use of the questionnaires.

Finally we would draw attention to the use of long text answers in the surveys, and where there are a number of questions which have the potential for responses of up to 8,000 characters. The responses are likely to be very rich, and where comparisons can be made for individual candidates between start and end questionnaires, the value is immense. However, while such responses may be valuable for discussion between the candidate and their tutor or facilitator, they have limited use in a large scale and longitudinal evaluation of this nature. With over 2,000 responses to CSBM start programmes, it is impossible to provide for meaningful analysis from such a large body of textual data. There may be scope now to review responses and develop coding frameworks for later questionnaires, and if responses are used by advisers for work with individual candidates, the information should be transferred to personal files. Such questions are also challenging for the respondents, and we would suggest the value of collecting this information needs to be reviewed in detail.

HOST will be happy to explore these and other issues with NCTL, and as appropriate to contribute to any refinement of survey tools in these and other areas.



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