

Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF): Round 2
Diminishing the gap for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 Reading

**EXCEED TEACHING SCHOOLS,
EXCEED ACADEMIES TRUST**

Project evaluation

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Acknowledgments

It has been a pleasure to undertake the evaluation of this project and to report the findings of this most successful project and its significant impact on disadvantaged pupils in Bradford schools.

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Executive Summary

The issue of social mobility and disadvantage

The Government is committed to improving social mobility through education. Narrowing the gap between the achievement of socially disadvantaged pupils and their peers is one of the greatest challenges faced by schools in England today. The gap in attainment of disadvantaged pupils has closed steadily in recent years but disadvantaged children remain on average, four months behind at the end of Reception year and 11 months behind at the end of Primary school. This report is an evaluation of a project aimed at diminishing the gap in Reading for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 in Bradford Primary schools.

Bradford is one of 12 Opportunity Areas identified in England and a social mobility cold-spot. As an Opportunity Area facilitating social mobility through raised aspirations, literacy and school leadership are identified priorities. Across Bradford, data shows a pattern of low attainment in literacy at every stage of learning, with disadvantaged pupils falling furthest behind. It is, however, making a significant investment into early Reading in schools and in homes. Improvements in literacy in primary education suggest this is helping to improve standards through support to improve phonics; support from the DFE's Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) and utilising the expertise in literacy and the capacity of Bradford's Teaching Schools and system leaders.

Literacy outcomes in Bradford

Improving literacy is an educational moral and economic imperative. Reading is an essential element of all stages of education. If children cannot read, they are disadvantaged for life. Literacy competence, especially in Reading is key to diminishing difference and enabling children to grow as confident, active citizens. A rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in Reading.

Literacy outcomes for disadvantaged children in Bradford are low, especially in relation to Reading where there is a greater gap to the national average demonstrated by 2016 Key Stage 2 outcomes than for any other subject. The performance of disadvantaged children reflects the link between poverty and life chances, and this impacts negatively on social mobility. In 2016, disadvantaged groups at all stages had significantly lower achievement. By the end of Year 6, the gap to the national average in the client schools had not significantly diminished. In Bradford, 46% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard at the end of year 6, compared to 64% of non-disadvantaged pupils. For disadvantaged pupils, the combined client schools' outcomes were just 37.9% of pupils achieving the expected standard, 30pp behind the national average for all pupils and 17pp behind the national average for disadvantaged pupils. Amongst a number of interventions, the key intervention used in this project was the Power of Reading, a programme developed by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE). Power of Reading has built a body of evidence over the life of the programme and illustrates a long-standing record of successfully helping teachers to close attainment gaps and significantly raise the quality of teaching and learning for all pupils.

Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) Project

Governmental support and investment, including a boost to early literacy and numeracy and spreading best practice, came through the £140 million Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) launched in April 2017. Exceed Teaching Schools were successful in the bid in Round 2 of the SSIF and awarded £263,500 for the project. The project aim was to diminish the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 Reading. It began in January 2018 and ended in March 2019.

Eleven Primary schools in Bradford participated in the project:

- Holybrook Primary School
- Princeville Primary School
- Lister Primary School
- Westbourne Primary School
- Home Farm Primary School
- Thackley Primary School
- Blakehill Primary School
- All Saints Primary School, Bradford
- Miriam Lord Primary School
- Lilycroft Primary School
- Marshfield Primary School

Each of these schools was supported by a total of 13 Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE) and 5 Local Leaders of Education (LLE) and one National Leader of Education (NLE) for the duration of the project.

At the heart of SSIF work and this project is evidence. The Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) logic model for evidence-informed project work was utilised for the project design, implementation and evaluation phases of the project. Problem identification In Bradford, 46% of disadvantaged pupils achieve the expected standard, compared to 64% of non- disadvantaged pupils, at the end of KS2 (2016 data). For Client schools, 36.2% of pupils achieved the expected standard, 30pp behind the national average for all pupils and 17pp for disadvantaged pupils. Interventions included training on the Parent Hub; Governor training; bespoke interventions for TAs and teachers and SLE support and coaching days. The Power of Reading delivered four days of training on quality first teaching of Reading and provided classroom resources. Monitoring and evaluation was through 10 days evaluation by Leeds Trinity University and 16 days LLE quality assurance visits. Data was collected and analysed from the New Salford Reading Age Tests providing baseline, interim and final assessment data.

Overall impact and key findings

The project 'Diminishing the gap for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 in Reading' has had significant impact.

National curriculum test data (SATs)

- Disadvantaged pupils' outcomes at the client schools increased by 28.6 percentage points from 37.9% achieving Expected Standard to 66.5%
- The gap between non-disadvantaged pupils and disadvantaged pupils in the client schools decreased by 7.2 percentage points between 2016 and 2018
- This closing of the gap by 7.2 percentage points is higher than the collective improvement of 'all Bradford schools' of 3 percentage points, suggesting the rate of progress has been accelerated for the client schools

Reading Age Tests

- In the six-month window of classroom-based interventions, the control group of pupils made 6.45 months progress on average
- The non-disadvantaged control group made 7.2 months progress compared to 13.35 months progress for disadvantaged pupils in receipt of intervention and/or Power of Reading, a gain of 6.15 months over their peers
- The pupils that received intervention and/or Power of Reading made an average of 13.35 months progress, a gain of 6.9 months on their peers

SLE and LLE support

Questionnaire returns and impact of school-to-school support reviews by support teams showed support provided by Specialist Leaders and Local Leaders contributed significantly to the improvement gains in schools. An important part of this support were specific and measurable actions that were agreed and documented in each client school.

Impact of the Power of Reading intervention

The Power of Reading has been a key intervention in the project with 100% of teacher and Headteacher evaluations after training days rated positive. 15 evaluations of the Power of Reading programme itself were received and 100% rated the course as "Very effective" or "Effective".

Recommendations

The SSIF project has been a highly successful project and has had considerable impact on disadvantaged pupils, teachers, curriculum development and the sharing of good practice in Reading in Bradford schools. Eight recommendations arising from the project are proposed.

1. Use school data to identify specific year groups and target groups for planned interventions
2. Rigorously monitor and evaluate the use of interventions to inform next steps
3. Consider research and evidence-based practice. The EEF are an excellent place to begin
4. Combine diagnosis, intervention and quality first-teaching
5. Encourage the use of Power of Reading as an effective intervention for Reading and catalyst for developing quality first teaching
6. Utilise the expertise in SLEs and LLEs that exists in Bradford schools as an important lever for school improvement and sharing best practice

7. Disseminate the project to parents and other schools in Bradford and the region
8. Contact the EEF to explore roll-out of the project to a new cohort of client schools

Jonathan Doherty

Section 1

Context and introduction to the project

Transforming education and the life chances of all children are the cornerstones of the Government's commitment to social justice. The vision is for education that allows every child and young person to reach his or her potential, regardless of background, ability or need and to achieve this through well measured outcomes and innovative local solutions in schools¹. A school-led system is the best way to improve outcomes for children, spreading interventions and approaches which work, schools taking charge of their own improvement and collaborating with others to deliver long term sustainable school improvement. Achieving educational excellence is about ensuring that the work is focused and evidence-based, encouraging collaboration and providing school improvement support that builds capacity and raises standards. This report is an evaluation of a project aims at diminishing the gap in reading for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 in Bradford Primary schools.

Disadvantage and achievement

Narrowing the gap between the achievement of socially disadvantaged pupils and their peers is one of the greatest challenges faced by schools today (disadvantaged pupils are identified in national datasets for their eligibility for the Pupil Premium Grant). There are significant achievement gaps in England associated with socio-economic status². Research evidence highlights social disadvantage as the biggest single indicator of low educational achievement^{3,4}. Disadvantaged children start school behind their more advantaged peers and the gap in performance widens as they progress through the education system⁵. The gap in outcomes between those from the least well-off backgrounds and their classmates is already evident by the time they begin school, aged 5. Yet the relationship between disadvantage and attainment is highly complex. First, the gap is not actually a gap, but a gradient: the highest test scores are achieved by the most advantaged pupils, and the lowest by those living in the most disadvantaged conditions. The situation is not particular

¹ DfE Strategy 2015-2020. World-class education and care. March 2016.

² Strand, S. (2014) Ethnicity, gender, social class and achievement gaps at age 16: intersectionality and 'getting it' for the white working class. *Research Papers in Education*, Volume 29, 2014 - Issue 2

³ House of Commons Select Committee (2014) *Underachievement in Education by White Working Class Children*. www.parliament.uk

⁴ Demie, F. & McLean, C. (2016) Tackling disadvantage: what works in narrowing the achievement gap in schools. *Review of Education*. pp. 138-174

⁵ Crenna-Jennings, W. (2018) *Key drivers of the education gap*. *Education in England*. Annual report. Education Policy Institute

to certain areas of the country nor to the type of school but is a national picture. The performance gap between pupils from more and less advantaged backgrounds in England is one of the largest among OECD countries⁶.

According to national data, the gap in attainment of disadvantaged pupils has closed steadily in recent years but disadvantaged children remain – on average – four months behind at the end of reception year and 11 months behind at the end of primary school⁷. The gap has decreased in each of the last seven years, narrowing by 3% in 2017 and 13.2% since 2011⁸.

Disadvantaged pupils of all abilities are more likely to underperform even in otherwise strong areas and strong schools. The Race Disparity Audit also highlighted that certain ethnic pupil groups can be more likely to under-perform or face exclusion. We have a national mission to level up opportunity across this country and build a fairer society, one that will guarantee a better future for the next generation. Social mobility has been a stated priority of the last four governments, with education considered to be a cornerstone of any strategy to boost upward mobility. A range of initiatives have been introduced with the goal of improving life chances for children and closing attainment gaps, including the National Strategies, investment in early years education and family support services like Sure Start and children’s centres, the London Challenge (including Teach First) and City Challenges, sponsored academies in areas with failing schools, the Pupil Premium Grant and, most recently, the Opportunity Area programme.

Tackling disadvantage. Bradford as an Opportunity Area

The Government is committed to improving social mobility through education⁹. The Social Mobility Action Plan in 2017 acknowledged that issues of, and issues stemming from social mobility, cannot be tackled quickly and require a long-term, sustained commitment across government, schools and local communities. With targeted action and funding to support action, the negative spirals can be reversed and a virtuous cycle that unlocks talent and potential generated. The Plan places greater emphasis on supporting and developing the key agents of improvement across the education system: that is to say teachers, leaders and other education and care professionals. The ambition also embraces that no community is left behind, and the Government recognises that a community shapes a child’s educational and later life chances. Areas with better education outcomes develop a higher skill base, higher productivity, greater economic returns and become more attractive to highly skilled people and investment, building a capacity to improve even further.

⁶ Macleod, S. Sharp, C. & Bernardinelli, D. (2015) *Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: articulating success and good practice Research brief November*. NFER

⁷ Education Policy Institute (2016) *Divergent Pathways: the disadvantage gap, accountability and the pupil premium*. <https://epi.org.uk/report/divergent-pathways-disadvantage-gap-accountability-pupil-premium/>

⁸ DfE (2018) *National curriculum assessments at Key Stage 2 in England*. HMSO.

⁹ DfE (2017) *Social Mobility Action Plan 2017. Unlocking Talent*. HMSO.

The Opportunity Areas programme was announced in October 2016. Initially, six areas were identified and then a further six areas were identified in January 2017. The 12 areas are:

- West Somerset
- Norwich
- Blackpool
- North Yorkshire Coast
- Derby
- Oldham
- Fenland and East Cambridgeshire
- Hastings
- **Bradford**
- Stoke on Trent
- Doncaster
- Ipswich

They are areas which face the greatest challenges across a range of issues. The purpose of Opportunity Areas is to focus local and national resources on a common goal of increasing social mobility and using education as a key driver to achieve this.

The Social Mobility Index was used to identify these areas. It suggests that very similar areas that are only a few miles apart do very differently on social mobility despite having similar challenges and opportunities. The Index seeks to identify areas in England with reduced opportunities that young people from poorer backgrounds have to succeed and the least socially mobile areas of the country. Bradford is identified as an Opportunity Area and a social mobility cold-spot. In the most recent Social Mobility Index (2017) Bradford ranked 254th, reflecting the progress made in early years education, but highlighting the continuing challenges in primary and secondary education. It is ranked the 5th most income deprived local authority in England. It is ranked the 6th most employment deprived local authority in England. It is one of the most densely populated urban areas in the UK outside London. 27% of the District's population live in areas in the 10% most deprived areas in England. Child poverty data (published September 2016) reported a child poverty rate of 28.6% for Bradford District, compared to 20.1% for England. The level of people with no qualifications in Bradford is higher than regional and national averages. It is the youngest major city in the UK. 24% of the population is under sixteen and nearly 42% of the population is under 30. Of the 370,000 pupils taught in the twelve Opportunity Areas, more than a quarter live in Bradford. It is ranked the 5th most income deprived local authority in England.

But Bradford's economy is growing fast. At £10 billion, Bradford has the ninth largest economy of any city in England and the fifth largest in the North. The city's economy has grown by 32% over the last ten years making it the fastest growing economy in Yorkshire and second to Manchester in the North. It is forecast to expand by a further 25% over the next decade. It is a city of enterprise. Bradford has a powerful culture of enterprise and the number of businesses has increased significantly over the past three years, rising faster than Leeds City Region and UK growth rates. Bradford is now home to 17,620 businesses employing 194,000 people, with a further 35,500 people self-employed.

Bradford has a diverse population. Over a third of its population are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 153 languages are spoken by children attending its schools. 67% of the District's population is of white ethnic origin, 20% are Pakistani, 3% are Indian, 2% are Bangladeshi, 2% are of Mixed heritage, 2% are Black and 4% have other ethnic origins. As a 'City of Sanctuary', Bradford is committed to continuing to welcome and support refugees, and international new arrivals¹⁰.

The vision to improve social mobility in Bradford is reflected in the document¹¹ *Bradford: Opportunity Area 2017-20, a local plan to improve opportunities for Bradford's children and young people*.

This is a plan for Bradford and will be a plan led by Bradford. It states '*we will seek every opportunity to give young people, teachers, school leaders, employers and other partners, the authority and the means to lead our work. 2. A partnership approach to 'place-based' working – we will work together to make decisions on how to focus our expertise, time and money. These will be driven solely by the needs of Bradford's children. 3. Evidence based interventions – we will ensure value for money and impact by insisting that activities are funded only where there is strong evidence that they will make a difference.*'

Four priorities are identified in the plan. One priority is to improve literacy in Bradford's Primary schools, particularly for disadvantaged pupils by bringing together local, regional and national expertise and resources to help Bradford's schools improve literacy, starting with primary schools (page 8). The report identifies the importance of literacy in tackle underachievement in Bradford.

Across Bradford, the data shows a pattern of low attainment in literacy at every stage of learning, with disadvantaged pupils falling furthest behind. Literacy is essential to understanding and success in every subject. It is also vital as an underpinning skill for social and emotional development. A lack of capability in written and spoken English is the concern most frequently raised by employers. Where English is not spoken or is not the first language at home, schools can face an additional challenge in engaging parents and carers to support their children's learning (page 30).

2016 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) data showed the proportion of children meeting the expected level of development for speaking, writing and reading in Bradford was between two or three percentage points lower than the national average.

At Key Stage 1, only 70% of Bradford's pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, four percentage points below the national average. 64% achieved the expected standard in writing, one percentage point behind the national average.

At Key Stage 2, 57% of Bradford's pupils achieved the expected standard for reading, nine percentage points behind the national average. For boys, standards are lower, only 54% of

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index-2017-data>

¹¹ *Bradford: Opportunity Area 2017-20, a local plan to improve opportunities for Bradford's children and young people*. Bradford Council

boys reached the expected standard, making them among the worst performing groups in West Yorkshire.

Bradford is making a significant investment in early reading in school and at home. Improvements in literacy in primary education suggest this and other programmes are helping to improve standards. Consolidating these improvements is essential for pupils to be ready for secondary education and for secondary schools to avoid spending time helping pupils catch up.

Actions to drive improvement and build capacity in primary literacy through:

- **Support to improve phonics.** This will include schools with high numbers of disadvantaged pupils and those with the largest gap to reaching the expected level in reading and writing at key stage 2.
- **Support drawn down from the Department for Education's Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF),** enabling Bradford's teaching schools and multi-academy trusts to help primary schools improve literacy and prioritise projects aiming to reduce the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils in literacy.
- **Making best use of the expertise in literacy and capacity of Bradford's teaching schools and system leaders** to reach schools who are not able to access support from other DfE programmes and providers.

Targets for 2020/1 are identified:

1. Close the gap between Bradford average and the national average in reading and writing in both Key Stage 1 and 2 by at least one percentage point each year from 2018.
2. Have closed the reading and writing attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils by at least one percentage point each year from 2018.

Section 2

The importance of literacy for social mobility

Gaps in achievement begin early. The gap is particularly pronounced in early language and literacy. By the age of three, more disadvantaged children are on average almost a full year and a half behind their more affluent peers in their early language development¹² and around two fifths of disadvantaged five-year-olds are not meeting the expected literacy standard for their age¹³.

Such gaps have a lasting detrimental impact on social mobility. Children who are behind in language development at age five are six times less likely to reach the expected standard in English at age eleven, and 11 times less likely to achieve the expected level in maths¹⁴. Three-year-olds from more disadvantaged families are 37 percentage points less likely to be read to every day than their most advantaged peers¹⁵.

Working with parents

One of the biggest influences on a child's learning and development is what happens in the home. It is what parents and carers do that is more important than who they are.¹⁶ Parents want to help and their support is vital but they need to know the tools to use and how they can best use them at home. An investment of £5 million to trial 'what works' in the North of England has been pledged along with an evidence review on how family learning and adult literacy approaches can be used to involve actively parents in supporting their children's

¹² Read On. Get On. (2014) *Read On. Get On. How reading can help children escape poverty*. <https://literacytrust.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/read-on-get-on/>

¹³ Department for Education (2016) *Early years foundation stage profile results: 2015 to 2016*. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/571605/SFR_50_2016_UD_Additional_Tables.zip

¹⁴ Save the Children (2016) *Early language development and children's primary school attainment in English and maths: new research findings*. http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/early_language_development_briefing_paper.pdf.

¹⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2010) *Poorer children's educational attainment – how important are attitudes and behaviour?* <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/poorer-children-education-full.pdf>

¹⁶ Education Endowment Foundation (2016) *Improving Literacy In Key Stage One*. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Campaigns/Literacy/KS1_Literacy_Guidance.pdf

early language development. The importance of a language rich home environment in reducing the “word gap” for too many children is reflected in the words of Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi: “*We want to create a generation of confident learners who can read and communicate effectively – these are vital skills that children need to grasp from the earliest opportunity in order to succeed*”¹⁷.”

The focus of this project was on Key Stage 2, a brief discussion on the results is relevant here. In England, national curriculum assessments at Key Stage 2 (2018) show that 64% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. Attainment increased in each of the test subjects compared to 2017. In reading, 75% of pupils reached the expected standard in 2018, up by 4 percentage points from 2017. In grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS), 78% of pupils reached the expected standard, up by 1 percentage point. Attainment in all of reading, writing and maths is not directly comparable to previous years because of changes to writing teacher assessment (TA) frameworks. In 2017, 61% of pupils reached the expected standard compared to 53% in 2016. In 2017, 9% reached a higher standard in reading, writing and maths compared to 5% in 2016. The combined reading, writing, and maths measure uses the reading and maths test results along with the outcome of the writing TA. Together, these subjects give a broad measure of pupil attainment. To reach the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths, a pupil must achieve a scaled score of 100 or more in reading and maths tests and an outcome of ‘working at the expected standard’ or ‘working at greater depth’ in writing TA. To reach the higher standard, a pupil must achieve a scaled score of 110 or more in reading and maths tests and an outcome of ‘working at greater depth’ in writing TA.

The Boston Consulting Group (2012)¹⁸ investigated the views of teachers and schools on what initiatives could make most impact on the educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils attending schools below government floor targets. From their report, two areas of development are relevant. 1. Improved literacy and numeracy in primary school and 2. Sharing best practice between schools. The Education Endowment Foundation publication¹⁹ *Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2 Guidance report in 2017* confirmed that good literacy skills provides the building blocks not only for academic success, but for fulfilling careers and rewarding lives. Their research highlights that a disadvantaged child in England is still more than twice as likely as their classmates from more advantaged homes to leave primary school without reaching the expected levels in reading and writing (p.2).

¹⁷ Gov.uk news story 1st August 2018 Multimillion investment in early years education and boost social mobility. Published 29 January 2019. Boost for national mission to improve early literacy and language

¹⁸ Boston Consulting Group (2012). *Premium Policies: What Schools and Teachers Believe will Improve Standards for Poorer Pupils and those in Low-attaining Schools*. London: The Sutton Trust [online]. Available: <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/1suttontrustbcgeefreport.pdf>

¹⁹ Education Endowment Foundation (2017) *Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2*, London: Education Endowment Foundation

The National Curriculum programmes of study for English at Key stages 1 and 2²⁰ states that English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English teaches pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.

The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.

²⁰ DfE, (2013) National Curriculum in England. HMSO.

Section 3

Reading

Reading is a complex skill that involves the integration of complex components²¹. It is an essential element of all stages of education. If pupils cannot read, they are disadvantaged for life. Early deficits carry through the Primary years and children who are behind in reading continue to do so for the rest of their schooling²². In the overview of research in the proposals for the Education Inspection framework (2019), it states that reading is prioritised to allow pupils the full curriculum offer. A rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading²³.

International research evidence into reading from PIRLS in 2017²⁴ (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) shows that a higher percentage of pupils in England are categorised as being 'very confident' readers (53%) compared to the International Median (45%). Pupil confidence in reading is strongly associated with average performance in PIRLS 2016, with the most confident readers in England scoring over 100-points more than those who report the lowest levels of confidence, which was similar to the international trend. However, 20% of pupils in England report that they do not like reading, which somewhat surpasses the International Median (17%). Those who like reading the most score, on average, 45-points more than pupils who report that they do not like reading, which is again similar to the international trend. A slightly lower percentage of pupils in England report being very engaged in their reading lessons (57%) than pupils internationally (59%). Engagement in reading lessons is less clearly associated with average performance in PIRLS than other motivational factors for pupils in England, and internationally.

Girls in England report higher engagement in reading lessons, confidence in reading, and liking of reading than boys. However, a slightly higher proportion of boys report positive attitudes to reading in PIRLS 2016 compared to 2011, whereas the proportion of girls reporting positive attitudes has remained similar across cycles.

Pupils in England who report having more books at home also report much higher levels of confidence and enjoyment in reading. Of those with 10 or fewer books in their homes, 42% report that they do not like reading, compared to just 12% of pupils who have more than 200 books in their home. Only a third of pupils with 10 or fewer books at home report being confident readers, compared to 73% of pupils who have more than 200 books. In England, of the pupils who report having few books at home, higher levels of confidence are also

²¹ Lyon, G. R. & Kameenui, E. J. (2001). *National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Research Support the America Reads Challenge*. the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/nichd.html>

²² Sparks, R., Patton, J. & Murdoch, A. (2014) Early success and its relationship to reading achievement and reading volume: replication of '10 years later'. *Reading and Writing*, 27(1), pp.189-211.

²³ Ofsted (2019) *Education inspection framework: overview of research*. January, p.20.

²⁴ McGrane, J., Stiff, J., Baird J., Lenkeit. J. & Hopfenbeck. T. (2017). Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS): National Report for England. December 2017

associated with higher average performance in PIRLS 2016. This is also the case for pupils with high numbers of books in their homes.

The National Curriculum programmes of study for reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions: word reading and comprehension. It is essential that teaching focuses on developing pupils' competence in both dimensions. Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) when they start school. Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world. Comprehension skills develop through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction. All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils' imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.

In lower Key Stage 2, Years 3 and 4 pupils should be able to read books written at an age appropriate interest level. They should be able to read them accurately and at a speed that is sufficient for them to focus on understanding what they read rather than on decoding individual words. They should be able to decode most new words outside their spoken vocabulary, making a good approximation to the word's pronunciation. As their decoding skills become increasingly secure, teaching should be directed more towards developing their vocabulary and the breadth and depth of their reading, making sure that they become independent, fluent and enthusiastic readers who read widely and frequently. They should be developing their understanding and enjoyment of stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction, and learning to read silently. They should also be developing their knowledge and skills in reading non-fiction about a wide range of subjects. In upper Key Stage 2, Years 5 and 6, pupils should be able to read aloud a wider range of poetry and books written at an age-appropriate interest level with accuracy and at a reasonable speaking pace. They should be able to read most words effortlessly and to work out how to pronounce unfamiliar written words with increasing automaticity. If the pronunciation sounds unfamiliar, they should ask for help in determining both the meaning of the word and how to pronounce it correctly. They should be able to prepare readings, with appropriate intonation to show their understanding, and should be able to summarise and present a familiar story in their own words. They should be reading widely and frequently, outside as well as in school, for pleasure and information. They should be able to read silently, with good understanding, inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words, and then discuss what they have read. Teachers should continue to emphasise pupils' enjoyment and understanding of language, especially vocabulary, to support their reading and writing. Pupils' knowledge of language, gained from stories, plays, poetry, non-fiction and textbooks, will support their increasing fluency as readers, their facility as writers, and their comprehension.

This Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance report contains recommendations regarding the teaching of reading to pupils aged between 7 and 11. It identifies two strands. The first is supporting pupils to develop fluent reading capabilities. Fluent readers can read quickly, accurately, and with appropriate stress and intonation. Fluent reading supports comprehension because pupils' cognitive resources are freed from focusing on word recognition and can be redirected towards comprehending the text. This can be developed through:

- guided oral reading instruction where teachers model fluent reading of a text, then pupils read the same text aloud with appropriate feedback
- repeated reading where pupils reread a short and meaningful passage a set number of times or until they reach a suitable level of fluency.

The second strand is teaching comprehension strategies through modelling and supported practice. Reading comprehension can be improved by teaching specific strategies that pupils can apply both to monitor and overcome barriers to comprehension. These include:

- prediction
- questioning
- clarifying
- summarising
- inference
- activating prior knowledge

Schools should focus on developing core classroom teaching strategies that improve the literacy capabilities of the whole class. When in place, the need for additional support should decrease. It is likely that a small number of pupils will require additional support in the form of high-quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress²⁵.

Literacy support for Bradford schools

Applying for funding

Exceed Teaching Schools applied for the SSIF grant in 2017, citing 2016 Key Stage 2 outcomes to demonstrate local need. The application was to support ten 'client' schools, which later increased to eleven. The application stated:

Literacy outcomes for disadvantaged children in Bradford are low, especially in relation to Reading where there is a greater gap to the national average demonstrated by 2016 Key Stage 2 outcomes than for any other subject. The performance of disadvantaged children reflects the link between poverty and life chances, and this impacts negatively on social

²⁵ Slavin, R. E., Lake, C., Davis, S. and Madden, N. A. (2011) 'Effective programs for struggling readers: A best evidence synthesis', *Educational Research Review*, 6 (1), 1–26. http://www.bestevidence.org/word/strug_read_jun_02_2010.pdf.

mobility. In 2016, disadvantaged groups at all stages had significantly lower achievement. By the end of Year 6, the gap to the national average in the client schools had not significantly diminished. In Bradford, 46% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard at the end of year 6, compared to 64% of non-disadvantaged pupils. For disadvantaged pupils, the combined client schools' outcomes were just 37.9% of pupils achieving the expected standard, 30pp behind the national average for all pupils and 17pp behind the national average for disadvantaged pupils. These schools have very low attainment and a large attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. Literacy competence, especially in Reading for the client schools, is key to diminishing difference enabling children to grow as confident, active citizens. Improving literacy is an educational moral and economic imperative. Bradford is an Opportunity Area where facilitating social mobility through raised aspiration, literacy and improved school leadership are identified priorities.

Through the project, the partnership sought to achieve one key outcome: The percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standards in Reading will equal that of non-disadvantaged pupils.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) 'Improving Literacy in Key Stage 2' guidance report highlights the importance of target teaching and support by accurately assessing pupil needs and using high-quality interventions to help pupils who are struggling with their literacy.

This project sought to improve practice in diagnosing pupils' individual learning needs, implementing timely appropriate evidence-based intervention, and to develop quality first teaching.

The end of the project was 31st March 2019.

Schools confirmed their involvement in the project through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

Implementing the project

Through the DfE-funded Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) project, Exceed Teaching Schools, led by Copthorne and Horton Grange Primary Schools have engaged with a wide range of providers that have delivered high-quality school improvement support in Bradford schools. These providers have a proven track record of positively impacting on standards and pupil outcomes in some of the district's highest performing schools despite their socio-economic challenges of their communities. The programmes aimed to help schools to maximise the impact of:

- SSIF grant from DfE
- Schools' use of Pupil Premium Grant for disadvantaged pupils
- Schools' own internally-funded development priorities

An *Interventions Market Place* event took place in March 2018 to provide schools with information on a menu of literacy interventions and costings comprising:

- 20:20 Reader
- Alphabet Arc
- Clicker 7
- BR@P
- Elklan
- Accelerated Reader

Outcomes of the day were to address school priorities of diminishing the gap for targeted disadvantaged pupils. It further identified staff training needs e.g. leaders, teachers, Teaching Assistants, early training and the requirement to create robust, fit for purpose action plans. On completion of the Market Place, the Headteacher, SENCO and English Subject Leader of each client school prepared a full-costed action plan for the intervention that would complement or replace their current provision, the training their staff would need in order to implement the interventions from September 2019, and their external support needs. These were funded by the project. Each client school received 19.5 days of funded Specialist Leader of Education (SLE) support from the summer term 2019, increasing during the autumn 2018 and spring term 2019. The SLE accessed the training alongside their client school to build sustainable local capacity and expertise.

The key intervention used in this project was the Power of Reading, a programme developed by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE). During its lifetime CLPE has built a national and international reputation for its work in the fields of language, literacy and assessment. CLPE is a charity working to improve literacy in primary schools. The work raises the achievement of children by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively and showing teachers how quality children's literature can be placed at the heart of all learning. It produces produce high quality resources to support classroom teaching and learning and work to ensure that as many schools as possible have access to the best knowledge, research and materials to help them use quality children's literature to raise children's achievement. This programme uses high quality children's literature and proven creative teaching approaches to engage teachers and children in the literacy curriculum and develop a whole school love of reading and writing. Now in its 15th year, the Power of Reading has raised achievement in over 4,000 schools and worked with 5000 teachers nationally.

Power of Reading²⁶ has built a body of evidence over the life of the programme and illustrates a long-standing record of successfully helping teachers to close attainment gaps and significantly raise the quality of provision for all pupils. Analysis of data has shown that Power of Reading schools:

- Make significant progress in reading and writing, particularly with those pupils who had previously been reluctant to engage with literacy
- Are effective in narrowing the achievement gap between boys and girls
- Find that their children choose to read more often, at greater length and are more confident in talking about books

²⁶ Centre for Literacy in Primary Education. The Power of Reading. Website.

- 98% of teachers said that the Power of Reading had raised reading engagement

Eleven client and six supporting Bradford schools accessed the Power of Reading training as part of Exceed Teaching Schools' SSIF project and this comprised a 4-day programme which included:

- 4 full day INSET sessions designed by a highly experienced team of teachers
- Free places for headteachers or senior leaders on the first and last days of the training
- packs of carefully chosen children's books (20 books per teacher) and selected associated teaching resources
- An audit of classroom literacy provision and support to develop a whole school approach to reading and writing
- Advice on forming children's book groups to increase enthusiasm for quality literature and understanding of how to share this in the classroom
- A subscription to a resource-packed website hosting over 200 teaching sequences for KS2, explanations of our teaching approaches and over 1500 examples of good practice
- An introduction to CLPE Reading Scales to help teachers strengthen formative assessment, understand the journey toward becoming literate and support progress for every child
- Opportunities to meet leading children's writers.

Power of Reading support included four full days in September, October, November 2018 and January 2019. Headteachers were invited to attend on days 1 and 4. This programme was utilised to develop quality-first teaching. The impact of the course is evaluated and included later in this report.

Governor we provided with training and resources to support their monitoring of their school's progress.

School-to-school support

The Schools White Paper²⁷, *The Importance of Teaching* (2010) signalled the importance of school-to-school support in the new directions outlined for schools. It is now expected that Teaching Schools draw together outstanding leaders in an area who are committed to supporting other schools and leaders and learn from each other. Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE) and Local Leaders of Education (LLE) who are experienced professionals in leadership positions are designated to provide support for and in other schools.

Exceed Teaching Schools are well placed to offer excellent tailored school-to-school support through National (NLE), Local (LLE) and Specialist (SLE) system leadership. They are committed to ensuring that school-to-school peer support has demonstrable impact whilst ensuring the Headteachers of the supported schools maintain ownership of the support. This is commonly operationalised in terms of expertise in areas such as leadership and management, quality of teaching, curriculum and pupil achievement and closing the

²⁷ Dfe (2010) Schools White Paper. The importance of Teaching. HMSO.

achievement gap; and through support for data analysis, coaching, training and joint action planning.

The aim for this project to close the achievement gap for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 in reading made it especially pertinent to utilise this support. Eleven Primary schools in Bradford participated in the project:

- Holybrook Primary School
- Princeville Primary School
- Lister Primary School
- Westbourne Primary School
- Home Farm Primary School
- Thackley Primary School
- Blakehill Primary School
- All Saints Primary School, Bradford
- Miriam Lord Primary School
- Lilycroft Primary School
- Marshfield Primary School

Each of these schools was supported by a total of 13 Specialist Leaders of Education (SLE) and 5 Local Leaders of Education (LLE) and one National Leader of Education (NLE) for the duration of the project.

Government funding through the Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF)

Governmental support and investment, including to boost early literacy and numeracy and spread best practice, came through £140 million Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) launched in April 2017. Alongside this the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) committed to spend a further £20 million to scale up and disseminate evidence-based programmes and approaches. The SSIF fund was intended to help build a school-led system, aiming to target resources to improve school performance and pupil attainment. The fund supported a broad range of school improvement activities and included literacy interventions, programmes and professional development activity. The fund supported medium- to long-term sustainable activities across groups of schools with a preference towards support provided by schools, for schools and was awarded to a total of 171 projects providing support 3,100 schools of all types across the country. Exceed Teaching Schools (Cophorne Primary School) was successful in the bid in Round 2 of the SSIF and awarded £263,500 for the project on diminishing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 Reading.

Section 4

Project time line. Key events

The project began in January 2018 and ended in March 2019. A timeline for the project was established with milestones determined each term.

Spring term 2018

- Notification of successful grant
- Review of 2016 and 2017 KS2 outcomes of support schools to identify focus and tracking tools
- Briefing for client schools with SENCOs, English Subject Leaders and Headteachers
- Marketplace of interventions – Headteachers, English Subject Leaders, SENCO and SLEs

Summer term 2018

- Intervention Action Plans submitted
- Funding agreements issued
- Visit to Horton Park Primary School to see interventions being used in classrooms
- New Salford Reading Age Tests meeting for assessment and screening arrangements

Autumn term 2018

- Intensive SLE support
- Baseline assessment and screening of target cohort.
- CLPE training days 1, 2 and 3
- Governor training days
- Interim assessment and screening

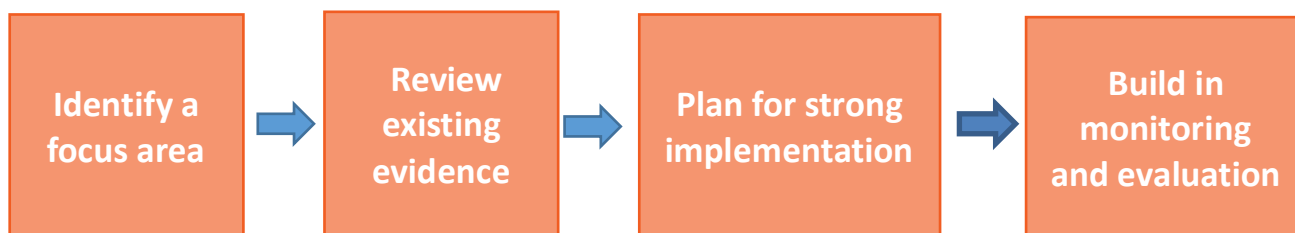
Spring term 2019

- Intensive SLE support
- CLPE training day 4
- Exit assessment and screening
- Celebration event

Project methodology

At the heart of SSIF work and this project is evidence. The SSIF is an important opportunity to bring evidence to school improvement. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) identifies four assessment criteria for school improvement projects: 1. Evidence-based programme of work. 2. Deliverability. 3. Sustainability. 4. Value for money. An evidence-informed approach speaks to all four. As described by the EEF, evidence for projects comprises four strands which are shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Evidence-informed project work



Using the EEF framework this looks like:

1. Identify a focus area

Purpose:

Identify a tight area of focus through a diagnosis of local need.

Starting questions:

What does local data and experience tell us is the greatest barrier to driving up standards?

Can we define and measure that barrier?

What do we hope will change?

2. Review existing evidence

Purpose:

Determine a programme of activity based on existing evidence of what has and has not worked before.

Starting questions:

How have similar problems been tackled before in similar locations?

How strong is the evidence behind a particular solution?

Is it cost effective?

3. Plan for strong implementation

Purpose:

Design a programme of activity that will deliver the selected intervention/s in ways that account for context (including history, resources and need).

Starting questions:

What exactly (events, training, resources) is needed to make the programme work on the ground?

What needs to happen, when and who will be responsible?

How can we plan for what's likely to go wrong?

4. Build in monitoring and evaluation

Purpose:

Test whether what we expected to happen is being realised in practice

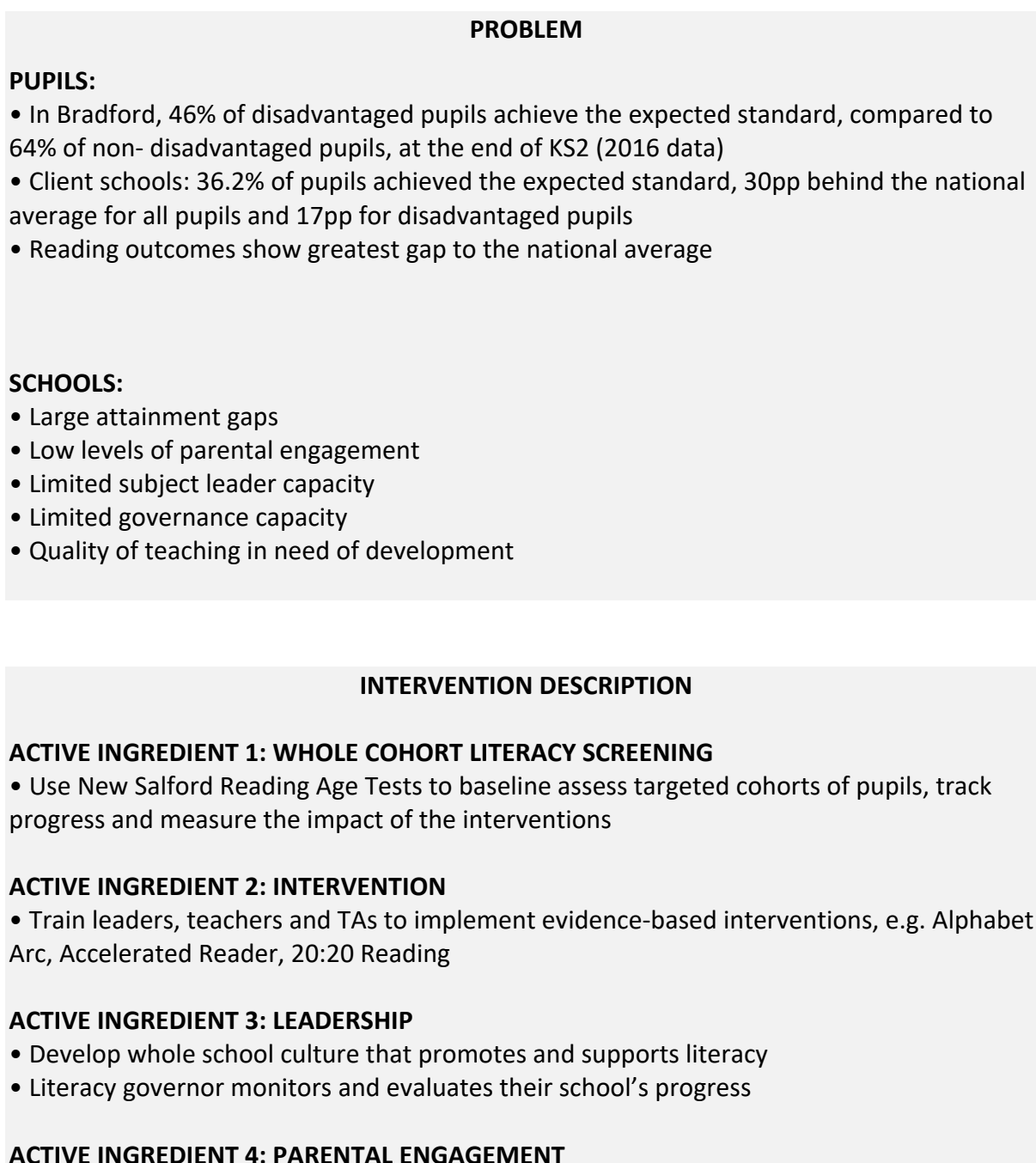
Starting questions:

How will we know we are doing what we expected to do?

What will be the signs of success and failure, both short and long term?

The project design, implementation and evaluation of this project on diminishing the gap for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 Reading utilised the EEF's Logic model and this is outlined in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. EEF Logic Model. Diminishing the gap for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 Reading (January 2018-March 2019)



- Engage parents to support home learning by sharing pupils' classroom-based learning on a day-to-day basis and guiding low threat activities for parents to support at home

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

TRAINING

- 1 x 0.5-day training on the use of Parent Hub to support parental engagement
- 1 x 1-day Interventions Marketplace to showcase evidence-based interventions that complement or replace the schools' current provision
- Bespoke intervention training for leaders, teachers, TAs and supporting SLEs relating to the new interventions adopted by the school
- 1 x 4 day The Power of Reading programme to develop quality first teaching
- 2 x 0.5-day governor training on monitoring the project
- 1 x 1-day training on systems and approaches adopted at Horton Park and Bradford schools
- 1 x 0.5-day Reading Age Test administration training

COACHING

- 10 x 19.5 days SLE support to add capacity in developing the schools' practice

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- £175 pack of books for SENCO, English leader, SLE and peer via The Power of Reading programme
- Professional learning texts for SENCO, English leader and SLE
- Additional resources as required to implement evidence-based interventions

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 10 days evaluation by Leeds Trinity University
- 4 x 4 days LLE quality assurance visits
- New Salford Reading Age Tests for baseline, interim and final assessments

IMPLEMENTATION

SHORT TERM

- Reading is a priority within each school's School Development Plan
- Schools identify new evidence-based practice to implement to improve outcomes
- Schools stop using less effective practice
- Governors are effective in monitoring the implementation and impact of the project

MEDIUM TERM:

- The needs of all pupils are increasingly met through diagnosis, intervention and quality first teaching
- Schools undertake change management process with reading at the centre of everything
- Lowest 20% of pupils in KS2 taught by specially trained teacher
- TAs are deployed in pedagogically meaningful activities
- Parents have access to reading and oracy resources

PUPIL OUTCOMES

DURING THE LIFESPAN OF THE PROJECT:

- Pupils develop resilience and a growth mindset whilst improving their reading skills
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading during Key Stage 2 is in-line with that on non-disadvantaged pupils
- Local capacity and expertise is secured

BEYOND THE LIFESPAN OF THE PROJECT:

- The project is extended to positively impact on more pupils within the client schools and with more schools
- Local capacity and expertise is utilised to support more schools for the benefit of more pupils

Table 1. School Intervention Action Plans

School	Data analysis	Intended outcomes
Westbourne	21pp gap between disadvantaged pupils and other for current Year 3 and a 3pp gap between disadvantaged and other pupils in current Year 4.	To diminish the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. Years 3 and 4, particularly in relation to the lowest ability pupils.
Miriam Lord	This is in particular relation to pupils in the current Year 5 /Year 6, where internal assessment information highlights a significant gap (30%+) between these groups for reading.	To diminish the gap between disadvantaged pupils in reading and the national average for non-disadvantaged pupils.
Lister	Teacher assessment data shows a 21% gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupil groups.	To diminish the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Year 5, particularly in relation to the lowest ability pupils.
Home Farm	School data identifies 10 pupils out of a cohort of 54 (18%) in Year 5.	Year 5 cohort to prepare for Year 6 SATS with a focus upon closing the gap between identified advantaged and disadvantaged pupils.
All Saints Bradford	SATs showed a gap of 5% between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Year 4 and Year 5.	To diminish the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Year 4 and Year 5.

Blakehill	Target pupils in years 3 and 5 who achieved ARE in Reading in KS1 but who are at least 1 year behind ARE currently.	Diminish the gap in attainment for Reading between the disadvantaged pupils and the non-disadvantaged pupils from year 2 onwards (average of 20% gap).
Holybrook	Year 6 cohort: teacher assessment data suggests evidence that disadvantaged children (65.5% of the cohort) outperform their peers however, disadvantaged boys are significantly outperformed by disadvantaged girls. Collectively, the cohort are not showing evidence of being on track to meet floor attainment targets through 'expected progress' for the end of Key Stage 2. An increase of 42% (5 boys) would bring disadvantaged boys' attainment more broadly in line with that of girls in the cohort and raise attainment to 72% meeting Age Related Expectations overall.	To bring attainment for disadvantaged boys in line with the progress of disadvantaged girls) in the Y6 cohort – plus increase ARE outcomes for the whole cohort.
Lilycroft	Teacher assessment data shows a 38 % gap between these groups. SATs showed a gap of 33% to National.	To diminish the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Year 4, particularly in relation to the lowest ability pupils.
Princeville	The school was below average in Reading with progress at -1.83. Gap in progress in Reading -0.3; attainment 13%.	To increase average progress in reading for all pupils throughout KS2. Improve attainment and progress in reading for disadvantaged learners in KS2 and narrow the gap by the end of Key Stage 2. To diminish the gap between New to English learners and other pupils in KS2, particularly in relation to the lowest ability pupils.

<p>Thackley</p>	<p>Teacher assessment data shows:</p> <p>20% gap between these groups in Year 3</p> <p>9% gap between these groups in Year 4</p> <p>38% gap between these groups in Year 5.</p>	<p>To diminish the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage Two.</p>
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Section 5

Overall impact and key findings

The project ‘*Diminishing the gap for disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 2 in Reading*’ has had significant impact.

National curriculum test data (SATs)

Using 2016 and 2018 national curriculum test data for the client schools, the following headlines are presented.

- 10 of the 11 client schools increased Key Stage 2 Reading national test outcomes at Expected Standard for disadvantaged pupils between 2016 and 2018
- In the one school that didn’t improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, the gap closed and disadvantaged pupils outperformed their non-disadvantaged peers
- Collectively, disadvantaged pupils’ outcomes at the client schools increased by 28.6 percentage points from 37.9% achieving Expected Standard to 66.5%
- This increase of 28.6 percentage points is higher than the collective improvement of ‘all Bradford schools’ of 16 percentage points, suggesting the rate of progress has been accelerated for the client schools
- The gap between non-disadvantaged pupils and disadvantaged pupils in the client schools decreased by 7.2 percentage points between 2016 and 2018
- This closing of the gap by 7.2 percentage points is higher than the collective improvement of ‘all Bradford schools’ of 3 percentage points, suggesting the rate of progress has been accelerated for the client schools
- 8 of the 11 client schools improved the gap between 2016 and 2018
- An extra 40 disadvantaged pupils achieved Expected Standard in 2018

Table 2. National Curriculum Test Data: Reading – Non-Disadvantaged and Disadvantaged Pupils. 2016 and 2018.

School	No Characteristic - All Pupils					Disadvantaged - All Pupils					Gap between Selection 1 and Selection 2	
	KS2 Reading Cohort		% Achieving Reading - Expected Standard			KS2 Reading Cohort		% Achieving Reading - Expected Standard			2016	2018
	2016	2018	2016	2018	16 - 18 Trend	2016	2018	2016	2018	16 - 18 Trend		
All Saints Church of England Primary School	58	91	58.6	52.7	↓	19	35	57.9	54.3	↓	-0.7	1.5
Blakehill Primary School	56	59	76.8	91.5	↑	14	13	57.1	100.0	↑	-19.6	8.5
Holybrook Primary School	30	26	36.7	65.4	↑	17	23	23.5	65.2	↑	-13.1	-0.2
Home Farm Primary School	48	59	47.9	59.3	↑	25	27	36.0	48.1	↑	-11.9	-11.2
Lilycroft Primary School	88	59	38.6	71.2	↑	40	27	35.0	59.3	↑	-3.6	-11.9
Lister Primary School	56	59	42.9	42.4	↓	17	16	23.5	37.5	↑	-19.3	-4.9
Marshfield Primary School	60	60	36.7	78.3	↑	13	20	15.4	90.0	↑	-21.3	11.7
Miriam Lord Community Primary School	58	58	53.4	79.3	↑	17	32	52.9	78.1	↑	-0.5	-1.2
Princeville Primary School	60	87	26.7	57.5	↑	30	39	33.3	61.5	↑	6.7	4.1
Thackley Primary School	46	59	69.6	91.5	↑	12	11	50.0	90.9	↑	-19.6	-0.6
Westbourne Primary School	62	61	40.3	80.3	↑	28	29	39.3	75.9	↑	-1.0	-4.5
Filtered selection - All Schools	622	678	47.4	68.9	↑	232	272	37.9	66.5	↑	-9.5	-2.3
Bradford	7,280	7,766	57	70	↑	2,841	2,969	46	62	↑	-11.5	-8.6

However, it should be remembered that not all schools targeted Year 6 with their implementation of the project. The pupils in receipt of the project undertook New Salford Reading Age Tests in September 2018, December 2018 and March 2019.

Reading Age Tests

These data sets is most representative of the impact of this project. Using New Salford Reading Age Test data consisting of a baseline assessment in September 2018, and interim assessment in December 2019 and a final assessment in March 2019, the following analysis has been produced. Standardised reading age tests were used with over 400 children, including the control group and those accessing intervention.

All pupils

- In the six-month window of classroom-based interventions, the control group of pupils made 6.82 months progress on average
- The pupils that received intervention and/or Power of Reading made an average of 12.57 months progress, a gain of 5.75 months on their peers

Non-disadvantaged pupils

- In the six-month window of classroom-based interventions, the control group of pupils made 7.2 months progress on average
- The pupils that received intervention and/or Power of Reading made an average of 8.43 months progress, a gain of 1.23 months on their peers

Disadvantaged pupils

- In the six-month window of classroom-based interventions, the control group of pupils made 6.45 months progress on average
- The pupils that received intervention and/or Power of Reading made an average of 13.35 months progress, a gain of 6.9 months on their peers

Non-disadvantaged versus disadvantaged

- The non-disadvantaged control group made 7.2 months progress compared to 13.35 months progress for disadvantaged pupils in receipt of intervention and/or Power of Reading, a gain of 6.15 months over their peers

Table 3. Reading Age Tests Results

	Reading Age: months progress	Additional months progress	% additional progress
Control group (no intervention or Power of Reading), all pupils	6.82		
Intervention and/or Power of Reading, all pupils	12.57	5.75	45.7
Control group (no intervention or PoR), not disadvantaged	7.2		
Intervention and/or Power of Reading, not disadvantaged	8.43	1.23	14.6
Control group (no intervention or PoR), disadvantaged	6.45		
Intervention and/or Power of Reading, disadvantaged	13.35	6.9	51.7
Any intervention	All pupils, intervention	12.57	
	Not disadvantaged, intervention	8.43	
	Disadvantaged, intervention	13.35	4.92
			36.9
PoR	All pupils, Power of Reading	11.78	
	Power of Reading, not disadvantaged	8.43	
	Power of Reading, disadvantaged	12.56	4.13
			32.9
20:20 Reading	All pupils, 20:20	17.55	
	20:20, not disadvantaged	n/a	Small sample
	20:20, disadvantaged	17.32	
Accelerated Reader	All pupils, AR	8.88	
	AR, not disadvantaged	5.66	
	AR, disadvantaged	9.81	
Alphabet Arc	All pupils, AA	21.2	
	AA, not disadvantaged	n/a	Small sample
	AA, disadvantaged	24.44	
Clicker 7	All pupils, C7	n/a	
	C7, not disadvantaged	n/a	
	C7, disadvantaged	26.5	Small sample size
Precision Teaching	All pupils, PT	14.5	
	PT, not disadvantaged	9.7	Small sample size
	PT, disadvantaged	17.33	
Elklan	All pupils, E	n/a	
	E, not disadvantaged	n/a	
	E, disadvantaged	10.5	
Boosting Reading	All pupils, BR	8.53	
	BR, not disadvantaged	9.71	Small sample size
	BR, disadvantaged	8.1	

There needs to be some caution where small sample sizes have been quoted.

SLE and LLE support

The support provided by Specialist Leaders and Local Leaders has contributed significantly to the improvement gains in schools. Questionnaire returns and impact of school-to-school support reviews by support teams cited to the following examples of impact-

“5/7 of the boys made at least 6 months progress in their reading age.”

“Year 6 TA has been trained and guided to improve his practice of teaching reading to support with all pupils but a focus on the disadvantaged boys” (Holybrook)

Blakehill Primary School reading results have steadily improved since agreeing to join the project last May – last year’s results were 94% expected and 45% GD all DSG children achieved expected (Blakehill)

“Pupil voice demonstrates love of reading, increased enthusiasm where power of reading and intervention has taken place” (All Saints)

*“Students report a ‘love of reading’ and teachers state more engagement from students in reading. Pupils are making more confident choices and are really keen to move up ZPD levels. * Children have made very good progress in terms of reading ages, e.g. disadvantaged child has made 1:01 month progress in a half term” (Thackley).*

As an important part of the support given to schools, actions which were specific and measurable were agreed and documented. Across the support schools these included-

- Interventions used by (SEN) Teaching Assistants
- Matching existing school book stock to the needs of the children
- Launching the intervention with parents and pupils
- Staff meetings on what the reading phase should look like and resources to support
- Evaluating and refining reading systems to ensure that children are being encouraged to read and how to demonstrate a love of reading to them
- SLE modelling a guided reading session to demonstrate a WAGOLL
- Working alongside staff to plan the reading phase of the English learning journey to enhance the quality first teaching of reading in lessons
- Rigorous analysis of data carried out by English Lead to feed back to class teachers – targeted children monitored.
- Whole class teaching of reading. Staff have moved towards teaching of reading skills and using quality texts from Power of Reading training.
- Observations carried out between supporting/supported school to share good practice in the teaching of reading.
- Reporting the successes and areas for development every half-term to parents

Impact of the Power of Reading intervention

The Power of Reading has been a key intervention in the project with teacher evaluations after all four training days. 100% of the evaluations of the Power of Reading interventions were positive. They reported feedback comments on the aspect of the programme that had been most successful, *“enthusiasm of pupils and teachers”* (Farnham).

The issues identified as having had most impact, *“love of reading has increased at home”* and *“excitement and engagement”* (Horton Park).

Specific challenges were also reported, *“inability to listen to smaller groups of children in order to build their expression (Lilycroft) and Miriam Lord commented, “Early Years, the logistics of delivering the book to all at once”.*

15 evaluations of the Power of Reading programme were received and 100% rated the course as “Very effective” or “Effective”. One illustrative comment about recommending the programme to others was, *“Definitely. It has changed the way we teach in Year 6 and children are engaged and enjoying books much more” (Cophorne).*

Headteacher evaluations were also received. They reported the impact on teachers as *“re-energized and enthused teachers”* and *“pedagogic conversations and debates” (Blakehill).* Impact on children for Marshfield was the *“improved engagement of boys; especially disadvantaged. These children are now given the ‘big picture’ at the onset of a new reading teaching sequence. Boys are now tailoring their own learning of reading”.* Dissemination strategies were identified by all schools and these included use of resources, websites, adoption of the programme as a whole school approach. Teaching sequences have been built into the literacy curriculum and plans in some schools are to systematically develop the programme across the curriculum.

Bryan Harrison, Headteacher at Miriam Lord Primary school submitted a blog and part of this is included below, showing the impact the Power of Reading had on his school:

I attended Day One of the four-day training programme and I’ll admit to being instantly sold on the Power of Reading. Having been a teacher for nearly twenty years I’ve seen my fair share of initiatives, but the thing that instantly grabbed my attention was how much common sense the training made. It made so much sense that it had me second guessing ten years of decision making as a Headteacher and questioning my entire English curriculum. That may seem dramatic as, on paper, we had strong outcomes and pupils have always made at least good progress in writing. But the Power of Reading made me realise that the outcomes were simply a mask for more underlying issues.

On the training it was refreshing to talk about ‘English’ teaching; not to break it down into the various components of Literacy such as reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation. As a younger teacher I was a product of the national strategies and even went on to be a Literacy consultant for them. But what I realise when I reflect on that time, and the time since, is how English has been broken down and compartmentalised into different boxes. The Power of Reading looked like it was opening the box up again and getting back to the basic of strong English teaching; find a book that children love, immerse them in it as a reader and this in turn will inspire them to write. This has also brought us back to the most important aspect of English teaching...the book. For years I have fed my pupils a steady diet of extracts to expose them to a range of different genres. Many of these extracts were extremely short and were used so that pupils got a ‘flavour’ of a style of writing, hopefully enough of a flavour so that they could produce their own identical version. If I didn’t realise it before, which deep down I think I did, I see that this is not substantial enough. Since adopting the Power of Reading at Miriam Lord it has been wonderful to see pupils so inspired and engaged to read again by immersing themselves in a high quality book pupils are once again fired up to read, and of course, that is making them more fired up to write as

well! Upon completing of the first teaching sequence on 'The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane' by Kate DiCamillo, the Year Four have been so inspired that they have been borrowing their own copies from the library and pestering parents to buy their own copy for home.
(30 January 2019)

Images taken of school displays at the Power of Reading final training day January 2019:



Recommendations

The SSIF project has been a highly successful project and has had considerable impact on disadvantaged pupils, teachers, curriculum development and the sharing of good practice in reading in Bradford schools. Eight recommendations arising from the project are proposed.

1. Use school data to identify specific year groups and target groups for planned interventions
2. Rigorously monitor and evaluate the use of interventions to inform next steps

3. Consider research and evidence-based practice. The EEF are an excellent place to begin
4. Combine diagnosis, intervention and quality first-teaching
5. Encourage the use of Power of Reading as an effective intervention for reading and catalyst for developing quality first teaching
6. Utilise the expertise in SLEs and LLEs that exists in Bradford schools as an important lever for school improvement and sharing best practice
7. Disseminate the project to parents and other schools in Bradford and the region
8. Contact the EEF to explore roll-out of the project to a new cohort of client schools

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