An Evaluation Protocol for the Research Schools Network

Professor Qing Gu, School of Education, University of Nottingham

### Evaluation Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Phase</th>
<th>Primary and Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Schools</td>
<td>All primary and secondary schools (n= 1,000) in the networks led by the 5 Research Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other key stakeholders</td>
<td>EEF evaluation team; Institute for Effective Education (IEE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Mixed Methods Design

- **Qualitative approach:**
  1. 2 light touch visits to Research Schools
  2. A mid-point telephone interview with senior leaders of Research Schools
  3. A telephone qualitative survey (n=125 schools)
  4. Interviews (face-to-face or telephone) with EEF and IEE

- **Quantitative approach:**
  5. A survey of all schools in the 5 Research Schools Networks
  6. Creating and building a standardised network school database for each of the five Research Schools Networks
  7. Secondary data matching: Edubase/Performance

#### Other evaluation methods

- Observing four Research Schools’ get-together meetings
- Developing a standardised pro forma on change in practice for Strand 2 activity, and conducting systematic analyses of the data

| Primary Outcome | Evidence against three pilot success criteria: evidence of promise; feasibility; and scalability |

Table 1: Research Schools Network Evaluation Design Parameters
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project description</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of promise: impact on research engagement</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalability</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The research team will provide the following outputs:</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Management and Security</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data protection, rights and access</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency, preservation, sharing and licensing</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherence</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATION TIMESCALE</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHICAL ISSUES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONNEL</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT BUDGET AND JUSTIFICATION</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has funded the University of Nottingham to evaluate the Research Schools project. This project, jointly funded by the EEF and the Institute for Effective Education (IEE), will support a network of schools to promote the use of evidence in improving teaching practice.

This evaluation of the Research Schools Network is designed to investigate and test the promise and efficacy of this sector-led model to scale up evidence-based practices in schools. Given the light touch nature of the evaluation, we aim, therefore, to provide a largely descriptive account based on a mixed methods design that is sufficiently robust to inform a judgment about the more general viability of the sector-led approach in terms of take-up, feasibility and scalability. The triangulation of various data sources will also explore the social validity of this sector-led approach, especially in terms of the extent to which this approach is successful in encouraging and sustaining the take-up of highly disadvantaged schools, and the association between the profile of schools that are taking up and engaged. We believe that the outcomes will inform the future design and assessment of the perceived and measured impact of the Research Schools Network programme.

This evaluation protocol sets out the context of the Research Schools project and describes in detail the mixed methods research design which allows for a multi-level and multi-perspective analysis on this new sector-led model. The protocol will also address issues of study ethics, outline an evaluation timetable, and set out the responsibilities of the evaluation team members. It is expected that this evaluation will provide valuable formative feedback on the development of a theory of change that informs how systematic educational initiatives are implemented and evaluated in the future.

Background

The Research School project is jointly funded by the EEF and the IEE to promote research use in schools. Each Research School will become a focal point for supporting, disseminating and implementing evidence-based practice in their region. This is to be achieved through building and developing multi-layered Research Schools Networks within and beyond their locality. Schools will be engaged in a variety of ways and with varying degrees of intensity in each Network (see Figure 1 below). This sector-led approach is believed to have the potential to develop, broaden and deepen evidence-based school improvement practices and cultures.

The first five Research Schools have been appointed and are due to start in September 2016. The second five will be appointed in December 2016 and due to begin in April 2017.
Project description

The aim of the project is to test and evaluate whether the sector-led approach to promoting the use of research is an effective way of scaling up evidence-based practices in schools. As such, a mixed methods, case study research design will be developed to explore and assess evidence of promise, feasibility and scalability of the approach. It is important to note that it is not within this evaluation’s remit to investigate whether and how a more ‘research literate’ school will necessarily be a more effective schools (i.e. the extent to which greater levels of research use in schools will result in enhanced academic outcomes).

The first phase of the evaluation (July 2016 – January 2017) will explore and baseline the initial conditions and contexts in which the five Research Schools will build and develop their networks over the course of the evaluation. It will also identify their strategies to develop, establish and sustain their Research Schools Networks, and plans to use these Networks to enable and support the delivery the three key strands of activity. Specific focus will be placed upon Research Schools’ differentiated and coordinated roles in encouraging and sustaining schools’ participation in the Networks in order to create capacity and cultures of evidence-based practice in schools. Moreover, the evaluation will explore the ways in which the Research Schools intend to link up with other local and national education networks and partnerships and use them to support the effectiveness and impact of their work.

Key evaluation activities in this phase include i) observation of the Research Schools’ get-together training and support meetings in October and December 2016, ii) analysis of each Research School’s delivery plans (which are due to be available in November 2016), and iii) an initial one-day visit to each of the five case study Research Schools in early December 2016.

In order to compare the different approaches adopted by the five Research Schools, the research team will work with them to jointly develop a standardised network school database.
which identifies the time and levels of engagement and participation of schools in each of the five Research Schools Networks. The team will also jointly develop a standardised pro forma with Research Schools to baseline and track individual participants’ perceived change in practice as a result of their involvement in Strand 2 activities. Specific focus may be placed on the relevance, applicability and effectiveness of the related activities in context of use.

The second phase of the evaluation (February – October 2017) will focus on collecting in-depth qualitative and quantitative evidence regarding barriers to and conditions for effective take-up, feasibility and scalability of this new sector-led model of scaling up evidence-based practice, as well as perceived impact on practices and cultures in schools.

To achieve this, the evaluation team will i) attend and observe Research Schools get-together training and support meetings in March and June 2017; ii) conduct follow-up telephone interviews with senior leaders of the case study Research Schools in April/May 2017, and a one-and-a-half day visit in October 2017; iii) carry out a senior leadership questionnaire survey of all network schools in May-July 2017; and iv) conduct a telephone qualitative survey of a stratified, purposeful sample of 125 schools (25 from each of the case study Research Schools) in October 2017.

The third phase of the evaluation (November 2017 – March 2018) will focus on the analysis and triangulation of different strands and sources of data and the production of the project report. The report is to be written in an accessible, non-technical style so that it provides feedback to the Research Schools to enable them to develop practice in the remaining years of their projects. A draft report will be submitted to EEF 1st February 2018 and a final report will be delivered by the end of March 2018. The evaluation team welcomes the opportunity to work closely with the EEF team to disseminate this evaluation work through academic publications.

This project is summarised in the logic model in Figure 2.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The evaluation will address this primary research question:

1. Is this sector-led approach via the Research Schools Network a viable way of supporting schools to develop evidence-based practices at scale?

In addition, the evaluation will aim to address most of the following secondary research questions in relation to the three EEF pilot success criteria. It is important to note that these questions were set up for the Research Schools Programme rather than the evaluation project alone. Thus, given the formative nature and limited time span of the project, the evaluation will not be able to explore all the secondary questions at depth – especially those that are underlined. A longer time frame would be necessary to collect data that allows a more nuanced and robust analysis.

Feasibility (Has the campaign happened as intended?)

2. What types of schools have been reached and engaged, and how many, within and across the three strands of activity?
3. How have the schools been reached and how have their engagement been sustained (or not sustained)? What network and communication strategies are most effective initially, and over time, within and across different types of schools and across the three strands? (mostly 1st strand)
4. Is work with schools in depth and sustained? What characteristics of the training are perceived to be effective, and how (e.g. are they monitoring success)? (2nd strand)
5. What types of interventions are being developed and evaluated, and how? (3rd strand)
6. How much interactions are there between the three strands?

Scalability (Is the approach affordable, sustainable and scalable?)

7. To what extent is the funded programme perceived to be affordable (e.g. how much time RS spend on programme of work)?
8. How entrepreneurial are the research schools and what different funding models do they use?
9. Can the approach be self-sustaining after the withdrawal of the funding?
   a. If so, how will it best become self-sustaining (e.g. how can research schools support each other? Do schools become more interested in attending low cost school-led training at the expense of commercial providers)?
   b. If not, why not?
10. How many schools are there available that could be research schools? What is the ideal number that is needed to build and embed evidence-based practice in schools?

Evidence of promise (Is there evidence of intended impact?)

11. Is there evidence that schools are engaging with the evidence and taking up evidence-based programmes and practices?
12. Is there evidence to support the theory of change?
13. Is there any evidence of non-instrumental impacts?
RESEARCH DESIGN

We envisage a **mixed methods case study** design as follows:

**Focus** The case studies of the **five** Research Schools Networks will be centred upon the approaches, conditions and processes of the network development and how this supports the implementation of Research Schools’ activity in terms of take-up, feasibility and scalability. The evaluation will also explore and assess the extent of change in attitudes, programme awareness, understanding, and take-up of evidence-based programmes in Research Schools and their network schools over time.

Evidence from our evaluation of the Teaching School Alliances suggests that it is necessary to consider the extent to which the Research Schools use their existing partnerships (e.g. teaching school alliances (TSAs) and multi-academy trusts) and networks (e.g. Teaching Leaders, Maths Hubs, regional TSA networks) to promote the up-take of evidence-based programmes and practices and through this, enhance the feasibility and scalability of this sector-led approach. It also suggests that it is necessary to consider how variation in levels of engagement by different schools across the three strands of Research Schools’ activity may influence the impact of this programme in terms of individual schools’ capacity to develop and embed evidence-based practices and cultures for improvement in teaching, learning and outcomes.

The research design is organised around the three EEF pilot success criteria.

**Feasibility**

**1) Delivery of the three strands of activity:** The data collection and analysis will involve two steps.

*Step 1* focusses on understanding Research Schools’ **delivery strategies and plans** against each of the three strands of activity over the next three years. In order to have an insight into the development and implementation of their initial delivery plans and identify the extent and how these plans may change and evolve over time, the research team will attend and observe all four Research Schools’ get-together meetings with EEF and IEE in October and December 2016, and March and June 2017.

*Analysis* We will provide a descriptive account of the similarities and differences in the approaches and strategies that the five Research Schools have developed to deliver each of the three strands of activity. We will develop a coding system on the **quality** and **focus** of the evidence base that each Research School has used to design, develop and deliver their activities within their Network over the course of the evaluation project.

*Step 2* involves **two light touch visits** to the five Research Schools. The first one-day visit will take place in late November/early December 2016 after Research Schools have finalised and submitted their delivery plans. The second one-and-a-half day visit will take place towards the end of the evaluation in October 2017.
Data collection  In each Research School, interviews will be conducted with the headteacher, director or lead co-ordinator of the research activity, a focus group of other members of the senior leadership team, and possibly a focus group of middle leaders. We will also propose to have a focus group interview with senior leaders of selected schools from the Network, and other key stakeholders within and beyond the membership of the Network (e.g. HEI partners, regional TSA coordinators, local authorities, regional school commissioners).

The purpose of the first one-day visit is to baseline the initial conditions and strategies for effective delivery of the three strands of activity within each of the five Networks. The visit will also gather information about the initial characteristics of the Networks (in terms of, for example, the contexts and performance profiles of their network schools), and their existing practices to promote, develop and embed evidence-based practice in schools within and across their Networks. Specific attention will also be drawn to the ways in which they intend to use existing partnerships and activity (e.g. Teaching Schools’ Research and Development work) to support the development of the Networks and the delivery of the Research Schools’ activity.

In order to capture changing strategies and practices, a mid-point telephone interview with senior leaders of the Research Schools will be conducted in April/May 2017. Evidence collected through the interviews will be fed back to EEF/IEE in order to facilitate the sharing of best practice across the Research Schools programme.

The second one-and-a-half day visit to each of the five Research Schools will take place in October 2017. The purpose is to track the extent of change in the conditions for and their approaches to delivering the three key strands of activity, and document their perceived impact on take-up and feasibility of this sector-led model. Specific focus will also be placed upon the scalability of the model (in terms of costs, affordability and financial sustainability after the withdrawal of the funding), and how Research Schools disseminate and translate research and evidence and importantly, support schools to build capacity to engage with evidence. By exploring their longer-term intention to continue with evidence-based programmes and the extent to which they have followed their initial plans on delivery, we will be able to identify feasibility and scalability issues that may be specifically related to the characteristics of the Network and/or the region.

In order to understand the role of EEF and IEE in facilitating the feasibility of the Research Schools model, termly interviews will also be carried out with their personnel. Their perceptions will be triangulated with views of schools through the school visits, the quantitative baseline survey in May-July 2017, and the telephone qualitative survey in October 2017. EEF and IEE personnel will also be consulted on the design of data collection tools.

Analysis  Detailed and consistent coding and data analysis frameworks (i.e. analytical matrices) will be developed to identify emerging themes. All interviews will be digitally recorded and will be analysed using the analytical matrices shortly after they have been conducted to ensure that emerging themes are fed into the research process. The analytical
matrices will be used as a basis to develop the data analysis and reporting framework for the each of the case studies. This approach will help to secure some consistency in the analysis of different strands of data and by different researchers and thus enable effective triangulation of research evidence in this evaluation.

2) Programme reach and participation

Data about the reach and composition of each of the five Research Schools Networks will be collected through a standardised network school database that the evaluation team will jointly design, develop and maintain in collaboration and consultation with the Research Schools. The focus of standardisation – in terms of time and levels of engagement and participation against each of the three strands of activity – is to secure the consistency of the data across the five case studies and enable the comparability and comparison of different approaches of the different Research Schools.

The initial discussion on the design of the database will take place at the first Research Schools get-together meeting with EEF and IEE in October 2016, followed by further explorations and approval at the second meeting in December 2016. This will enable each Research School to start building the database for their Network from January 2017 and continue to update it throughout the evaluation project (and beyond). This approach will also enable the evaluation team to baseline and track the development of the Networks over time, especially in terms of the extent of change in the research engagement of schools with different profiles of deprivation and performance.

Analysis: The database for each of the Research Schools Networks will be analysed separately first before combing them for comparison. Analysis will consider individual schools’ time, duration and levels of engagement within and across the three strands of activity. Where possible, the analysis will identify clusters of schools that have played differentiated roles and made differing contributions to the delivery of each of the three strands of activity.

A key focus of this strand of evaluation work is to identify whether (and, if so, how) the research schools successfully engaging high deprivation, low performing schools that are less research engaged. To achieve this, schools’ profiles in each database will be matched to existing secondary databases (including EduBase, school performance data) to explore the main characteristics of schools in each Network, i.e. the ‘membership’ makeup of the Network. This analysis will also identify the underlying proportion of disadvantaged pupils for each school over the time period, as well as which schools deviated from the average proportion and by how much. Importantly, this allows us to appropriately address the issue of uncertainty and to highlight systematic patterns away from natural sampling variation.

Specific questions about programme reach and participation will also be asked at the interviews with the Research School senior leaders during the two visits and the mid-point telephone interview. We will then triangulate their perceptions with the participating schools’ profiles to assess the effectiveness of their strategies in terms of engaging disadvantaged, low performing schools.
Evidence of promise: impact on research engagement

Data collection

(1) A baseline survey of all network schools (n≈1,000) will be conducted between late-May and mid-July 2017. The purpose of the survey is to explore i) the conditions that may have, positively or negatively, influenced schools’ motivation to participate in different strands of network activities; ii) the extent to which their engagement and participation thus far have made a difference to the practices and cultures in their schools; and iii) their expected long-term engagement with the Networks.

The decision to undertake the survey in the summer term of 2017 is informed by the evidence from our evaluation of Teaching Schools which suggests that it has taken almost all Teaching School Alliances one to two years to become clearer about who they are (i.e. identity), what they are for (i.e. mission) and how to achieve their aims (i.e. action). We envisage that the establishment of Research Schools Networks and the development of the three strands of activity may also take time to evolve, and that by May-July 2017 the five Research Schools will have become clearer about the composition of their Networks and how it works to support the delivery of their programmes and activities.

Therefore, the concept of ‘baseline’ is in relation to the longer term development of the Networks for this cohort of Research Schools. Their three year project ends in 2019.

The decision to survey all schools in each Network takes into account the potential risk of low response rates. We will work closely with the Research Schools to disseminate the survey and seek their support to help boost the response rates. The headteacher (or the senior leader who coordinates with the Research Schools) will be invited to complete the questionnaire in each school. We aim for a response rate of 50% in the Strand 1 group and 80% in the Strands 2 and 3 groups. The survey will be available in online (paper version available on request).

(2) We will conduct a telephone qualitative survey of a stratified, purposeful sample of 25 schools in each of the five Research Schools Networks (total N=125) in October 2017. The purpose is to explore, in more detail, various network schools’ motivation for participation and engagement, conditions for effective take-up of evidence-based practices, and their perceived impact on practices and cultures in schools.

The selection of schools for the qualitative survey will take into account school phase, type and size, location (urban/suburban/rural), school socioeconomic contexts, and school performance. It will also consider their responses to the quantitative survey, and the standardised network school data in terms of their engagement with the Research Schools prior to the project and their levels of participation across the three key strands of activity during the project. The school leader who coordinates with the Research Schools will be invited for the qualitative survey interview.
In order to compare and contrast the impact of Strand 2 activity on individual participants’ knowledge, skills and practices across the Research Schools Networks, we will jointly design and develop a standardised pro forma to baseline and track the extent of perceived change in participating teachers’ and school leaders’ practices, and also the conditions (e.g. school cultures, school leadership, staff collegiality) that have facilitated or hindered the impact of the training on their change (or lack of change).

This pro forma will be developed in consultation with the Research Schools who will then collect data from participants of each of their Strand 2 activity at three time points: i) prior to the start of the training; ii) on completion of the training; and iii) one term after the completion of the training. The analysis of the data will be conducted by the evaluation team.

Data analysis

We envisage that the questionnaire will take no more than 20 minutes to complete. There will be both closed and open questions to capture the necessary information. The researchers will draw inferences from the quantitative data using, inter alia, parametric and non-parametric tests of variance to examine schools’ perceptions of the conditions and practices that enable or hinder their engagement with different strands of the Research Schools’ activity, as well as effective take up of evidence-based practices in their schools.

The analysis of standardised pro forma will focus on exploring i) variations in the extent of change in individual participants’ practice over time and ii) the factors (e.g. individual, school, quality of training related factors) that may have contributed to change (or lack of change) in practice.

Where possible, the qualitative survey data, the questionnaire survey data and the pro forma data will be matched to existing secondary databases (Edubase, school performance data). The analysis will enable us to investigate take-up, engagement and the reach to FSM pupils in addition to whether, and how, schools are translating and using evidence and evidence-based programmes. This will also enable us to consider the impact of the Research Schools on the gap between schools and between pupils at least in terms of take-up of evidence-based approaches.

In addition, the analyses of these three strands of data will be triangulated with the quantitative analyses of the standardised network school databases and the additional qualitative data collected from i) a telephone qualitative survey of 125 network schools, ii) telephone interviews (and/or if possible, focus group interviews) with EEF and IEE personnel, and iii) light touch school visits. The triangulation of the multi-perspective data on the delivery of the Research Schools’ activity, programme reach, research engagement and impact will enable us to provide a relatively nuanced analysis as to the extent and how this sector-led approach via the Research Schools Network is a viable way of supporting schools to develop evidence-based practices at scale.
Scalability

The assessment of the extent to which this sector-led approach is perceived to be affordable and sustainable will be carried out at the individual school level. We envisage that it will be difficult to collect data from schools about their marginal and direct costs. We will create a pro forma prior to our second visit to Research Schools and ask them to prepare the breakdown costs regarding, for example, the staffing and administration structure that has been created to deliver the Research Schools’ activity; and the financial revenue that they have created through various programmes and activities. We will also interview the EFF and IEE personnel, and then combine with the evidence relating to the feasibility to address scalability. In addition to the proposed analyses on cost effectiveness, in-depth qualitative data from case studies will also be of particular value here, in that it will enable us to capture issues and conditions that may be particular to the history and contexts of the five Research Schools.

Outputs

The research team is committed to disseminating and sharing outcomes of this evaluation with the EEF/IEE throughout the project. This will enable the research team to provide feedback to the EEF/IEE on what is working well and where and what improvements might be needed in a timely manner and is, therefore, an important strategy to support the EEF/IEE’s commitment to developing support as Research Schools travel over time.

The research team will provide the following outputs:

1) **One interim report** will be produced at the end of January 2017. It will provide a summary of the evaluation activity to date and the results from the interim analysis of the first case study visit.

2) One mid-point **in-person feedback session** in June 2017. The research team will present interim findings from the case studies, the progress of the survey, and a summary of the development and interim analysis of the standardised network school databases and the standardised pro formas on change in practice.

3) **The end-of-project report** will present and synthesise the outcomes from different strands of the evaluation, and through these, provide a theory of change model that is informed by the synthesised evidence from the evaluation. A draft report will be submitted to the EEF/IEE on 1st February 2018, and a final report will be delivered by the end of March 2018.

Data Management and Security

The evaluation will make use of both primary and secondary data. With the use of the primary data and secondary datasets (quantitative and qualitative), these datasets will be held locally. For this purpose, we will have the use of a secured partition on the University of Nottingham’s research network drive with access provided to the evaluation team members and specific IT support personnel. Access to the network drives is tied to researchers’
workstations which are situated in private locked offices. The terminals are all password-protected and authenticated through the University’s centralised Information Access Management system. Remote access, where permissions allow for it will only work through remote desktop which has the same password and authentication requirements. The research drive partition is regularly backed-up and further stored on tape drives.

Data protection, rights and access

In all published reports and any subsequent academic journal articles, we will avoid the identification of pupils, teachers, schools, and EEF and IEE staff.

Transparency, preservation, sharing and licensing

The long-term responsibility for archiving the data will rest with the Education Endowment Foundation and its partners. On the completion of the evaluation, the data and supporting documentation will be released to the Foundation, Fisher Family Trust acting as the data archive team, as well as the developers.

Any academic publications which come from the work carried out during the evaluation will release supporting materials through Harvard’s Dataverse repository (where appropriate). This is an open source data repository which provides the advantages of specifically organising data curation on the basis of published academic outputs. It allows the curation of replication code and documentation, provides controls over data access, and importantly provides versioning control for updates to material over time. All material which enables a successful replication (with the inclusion of synthetic versions of the data – to protect the identity of the participants, but maintain the statistical properties of the datasets) will be preserved in the repository.

Adherence

Adherence will be reviewed at the evaluation’s progress management meetings and on request from the Education Endowment Foundation and the Institute for Effective Education.

EVALUATION TIMESCALE

Table 1 below provides a summary of the key research activities, methods of data collection and evaluation timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light touch school visits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-point telephone interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Research Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: Summary of data collection timeline

| ETHICAL ISSUES | The potential for harm in this research will be relatively low. Ethical issues with regard to consent, privacy and confidentiality of data will be considered in each strand of the research. Ethical approval will be sought, prior to the research commencing, in line with the University of Nottingham Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics and the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics. |
| PERSONNEL | Professor Qing Gu will lead the evaluation and conduct case study visits and interviews as well as interviews with EEF and IEE. Professor Jeremy Hodgen will be the Co-Investigator of the project supporting the design and analysis of different strands of research work. Dr Lindsey Smethem and Isos Partnership (Simon Rea, Ben Bryant and Kiaran Gill) will conduct the qualitative data collection and analysis. Isos Partnership is an experienced research and advisory organisation. They have undertaken research and evaluation projects |
for the DfE, National College, Welsh Government, Ofsted, Teach First, and a wide range of local authorities.

**Dr Kate Holdich** and **Fiona Ellis** will conduct the telephone qualitative survey. Dr Holdich is a freelance educational researcher. She worked as a senior research manager for CUREE and also a research fellow on an ESRC Knowledge Exchange project at the University of Nottingham (co-led by Gu). Fiona Ellis is a researcher at Seymour Research and has been involved with a wide range of mixed methods research projects.

**Dr Kathy Seymour** (Seymour Research) will conduct the quantitative data collection and analysis, including the design and analysis of the standardised network school databases and the pro forma on change in practice.