Schools Partnership Programme

One of the Education Development Trust’s (formerly CfBT) flagship projects is the Schools Partnership Programme (SPP). This is based around partnerships of 3-7 schools working through a three part programme involving: self review; peer review; and follow up school-to-school support.

Schools are trained in how to effectively undertake a continuous cycle of self review, peer reviews and follow up school-to-school support. Senior and middle leaders are the key participants, and each cluster nominates “Improvement Champions” who receives extra support to develop their facilitation skills and evidence-based approaches to school improvement. Leaders from the clusters will attend 4 days of training, alongside undertaking 2 structured peer reviews, each taking 1-2 days. While schools will identify individual priorities for improvement, all will focus on reducing the attainment gap in core subjects.

Why are we funding it?

School peer review is a popular approach to school improvement, and this model in particular has had significant reach already. The model itself is informed by international literature about school improvement, such as the work of Michael Fullan and Viviane Robinson. However, it has not been evaluated robustly. Partly this is because such models are complex to evaluate: they have varied inputs and a whole range of outcomes, and therefore huge scale and complicated process evaluations are required to identify what impact they have, and what is driving that impact. This trial could produce useful evidence for schools looking to adopt this or a similar approach.

How are we evaluating it?

This effectiveness trial will test the SPP model delivered at large scale and in real world conditions. SPP will recruit 50 clusters of schools (a total of around 300 schools). The independent evaluation team, led by Jake Anders at UCL Institute of Education, will compare them to statistically similar schools (a “matched difference-in-differences” design). The focus will be on KS2 results of the primary schools involved in the clusters following 2 cycles of review. The quantitative impact evaluation will be accompanied by an in-depth implementation and process evaluation exploring the project’s successes and challenges at various levels.

When will the evaluation report be due?

The evaluation report will be published in Spring 2021.