



Department
for Education

Analytical associate pool

**Summary of recent small-scale research
projects**

March 2019

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Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) uses high quality evidence and analysis to inform policy development and delivery to achieve [our vision](#) - to achieve a highly educated society in which opportunity is equal for young person no matter what their background or family circumstances.

Within the DfE there is an analytical community which comprises statisticians, economists, social and operational researchers. These specialists feed in analysis and research to strategy, policy development and delivery.

While much analysis is undertaken in-house and substantial projects are commissioned to external organisations, there is often a need to quickly commission small-scale projects.

We have therefore created a pool of Analytical Associates who can bring specific specialist expertise, knowledge and skills into the department to supplement and develop our internal analytical capability.

In June 2014 we invited applications from individuals to join the pool. We received an overwhelming response and, after evaluating the expertise of everyone who applied, we established the Analytical Associate Pool.

Over 200 independent academics and researchers are in the pool, and they can be commissioned to carry out small-scale data analysis, rapid literature reviews and peer review. They also provide training, quality assurance and expert advice on an ad-hoc basis. Most projects cost less than £15,000, and more than 180 projects have been commissioned since the pool opened in September 2014.

Summary of projects

At DfE we aim to make analysis publicly available and we follow the Government Social Research (GSR) [protocol](#) for publishing research. Much of the analysis undertaken through the Associate Pool is only small in nature and we are publishing a summary of findings here to ensure that they are shared. More substantial work is published in stand-alone reports throughout the year. See page 14 for details and links to projects already published.

Evaluation of the Leadership Coaching Pledge one-year pilot

Associates: Dawn Hands and Elizabeth Davies (BMG Research)

The research

The Leadership Coaching Pledge (the pledge) aims to co-ordinate a coaching offer for female primary and secondary teachers looking to progress in their career and move into leadership positions. It is based on the premise, demonstrated in many leadership programmes, that coaching increases confidence, builds resilience, capability and inner resource.¹

The Pledge was launched in 2016 by DfE, who invited leaders from all backgrounds to 'pledge' to coach at least one aspiring female leader. The structure, content, style of delivery and overall duration of coaching is agreed between coaches and participants. Coaching can be face-to-face, email, telephone, video based, digital or a mixture of these. In October 2017, funding was provided to Teaching School Council (TSC). The TSC is a national body representing all Teaching Schools in England; the council liaise with DfE in an advisory role to promote and represent their remit, to support teaching schools. The TSC took over management of the Pledge, delivering through eight lead schools. The TSC now has responsibility for: hosting the coach directory; managing the coach and participant sign-up process and data; and promoting opportunities for feedback and best practice sharing.

A small scale evaluation was commissioned through the DfE Associate Pool to assess the extent to which the Pledge met its aims and objectives, and to consider how well it has been delivered in practice and where improvements can be made. The project was delivered between May and June 2018. The evaluation was informed by two online surveys designed and delivered by the DfE during the pledge to capture participant and coach views at different points in time and 24 in-depth telephone interviews. The sample size for the baseline survey was 528, the sample size for the follow-up survey was 174.

¹ NFER, *Mentoring and Coaching for Professionals: A Study of the Research Evidence*, 2008, <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/2003/mcm01.pdf>.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with four representatives from across three lead schools, eleven coaches, and nine participants.

Key findings

Motivations for taking part tended to be positive for both coaches and participants. Coaches wanted to support other professionals or give back to the system, whilst having the opportunity to develop their own practise. Participants felt coaching would be able to support them in a range of ways and were enthused at the opportunity to access this at no cost to themselves or their schools.

Coaching typically lasts between 3 and 6 months with around 6-10 hours of support in this time. A schedule of sessions is agreed by the coach and participant at the outset, with face-to-face or combination approaches used most frequently for delivery.

Coaches said the structure of the pledge allowed them sufficient flexibility to use their own approaches to coaching (typically using a model they have received prior training in or have qualifications in), and to tailor their support to the participants' needs.

Participants were generally satisfied with the quality of coaching they received, with the large majority (89%) of survey respondents saying it was excellent or very good. Coaching sessions covered a wide range of issues, including: addressing confidence issues; reviewing job applications and providing feedback; reviewing career options and pathways; discussing specific barriers and challenges; and managing difficult conversations

The baseline survey revealed that social media was the most common way for participants to find out about the pledge. Generally, coaches and participants felt that more could be done to raise awareness, suggesting it could be promoted through events. Several coaches and participants thought schools should do more to promote it to staff.

Coaches and participants interviewed in-depth made a number of suggestions for improving the coaching database, including additional guidance about how to select a coach and the considerations involved; more support for coaches especially in amending their profiles on the database, and more quality assurance of the coaching provided.

Other suggested areas for consideration included: increasing engagement with those returning to work and flexible workers; co-ordinating messaging with partners to avoid duplication across regions; and further clarifying the purpose of the pledge and the available support.

Overall, respondents said the pledge was high quality and high value and made a positive difference in supporting female teachers to progress. Where respondents had less positive experiences or concerns about quality this was mostly attributed to key programme design and delivery factors which they felt could be improved (such as the matching process). There was strong support for the pledge to continue.

Looking forward

This evidence has been used to re-evaluate how DfE delivers the Coaching Pledge and the department is now looking to appoint a national provider from April 2019 who will have the expertise to improve the design and delivery of the Coaching Pledge, capacity to raise awareness on a national scale and work with partners to provide a consistent offer of support.

Leadership Equality and Diversity Fund and Targeted Support Fund: Analysis of project end of year (2017/18) reports

Associate: Anwen Page

The research

The Leadership Equality and Diversity (E&D) Fund was designed to provide grant funding to schools to support teachers from under-represented groups to progress into leadership. These under-represented groups were defined as teachers holding one or more 'protected characteristics' as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The Targeted Support Fund (TSF) was designed to provide grant funding to develop and deliver leadership programmes in areas or types of school where it has traditionally been difficult to recruit.

On completion of the Leadership E&D and TSF programmes, the project lead/regional representative completed an online feedback form, which covered all aspects of the programme organisation, delivery and perceptions of impact. This report aggregates and summarises the results from 38 (out of a total of 39) feedback forms from the Leadership E&D fund, and 6 (out of a total of 7) feedback forms from the TSF programme.

The key objective of this analysis was to identify best practice in the design and delivery of both programmes. In order to do so it examined:

- Participation in programmes.
- Participant needs and recruitment.
- Outcomes and benefits.
- Programme delivery and operation.

Key findings

E&D

Teacher recruitment was typically through networks or via face-to-face/direct approaches. Responses to recruitment were varied. When asked to report on any issues

encountered with recruitment, 39% of projects reported that they had experienced no problems at all with recruitment. Whilst some projects indicated that they were oversubscribed or had waiting lists other projects reported that they had struggled to hit recruitment targets. Securing the release of candidates was the biggest single concern reported in the feedback forms, which was often resolved by planning sessions outside of school time.

Project representatives described a process of tailoring programmes in response to baseline assessment of participant development and support needs at the start of the programme. Examples of tailoring the delivery included assigning tutors according to requirement and providing access to support networks. E&D programmes often reported having a strong focus on personal development skills, such as building confidence and self-reflection; this was in response to baseline assessment participant needs.

One of the main areas of learning related to scheduling; considerations and decisions made about the programme as a whole and specific session were noted as ways to remove barriers to attendance. Positive reflections on the offer focussed on the content; some projects identified a particular elements as being particularly successful, or something to include in future, these included the residentials, leadership theory and coaching.

TSF

A range of teacher recruitment techniques were employed by the programmes supported by the TSF which broadly fell into 'networking' (for example using existing local networks), 'targeting' (directly approaching potential participants and/or their schools) and 'communications driven' (e.g. newsletters). Half the projects identified some barriers to recruitment, which included: competition between schools for staff, issues with schools such as releasing staff/cascading information and changes to recruitment programmes. Respondents suggested successful retention strategies included making materials available online, offering twilight sessions (sessions run in the evening, outside of school time), regular communication and contact, using coaching and mentoring, careful selection of participants and offering practical support with applications.

When asked to rate how successful their projects were in terms of delivering certain learning outcomes/benefits, project representatives reported strengths of the programme included where delivery had supported understanding of the nature of senior leadership and how to build wider support networks; this was reported as very successful by all five operational areas. However, feedback from project representatives suggests they perceived the programme to have had low impact on learning outcomes relating to specific senior-leadership skills such as recruitment skills, facilitation / communication skills, and ability to motivate others.

Projects suggested that elements of programmes that were thought to be valuable to the local area these had been embedded into existing local frameworks and efforts have been made to coordinate with other existing leadership opportunities. This included embedding Recently Qualified Teachers /aspiring heads programme into the Continuing

Professional Development (CPD) offer from regional Teaching Schools and DfE accredited leadership programmes. Overall this feedback provided understanding of where the programmes had helped participants to increase their confidence, develop their leadership style, and ultimately to achieve next stage promotions.

Looking forward

The final round of the Leadership Equality and Diversity Fund was delivered in 2017-18 and this was also the case for the Targeted Support Fund. However, the Department has since launched a new school-led equality and diversity school-led hub model in 2018. This new approach seeks to build on the success and address delivery issues of the E&D Fund and TSF by creating hubs of 'expertise' who can work directly with schools.

Measuring resilience to extremism in schools

Associate: Stephen Boxford

The research

This literature review was commissioned by the DfE in February 2018 to provide an overview and rapid assessment of the literature on building resilience to extremism in young people aged 5-21, with a focus on those of school age (that is, 5-18). It reviewed both academic and grey literature², including descriptions of interventions and programmes, evaluations (where these were available), and systematic reviews³ that looked at topics including 'resilience against violent radicalisation' and 'what works in countering violent extremism'. These were scrutinised in order to answer the following questions:

- How is 'resilience to extremism' understood in the literature on building young people's resilience to extremism?
- What approaches have been taken to build young people's resilience to extremism?
- What is the strength of the evidence to support these approaches?

To this end, the report drew out key information from recent UK and international literature. We were primarily interested in literature published in the last 5 years, with

² The Fourth International Conference on Grey Literature (GL '99) in Washington, DC, in October 1999 defined grey literature as follows: "That which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers." <http://www.greylit.org/about>

³ "Systematic reviews... typically involve a detailed and comprehensive plan and search strategy derived a priori, with the goal of reducing bias by identifying, appraising, and synthesizing all relevant studies on a particular topic." Uman LS. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses. *J Can Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2011;20(1):57-9. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3024725/>

priority given to more recent literature. However, literature published pre-2012 could also be included if instructive. The scope of the review was not constrained to UK-based interventions, but only English-language evidence was included.

Key findings

- Interventions to build young people’s resilience to extremism form an important part of national and international prevention strategies to counter violent and non-violent extremism.
- Interventions generally address the knowledge, attitudes or behaviour of participants, or a combination of these. Educational approaches typically focus on democratic participation, tolerance for diversity, critical thinking skills or moral reasoning, or a combination of these. The individual evidence base for each is variable, but generally weak.
- Employing a variety of approaches to building resilience may be advantageous, as they can each address different parts of the puzzle. However, variety and a lack of specific explanation in the literature have led to confusion over the meaning of ‘resilience to extremism’ and how best to promote resilience to extremism.
- The overall evidence base for interventions to build young people’s resilience to extremism is historically weak but appears to be improving. There is an abundance of research that does not provide, or aim to provide, empirical evidence for the impact of these interventions, but a few rigorous evaluations have been carried out with encouraging results. This is especially true for interventions that aim to promote resilience to extremism via attitude change, possibly for methodological reasons⁴.

Promoting integration in schools

Associate: Heather Rolfe

The research

This targeted, non-systematic literature review was commissioned by the DfE in February 2018 to review evidence regarding how those in the wider education sector are

⁴ Doney, J. and Wegerif, R., 2017. *Measuring Open-Mindedness: An evaluation of the impact of our school dialogue programme on students’ open-mindedness and attitudes to others*. Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. Available at: https://institute.global/sites/default/files/inline-files/Measuring%20Open-mindedness_29.06.17.pdf; Tunariu, A.D., Tribe, R., Frings, D. and Albery, I.P., 2017. The iNEAR programme: an existential positive psychology intervention for resilience and emotional wellbeing. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 29(4), pp.362-372; See, B.H., Gorard, S. and Siddiqui, N., 2017. Does participation in uniformed group activities in school improve young people’s non-cognitive outcomes?. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 85, pp.109-120.

attempting to reduce ethnic and religious segregation, by reviewing evaluations of the various approaches that have been successfully trialled in education settings.

The review focused primarily on interventions deployed in the primary and secondary phases in the UK, although it also touched on relevant initiatives employed within the further and higher education sectors. In relation to religious integration specifically, the review drew on evidence relating to Northern Ireland. English-language only evidence was considered.

Key findings

- There are a range of extra-curricular projects which have shown promise in promoting social integration but few have been rigorously evaluated.
- A number of studies suggest that contact between pupils of different ethnic and faith groups may have positive results in terms of attitudes and feelings – this is known as ‘contact theory’. At the same time, there is a persuasive argument that contact alone is not enough, and that particular types of interaction and activities can enhance and accelerate the process of social integration, such as creating conditions for classroom discussion and reflection on diversity which enable pupils to engage with different perspectives.
- Even when not referenced explicitly, contact theory underpins many of the projects focused on improving integration, such as The Linking Network⁵ ~~schools linking~~. The Linking Network is a promising area and ~~preliminary~~ some research has suggested it may have a positive impact on many aspects of pupils’ skills, attitudes, perceptions and behaviours. There remain, however, significant knowledge gaps regarding how best to implement schools linking.
- Across the projects surveyed there is evidence that creating conditions for classroom discussion, and reflection on diversity, enables and encourages pupils to engage with different perspectives.
- Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating the integration process between pupils, and across projects there are indications that preparation, training, and support for teachers engaged in delivering integration-promoting initiatives is important to their success.

⁵ “The Linking Network supports schools and communities to develop a positive, cohesive ethos by helping children, young people and adults to explore identity, celebrate diversity, promote community and champion equality.” <https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/about/>

Designated senior lead for Mental Health

Associate: Rebecca Brown

The research

A key proposal in the [2017 'Transforming children and young peoples' mental health provision' Green Paper](#) was to incentivise all schools to identify a Designated Senior Lead, who would be responsible for mental health and wellbeing in their school or college. This study was commissioned to map the existing training provision currently available which is relevant to the designated senior lead for mental health role, in order to support national implementation of this role and inform training the department is looking to provide.

The study, carried out between May and July 2018, adopted a two-tier mapping strategy, exploring available training in England relating to the likely responsibilities of designated senior leads for mental health – DSL(MH) in schools and colleges.

Tier One involved targeted searches using the researcher's (Associate Pool) own network of trainers and training organisations as well as evidence from previous related Associate Pool studies to elicit information and awareness of training available on the market that would be relevant for the DSL(MH).

To complement Tier One and to ensure comprehensive mapping of training providers, Tier Two involved web-based searches. A key word framework was developed and used to conduct Google searches. The first 5 pages of Google were reviewed for each combination of key words to identify relevant training provision. Key organisations' websites and directories of training were also searched.

Key findings

The DSL(MH) role has the following 7 key responsibilities (outlined in the 2017 Green Paper):

- Oversight of the whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing, including how it is reflected in the design of behaviour policies, curriculum and pastoral support, how staff are supported with their own mental wellbeing and how pupils and parents are engaged;
- Supporting the identification of at-risk children and children exhibiting signs of mental ill health;
- Knowledge of local mental health services and working with clear links into children and young people's mental health services to refer children and young people into NHS services where it is appropriate to do so;

- Coordination of the mental health needs of young people within the school or college and oversight of the delivery of interventions where these are being delivered in the educational setting;
- Prioritising the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based interventions with the necessary knowledge to identify and procure these;
- Providing support to staff in contact with children with mental health needs to help raise awareness, and giving all staff the confidence to work with young people;
- Overseeing the outcomes of interventions, on children and young people's education and wellbeing.

This two-tiered mapping review explored existing training provision relevant to the DSL(MH) lead role in schools and colleges.

Training courses or programmes identified that were specifically developed for school mental health leads, and/or highly relevant training for the role addressing at least 3 of these key responsibilities were categorised as Level One, with the top end of the 'Level One' range being training courses who addressed at 5 or more of these.

Overall, 31 training courses or programmes were identified as Level One, with 14 of these fitting in at the top end of the Level One range

Of the 31 training courses identified as Level One, 30 fit into the following 4 groups:

- One or two-day face to face workshops available nationally, or across several geographical locations (12)
- Programmes involving blended learning (using a mix of online and face-to-face training) taking between 6 months and 2 years to complete, available nationally, or across several geographical locations (5)
- Local training involving collaborations between schools, child and adolescent mental health services, local authorities and other local organisations or initiatives (10)
- Online training (3)

Only one could not be grouped, as it was still in development.

The table below shows how the learning outcomes, or objectives of these learning programmes, were mapped against the 7 key responsibilities identified for the DSL(MH) role, and further broken down by type of training offered:

	DSL(MH) Key Responsibilities		
	2 or fewer	3 or 4	5 or more
One or two day workshop	0	7	5
Blended learning 6 - 24 months	0	2	3
Local training with Mental health services, LA and charities	1	3	6
Online courses	1	2	0

Several other training courses and providers were identified that contained one or two of the above key responsibilities, and would be relevant for the DSL(MH) role if they were

This research has confirmed that there are a variety of providers operating both nationally and locally who would be able to offer training which could fit with our early thinking about the approach we want to take, to both the course content for the DSL(MH) and to support delivery of the 7 key responsibilities for the DSL(MH).

The research also confirmed that current online-only courses did not appear to offer the breadth of content to put them on a par with those at the top end of the 'Level One' range which met with 5 or more of the identified DSL(MH) training course objectives.

further developed or adapted. These were categorised as Level Two.

We have furthermore used this research in terms of indicative costings and course structure for the DSL(MH) training, and it has been used to directly assist us with a draft training specification.

Holiday activities and food literature review

Associate: Jane Evans

The research

This literature review was commissioned by the Department for Education in July 2018 with a view to understanding the evidence about the impact of school holidays on pupils, especially those from disadvantaged homes. The Department commissioned the report to inform the design of the Department's planned summer 2019 programme of holiday activities and food provision.

The literature review covers published evidence regarding two potential effects:

- 'Holiday Hunger': where children and families are unable to afford sufficient nutritious food during school holidays, including children who receive free school meals in term time. The review investigates evidence of the extent of holiday hunger in the UK, which children are affected and how they and their families can be supported during the holidays.
- 'Holiday learning loss': where pupils potentially lose academic skills and knowledge over the summer holidays. The review investigates evidence of the extent of holiday learning loss, who might be affected and what provision is effective to mitigate holiday learning loss.

The review also covers evidence on existing holiday food provision, including best practice on encouraging participation and attendance among disadvantaged groups.

Key findings

- There is no conclusive evidence on the extent of holiday hunger or holiday learning loss in England. Much of the evidence on the effects of holiday hunger and holiday learning loss and on effective provision to address these issues has been drawn from the international literature, especially evidence from the USA.
- Only a few UK providers of holiday activities with food had sufficient records to draw any substantive conclusions about best practice or value for money in holiday food and activity delivery. The most informative evidence came from those which had been formally evaluated.
- While learning from international (especially US) evidence, the review reveals a number of evidence gaps in the UK and a lack of evaluation of current provision to address both holiday hunger and holiday learning loss.

Holiday Hunger

There is no conclusive evidence on the extent of holiday hunger in England. The UK does not undertake official measurements of food insecurity (Taylor & Loopstra, 2016)⁶, unlike many other developed countries, so the extent of this issue remains unknown. The literature provides a range of estimates, for example:

- In 2017 UNICEF published a global review of childhood food insecurity data that found that 4 per cent of children in the UK aged under 15 did not receive 3 meals a day, compared with 1 per cent in Poland and 2 per cent in Portugal (Pereira et al., 2017)⁷.
- In 2013, Ipsos Mori's social research unit interviewed a representative sample of 500 parents and 500 children from across London and found that 8 per cent of parents reported that, at some point, their children have had to skip meals because they cannot afford to buy food (Ipsos Mori Social Research Unit, 2013)⁸.

International evidence on food insecurity indicates that persistent or repeated episodes of hunger have a negative effect on children's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and impact adversely on attainment and achievement at school.

⁶ Taylor, A. & Loopstra, R., 2016. Too Poor to Eat; Food insecurity in the UK, London: The Food Foundation.

⁷ Pereira, A., Handa, S. & Holmqvist, G., 2017. Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity among Children across the Globe, Innocenti Working Papers no. 2017-09, Florence: UNICEF Innocenti.

⁸ Ipsos Mori Social Research Unit, 2013. Child Hunger in London: Understanding food poverty in the capital, London: Greater London Authority.

Holiday Learning Loss

While the evidence from the USA is extensive due to its 13-week break drawing substantial research attention, evidence from other countries with shorter summer breaks (such as the UK, where the break is 6 weeks long) is limited. Evidence from the USA and other countries suggests that poor pupils and ethnic minority pupils fall behind their better off peers significantly during the summer break. However, it is not apparent from the literature whether UK school pupils experience summer learning loss; although there is an assumption amongst teachers and educationalists that they do (The Key, 2014)⁹, especially those pupils from low income households who are already behind other pupils in attainment.

Determining the true extent of holiday learning loss in the UK would require a robust programme of research to test pupils before and after the school holidays, with a further test at the end of the autumn term to validate the findings.

Encouraging participation in holiday activity and food provision

Evidence from the US suggests that the best ways to encourage attendance in holiday activity and food provision include 'word of mouth' recommendations, verbal presentations to communities and calling door to door. Involving parents and carers can encourage participation and represents value for money in terms of marketing, while promotions such as competitions and free food for parents and carers have also been found to be effective in some programmes. Inviting parents to participate means that information can be provided about nutrition, housing and welfare. Whole family cooking activities benefit families in understanding how to make the best of low cost ingredients as well as being fun.

It is important to avoid stigma. As noted by the Derbyshire school holiday food programme, the term "holiday hunger" is stigmatising to families experiencing hardship and should not be used when delivering provision. Close attention should be paid to the stigmatising effects on children, and parents and carers, of provision that is too closely targeted (Garthwaite, 2016; Lambie-Mumford & Sims, 2018; Stretesky et al., 2017)¹⁰. Targeting should be broad rather than refined and neutral settings can aid participation:

9 Key Insights (2014) Summer Learning Loss [Online]. Available at: <http://insights.thekeysupport.com/2014/07/28/summer-learning-loss/> (accessed 16 June 2018).

10 Garthwaite, K., 2016. 'Stigma, shame and 'people like us': an ethnographic study of foodbank use in the UK'. *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 24(3), pp. 277-289.

Lambie-Mumford, L. & Sims, L., 2018. 'Children's Experiences of Food and Poverty: the rise and implications of charitable breakfast clubs and holiday hunger projects in the UK'. *Children and Society*, 32(3), pp. 244-254

Stretesky, P. et al., 2017. 'The Impact of Holiday Clubs on Household Food Insecurity—A Pilot Study'. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 26(2), pp. e261-e269.

for example, facilities in parks or community centres rather than a church or school. Food banks were felt to be stigmatising locations for delivery.

Branding and marketing are important. There was evidence that older young people are put off by the term 'club'. Time needs to be allowed to market provision to the community.

The greatest proportion of pupils on free school meals are those in Special Schools (35.7%) and Pupil Referral Units (40.0%)¹¹. In addition, the evidence on food insecurity shows that a higher incidence of mental, emotional and physical health problems occurs amongst children and young people who are food insecure. The staffing of holiday activity and food provision needs to reflect the probability of a higher level of special needs and challenge in the targeted groups.

Evidence on food insecurity shows that children are affected emotionally and socially by a lack of food in the household even if they themselves receive sufficient food due to management of resources by the adults.¹² Provision for children from food insecure households should include support for families as a whole especially in the light of the evidence to show that involving parents improves participation.

Polemic debate could be minimised through the objective collection of official data on food insecurity and its impacts.

Effective holiday activity and food provision

Provision for children experiencing hunger in the school holidays is ad hoc, piecemeal, informal and largely run by local charities and volunteers. However, there is also evidence that this informality may allow for some flexibility and sensitivity to local contexts.

Evidence on effective holiday provision in the UK is limited, but some suggests that services which provide consistent, easily accessible, enrichment activities beyond just lunch or breakfast, and which involve parents and children in the preparation of food are those which work best.

11 Department for Education, 2018. Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics January 2018 Statistical First Release. [Online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719226/Schools_Pupils_and_their_Characteristics_2018_Main_Text.pdf [Accessed 28 June 2018]

12 Belsky, D. et al., 2010. 'Context and Sequelae of Food Insecurity in Children's Development'. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 172(7), pp. 809-818.

Whitaker, R., .C, Phillips, S. & Orzol, S., 2006. 'Food Insecurity and the Risks of Depression and Anxiety in Mothers and Behavior Problems in their Preschool-Aged Children'. *Pediatrics*, 118(3)

Centres which invite parents and carers to meals allow for advice to be given on other topics such as benefits, housing and relationships.

Increasing EBacc entry rates

Associates: ASK Research

The research

DfE commissioned ASK Research in December 2017 to find out how some schools have increased their EBacc entry rates, and the lessons that can be learnt by other schools from these. The fieldwork involved two strands:

1. Six schools with low EBacc entry rates were asked what advice or lessons they wanted to learn from schools who had increased their EBacc entry rates.
2. Thirty schools across England, with a range of characteristics, all rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, that had increased their EBacc entry rates by 40 percentage points or more between 2011 and 2017 were interviewed about how they had achieved this.

The EBacc is a school performance measure introduced in 2010. It measures the number of pupils entering GCSEs in the following subjects at GCSE; English language and literature; maths; the sciences; geography or history; and a language. These are the subjects which the Russell Group says at A level open more doors to more degrees. The government's ambition is to see 75% of pupils studying the EBacc subject combination at GCSE by 2022, and 90% by 2025.

Key findings

Schools who had not significantly increased their EBacc entry rates spoke about what advice or lessons they wanted to learn from schools who had increased their EBacc entry rates. Broadly, they wanted to know:

- How to encourage more pupils to take EBacc subjects
- How to set up options to promote EBacc and maintain a broad and balanced curriculum
- How to support pupils to engage with Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)
- How to support pupils with lower ability levels
- How to increase engagement and achievement rates
- How to secure high quality staff to deliver EBacc subjects
- How to ensure progression from primary schools and beyond the secondary phase

- What is the development journey to increasing EBacc entry rates

The research identified a number of schools which had demonstrated a clear increase in their EBacc entry rates since 2011, with many entering over 80% of their pupils for the combination of EBacc subjects.

The key feature shared by all of the schools interviewed who had increased their EBacc entry rates was that they had introduced a pathway where pupils studied all EBacc subjects at Key Stage 4 and were routing more pupils into this pathway.

Schools who had increased their EBacc entry rates were routing pupils into an EBacc pathways in one of three ways:

- Making the study of EBacc subjects compulsory for almost all pupils.
- Selecting certain pupils to enter into an EBacc pathway at Key Stage 4.
- Allowing a free choice of options but strongly encouraging the take up of EBacc subjects.

Schools said they supported pupils who found EBacc subjects more difficult by giving them more time on those subjects. Some schools used some of the following options to balance competing demands on time:

- Extending the school day for all in order to incorporate longer lesson times and/or more time for EBacc subjects.
- Allocating less curriculum time to non-EBacc subjects by having them taught for all students a term at a time or offering them through enrichment or after school sessions, and not necessarily studied to GCSE.
- Offering compulsory RE, PE and Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) in more creative ways, including as extra-curricular activities, during tutor time or 'intensive' days, or within other subjects.

This shift to compelling more pupils to study the full range of EBacc subjects (often seen by pupils and parents as academically more challenging) was being balanced with ways to increase pupil engagement, enthusiasm and achievement. Strategies for this comprised:

- Addressing MFL delivery and pedagogy.
- Making MFL relevant and engaging.
- Raising the quality of EBacc subject teaching.
- Liaising with feeder schools
- Supporting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Supporting pupils with lower ability levels

To successfully implement this approach schools were focusing on the following to underpin this cultural shift.

- Having high aspirations for their pupils.
- Getting parents on board.
- Securing high quality staffing.
- Ensuring progression routes from GCSE to further education and university.
- Reflecting on and developing their approach.

The information collected through this research is being used to inform support strategies to help schools deliver the EBacc subjects.

Published full project reports

In addition to these summaries, some Associate Pool projects have been published as a full report on the [DfE Internet site](#) or on Associate's own websites. See below for more information and links to these publications.

Table 1 Associate Pool Published Reports since December 2018

Date	Title	Description
28/02/2019	Public sector apprenticeship target reporting: research brief	This research brief summarises responses from public sector bodies to the apprenticeship target and future plans for delivery.

Further information

If you would like any further information about the Associate Pool or the projects included in this summary please email us on: associate.pool@education.gov.uk



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