

How do you know it works?

Linking school improvement to evidence of impact

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Outcomes of today's session



- Consider the problems you are grappling with in your Trust
- Explore practical approaches to building evidence, identifying which initiatives are making the greatest difference and where gaps remain
- Understand how leaders can use research and evaluation to target interventions and strengthen decision-making

Our mission



ImpactEd Group supports education and purpose-driven organisations to maximise and realise their potential.

We do this by helping our partners to be consistently impactful and operationally sustainable.

Who we are



ImpactEd Group is an employee-owned consultancy that provides specialist support to the UK education sector.

We take pride in the depth of our sector and disciplinary knowledge, the power of our longitudinal data and benchmarks, and our commitment to actionable insight in all that we do.

**Deep Sector &
Disciplinary Knowledge**

**Longitudinal Data
& Benchmarks**

**Actionable
Insight**

What we do



Who we connect with



inspiration
trust

Harris Federation 



Ark
....



Star



Tudor Grange
Academies Trust



Who we connect with



Steve Rollett ✓ • 1st

Deputy Chief Executive | Executive Leadership, Stakeholder Engagement & ...
3d • 🌐

This is such good work from [Chris Larvin](#) and [ImpactEd Group](#). Well worth a read.



ImpactEd Group ✓

4d • 🌐

Today we're publishing The Trust Effect: Evidence on pupil outcomes, workforce and school improvement, alongside the [Confederation of School Trusts](#)' new report, Advancing education: Two decades of school... more



**Confederation
of School Trusts**



How we do it



Trust Learning Partnerships: *enabling better decision-making*



- Explore priority school improvement challenges, **agreeing the problem area** schools want to focus on
- **Define an approach** that answers the right questions using the most appropriate evidence, research methods and expertise
- Co-design and **deliver** with clear parameters
- **Report** to leaders and governors
- Turn insight into action with supported **implementation**

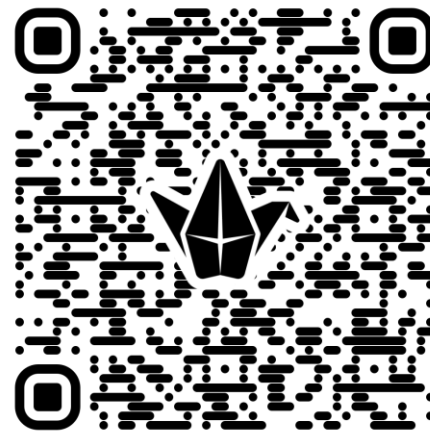
Knowing your problem



What are some of the areas you are grappling with in your trust?

What do you want to understand about your impact and why?

Add your thoughts to the padlet.





Collaborative impact exploration: Understanding Attendance

Impact exploration: Understanding Attendance



Examine the data in the handout provided

- Where are the problems, and how do you know?
- What isn't the data telling you?
- Where would you like to probe further, and how?

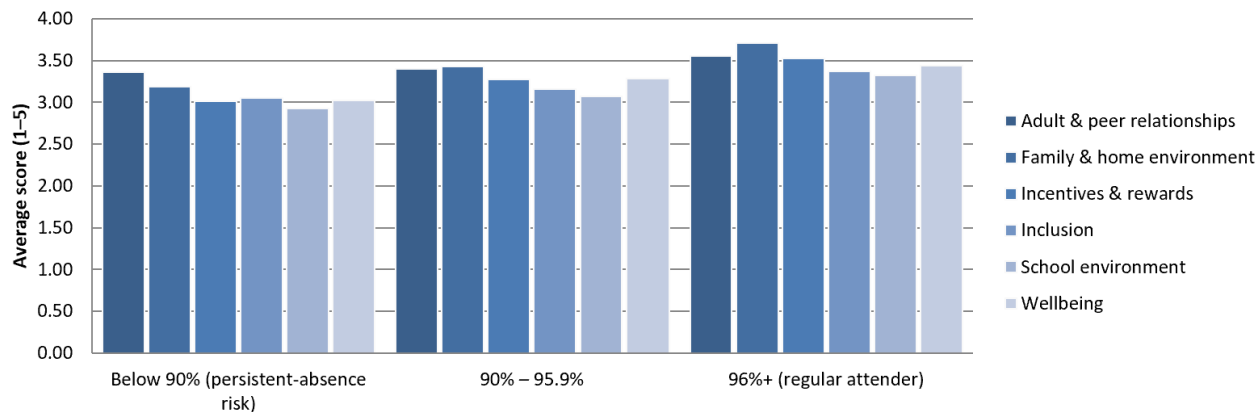
Impact exploration: Understanding Attendance



A. Attendance and survey themes by year group										
Year group	N pupils	PP eligible (n)	SEND (n)	Avg attendance (%)	Adult & peer relationships	Family & home environment	Incentives & rewards	Inclusion	School environment	Wellbeing
7	286	66	76	95.3	3.63	3.66	3.94	3.54	3.42	3.43
8	279	65	44	94.3	3.46	3.49	3.51	3.24	3.03	3.29
9	284	50	34	95.1	3.42	3.46	3.49	3.28	3.11	3.33
10	246	37	49	94.1	3.39	3.55	2.89	3.04	3.06	3.23
11	225	39	27	95.3	3.39	3.50	3.03	3.05	3.19	3.30
12	50	0	6	91.0	3.61	3.52	2.92	3.41	3.52	3.39
13	51	0	8	90.0	3.77	3.78	2.98	3.39	3.42	3.32
All (7–13)	1421	257	244	94.5	3.48	3.54	3.37	3.26	3.19	3.32

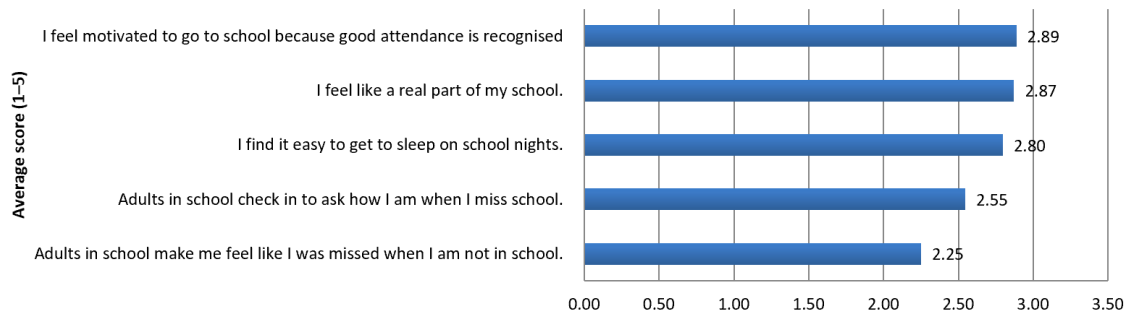
Impact exploration: Understanding Attendance

Survey theme scores by attendance band (1–5 scale)

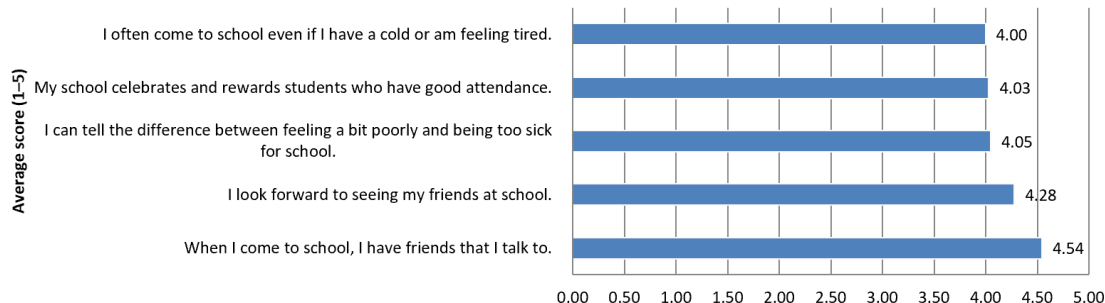


Impact exploration: Understanding Attendance

Bottom 5 survey items — lowest average agreement (School A)



Top 5 survey items — highest average agreement (School A)



Administrative projects as well as outcomes projects – a case study



One large, national trust knew they were spending too much on supply and didn't have a sharp process across their schools:

- Analysis of spend Vs benchmarks of similar cluster
- Diagnostics across trust settings
- Structured interviews with all heads
- Write up and synthesis of findings with recommendations
- Design and piloting of a new system
- New standard operating procedure for schools and reporting approach set up at Board level
- Spend on supply has consistently declined throughout the project

Why are we doing this work in the system?

- Marking your own homework is rarely effective.
- Only looking internally means you don't get the value of sector benchmarks.
- Perhaps most importantly – there is limited time and capacity to lead these projects amongst the daily operations, even though we know they can deliver resource and impact gains.

Revisiting your burning questions

Do these prompts make you think differently about how you are approaching your own projects?

Are there other areas you might want to explore now?



Take away - questions you can ask internally

A

Before you invest

Is the case clear?

- Problem defined from your own data
- Logic model links activities to outcomes
- Existing evidence check
- Success metrics and target pupils agreed

B

Before it starts

Can we measure change?

- Baseline taken before starting
- Measures match the intended outcomes
- Comparison group or benchmark
- Named data owner, consent sorted

C

During delivery

Is it happening as planned?

- Sessions and attendance recorded
- Pupil and staff views gathered
- Review points set to adjust
- Drop-outs tracked, and why

D

Afterwards

What did we learn?

- End results compared with baseline
- Other explanations tested
- Who benefited, and who did not
- Clear stop, adapt or expand decision

E

Across schools

Are we learning as a group?

- Common measures across schools
- Learning from similar schools
- Clear central vs local split
- Findings shared to shape spending

Take away - questions you can ask internally

Is it making a difference?

A self-assessment for any intervention, programme or investment. Use it to check whether you will be able to tell if it worked, and for whom.

Intervention or investment

School or trust

Date

HOW TO USE IT

- 1 Choose one intervention or investment you are running now.
- 2 Rate each statement: Not yet (0), Partly (1) or In place (2).
- 3 Total each section on page 4 and pick your three priorities.

Sections A to D are for every school. Section E is for trust central teams.

A Before you invest

Is the case clear?

Not yet
0 Partly
1 In place
2

1	We can describe the specific problem this investment addresses, using our own data.	☐	☐	☐
2	We have a written logic model showing how the activities lead to short-term changes, and how those lead to the outcomes we want.	☐	☐	☐
3	We have checked the existing evidence for this approach (for example, the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit), including for pupils like ours.	☐	☐	☐
4	We have agreed what success looks like, by when, and what result would make us stop or change course.	☐	☐	☐
5	We know which pupils it is for and how they will be selected.	☐	☐	☐
6	We know the full cost, including staff time, so we can judge value for money later.	☐	☐	☐

B Before it starts

Can we measure change?

Not yet
0 Partly
1 In place
2

7	We capture a baseline with pupils before the intervention starts.	☐	☐	☐
8	Our measures match the outcomes in our logic model, including non-academic outcomes such as wellbeing or attendance where relevant.	☐	☐	☐
9	We use the same measures at the start and the end, and they are reliable enough to show real change.	☐	☐	☐
10	We have a way to estimate what would have happened without the intervention, such as similar pupils not yet taking part, a previous cohort or a national benchmark.	☐	☐	☐
11	A named person is responsible for collecting the data and has time set aside to do it.	☐	☐	☐
12	Data protection and consent are sorted before we collect anything.	☐	☐	☐

C During delivery

Is it happening as planned?

Not yet
0 Partly
1 In place
2

13	We record whether it is being delivered as intended: sessions run, pupil attendance and how much pupils receive.	☐	☐	☐
14	We gather pupil and staff views while it runs.	☐	☐	☐
15	We have agreed points to review progress and adjust.	☐	☐	☐
16	We track which pupils drop out, and why.	☐	☐	☐



WHY THE BASELINE MATTERS

Without a baseline you can describe where pupils ended up, but not how far they travelled. It is very hard to add one after the intervention has started.

D Afterwards

What did we learn?

Not yet
0 Partly
1 In place
2

17	We repeat our measures at the end and compare them with the baseline.	☐	☐	☐
18	We test other explanations for any change, such as pupils improving anyway after being chosen for a low score.	☐	☐	☐
19	We look at who benefited and who did not, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.	☐	☐	☐
20	We allow enough time for outcomes that take longer, and plan a later follow-up where needed.	☐	☐	☐
21	We make and record a clear decision to stop, adapt or expand, and share what did not work as well as what did.	☐	☐	☐



WATCH OUT FOR THE BOUNCE-BACK

Pupils picked because of one low score often do better next time anyway, since part of that low score was a bad day. A comparison group shows how much of the change the intervention can fairly claim.

E Across schools FOR TRUSTS

Are we learning as a group?

Not yet
0 Partly
1 In place
2

22	Our schools use common measures so their results can be compared fairly.	☐	☐	☐
23	We look at differences between our schools and learn from those doing better in similar contexts.	☐	☐	☐
24	For each central investment, it is clear what is common across schools and what is left to local decision.	☐	☐	☐
25	Findings, including disappointing ones, are shared across the trust and shape future spending.	☐	☐	☐

To get your copy of the impact checklist, or to talk about impact in your trust, please email: **jo.twiby@impactedgroup.uk**

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www.impactgroup.uk/