Glasses in Classes

In the UK it is recommended that all children receive an eyesight test in their Reception year. This is provided by health services and results are shared with families, but not schools. Roughly 10–15% of children fail their eyesight test, and of these around a third are not taken to the opticians to obtain glasses.

This project will test an intervention designed to increase the number of children who obtain and consistently wear glasses, following the eye test. The results of the eye test will be shared with schools, school staff will be trained to support pupils and their families to get glasses and encourage pupils to wear them, and funding will be provided for a second pair of glasses for pupils to keep at school. Each participating school will appoint a member of staff as a “vision coordinator” who will coordinate participation in the project, including the relationship between school, families, opticians and health services. Vision coordinators will receive a short twilight training session.

Before the trial starts, the training package will be piloted in 4 schools in Tower Hamlets. Feedback from the pilots will be used to revise the training appropriately, and if required the training package will be repeated in a further two schools.

Why are we funding it?

Disadvantaged children are more likely to not get or wear glasses after the eye test, so this project is a good fit for the EEF. The existing evidence base suggests that attempts to increase how much children wear glasses can have positive impacts on academic attainment. However, these trials were in a different context, and it would be useful to conduct a trial in the UK.

How are we evaluating it?

The programme will be independently evaluated by a team from the University of Nottingham, led by Professor Roisin Corcoran. The evaluation will use a two-arm randomised control trial to examine the impact of a one-year intervention of Glasses for Classes on the primary outcome of literacy and secondary outcomes of maths and an eyesight test. The process evaluation will ask whether the intervention improved attendance at opticians and adherence to glasses wearing.

When will the evaluation report be due?

The evaluation report will be published in Summer 2020.