



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Closing the gap: test and learn

Technical annex B: provider perspectives

Winter 2016

Contents

1	Intervention provider perspectives	3
	1stClass@Number	3
	Growth Mindsets	6
	Numicon Intervention Programme	13
	Research Lesson Study	18
	Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)	26
	Achievement for All response August 2015	36
2	Achievement for All – additional provider report (May 2015)	41
3	Achievement for All – additional provider report (October 2015)	56

1 Intervention provider perspectives

Reflecting the collaborative nature of the project, intervention providers were given the opportunity to contribute their own perspectives through an online survey report. These verbatim reports were taken into account in the overall conclusions of the programme, and in one case with regard to the conducting of additional analyses. The reports are presented as they were supplied, with only minor house style, proofreading and privacy-related modifications.

1stClass@Number	
Name of intervention provider:	Every Child Counts
Qualitative questions	
Please summarise whatever evidence you have that is related to the effect of 1stClass@Number on pupil attainment. This can include a wide range of sources and references.	
Over 45,000 children in years 1 to 11 have been supported by 1stClass@Number in 3,500 schools. They have made an average number age gain of 12 months in only 3.5 months – over three times the expected progress using the Sandwell early numeracy test.	
Please summarise any evidence related to the use of 1stClass@Number on pupil motivation.	
93 per cent of pupils showed more interest and confidence in learning mathematics in class after the intervention, according to surveys of the class teacher.	
Describe the ways that you would expect 1stClass@Number to affect teacher learning and professional development.	
Many teaching assistants reported that the professional development was extremely effective in increasing their confidence and improving their ability to support mathematics in lessons.	
What is your view of the role of research more generally, including action research, and other qualitative research, in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership?	
We believe that involvement in research can have a very positive impact on teaching, learning and leadership.	

1stClass@Number

Has involvement in the RCT changed the ways that you approach decision-making in your organisation? If so, please describe what has happened.

No

What is your view of the value of randomised controlled trials in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership and school improvement?

RCTs are very useful to bring external evaluation to the interventions.

Use this box to tell us anything else you want to say.

Quantitative questions

Fidelity of treatment delivery

These questions ask you to evaluate the fidelity with which you think schools implemented the intervention in the trials. The data will be used to see if there is a relationship between delivery and attainment across the whole intervention group and are in no way judgmental of individual schools, nor will they be used in any way that is not anonymous.

To what extent do you think schools implemented 1stClass@Number consistently according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

1 – Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments: We do not have the information to answer this question.

To what extent do you think schools delivered 1stClass@Number regularly and according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

1 – Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments: We do not have the information to answer this question.

To what extent do you think schools implemented 1stClass@Number to the standard of practice that you think you, the intervention provider, would deliver it?

1 – Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments: We do not have the information to answer this question.

1stClass@Number

Treatment practicality questions

These questions will be used to assess if there is a relationship between the practicality of the intervention and attainment.

In terms of timetabling and staffing, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate 1stClass@Number into their work?

1 – Not practical at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

1stClass@Number has been developed in liaison with schools to ensure that it is straightforward to implement. A senior teacher from each school is trained to manage its effective implementation.

In terms of ease of method and training of staff, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate 1stClass@Number into their work?

1 – Not practical at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

Detailed lesson plans are provided and the extensive training enables teaching assistants to understand them and to develop the subject knowledge to adapt them to pupils' needs.

In terms of classroom resources, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate 1stClass@Number into their work?

1 – Not practical at all 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

All the resources needed to deliver 1stClass@Number are provided with the training.

Growth Mindsets

Name of intervention provider:

Growing Learners, University of Portsmouth

Qualitative questions

Please summarise whatever evidence you have that is related to the effect of Growth Mindsets on pupil attainment. This can include a wide range of sources and references.

A common belief in our society is that people with high ability and self-belief in that ability are likely to embrace the challenges that they tackle in life with high levels of resilience, determination and thus success. However, it is not ability or belief in that ability that predicts resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge and failure (Dweck, 1999); rather it is the individual's belief about the nature of ability (referred to as self-theory of intelligence also known as mindset).

Interventions related to 'mindset' have been rolled out widely in the USA and its effectiveness is well-evidenced. It is based on implicit self-theories of intelligence, which identifies two types of intelligence belief, namely incremental (or growth mindset) and entity (or fixed mindset). Individuals with a growth mindset believe that they can develop their intelligence, while individuals with a fixed mindset believe that their intelligence is innate (i.e. I was born this way/this is what I am).

Importantly, having a growth mindset creates resilience to failure or difficulties in learning. A growth mindset sends a child positive messages about **effort and strategy**, leading pupils to try harder, or to try a different strategy for learning (rather than avoid the task in order to avoid damage to their self-esteem). In comparison, for children with a fixed mindset, failure will send a negative message about **who they are**. This will damage their self-esteem and is likely to lead them to avoid the same task in the future, disrupt it or give up trying at the earliest opportunity in order to avoid this impact to their self-esteem, often characterised by cognitions such as 'if I don't try then I can't be seen to have failed because I'm not clever'.

Dweck has demonstrated that individuals who believe their intelligence is fixed will assume that they have reached their own limit when facing a challenging obstacle, whereas individuals who believe their intelligence or ability can grow and develop will be more likely to persist. The latter leads to a 'mastery orientation' that protects against a helpless orientation. Seligman first identified learned helplessness in 1965 (Seligman, Maier & Geer, 1968) and it is defined as the perception that an obstacle is impossible to overcome. Consequently, it has been argued to be a motivational problem especially in relation to the academic environment. When individuals are helpless, failure undermines them; once it occurs they feel it is out of their control, whereas, individuals who are mastery oriented use failure to motivate themselves; they are resilient to challenge and

Growth Mindsets

failure (Dweck, 1999; 2007).

These differences in learning orientation are reported to be due to the difference in children's meaning systems; failure has different meanings for fixed and growth theorists. For those with a growth mindset effort is seen as a necessity in order to achieve in life (Dweck, 1999). However, fixed theorists believe that high effort indicates low ability and are therefore fearful of being perceived in these terms, avoiding persistent effort, leading them to sabotage long term goals (Dweck, 1999). For those with a fixed mindset failure is attributed not to effort but to their own ability, thus failure is damaging to self-esteem. This is a negative state that can be evaded by avoidance of the task or avoidance of effort in the task if forced to confront it. Thus the individual protects themselves from future failures that can be attributed to their ability (by themselves or others).

Resilience to challenge and failure is a fundamental aspect of success. Licht and Dweck (1984) revealed that when students, with a helpless orientation, were confronted with a confusing passage of a task only 35.6 per cent of students mastered the task compared to 71.9 per cent of mastery orientated children. Diener and Dweck (1978) explored the differences between helpless children and mastery orientated children in fifth and sixth grade (UK years 5 and 6). This study was based on anagrams, the first eight anagrams were possible to solve but the next four anagrams were far too difficult for children of their age. As expected the helpless children attributed their failure to lack of ability and quickly doubted their intelligence when faced with failure. They lost their motivation to perform the task. It is clear that having a helpless orientation to learning can hinder an individual's ability to work to their full potential.

Blackwell, Trzesniewski and Dweck (2007) followed American school children as they made the transition to seventh grade (equivalent to year 8 in England) and found that pupils with an existing growth mindset outperformed those with a fixed mindset in maths and that, despite all pupils entering the seventh grade with similar past attainment, this gap continued to grow over the two-year period of the study.

In another study, Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht (2003) demonstrate that pupils who received growth mindset training showed significant increases in their mathematics and verbal test scores (compared to a control group). Additionally, the girls in the growth mindset group not only improved their attainment but also narrowed the gender gap in mathematics. Although this may suggest that growth mindset work is more effective with girls than boys, this isn't the case. This simply demonstrates that in relation to mathematics, the boys had less of an issue with fixed mindset and didn't have as far to move as the girls did. In other words, the transformation was smaller for boys because they were already positive and performing in this area.

Growth Mindsets

Furthermore, mindset has been shown to have a predictive value (of academic performance) greater than that of intelligence (as measured by IQ) (Kornilova, Kornilov & Chamakova, 2009). Even beyond school and into the workplace research findings demonstrate that the more growth minded a manager was, the better they were at recognising good and bad performance and the more highly rated they were as managers (Heslin, Latham, VandeWalle, 2005). Finally Hong, Chiu, Dweck, Lin, and Wan (1999) revealed that differential patterns of response for incremental and entity theorists measured in childhood remain in young adults.

Finally, in another US study, an experiment was performed to test a method of helping students resist responses to stereotypes about ability and ethnicity (Aronson, Fried and Good, 2001). Specifically, students in the experimental condition of the experiment were encouraged to see intelligence – the object of the stereotype – as a malleable rather than fixed capacity. This growth mindset was predicted to make students' performances less vulnerable to stereotype threat and help them maintain their psychological engagement with academics, both of which could help boost their college grades. Results were consistent with predictions. The African American students encouraged to view intelligence as malleable reported greater enjoyment of the academic process, greater academic engagement, and obtained higher grade point averages than their counterparts in two control groups. These results are extremely promising. This supports the value of such interventions in that growth mindsets can be developed. In addition the evidence presented suggests that these changes can be sustained without further intervention, can have long-term impacts on achievement and can close gender and ethnicity gaps in achievement.

In summary, many years of research (pioneered by the American psychologist, Carol Dweck and her colleagues) has shown that:

- Children with a growth mindset do better at school.
- Children can be taught a growth mindset.
- Changes in mindset as a result of intervention have been maintained in up to eight weeks after intervention (no research has tested the longevity of change beyond this period).
- Teaching a growth mindset raises motivation and achievement, especially in traditionally difficult subjects (eg mathematics) and across difficult school transitions.
- These impacts on attainment occur as positive upward spirals via enhanced resilience to challenging tasks that is maintained even when failure is encountered,

Growth Mindsets

thus changes in mindset would be expected to last beyond eight weeks.

- Different patterns in mindset (naturally occurring) in childhood persist into adulthood and have an impact beyond educational attainment. Thus changes in mindset due to intervention should also last into adulthood.

There is no work yet exploring the impact of mindset interventions delivered via teacher training.

Please summarise any evidence related to the use of Growth Mindsets on pupil motivation.

As above.

Describe the ways that you would expect Growth Mindsets to affect teacher learning and professional development.

We would expect teachers to: adapt their language around ability to focus on learning process, the product/outcome, the strategy and effort instead of ability or intelligence; set higher expectations for all pupils, and reconsider reward systems and ability setting. We would expect to see them setting more challenging work for pupils and allowing more space for practice, supported challenge and learning through failure, embracing challenge and failure as learning opportunities enabling learners to explore the strategies that work for them.

What is your view of the role of research more generally, including action research, and other qualitative research, in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership?

Any type of research is of use within a school (even if it does not reach the empirical standards required for peer reviewed publication) to stimulate reflection and discussion, provided it is not used for purposes beyond this. Change in policy, practice or curriculum would be better limited to research findings that have undergone scrutiny regarding the quality of data, analysis and interpretation. To achieve this, teachers without social science research training will need guidance and support, or additional training.

Has involvement in the RCT changed the ways that you approach decision-making in your organisation? If so, please describe what has happened.

We further developed our intervention based on what we learned from the teachers that we worked with.

What is your view of the value of randomised controlled trials in developing teaching and

Growth Mindsets

learning, and/or in school leadership and school improvement?

In order for it to be of value, teachers need to be trained to deliver interventions so that the intervention can exist beyond the research/intervention team's involvement with a school. However, this is challenging in terms of fidelity – as below. Thus initial RCTs could be smaller scale and delivered by a consistent intervention team (normally those that developed the intervention) to ensure fidelity. Should the intervention demonstrate efficacy, a larger scale feasibility trial can follow. In this case the RCT, run across a larger number of schools and delivered by teachers trained in the intervention, can ascertain the scalability of the intervention.

Use this box to tell us anything else you want to say.

RCTs are incredibly useful but very difficult to manage in an applied setting. Here, I am concerned about the contamination of the control schools/pupils. Teachers have been asked to deliver the intervention to free school meals (FSM) eligible pupils only. However, we know from our training sessions with teachers that they are in fact planning to deliver to all their pupils – thus there is no real pupil control. In addition control schools communicated to us during their training (as part of a waiting control group) that they had become excited about mindset work and began their work on this in school early, before their main training on the intervention - thus many control schools were not without existing mindset intervention. Overall, we are concerned that there is no genuine control group in this RCT.

Quantitative questions

Fidelity of treatment delivery

These questions ask you to evaluate the fidelity with which you think schools implemented the intervention in the trials. The data will be used to see if there is a relationship between delivery and attainment across the whole intervention group and are in no way judgemental of individual schools, nor will they be used in any way that is not anonymous.

To what extent do you think schools implemented growth mindsets consistently according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

1 – Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

Some schools deliver exactly as trained; others due to a myriad of constraints on their time have attended the intervention training but not been able to fully implement the

Growth Mindsets

intervention after attending training.

To what extent do you think schools delivered growth mindsets regularly and according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

1 – Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

As above

To what extent do you think schools implemented growth mindsets to the standard of practice that you think you, the intervention provider, would deliver it?

1 – Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

As above, very mixed. Thus there should be some school-level variable in the final analysis.

Treatment practicality questions

These questions will be used to assess if there is a relationship between the practicality of the intervention and attainment.

In terms of timetabling and staffing, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate growth mindsets into their work?

Not practical at all - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

It has been designed to be flexible and low-impact in terms of time for delivery and requires no additional planning since all lesson plans and learning materials are provided.

In terms of ease of method and training of staff, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate growth mindsets into their work?

Not practical at all - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

The training has a few clear messages that are communicated to teachers that are easy to translate into classroom practice (especially with the lesson plans and materials

Growth Mindsets

provided). Changing school culture is also possible but much more complex and would be part of a longer term programme in schools, as well as buy in from the school leadership team.

In terms of classroom resources, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate growth mindsets into their work?

Not practical at all - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

No other resources needed as they are all provided as standalone lessons.

Numicon Intervention Programme

Name of intervention provider:

Numicon Intervention Programme –
Oxford University Press

Qualitative questions

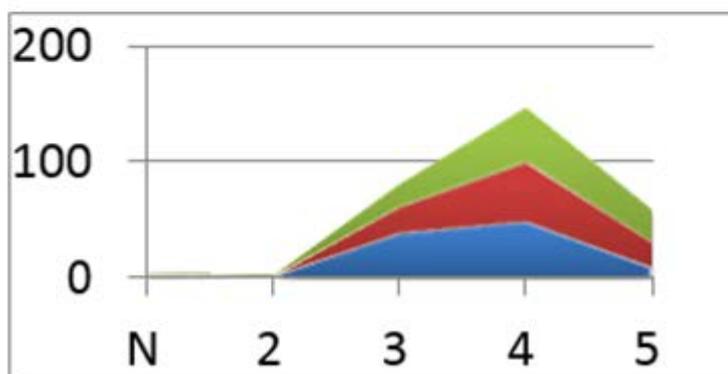
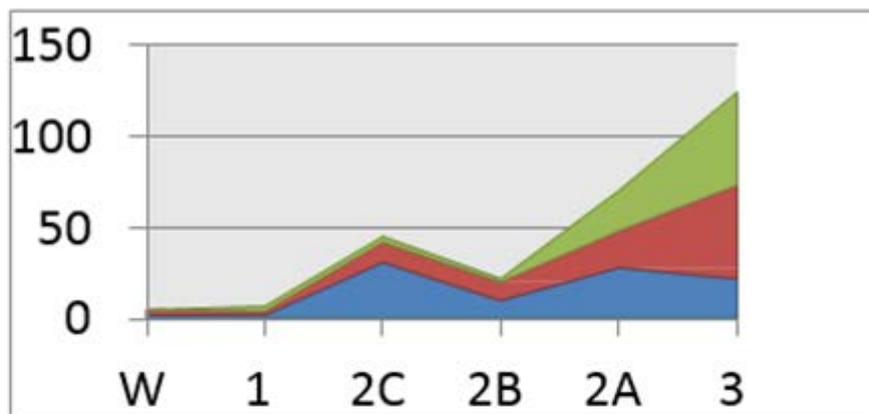
Please summarise whatever evidence you have that is related to the effect of numicon intervention programme on pupil attainment. This can include a wide range of sources and references.

NIP has a proven positive effect on pupil attainment. Case studies are summarised here from a range of sources.

http://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/oxed/primary/maths/numicon/k51355_numicon_impact_study_web.pdf?region=uk

Also, evidence of impact over time:

Peacehaven Infants School key stage (KS)1 SATs results over 3 years – 47 per cent increase in students achieving level 3 at KS1 having used Numicon for quality first teaching, support and intervention.



72 per cent increase in students achieving level 5 at KS2 having used Numicon in KS1

Numicon Intervention Programme

Please summarise any evidence related to the use of numicon intervention programme on pupil motivation.

Part of the NIP data collection is to gain the child's view of themselves as a learner of mathematics and how they feel about the subject prior to the intervention beginning and then again on exit from the programme. Schools report that the NIP approach and the intervention programme both have a considerable impact on pupil motivation. Some of the current closing the gap: test and learn programme schools have reported informally:

'Both TAs, that have delivered the programme, are delighted with the children's growth in confidence.'

'... the children's increased confidence is evident – looking forward to sessions, asking to use it in the classroom for maths tasks etc. I know this is all qualitative but nevertheless the gains are visibly evident.'

Describe the ways that you would expect the numicon intervention programme to affect teacher learning and professional development.

Teacher learning is the key focus for NIP professional development and of the associated teaching resources. The teaching resources focus on the teacher's own awareness and practical application of mathematical concepts, subject knowledge and pedagogical approaches. This is discussed in depth and practically addressed through professional development offered to schools. With sustained focus and support teacher learning can be enriched and developed over time, which has a greater impact on the transformation in teacher practice.

For schools that book training packages from NIP programme, part of this work is with subject leaders or the senior leadership team to ensure the NIP approach and resources are embedded in the teacher's mathematical teaching and learning for all children.

What is your view of the role of research more generally, including action research, and other qualitative research, in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership?

Research is key to continued development and learning. Action research in particular can be a powerful tool in developing policy, practice and pedagogy. Research based in the education establishment itself is more focused and relevant to practitioners and school leadership as it is within the context of the environment and individuals who then have the power to change and improve, based on their own data and findings.

Has involvement in the RCT changed the ways that you approach decision-making in

Please summarise any evidence related to the use of numicon intervention programme on pupil motivation.
your organisation? If so please describe what has happened.
Yes, the project has made us acutely aware of the importance of information sharing and communication, also clarity of a project and the criteria within it.
What is your view of the value of randomised controlled trials in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership and school improvement?
Randomised controlled trials can, and do, have a positive impact on developing teaching and learning and school leadership / school improvement. However, the criteria for randomised controlled groups may be at odds with the criteria of programmes, resources or intervention programmes trialled within the research study; for example the NIP is designed for children in year 2 working below age-related expectation. If a child cannot answer the first question in the diagnostic assessment then testing is suspended as the intervention is deemed inappropriate. Randomised selection would not take this into account. Control groups also need to be carefully set up as using a different year group or group of vastly differing ability may not allow for relevant comparisons to be made.
Use this box to tell us anything else you want to say.
Quantitative questions
Fidelity of treatment delivery
These questions ask you to evaluate the fidelity with which you think schools implemented the intervention in the trials. The data will be used to see if there is a relationship between delivery and attainment across the whole intervention group and are in no way judgemental of individual schools, nor will they be used in any way that is not anonymous.
To what extent do you think schools implemented numicon intervention programme consistently according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?
Never – 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> – Always
Comments:
Once the schools left our training and we had been able to fully explain the programme they had signed up to and the conditions that needed to be met we understand that many differing models of intervention delivery were made, therefore no comparison

Please summarise any evidence related to the use of numicon intervention programme on pupil motivation.
across those schools taking part can be made.
To what extent do you think schools delivered numicon intervention programme regularly and according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?
Never – 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> – Always
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Most schools managed to deliver the appropriate number of intervention lessons. Although the time period was between 6 and 18 weeks so therefore no comparable data between schools.</p>
To what extent do you think schools implemented numicon intervention programme to the standard of practice that you think you, the intervention provider, would deliver it?
Never – 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> – Always
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Due to problems with schools not running appropriate, consistent and high quality intervention, nor successfully training within their own settings, we do not believe that many schools ran the NIP to the standard we would expect. This feedback is also apparent in over 50 per cent of the responses we received from our own Survey Monkey report.</p> <p>Much of this is due to the time lapse between initial testing, beginning the intervention lessons and the re-testing – some of which were months, not weeks. There is no consistency in the time lapse of schools between the progress in maths (PiM) and the NIP programme.</p>
Treatment practicality questions
These questions will be used to assess if there is a relationship between the practicality of the intervention and attainment.
In terms of timetabling and staffing, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate numicon Intervention Programme into their work?
Not practical at all – 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> – Completely practical
Comments:

Please summarise any evidence related to the use of numicon intervention programme on pupil motivation.

The NIP approach and resources were written and designed to be used in whole class teaching. The resources, approach and practical application can be used across all ages and abilities and this is where success is greatest.

In terms of ease of method and training of staff, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate numicon intervention programme into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

The NIP has been revised and published as an online resource in February 2015. This was not during the course of training for this research project and any limitations that schools found in using the teaching guides for planning intervention lessons have been addressed. The revised suite of resources is compiled to enable each school to extract specific lessons according to the diagnostic; and these are also linked and laid out in conjunction / matching the core teaching resources for NIP.

In terms of classroom resources, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate numicon intervention programme into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical x

Comments:

NIP is designed to be a whole class suite of resources including practical apparatus, for children to be taught whole class, and through any intervention, with an approach that encapsulates a mastery of teaching and learning, progressive based on mathematical concepts, linked to our national curricula and easily integrated into a school curricula, fully supported with long, medium and short term planning, interwoven assessment opportunities, tracking and lesson design that encourages teachers to facilitate learning for all pupils at a similar pace, from individual starting posts, which can practically be integrated.

Research Lesson Study

Name of intervention provider:

CUREE

Qualitative questions

Please summarise whatever evidence you have that is related to the effect of research lesson (RLS) study on pupil attainment. This can include a wide range of sources and references.

According to the data captured via the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education (CUREE) surveys asking participating schools to report on various areas of impact based on the evidence they said:

For both reading and writing, the majority of the schools (three quarters or more) that carried out the intervention and responded to the survey (response rate in year 2 was around 55 per cent) reported positive impact of the intervention. Around a quarter of respondents reported that the impact was significant. A small minority (one school in both cases) reported that there was no impact on their pupils' reading or writing respectively.

Around two thirds of schools noted improvements in their pupils' vocabulary and grammar. A small proportion reported significant impact and a similar group reported no impact on their pupils' vocabulary or grammar.

Around half of the schools who reported to us noted improvements in (secondary) subject knowledge; just under a quarter thought the impact was significant and a similar proportion reported that there was no impact.

NB: None of the schools that reported 'no impact' on particular aspects of literacy had these areas as the focus of their RLS.

'The RLS had a positive impact on both teaching practice and the outcomes for the vulnerable learners.'

'In both groups there was a... significant positive impact on the lower [ability students].'

Please summarise any evidence related to the use of research lesson study on pupil motivation.

75 per cent of those surveyed by CUREE saw a positive impact of RLS on pupil engagement and motivation; half of them said the impact was significant.

One member of staff noted: 'Pupil behaviour showed more focused attention

Research Lesson Study

and longer engagement.’

Another school reported:

‘...level of engagement in comprehension activities of the whole class increased as a result of using these graphic organisers. This was further supported by the positive feedback we gained from the pupils involved (sample questionnaires are available to support this). It was perhaps most obvious with our pupil premium pupils, whose work and questionnaires clearly reflected increased levels of motivation.’

Describe the ways that you would expect research lesson study to affect teacher learning and professional development.

Some of the areas, where participating practitioners noticed learning and positive changes, included improvements in:

- in-depth understanding of their pupils’ barriers to learning, both related to literacy and wider
- clarity about literacy and skills that comprise it, strategies for developing writing skills and comprehension in particular
- effective use of group work
- effective feedback and in particular seeking feedback from pupils and supporting them to offer ‘valuable’ feedback to each other
- better understanding of progression in learning and sequencing learning activities appropriately.

Specific comments included:

‘Literacy focus in all lessons has changed. Found the whole process really valuable and we are going to use it both within the college and in my teaching school role.’

‘We found the process of working together a positive experience and professionally rewarding. One teacher remarked that in his 15 years at the school it is the first time he has observed another member of staff teach.’

What is your view of the role of research more generally, including action research, and other qualitative research, in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school

Research Lesson Study

leadership?

We are strongly in favour of this.

Has involvement in the RCT changed the ways that you approach decision-making in your organisation? If so please describe what has happened.

We are involved in a number of these. This experience has increased our understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of RCTs as a methodology and it is helping us design support for future research and development (R&D) programmes using a broader canvas of methodologies.

What is your view of the value of randomised controlled trials in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership and school improvement?

It has an important part to play alongside other methodologies and this programme has been helpful in introducing a significant number of schools to much deeper diagnostic assessments with genuine diagnostic power.

Use this box to tell us anything else you want to say.

The use of teaching school alliance (TSA)-based R&D leads has been important in achieving a critical mass of interest / engagement but it has also created some very extended lines of communication which have not always worked well. Schools were very noticeably more stressed by changes in the system, particularly assessment in year 2 and R&D leads participating in training told us it had been much harder to secure participation in any intervention.

Quantitative questions

Fidelity of treatment delivery

These questions ask you to evaluate the fidelity with which you think schools implemented the intervention in the trials. The data will be used to see if there is a relationship between delivery and attainment across the whole intervention group and are in no way judgemental of individual schools, nor will they be used in any way that is not anonymous.

To what extent do you think schools implemented research lesson study consistently according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

Never – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Research Lesson Study

It is challenging to provide a meaningful average as many schools implemented the intervention precisely as designed, some made adaptations for context or in response to pragmatic challenges and a minority of three schools chose to make such significant alterations that what they did could not be described as RLS (see list below); others take various positions in between the two extremes.

The training is designed to enable us, as providers, to monitor the fidelity and quality of the implementation during the initial stages of the intervention delivery. So, for example, all participating schools are required to bring the evidence of them having planned the delivery of the intervention in accordance with its design to day 2 of the training.

During training day 2 and subsequent liaison with the participating schools, their completed key tools (such as close case analysis document and the nested diagram of their plans for working with the target pupils) were checked for:

- all elements/stages of RLS being present
- collaborative approach (RLS cannot be done by a single colleague)
- literacy focus
- literacy strategies being evidence based
- tight focus on target pupils within RLS
- appropriate number of sessions being planned to deliver.

Whilst scaffolded via tools and training, appropriate implementation of the intervention is beyond our control. We know from evidence submitted to us that there were schools that did not implement the approach as designed. Most commonly:

- colleagues were unable to carry out RLS as a **collective** practice development experience (which is its fundamental feature)
- they did not carry out all elements of RLS (eg the 'observation' element did not happen)
- colleagues did not focus their work on literacy or target pupils, which are key features of RLS.

NB: the lists below are not exhaustive but are based on the evidence we were able to secure from the participating schools; over half of the schools that have completed the intervention submitted the required evidence to us. You may have responses from other

Research Lesson Study

schools.

School A

Only involved in one lesson study cycle. (The recommended number was three and minimum two.)

School B

Colleagues involved met infrequently (once a month or less often) throughout each lesson cycle to plan and discuss notes / evidence.

School C

The length of the intervention was insufficient: the school ran RLS for less than four weeks.

School D

The intervention started very late due to staffing and other reasons. Colleagues involved only had brief staff room / corridor conversations every 2–3 weeks to plan and discuss notes / evidence during each lesson study cycle. Colleagues involved felt they did not have time to debrief their experience throughout the intervention, and were not able to observe lessons (neither live nor via video).

School E

The intervention started very late due to staffing and other reasons.

The RLS team also changed during the training and intervention period (meaning untrained colleagues delivered the intervention).

They did not focus their RLS on literacy.

School F

Colleagues involved met infrequently (once a month or less often) throughout each lesson cycle to plan and discuss notes/evidence.

Colleagues were unable to plan the lessons together.

To what extent do you think schools delivered research lesson study regularly and according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

Research Lesson Study

Never – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always ¹see below

Whilst overall the schools appeared to deliver sessions frequently and for a substantial period of time, several schools delivered the interventions for a shorter period than recommended or less frequently than advised. See previous question for detailed information.

¹For the first group of schools we would assess this as six.

¹For those where we have direct evidence about problems with intensity / regularity we would estimate this as four.

NB: we did not have evidence from all the participating schools; some evidence (rarely a comprehensive set) was submitted by around half of the participating schools.

To what extent do you think schools implemented research lesson study to the standard of practice that you think you, the intervention provider, would deliver it?

Never – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

This is not a question that can be averaged in this way. Where we have detailed evidence of implementation from schools (such as planning notes, new learning materials being developed, pupils' work, etc) these suggest good standard of practice when delivering RLS but has been noted in other schools, there is strong evidence that it was not at all implemented with fidelity. A correct response to our question would tick all boxes – for different schools. Our intuitive estimate given above indicates that we think around two thirds of the schools delivered the intervention to an acceptable standard of practice.

Treatment practicality questions

These questions will be used to assess if there is a relationship between the practicality of the intervention and attainment.

In terms of timetabling and staffing, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate research lesson study into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely Practical

Comments:

RLS is widely known to be a resource intensive intervention as it requires three

Research Lesson Study

colleagues' time for planning, teaching, observing and debriefing lessons. To ensure it is appropriately delivered and embedded, RLS has an element of leadership support, and monitoring built into it. Practitioners reported that in many cases RLS champions did help with logistics, further development and practicalities (eg arranging time and space for the team to do RLS). However there were instances when schools reported challenges in this respect, for example:

'The process was very time-intensive. As a team, we really struggled to find time to meet, plan and evaluate the research lessons. Furthermore, it was not always possible for two colleagues to observe the research lesson, due to pressures on the timetable.'

Aware of the potential demands on colleagues carrying out RLS (particularly if little leadership support was in place) CUREE strongly advised schools throughout the training to use video rather than live observations and many of them found this to be a significantly easier approach to manage.

70 per cent of those surveyed said they were planning to use RLS again next year. These schools noted how they had invested in video technology for their classrooms, or were going to run in-house RLS sessions to help support staff to carry out action research.

In terms of ease of method and training of staff, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate Research Lesson Study into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely Practical

Comments:

We know from evidence collected that most schools contributing evidence integrated RLS into their work by continuing to deliver the intervention and extending it to classes and subject areas not initially involved in the trial. For example, according to the CUREE survey of the participating schools, around three quarters of the respondents were planning to use RLS next academic year. Specific comments included:

'We will run our own in house RLS sessions to encourage and provide guidance on how to carry out action research.'

In terms of classroom resources, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate Research Lesson Study into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely Practical

Research Lesson Study

Comments:

RLS is a professional development intervention equipping practitioners with skills to develop their practice, including learning resources with resources provided to scaffold this in relation to literacy and to provide structure for, for example, observation and debriefing. Practitioners design their own learning materials collaboratively in their triads rather than these being offered to them as part of the intervention. In this respect there are relatively few issues with integrating RLS into existing work, providing existing approaches to lesson planning are relatively robust.

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

Name of intervention provider:

CUREE

Qualitative questions

Please summarise whatever evidence you have related to the effect of RTI: Breakthroughs in Literacy on pupil attainment. This can include a wide range of sources and references.

According to the data captured via CUREE surveys asking participating schools to report on various areas of impact based on the evidence they said:

- All schools who responded (response rate around 30 per cent in both years) noted positive impact of the intervention on reading in general and comprehension in particular. Around three quarters reported the impact being significant for reading and three quarters for comprehension. The pattern was virtually identical in years 1 and 2.
- Schools that chose to focus on phonics all noted positive impact, with it being significant in approximately a third of instances.
- The picture was similar for grammar. There was, however, a slight difference between the two cohorts: a higher proportion (around half) of the schools involved in year 1 thought impact on their pupils' grammar was significant. There was also a very small proportion of those who were unsure.
- In year 2, the majority of those who focused on fluency and vocabulary saw positive impact; around two thirds of them reported it as significant. In year 1, the numbers of those who reported significant impact on pupils' vocabulary were lower (around a quarter).
- In terms of writing, the majority of those who focused on it saw positive impact on pupils' ability to construct paragraphs and texts. Significant impact was noted by around a third of schools in year 1 and three quarters in year 2.
- Impact on spelling was identified as minor in both years.

Several schools carried out an analysis of their quantitative data and qualitative evidence and wrote it up as reports or presentations. Examples included:

'It is clear from the data (based on teacher assessed national curriculum levels) that the research has had a positive impact on attainment in English, as students in the intervention group have made more sublevels of progress than those in the control group. The average sublevel progress made is four

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

times the amount and although a number of the students involved have struggled to attain their end-of-year target they have made positive progress. Evidence also suggests that these interventions have had a positive impact on progress across the curriculum. For example, in geography, on average students in the intervention group achieved four sublevels of progress and those in the control group achieved two sublevels of progress.'

'[Evidence] showed... the majority of learners improving significantly and many closing the gap with their peers in mainstream lessons.'

Please summarise any evidence related to the use of RTI: Breakthroughs in Literacy on pupil motivation.

In years 1 and 2, the majority of those surveyed by CUREE saw a positive impact of RTI: Breakthroughs in Literacy on pupil engagement and motivation. In year 1 around half of the schools reported the level of impact as significant; in year 2 this rose to at least three quarters. There was, however, one school which noticed no impact of the intervention on pupil motivation.

Describe the ways that you would expect RTI: Breakthroughs in Literacy to affect teacher learning and professional development.

Some of the areas where participating practitioners noticed learning and positive changes included improvements in:

- clarity about literacy and skills that comprise it
- effective use of group work and pupil peer learning strategies
- challenging pupils appropriately
- literacy interventions they can select from, based on the needs of their pupils
- use of assessment, evaluation and monitoring in interventions.

Specific comments included:

'We now understand the elements of reading.'

'Fuller recognition of peer to peer tutoring. Used this approach in other lessons.'

'The templates for evaluating and monitoring interventions are fabulous – will

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

be using that going into next year.'

What is your view of the role of research more generally, including action research and other qualitative research, in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership?

We are strongly in favour of this.

Has involvement in the RCT changed the ways that you approach decision-making in your organisation? If so please describe what has happened.

We are involved in a number of these. This experience has increased our understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of RCTs as a methodology and it is helping us design support for future R&D programmes using a broader canvas of methodologies.

What is your view of the value of randomised controlled trials in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership and school improvement?

It has an important part to play alongside other methodologies and this programme has been helpful in introducing a significant number of schools to much deeper diagnostic assessments with genuine diagnostic power.

Use this box to tell us anything else you want to say.

The use of TSA-based R&D leads has been important in achieving a critical mass of interest / engagement but has also created some very extended lines of communication which have not always worked well. Schools were very noticeably more stressed by changes in the system, particularly assessment in year 2, and R&D leads participating in training told us it had been much harder to secure participation in any intervention.

Quantitative questions

Fidelity of treatment delivery

These questions ask you to evaluate the fidelity with which you think schools implemented the intervention in the trials. The data will be used to see if there is a relationship between delivery and attainment across the whole intervention group and are in no way judgemental of individual schools, nor will they be used in any way that is not anonymous.

To what extent do you think schools implemented RTI: Breakthroughs in Literacy consistently according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

Never – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

It is impossible to provide a meaningful average as many schools implemented the intervention precisely as designed, a small minority did not and others took various positions in between the two extremes. This diversity and range means that it is important to investigate cases of possible violations of intervention fidelity before interpreting the results, on a case by case basis, rather than via judgements being made either way for the entire cohort of schools.

The training is designed to enable us, as providers, to monitor the fidelity and quality of the implementation during the initial stages of the intervention delivery. So, for example, all participating schools are required to bring the evidence of them having planned the delivery of the intervention in accordance with its design to day 2 of the training.

Both for years 1 and 2 of delivering RTI: breakthroughs in literacy, during training day 2 and subsequent liaison with the participating schools, their completed key tools (such as close case analysis document and the nested diagram of their plans for working with the target pupils) were checked for:

- the presence of the tiered approach to ensure holistic and comprehensive nature of the intervention
- clarity and appropriateness of the intervention foci for individual pupils and their groups
- selection of strategies to be used at different levels to ensure they are evidence-based
- planned frequency of sessions at different levels

Whilst scaffolded via tools and training, appropriate implementation of the intervention is beyond our control. We know from evidence submitted to us in the early stages of implementation that in both years there were schools that did not implement the approach as designed. Most commonly, they did not implement the tiered aspect of the intervention. This is a serious problem because if the interventions are only used in tier 1, ie in whole class settings, teachers may be offering what is in effect remedial teaching to whole classes. We know, and reported to you, examples of this in year 1 and so we warned schools explicitly about this in year 2. The other main fidelity challenge visible in the early, monitored stages occurred where schools were unable to deliver the intervention long enough and sufficiently frequently (see below). Both problems emerged

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

at various stages across the interventions. So the evidence below is based both on early monitoring and our later survey.

NB: the lists below are not exhaustive but are based on the evidence we were able to secure from the participating schools; less than half of the schools submitted the required evidence to us. You may have responses from other schools.

Year 1

School G

The intensity of the intervention may have been insufficient (target pupils were involved in only one lesson per week), no tiered approach to intervention delivery (focus was on whole class – although the school believed that their close case analysis justified this).

School H

Planned for tiered approach using the tools, but reported lack of intensity and some of tier 2/3 work not happening due to staff illness.

School I

No tiered approach to intervention delivery (focus on whole class).

RTI team changed between the training and intervention period so an untrained supply teacher attempted to deliver RTI in one of the classes using the materials supplied.

School J

No tiered approach: chose 12 pupils across 2 classes, mainly worked in small groups for 50 minutes. No holistic approach to tackling literacy gaps: focus on comprehension only.

School K

No tiered approach: intervention carried out in a withdrawal group of 18 struggling pupils; intensity of sessions insufficient.

The school commented:

‘Post-test was much harder to do than the pre-test – very hard for the focus pupils. Pupils found it too hard and tried to read everything properly in the post-test which slowed them down; in the pre-test they just clicked randomly and got some things right.’

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

School L

One of the trial teachers switched between classes half-way through the intervention period, so neither experienced it for a sufficiently long period of time.

The second teacher did not use the approach or any of the tools (developed to ensure implementation fidelity) provided.

Year 2

School M

No tiered approach to intervention (focus on small groups, tier 2, only). An exclusive focus on tier 2 is less problematic than an exclusive focus on tier 1 because it is targeted.

School N

The intervention started very late because of staffing and other problems. One of the teachers involved was unable to attend all of the training sessions.

School O

No tiered approach to intervention (focus on whole class). Ran RTI with both intervention and control pupils in their class. No holistic approach to tackling literacy gaps: focused on comprehension only.

School P

The RTI champion was unable to attend all the training sessions. The intervention was started very late because of staffing and other reasons. Ran RTI with both intervention and control pupils in their class.

School Q

Didn't do any tier 3 work (1:1) which may not be an issue if there was plenty of targeted tier 2 work.

School R

The length of the intervention was potentially insufficient: the school only ran RTI for just over five weeks.

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

School S

The intervention started very late because of staffing and other problems. The length of the intervention was potentially insufficient: the school only ran RTI for just over five weeks.

School T

Didn't do any tier 3 work (1:1) which may not be an issue if there was plenty of targeted tier 2 work.

Most importantly, changes to the randomisation process in year 2 resulted in additional challenges to RTI implementation by the schools.

According to the evidence collected during the initial training days, the participating teachers from 15 schools were concerned because they worked with both intervention and control pupils (sometimes these were in the same class) or they did not know about who their target pupils were.

In all cases schools were advised to urgently contact CfBT Education Trust (CfBT)/National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) but we have no information about whether all potential pollution issues were resolved.

Based on the analysis of the questionnaires submitted to us by approximately a third of the participating schools, three schools definitely had control and intervention pupils in classes being offered tier 1 (whole-class) interventions.

The situation with the remainder is unclear and needs investigating before interpreting the results, particularly in those cases where the differences between the target and control pupils are small and tier 1 interventions were chosen on the basis of close case analysis.

If we had to make an estimate that averages such dissimilar cases we might estimate this as at most a 4 – largely because of how little we know about what happened to the significant queries about randomisation.

To what extent do you think schools delivered RTI: breakthroughs in literacy regularly and according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

Never – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

Whilst overall the schools appeared to deliver sessions frequently and for a substantial period of time, several schools in both years 1 and 2 delivered the interventions for a shorter period than recommended or less frequently than advised. See previous question for detailed information.

For the first group of schools we would assess this as 6. For those where we have direct evidence about problems with intensity/regularity we would estimate this as 5.

NB: we did not have evidence from all the participating schools; some evidence (rarely a comprehensive set) was submitted by less than half of the participating schools.

To what extent do you think schools implemented RTI: breakthroughs in literacy to the standard of practice that you think you, the intervention provider, would deliver it?

Never – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

This is not a question that can be averaged in this way. Where we have detailed evidence of implementation from schools (such as planning notes, new learning materials being developed, pupils' work, etc) these suggest a good standard of practice when delivering RTI: Breakthroughs in Literacy. But as has been noted, in other schools there is strong evidence that it was not at all implemented with fidelity. A correct response to our question would tick all boxes – for different schools. An intuitive estimate would suggest that perhaps half the schools in year 1 and two thirds in year 2 implemented RTI: Breakthrough in Literacy as we would deliver it – although we still have concerns about cross-contamination in small schools where control and intervention pupils were being taught tier 1 RTI: Breakthroughs in Literacy interventions together in the same class.

Treatment practicality questions

These questions will be used to assess if there is a relationship between the practicality of the intervention and attainment.

In terms of timetabling and staffing, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate RTI: breakthroughs in literacy into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

RTI is a relatively complex intervention in organisational terms, reflecting the complexity

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

of holistic literacy skills development and needs of the pupils it targets. To ensure it is appropriately delivered and embedded, RTI: breakthroughs in literacy has an element of leadership support and training built into it. RTI champions attend the training alongside classroom practitioners and then support them in making it work in their schools. This proved to be an effective approach. In the minority of schools where, for internal reasons, champions are unable to fulfil their role as defined within RTI: breakthroughs in literacy, classroom practitioners can struggle to deliver the intervention in its entirety.

In terms of ease of method and training of staff, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate RTI: breakthroughs in literacy into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 x 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

We know from evidence collected over two years that most schools that take part in the training integrate RTI: breakthroughs in literacy into their work by continuing to deliver the intervention and extending it to classes and subjects areas not initially involved in the trial. For example, according to the CUREE survey of the participating schools (response rate approx 30 per cent in both years), around three quarters of the participating schools were planning to use RTI: breakthroughs in literacy next academic year and the remainder were planning to use some of its elements. Specific comments included:

‘I would like to run this again this year as a short-term intensive intervention but get more departments involved... The reading comprehension whole class activities worked very well so we’ll keep these along with the guided reading idea. I am meeting with the senior leadership team (SLT) member in charge of pupil premium and closing the gap in the school and the head to see if, in light of the changes to special educational needs (SEN), if we have capacity to complete more intensive 1:1 and small group work.’

‘[We will be] rolling out a scheme of work next year embedding tools within mainstream curriculum [and] staff training to develop and use more home/school packs’

‘We will use some RTI again when we can look at another class for six weeks.’

‘We will use the strategies in other groups.’

‘We are going to use the idea with lower sets in KS3 English.’

Schools were embedding and integrating RTI: breakthroughs in literacy into their

Response to Intervention: breakthroughs in literacy (RTI)

curriculum because of the structure of the training and resources and the extent to which the intervention impacted on pupils' literacy skills rather than ease of method and training. Other common factors behind schools embedding RTI: breakthroughs in literacy include:

- the intervention's ability to pull together and build on, as well as sufficiently extend and deepen, schools' existing literacy work
- it being used as a successful parental engagement strategy.

In terms of classroom resources, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate RTI: breakthroughs in literacy into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

According to the evidence we have, all participating schools were planning to use some or all of the RTI: breakthroughs in literacy materials. They valued the quality of materials and found these easy to use in their practice. We always encourage the schools we train to make appropriate contextualisation of materials to ensure the intervention builds on and takes account of existing work and is fully tailored to pupil needs.

Achievement for All response August 2015

Name of intervention provider:

Achievement for All

Qualitative questions

Please summarise whatever evidence you have that is related to the effect of Achievement for All on pupil attainment. This can include a wide range of sources and references.

We have impact data that shows average point score (APS) progress for target cohort pupils in reading, writing and mathematics (see appendix A). Our data shows that target cohort pupils in the participant schools made:

- 5.0 APS progress annually in reading
- 4.9 APS progress annually in writing
- 4.8 APS progress annually in mathematics

The information in these tables also shows data by key stage and that 44 per cent of the pupils were those on FSM.

We also have impact data that shows APS progress data (see appendix B) for target cohort pupils was greater when compared with:

- All pupils nationally at key stage 2 and key stages 3 and 4
- All pupils vulnerable to underachievement at key stage 2 and key stages 3 and 4

Please summarise any evidence related to the use of Achievement for All on pupil motivation.

We do not collect this information specifically but our programme is designed to improve the access, aspiration and achievement of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. A key part of this includes working with schools to raise the motivation of these young people. The impact is evidenced in the improvement in their attendance, reading, writing and mathematics. Independent research by PwC to be published in September 2015 shows an increase in both teacher and parent confidence and perception across aspiration and pupil engagement and wider outcomes and opportunities. (We can share the PwC report upon its publication to provide further details of this information in September 2015.)

Describe the ways that you would expect Achievement for All to affect teacher learning and professional development.

Achievement for All response August 2015

The achievement coach working with the school provides appropriate continuous professional development (CPD) and coaching linked to the school's action plan to enable the school to make improvements. A quality framework is followed but the delivery is bespoke and tailored to the needs of the school, staff and pupils.

What is your view of the role of research more generally, including action research, and other qualitative research, in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership?

New, well-funded and well-designed research is always useful if it provides evidence of effective practice that can be used to improve teaching and learning and / or school leadership. We also believe that there is significant merit in capturing 'data' via case studies in our experience to specifically pinpoint learning in a vastly diverse and varied environment such as education settings.

Has involvement in the RCT changed the ways that you approach decision-making in your organisation? If so please describe what has happened.

For projects where a programme or service is being offered free we now consider the implications and in particular the effect on the organisations' engagement if they have not had to pay for it. We also do far more to ensure that schools are aware of the requirements of the programme before they register and embark upon the programme.

In addition we have reviewed and improved the way we monitor coaching delivery and ensure quality assurance processes are in place throughout the entire duration of the programme.

What is your view of the value of randomised controlled trials in developing teaching and learning, and/or in school leadership and school improvement?

RCTs are a useful way of comparing approaches or interventions over time; however, the measures used to assess impact need to be appropriate and if comparing different approaches they need to be broadly similar in their aims. For example, it would be a good way of comparing a range of mathematics interventions or whole school development programmes but not so appropriate for comparing interventions with different aims, objectives and areas of focus.

Use this box to tell us anything else you want to say.

The robust, successful overall/general management of projects of this nature are critical to ensuring that the research accurately assesses the various interventions being measured and compared. There have been some examples of communication issues

Achievement for All response August 2015

that have impacted on this project creating additional variables (eg schools not fully understanding the nature and required commitment and therefore not fully undertaking the intervention that is being measured) which may impact on the ability of Achievement for All (AfA) being able to successfully deliver the schools' programme in the usual planned, quality way it would do and expects to be measured on.

Quantitative questions

Fidelity of treatment delivery

These questions ask you to evaluate the fidelity with which you think schools implemented the intervention in the trials. The data will be used to see if there is a relationship between delivery and attainment across the whole intervention group and are in no way judgemental of individual schools, nor will they be used in any way that is not anonymous.

To what extent do you think schools implemented Achievement for All consistently according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

Never – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

The extent to which schools engaged with the programme and worked with the coach to make changes identified in their needs analysis and action plan varied considerably. Some were engaged from the start and undertook actions, developed the way they did things, trained staff etc. Others were slow to engage and some never really engaged with the programme. These schools often delayed or cancelled visits and made slow progress in taking action needed as identified in their action plan or by the coach. The degree of engagement and willingness to make changes has an impact on the results achieved.

To what extent do you think schools delivered Achievement for All regularly and according to the recommendations of you, the intervention provider?

Never – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

AfA is not a programme that is 'delivered regularly'. It is a whole school improvement programme requiring ongoing action and review.

To what extent do you think schools implemented Achievement for All to the standard of

Achievement for All response August 2015

practice that you think you, the intervention provider, would deliver?

Never – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Always

Comments:

Coaches make regular visits to schools and are in contact in between visits, but schools are expected to work through strategies and processes so that capacity in school grows as the programme develops. This varied from school to school and depended on their commitment to making changes and improvements.

Treatment practicality questions

These questions will be used to assess if there is a relationship between the practicality of the intervention and attainment.

In terms of timetabling and staffing, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate Achievement for All into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

The AfA school programme is a framework which helps schools to identify what they need to do to improve the aspirations, access and achievement of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. To be successful, schools need to work with their coach to identify where they need to develop and make changes and then to take action. Schools need to ensure that they have a champion who is a senior member of staff who has the time and commitment necessary. As long as a school is committed then it is entirely practical to integrate the work needed into the school development plan. Our experience shows that our programmes help schools become more efficient and effective in their management and therefore create more time.

In terms of ease of method and training of staff, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate Achievement for All into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

Because the AfA programme is a framework for improvement it depends on the commitment of the senior leadership to integrate the improvement and developments needed into their work. AfA also requires schools to think innovatively and creatively as

Achievement for All response August 2015

far as parental engagement is concerned. This is difficult to manage initially but in time is a fundamental contributor to accelerated levels of pupil progress.

In terms of classroom resources, how practical do you think it is for schools to integrate Achievement for All into their work?

Not practical at all – 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 – Completely practical

Comments:

The AfA schools programme is not a classroom-based programme *per se*, however coaches are tasked with supporting classroom practice and regularly undertake learning walks and observations to support good-to-outstanding classroom practice. This supports pedagogy and standards of teaching and learning within the school and adds capacity to senior leadership teams as well as developing classroom-based approaches.

2 Achievement for All – additional provider report (May 2015)

Executive summary

AfA has been delivering its schools programme in schools from TSAs across the country as part of the NCTL closing the gap: test and learn programme. The aim is to compare the impact of the programme to other interventions using the new group reading test (NGRT).

AfA is currently working with 26 intervention schools that started in late autumn 2013/early 2014 and 18 control schools that started in autumn 2014.

The AfA schools programme is an integrated programme that helps schools improve outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, including those from low-income families, those identified with special educational needs, and children who are cared for. This includes improving outcomes in writing and mathematics as well as reading. Rather than focusing on short-term interventions, the programme aims to ensure that schools make lasting changes and improvements in their leadership, teaching and learning, parental engagement, wellbeing of learners, behaviour and attendance.

APS scores data indicates that target pupils in closing the gap: test and learn programme primary and secondary schools are making better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

AfA has also found that, when compared to other AfA schools results show greater progress for target pupils, suggesting that this particular approach to delivering the programme provides improved results for the charity.

Schools have also reported a wide range of other improvements as a result of the implementation of the AfA programme.

Introduction

The NCTL contracted with AfA in 2013 to deliver the schools programme in a selection of schools from TSAs across the country. The aim is to compare the impact of the programme to other interventions using the NGRT.

AfA anticipated that around 80 schools would be involved. The list sent by NCTL originally contained 66 schools, made up of:

- 36 intervention schools – these schools were due to start the programme in autumn 2013

- 30 control schools – these schools were due to start the programme in September/October 2014

AfA is currently working with 44 schools: 26 intervention schools and 18 control schools.

Overview of work undertaken

Registering schools

All schools were registered centrally to avoid delays, as schools were not able to register themselves until after they had been informed of whether they were in the control or intervention group.

Coach preparation and quality project management

AfA undertook a robust and detailed preparation exercise to ensure that all schools were allocated an experienced, trained and approved achievement coach who was fully informed about the requirements of the programme. Achievement coaches attended briefing sessions led by AfA's training manager and the project manager. Information and presentation slides were also sent to all coaches following the briefings.

To ensure a quality management and quality assurance process was in place, additional coach teleconferences were held periodically to check on progress, and to address and overcome issues. Regular updates were sent to regional directors who have oversight for the quality assurance of the delivery of the programmes.

Delivering the programme

Following the AfA schools programme framework, achievement coaches undertook the following in schools:

- Working with colleagues from across the school community, the achievement coach and school champion completed the needs analysis and developed an action plan to support the development of the four elements of the schools programme:
 1. leadership
 2. teaching and learning
 3. wider outcomes and opportunities – developing behaviours for attendance, learning and personal well-being

4. parent and carer engagement

- Identifying target groups of pupils in line with guidance from NCTL.
- Collecting baseline data on reading, writing, mathematics, attendance and parental engagement.
- Delivering introductory training to all staff.
- Delivering structured conversation training to key staff to support effective parental engagement.
- Providing schools with access to the AfA 'Bubble' (an online e-Learning platform) to enable them to access online materials and resources to support the implementation of the programme and the school's development.
- Visiting schools regularly to deliver high impact, evidence-based core modules blended with a series of school-driven activities tailored to each school's needs including training, CPD and coaching to help schools meet their action plan.
- Holding termly review meetings which included planning for the following term.
- Encouraging schools to submit termly data based on APS scores.

Issues encountered during the project

Preparation of schools

When the programme started the following were common responses:

- Some schools were unclear about how they became involved in the project in the first place; sometimes this was because the member of staff who had expressed an interest had left or had not informed other colleagues.
- Some schools were not sure how they had been allocated to AfA.
- Some schools were unclear about the nature of the schools programme. Some schools were under the impression that it was a training programme and did not appreciate that the schools would be required to do the work with the support of an achievement coach and that they would need a school champion who was part of the leadership team.
- There was a lack of clarity over target groups in some schools.

- Many schools were confused about the funding and invoicing arrangements.

This led to some schools withdrawing from the intervention group before they started. Some decided not to proceed after the first visit when the nature of the programme became clearer. Others carried on but were not as engaged as is required to ensure the programme is successfully undertaken. AfA attempted to address these concerns and issues by arranging meetings and visits and addressing the concerns raised by the schools to provide assurances and clearer communication as to what the programme was and why schools were being asked to take up the programme.

It was also reported to AfA that as the schools did not start at the beginning of the academic year most had already organised their CPD programme for the year and were very reluctant to change this, making it difficult for achievement coaches to deliver introduction and structured conversation training at the most effective and appropriate time. However, significant flexibility and adjustments were made to overcome this wherever possible.

Control schools

To try and ensure that control schools were well prepared and to check that they really wanted to proceed, the AfA project manager contacted all the control schools initially by email with information about the programme. Schools were followed up by phone or email and regional directors were asked to contact the schools to explain the programme in more detail. This led to 11 schools deciding not to proceed. The most usual reason was lack of staff time or more pressing issues in the school.

Only one of the control schools has withdrawn.

Testing

Originally AfA understood that schools would undertake literacy and numeracy testing. However schools have only tested literacy using the online NGRT fully administered by NCTL.

All of the schools were supposed to undertake baseline testing in autumn 2013. Following the testing, schools were notified whether they were in the intervention or control group. The testing was delayed and at this point a number of schools decided not to go ahead, which meant that the start date for most schools was December 2013 or January 2014.

A number of schools have not completed the testing. Some have not done any testing and others have only completed one round.

School engagement

Due to the late start, some uncertainty over the nature of the programme and problems in finding time for staff training some schools were delayed in undertaking the programme.

Other issues that have affected school engagement include key staff changes, key staff absence, Ofsted inspections and, for one or two schools, a feeling that because the school is already 'outstanding' they do not need the programme. These are all common factors or reasons that have been communicated to AfA by participating schools as barriers to participating with the programme in the planned and agreed way.

AfA coaches and regional directors have worked hard to engage the schools that have been less committed or have been reluctant to submit data. This has included meetings with headteachers to explore issues affecting their engagement, such as a poor Ofsted grade and how full engagement in the programme can support improvement. For schools that have an Ofsted grade of outstanding, the regional directors and coaches have clarified how the programme can help them continue to improve and maintain that grade. Other issues impeding engagement have been explored and in many cases issues have been resolved through proactive partnership working and solution-focused dialogue. This has helped many of the schools to improve their engagement and currently there are only two schools not engaging in a way that will ensure successful undertaking of the programme.

If schools were insistent about leaving they were submitted as cases at the AfA weekly surgeries and NCTL and CfBT were informed.

Outcomes

The AfA schools programme is an integrated programme that helps schools improve outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, including those from low-income families, those identified with special educational needs and looked-after children, with a specific primary focus on improving outcomes in writing and mathematics as well as reading¹.

The charity is clear that the programme should not be viewed as a short-term intervention solution. The programme aims to ensure that schools make lasting changes and improvements in their leadership, teaching and learning, parental engagement, behaviour, attendance and the well-being of learners.

¹ *The Achievement for All programme: Social Impact Report*. PwC, 2014.

Progress of individual schools (see appendix A for specific examples)

Qualitative feedback indicates a wide range of positive impacts of the programme which will lead to long-term benefits for schools and pupils, especially the most vulnerable, for example:

- Improvements in the engagement of parents through the use of structured conversations. This includes engagement with more parents and improved relationships with parents, leading to improved outcomes for pupils.
- Identification of specific issues through the needs analysis and action planning process which are being addressed by the school with the support of their coach.
- Improved use of data to identify issues and areas for improvement.
- Improved target setting with learners.
- More rigorous monitoring of targets and plans.
- Reviews of learning support approaches leading to more effective use of TAs to support learners.
- Improved attendance as a result of increased parental engagement and focus on improved teaching and learning, addressing behaviour and well-being issues.
- More effective sharing of information in school, including sharing effective practice with colleagues.

These examples illustrate a few of the wider benefits of the AfA programme in addition to improving reading, writing and mathematics scores in targeted pupils.

Progress in reading, writing and mathematics

To assess academic progress, AfA gathers termly data on the target group's reading, writing and mathematics APS scores. The expectation is that pupils will make three points progress in APS across an academic year – equating to one point per term, broadly. AfA has made a number of comparisons with other groups as a measure of progress for the closing the gap: test and learn programme pupils.

First, to help understand the impact of the programme on the closing the gap: test and learn programme pupils, comparisons with the AfA schools as a whole were undertaken. The data shows that in primary schools, in reading and writing the closing the gap pupils are making better progress than the pupils generally in AfA schools. In mathematics in

term 3, they are making slightly less progress. In secondary schools in reading and mathematics the closing the gap: test and learn programme pupils are making better progress than the pupils generally in AfA schools. In writing, they are making slightly less progress.

Second, another comparison was undertaken which can be summarised as follows: Ofsted and DfE guidance suggests a child is expected to make one APS point progress per term. In reading, writing and mathematics the closing the gap: test and learn programme pupils are exceeding this expected progress target and therefore would be deemed to be making more than expected progress.

Third, a similar comparison with data provided through RAISEOnline in 2014 shows that AfA children are making more progress than all children nationally, and considerably more progress than children from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Therefore the findings suggest that closing the gap: test and learn programme pupils are making greater progress than other AfA schools, all children nationally, disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) nationally. In essence there is confidence that the AfA programme is successful in closing the gap for all of the target cohort children across the closing the gap: test and learn programme schools.

Furthermore it is important to note that many schools are no longer using APS scores, which has affected the data collection. The charity has also attempted to address this proactively and positively by directing the achievement coaches to work with schools to collect alternative data based on age related expectation. Schools are being asked to provide data based on the number of pupils whose progress was less than expected, as expected and more than expected; progress results using this method are expected in the autumn term.

Table 1 below provides a summarised set of data.

Benchmarking data for closing the gap: test and learn programme

Table 1: Results September 2014 – April 2015

Data type	Primary			Secondary			Details
	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
AfA data types	Termly APS Progress Scores						Sample group size
Closing the gap – September 2014	1.89	1.65	1.59	1.60	2.06	1.79	Schools: primary=5; secondary=6 (intervention schools only)
Closing the gap – December 2014	1.76	1.64	1.59	1.38	1.79	2.06	Schools: primary=9; secondary=14 (intervention and control schools)
Closing the gap – April 2015	1.70	1.60	1.41	1.68	1.81	1.63	Schools: primary=11; secondary=18 Schools: primary=9; secondary=14 (intervention and control schools)
Closing the gap – intervention	1.54	1.71	1.60	1.50	1.87	1.73	Schools: primary=8; secondary=13 (intervention schools only)
Closing the gap G2 – control	1.60	1.70	1.20	2.22	1.64	1.33	Schools: primary=3; secondary=5 (control schools only)
All AfA schools	1.56	1.46	1.47²	1.82	1.80	1.39	Schools: primary=756; secondary=135

² Red indicates where APS scores for all AfA schools are better than for closing the gap: test and learn programme schools

External data							
Expected progress	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.20	1.20	1.20	DfE and Ofsted guidance
Estimated progress							
All pupils	1.17	1.13	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	2013 RAISEOnline (unvalidated data)
SEND with statements	1.00	0.73	0.99				Calculated from RAISEOnline data
SEND without statements	1.09	1.08	1.00				
FSM/CLA	1.05	1.00	1.06				

Furthermore, the information reported in appendix A offers evidence that schools undertaking the AfA programme are also benefiting from the robust whole-school approach that the schools programme provides in making systematic, long-term improvements and changes that will result in sustainable, systematic and working practices as result of undertaking the programme.

Summary and conclusion

In conclusion, using APS scores data indicates that target cohort pupils in the closing the gap: test and learn programme primary and secondary schools are making better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared with other AfA pupils and all pupils nationally.

AfA has also found that when compared to other AfA schools greater progress is shown for target pupils, suggesting that this particular approach to delivering the programme provides improved results. This has been achieved despite the challenges and issues outlined within this report, which might also lead to the conclusion that results may have been even more favourable had these challenges not been presented and schools had been able to undertake the programme and engage in the way that the charity traditionally finds leads to a more successful undertaking of the programme.

AfA recognises that the NGRT, adopted by NCTL as a measure of progress for some pupils in this work is a recognised objective, 'point in time' test that measures reading ability under its specified test conditions. However, the AfA schools programme is designed and built on a whole school / setting improvement evidence-based framework that encompasses a much broader change and system improvement programme across reading, writing and mathematics. Furthermore, other wider outcomes and opportunities that affect progress improvements for children not just from the target cohorts but for all children in the schools where the programme is delivered, are commonly found. The data presented in this report is also supported by a broad range of evidence from the initial AfA pilot programme evaluation³ and more recent independent analysis referenced in this report from PwC that demonstrates that pupils in schools fully engaging with the achievement coach following the full robust framework, and undertaking the programme as planned and designed, make better than expected progress.

³ *AfA National Evaluation*. DfE, 2011.
[Link to AfA national evaluation. DfE 2011](#)

Appendix A: Examples of progress reported by schools

Below are some examples of progress reported by schools in their survey responses:

School A

- Looking at self-esteem and well-being measures to evaluate the effectiveness of additional mental health programmes in the school.

School B

- Attendance at structured conversation meetings with parents is 90 per cent plus and parental engagement has moved from 56 per cent to 91 per cent green.
- Progress has been 9 APS in English and 6.5 APS in mathematics in one year.

School C

- The programme has been rolled out across the whole school with a much wider cohort, which involves all teachers conducting structured conversations with at least one family in their tutor group.
- Governors have received information on the programme from the coach to enable them to help lead the strategic direction of the project and continue to invest in the pupil premium pupils.
- Teachers are having to think about the targets set for pupils and how they can be shared effectively, and how they can be integrated into lessons. This is only the early stages of this process, but it will help the school to focus specifically on the progress of pupils in the pupil premium fund (PPF) cohort.

School D

- There is a sharp focus on differentiation, coach involved in joint observations and feedback sessions with teaching team in identified year group.
- School is proactive in its approach to monitoring access to wider outcomes/opportunities. It has developed a RAG rating system to highlight less engaged pupils.

- Coach recently held a feedback forum with teachers who were positive about taking the programme into the second round of structured conversations and the deputy head will support teachers where parents have not engaged.

School E

- Through mentoring as an AfA intervention, a major issue was discovered which was affecting the well-being of a large number of pupils. The school has now put in place a course of action to tackle this sensitive problem.

School F

- Coach and champion did joint observation in lower ability English and mathematics lessons as well as observing withdrawal lessons in English. They identified good practice in English and in extra English support. Identified total lack of differentiation in lower groups for mathematics – so progress poor for some. Also very limited extra support in mathematics. Assistant head with responsibility in mathematics will address concerns with the department. Discussed need for CPD, and more radical action in year 11 group, and also putting in place withdrawal support at KS3 in mathematics.

School G

- Following structured conversation training the school champion has witnessed a complete change of attitude from one child and parent. This will serve as a future example to the rest of the target groups.

School H

- Every student across the school now has personalised targets.
- For the target groups every individual has a pupil profile that includes strategies.
- The school has introduced a KS3 diploma that will focus on TRICS (team, reflective, independent, creative learner) as well as academic progress.

School I

- The TAs are involved more regularly and effectively in the planning with classroom teachers to ensure that pupils are receiving the necessary and targeted support

within the classroom to meet their needs and that they are being used more effectively within the classroom.

- More robust tracking and monitoring of interventions offered to measure impact and to ensure continuity with support provided within the classroom. Across the school there has been a scrutiny of books to assess feedback given and to ensure there is a consistency of expectations for both SEND and non-SEND pupils.
- A review of the TAs has been completed to ensure that they are more effective in their roles and they are being observed more regularly when supporting within the classroom for quality assurance.
- Structured conversations have taken place and the feedback received has been very positive. Teachers reported positively about the opportunity to have sufficient time to speak to parents and pupils about any concerns or issues and the learning and progress in general. Parents on the whole were very positive as they felt their views and concerns were being listened to and taken seriously and that support or actions were agreed to be put in place.
- The school has decided to follow up the structured conversations with reviews at mid-points in the term to offer feedback to the parents and pupils regarding the agreed targets and progress made. The school is planning to train more staff to be able to conduct the conversations with the new target pupils and possibly extending the opportunity for structured conversations for other groups of pupils within the school.

School J

- Progress has been made with regard to pupil information being shared more frequently within the school and particularly between mathematics and English departments, where there is more collaboration to allow for discussions around progress of pupils within the two subjects.
- There is more sharing of information across the school about support and interventions being provided for pupils as this is provided within departments.

School K

- Activities identified for the spring term include teacher coaching, focusing on raising expectations and aspirations, review of individual children's provision and interventions to support the development of TAs, effective pupil progress meetings and using tracking to inform teaching strategies.

- The school has already adjusted their engagement with parents and follow the principles of structured conversations for all children in parental engagement meetings. This will be maintained.

School L

- Senior leaders have introduced a more rigorous monitoring of provision within the classroom.
- Senior leaders are involved in learning walks on a weekly basis, which provides a better understanding of strengths and areas requiring improvement, in teaching and learning across the school.
- Attendance in the primary school has improved this academic year so that it is now in line with national averages.

School M

- The achievement coach has supported the school champion in observations of targeted pupils, including pupil voice and scrutiny of work. This will continue as school practice.

School N

- Teacher/TA training programme is going well. A special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) organised a feedback meeting with teachers and TAs. The meeting was very positive and the enthusiasm and commitment of both teachers and teaching assistants has maintained momentum.
- Following feedback from the teachers and TAs there was open discussion about ways forward. It was felt that the case study will produce key messages (from lessons learned) related to:
 - a) the role, status and use of TAs
 - b) the time commitment for teachers and TAs to work more effectively together and strategies to address this
 - c) the CPD of both TAs and teachers
 - d) the implications for the leadership and management (including middle management) to facilitate developing the TA role

School O

- Teachers have used structured conversations to understand the barriers pupils are currently facing. As a result, teachers have a clearer understanding of their individual needs and are planning accordingly. For example, a child needed language modelling so the school has built in 1:1 time to do activities such as cooking so he can hear and practise the language.
- Classroom observations revealed a need to focus on engaging and meeting the individual learning needs of disadvantaged children. Teacher coaching has already begun to address this.

School P

- Regular pupil focus groups have enabled pupils to have a voice.

School Q

- Wider opportunities are traditionally extensive in the school but a detailed audit of the number and type of activities and the students participating has never been undertaken before. This is now underway with expected completion by the end of term.

School R

- Support staff have all had training/coaching on how they can support pupils to have positive break and lunch times. The coach has also supported them in the role they can play in promoting attendance and punctuality.
- Presentation and expectations in year 5 books have significantly improved. Year 5 had coaching during the visit to close the gap for target pupils with a focus on spelling and number facts.

3 Achievement for All – additional provider report (October 2015)

Introduction

NCTL contracted with AfA to deliver the AfA schools programme in a selection of schools from TSAs across the country. The aim was to compare the impact of the programme with other interventions using the NGRT. The interventions and their foci are:

- IstClass@Number – numeracy
- Inference Training – literacy
- RLS – literacy and numeracy
- Achievement for All – literacy and numeracy
- Numicon – numeracy
- RTI: breakthroughs in literacy – literacy
- Growth mindsets – literacy and numeracy

We are currently working with 22 intervention schools and 16 control schools.

School engagement

Due to the late start and confusion over the nature of the programme, and also problems in finding time for staff training, some schools were very slow to get going.

As well as conducting the usual visits and termly reports, coaches were asked to complete a monthly report for the project manager. Coaches were asked to identify progress, issues and level of engagement.

Where coaches were having difficulty in engaging schools or schools were considering leaving the programme, the regional directors or team leaders were informed and became involved to provide appropriate support.

If schools were adamant about leaving they were submitted as cases at the AfA weekly surgeries.

The fact that the schools have not had to pay a fee for the programme or have only made a small contribution may well have affected their engagement.

Results

Below are the results for the schools to date from the AfA data collection process. We collected baseline data on the pupils in the target groups at the beginning of the programme and then termly to identify progress in reading, writing and maths using APS data as well as information on attendance and parental engagement.

Closing the gap: test and learn – reach and impact

Composition of schools and pupils

Figure 1: The number of schools involved in the project

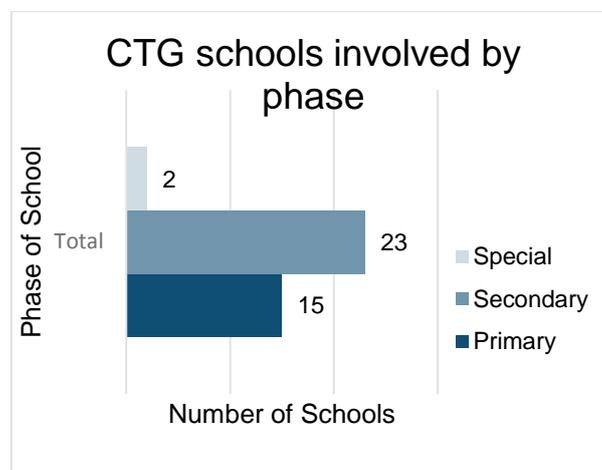
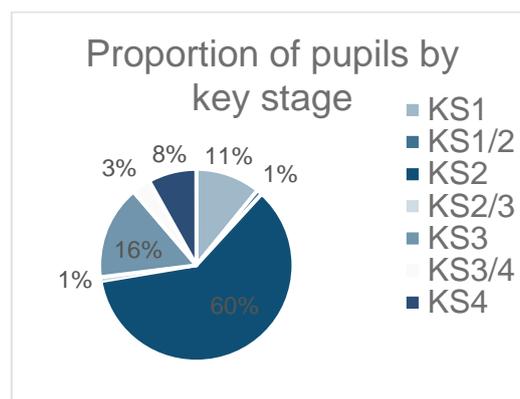


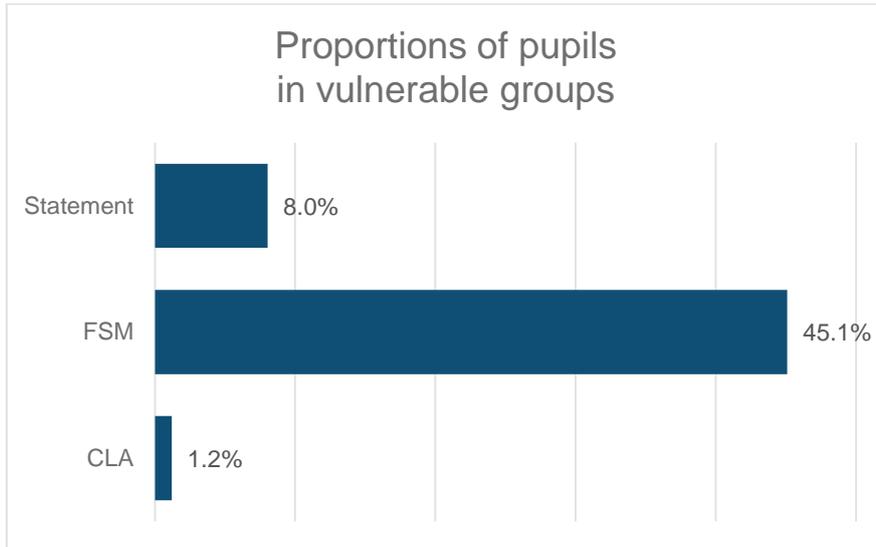
Figure 2: The breakdown of pupils by key stage



Total number of pupils in the target groups = 1107

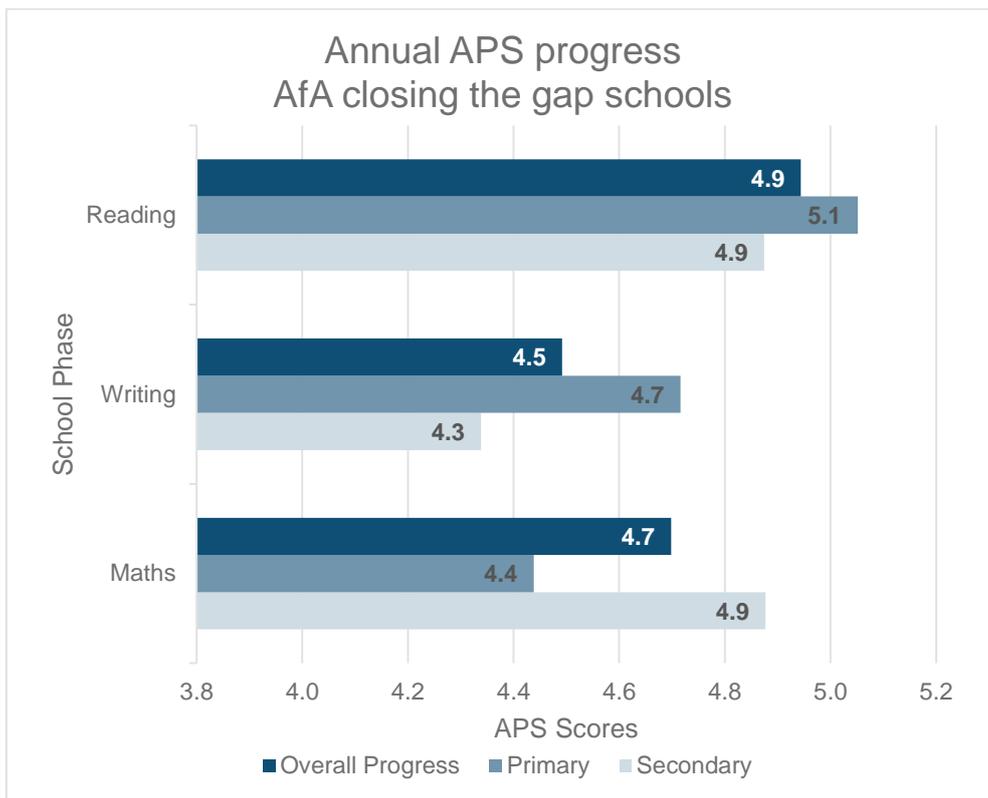
Where groupings are shown across key stage boundaries, this occurs when pupils start in one key stage and move into the next. Most of the pupils involved are from primary schools.

Figure 3: Different types of need among pupils



AfA also looks at data for specific vulnerable groups including those with a statement or education health and care plan, those eligible for FSM and looked after children.

Figure 4: Impact of the programme for submitting APS data



How does this compare with other groups?

Table 2: Comparison with other groups

Source	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Closing the gap: test and learn programme schools	4.9	4.5	4.7
All AfA schools	4.6	4.4	4.3
Expected progress KS2	3	3	3
Expected progress KS3 to KS4	3.5	3.5	3.5

The scores show the amount of progress over a one-year period, based on the data submitted by schools during their time on the programme. The data is then normalised to provide the score for a single year even if the data represents more than one year.

The comparisons provided are for all AFA schools and show that progress for ‘closing the gap: test and learn programme’ target groups is above the average for all pupils.

The expected progress figures are based on guidance provided by the DfE.

Other indicators

Table 3: Other indicators

Indicator	Attendance	RED parental engagement	GREEN parental engagement
Start	93.75	18.2	22.1
End	94.1	6	54.8
Progress	0.35	-12.2	32.7
Impact	0.4%	-67.0%	148.0%

Based on data collected at target-group level each term since the schools joined the programme, the increase covers a period of three terms from baseline – approximating to one year.

Parental engagement data is based on coaches and schools making a judgement about parental engagement for target-group children at baseline and during each subsequent term. If parents are not engaged they are given a red, amber or green score. This is aggregated to produce an overall score for the target group for red, amber and green. The figures are then compared with the baseline to provide a sense of the degree of change. The impact is based on three terms of data.

It is clear that there has been a significant improvement in parental engagement, with a 67 per cent decline in red engagement (ie little or no engagement with the school) and a 148 per cent increase in green engagement (ie positive engagement of parents). Over the course of two years we might expect further progress on attendance and parental engagement.

Conclusion

From the data collected by AfA it is clear that the closing the gap: test and learn programme schools are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and that the improvement in parental engagement is excellent. We know that good parental engagement and the use of the AfA structured conversation approach with parents has a significant impact on pupils' achievement.

AfA has previously provided reports with examples of changes and improvements in individual schools involved in the project.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:
teaching.schools@education.gsi.gov.uk or www.gov.uk/nctl

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