

# Evaluation of Whole School SEND Review: A cluster randomised controlled trial

## Evaluation Protocol



Evaluator: Manchester Metropolitan University

Principal investigator(s): Stephen Morris & Cathy Lewin

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Evaluation of Whole School SEND (WSS) Review: A cluster randomised controlled trial
<b>DEVELOPER (INSTITUTION)</b>	Nasen
<b>EVALUATOR (INSTITUTION)</b>	Manchester Metropolitan University
<b>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S)</b>	Stephen Morris and Cathy Lewin
<b>PROTOCOL AUTHOR(S)</b>	Stephen Morris, Cathy Lewin, Peter Hick, Andrew Smith and Jordan Harrison
<b>TRIAL DESIGN</b>	Two-arm parallel cluster randomised controlled trial with allocation at the school level
<b>TRIAL TYPE</b>	Efficacy
<b>PUPIL AGE RANGE AND KEY STAGE</b>	Age range during the study: 12/13-15/16, recruitment and enumeration during KS3 with outcomes at KS4
<b>NUMBER OF SCHOOLS</b>	160
<b>NUMBER OF PUPILS</b>	4,000 SEND students per cohort, total cohort size 28,800 (all pupils), with two cohorts per school
<b>PRIMARY OUTCOME MEASURE AND SOURCE</b>	Marks in GCSE English Language (Exam Boards via schools)
<b>SECONDARY OUTCOMES MEASURE AND SOURCES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marks in GCSE Mathematics (Exam Boards via schools)</li> <li>• Grade in GCSE English Language (school records)</li> <li>• Grade in GCSE Mathematics (school records)</li> <li>• Unauthorised absence in previous school year (School records)</li> <li>• Authorised absences in previous school year (School records)</li> <li>• Fixed term exclusion in previous school year (School records)</li> <li>• Permanent exclusion in previous school year (School records)</li> <li>• Student wellbeing score (Total difficulties score, student 11-17 self-completion SDQ)</li> </ul>

### Protocol version history

VERSION	DATE	REASON FOR REVISION
2.0	30/10/2020	Revised protocol accounting for changes stemming from school closures in response to Covid-19 pandemic
1.0 [ <i>original</i> ]	31/1/2020	Original protocol

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## Study rationale and background

Students with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) represent a significant and often vulnerable part of the secondary school population (14.9%, Department for Education, 2019a). School leaders report substantial challenges in making additional provision for SEND pupils, with increasing demand for specialist professional assessments following the new Code of Practice for SEND (ASCL, 2019). Students with SEND are disproportionately likely to be excluded from school, to be eligible for free school meals and to be 'looked after' or identified as a child in need (Department for Education, 2019b). In this sense, the focus on SEND students' academic attainment relates to the EEF's focus on economic disadvantage: 26% of pupils with special educational needs are eligible for free school meals compared to 12% of pupils without special educational needs (Department for Education, 2019a).

There is therefore an overlap between the support needs of a range of vulnerable learners and those with identified SEND. Research over recent years has highlighted the importance of inclusive pedagogy for all learners (Florian, Rouse, & Black-Hawkins, 2016; Florian & Spratt, 2013; Lewis & Norwich, 2004), pointing to the need to develop schools as inclusive learning environments, rather than focusing primarily on specialist approaches for individuals identified with SEND. Equally, there is a strand of research in the field of inclusive education over the last thirty years addressing the development of more inclusive practices with learners with SEND, as a whole-school development issue (Hick & Thomas, 2008). A key example is the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002), which provides a process and resources to support inclusive school development.

The Whole School SEND (WSS) Review is best understood against this backdrop of wider research examining inclusive school cultures. The WSS Review process includes:

- SENDCo training on reviewing and peer mentoring provided by an experienced SEND reviewer;
- The use of an evidence-based framework which draws on a school's current information, robust data and contextual factors to structure the review; and
- Peer-to-peer support and a reflection network to facilitate a collaborative, localised and grassroots approach to developing SEND provision.

Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson (2006) point to the benefits of engaging stakeholders with evidence that can provoke 'principled interruptions' in professional discourses, providing opportunities for reflection on previously established practices. In this sense, the WSS Review can be viewed as seeking to promote the development of more inclusive practices by engaging school leaders and acting as a catalyst for school-led change, focusing on local priorities. Thus, the WSS Review process reflects the premise that excellent teaching for pupils with SEND is excellent teaching for all.

The role of the school Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo) has developed significantly in recent years, with a mandatory qualification and more detailed guidance in the revised Code of Practice for SEND (Department for Education, 2015). Whilst this role is more firmly embedded in the infrastructure of the SEN funding system, and is increasingly seen as a route toward school leadership - there is less evidence of the impact of SENDCOs on developing inclusive practices at a whole-school level. Likewise, there is a dearth of rigorous evaluation evidence relating to specific whole-school level interventions that are relevant to secondary schools and can be adopted at scale.

The Whole School SEND (WSS) Review was developed in response to the Department for Education (DfE) identifying a need for schools to access support for implementing 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms (Bunter, 2018). DfE guidance encourages schools to commission a review using the Whole School SEND (WSS) materials, to reflect on SEND provision and explore different approaches to raising attainment. A substantial proportion of Local Area SEND Inspections identified weaknesses in provision (Ofsed/CQC, 2017), often resulting in a requirement for local authorities to issue a Written Statement of Action and provide support for WSS Reviews. For schools, the disproportionately high levels of exclusion of SEND pupils remains critical (Department

for Education, 2019b). This is likely to impact negatively on pupils' attainment and to reflect weaknesses in school-level support.

The WSS Review aims to prioritise SEND provision in secondary schools by giving school leadership teams ownership of the process to support school development of SEND – ultimately with the aim of improving pupil outcomes.

Specific issues to address include:

- SEND provision tends not to be prioritised by strategic leadership teams in secondary schools and is not very well regulated (Curran, Moloney, Heavey, & Boddison, 2018; Wall, Van Herwegen, Shaw, Russell, & Roberts, 2019).
- SENDCos are most likely to be middle leaders and so in a difficult position to drive whole school change (Pearson, Mitchell, & Rapti, 2015).
- Ownership of the SEND agenda within secondary schools is often fragmented, in contrast to primary schools. This involves risk in terms of identification and support of pupils.
- SEND provision in secondary schools tends to have less focus on teaching and learning and is more about resources and pastoral concerns (Curran, Moloney, Heavey, & Boddison, 2020)
- Classroom teachers lack confidence in SEND provision (Ginnis, Pestell, Mason, & Knibbs, 2018).
- There is a lack of wider understanding in schools of what the SENDCo's role and responsibilities are (Curran et al., 2018).
- SENDCos may be in post prior to receiving training through the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (Wall et al., 2019), and so may lack the required knowledge.

An evaluation of the initial DfE contract for WSS delivery noted that peer-mentoring, a requirement of the original DfE contract, was valuable and created 'significant learning opportunities' (Bunter, 2018). The evaluation suggests that:

"WSS is well-placed to scale-up contract delivery to reach more schools in more regions but needs to continue understanding the nuances of stakeholders within the community of practice to ensure continued delivery of appropriate interventions" (Bunter, 2018, page 6)

"WSS has made a positive contribution to the SEND sector by empowering the sector to believe system change is achievable by providing solutions that already exist in the system." (Bunter, 2018, page 155)

The WSS Review team note that the initial evaluation showed evidence of promise in terms of the impact at school level, for example:

- The process enabled schools to build on what they were already doing well for pupils.
- More non-specialist SEND teachers were willing to look reflectively at their classroom practice.
- Subject leaders became more aware of SEND practice and curriculum differentiation.
- A wider awareness developed of the value of pupil progress data and its use in future curriculum planning.
- SEND operational practices were changed in some schools.
- Peer-to-peer mentoring was adopted by some teachers/groups outside of SEND.
- The use of peer-to-peer mentoring was valued by all participants.

In addition, the WSS Review team noted that there were particular challenges with the review process in secondary school settings, due to the size of such institutions resulting in more children designated as SEND and the greater chance of inconsistencies in practices and staff attitudes to SEND provision, as well as the behaviour and SEND teams working independently of each other (Bunter, 2018). A further additional challenge relates to the tension between secondary schools working together and the competition between them in relation to student recruitment.

Moreover, there are some important features in the WSS Review approach that should be considered:

- There is a specific focus in 'SEND Review' on learners with identified SEND; whereas other initiatives have tended to give greater emphasis to the need to move beyond SEND to a broader approach to include all learners.
- There is evidence to suggest that careful matching of schools and brokering of relationships may be important to the success of peer support between school leaders (Ainscow, 2015). The WSS Review builds on substantive research focusing on school improvement and equitable education and engages peer support between school SENCOs as a key lever for change. Ainscow (2015) suggests that school partnership can be a powerful means of fostering improvements; however 'such partnerships have to be carefully orchestrated, using evidence as a catalyst to focus attention on overlooked possibilities for moving practice forward' (Ainscow, 2015, page 143). Thus, the ways in which schools are partnered for school-to-school support is critical. However, school matching for peer support within the WSS Review is based on pragmatic considerations such as local access and is aimed at the SENDCo level.

Both of these dilemmas represent themes which will need to be addressed within the evaluation of the WSS Review process. A key indicator here is likely to be the degree of engagement of senior leaders and the extent to which the focus for the WSS Review is seen within a school as largely restricted to students with identified SEND.

Accordingly, the evaluation will need to establish whether the WSS Review process has an impact on students with a SEND designation and also on all students, both in terms of their attainment and their well-being. The evaluation design is elaborated in the following sections.

## Intervention

The SEND Review aspires to be an approach that is constructive, collaborative and owned by the school (rather than an audit or inspection process). Its aims are for school improvement in SEND provision without 'punitive' interventions. It seeks to draw on and support existing expertise and good practice within and across schools. The intervention is delivered to SENDCos who are expected to oversee the Whole School SEND (WSS) Review within their own school and to develop and implement a SEND Development Plan, targeting areas for improvement. The WSS Review process aims to raise awareness and give SENDCos more status such that they can become agents of change. Their role should shift from one with a pastoral focus to one that drives change in both teaching and learning.

As tested in this trial, the intervention will be delivered across 5 regions: The North East; North West; Southwest; South Central England and Northwest London, and West Midlands. The underlying model is peer-to-peer support which is facilitated by partnering schools. However, in this project the partnering of schools is pragmatic and primarily based on geographic proximity although other considerations such as advice from the regional nasen co-ordinator will also contribute to decisions that are made. The partnerships may work out differently in different contexts; some may work well, others may require greater levels of support from the central WSS team.

The WSS Review Guide, the key documentary resource, explores eight areas to help schools to ensure the effectiveness of their SEND practice:

- Outcomes for pupils with SEND
- The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEND
- Leadership of SEND
- The efficient use of resources
- Assessment and identification
- Working with parents and carers and pupils with SEND
- Monitoring, tracking and evaluation
- The quality of SEND provision

Additional supporting documentation provided through WSS Review includes: the WSS Review Guide, reporting templates, and SENDCos guidance. These and other documents will be revised or created for this project. Other resources available from nasen targeting different stakeholder groups and designed to support school improvement of SEND provision will also be shared with participating schools.

The programme is structured around five key contacts between nasen and the school/SENDCos:

### 1. SEND REVIEWER TRAINING (MARCH 2021)

This one-day face-to-face event for SENDCos, facilitated by WSS Project Directors, aims to:

- Outline the project vision;
- Outline the project aims;
- Provide SEND Reviewer training; and
- Provide Peer mentoring training.

There will be one training session in each region and in which schools that have elected to take part and been randomised to the intervention group will be invited to attend. Training will be delivered based on a standardised plan. Its content will be targeted specifically at secondary schools. SENDCos from partner schools will attend together, and one aim of the day is to build the relationship between them. The day will also include practical activities to increase participants' confidence in conducting the WSS Review process.

The reviewer training will be followed by a four week period (April 2021 – June 2021) in which the partner schools do a **peer-to-peer review** of each other's SEND provision. Firstly, each school undertakes a self-evaluation, involving the SENDCo and at least one other senior leader. The SENDCo should provide the self-evaluation and relevant documents (e.g. school Ofsted report, school SEND policies, school improvement plan, staff CPD programme, student data, staffing structure) to their partner school three days before the peer review visit. The self-evaluation template, intended to record a reflection on current practice, provides suggested themes and areas to explore for each of the 8 areas outlined in the SEND Review Guide. The SENDCos are required to identify (and celebrate) strengths, areas for development, and stakeholders who might be involved in initiatives to support SEND students.

The schools review their partner school's documents, the self-evaluation report, any relevant information from partner school's website and then visit the partner school to undertake the review. The visit could include a meeting with the head teacher, other key staff members, and observations of activities targeting SEND provision. That is, the purpose of the visit is for the peer reviewer to observe what is actually happening in its partner school, gather further information and get a deeper understanding of the school context and local issues. The school conducting the review makes suggestions through a reporting template, identifying strengths, areas for development and key recommendations for next steps. This approach is collaborative and requires professional honesty. Its rationale is to establish shared perceptions, triangulate evidence, develop a shared vision and identify next steps. The WSS team will ensure that this process takes place through continued email contact with the schools. Completed reporting templates will be sent to the Project Directors no later than one week before the first engagement day. A Project Director will quality assure the peer review on its receipt.

Should a school drop out of the intervention arm of the study prior to completing the peer review process, the remaining school will join another pair to form a trio or a Project Director will undertake the review depending on the stage of the process that has been reached at the time. Should a school drop out of the intervention arm of the study after completing the peer review process, the remaining school will still receive peer support through the regional support network of schools and will be prioritised in the WSS team school visit schedule.

## **2. ENGAGEMENT DAY (JUNE 2021)**

The format of these days will be flexible and tailored to meet participating schools' needs. The focus of each regional event, involving a minimum of 16 SENDCos (a minimum of 80 overall), will be based on the peer reviews of schools from that region, and the strengths and weaknesses identified. The discussions will also be responsive to the participating SENDCos' concerns. The engagement day will facilitate a regional community of practice for sharing knowledge, ideas and experience, as well as providing opportunities for collaborating and developing local networks.

The aims of this one-day f2f event for SENDCos, facilitated by WSS Project Directors, will be to:

- Reflect on SEND Reviews;
- Provide tailored SEND CPD based on regional feedback from peer reviews;
- Provide strategic SEND Leadership training;
- Draft the SEND Development Plan.

**SEND Development Plan:** SENDCos will begin to write their school's SEND development plan at the first engagement day. This will include three identified areas for development, relevant actions for each area and key stakeholders to involve. It should be shared with senior leaders and governors at a Full Governing Body meeting before the first school support visit by a WSS Project Director.

There will be email contact over the summer to enable the WSS team to keep touch with the participating schools.

### **3. FIRST SUPPORT VISIT FROM WSS PROJECT DIRECTOR (SEPTEMBER 2021 – DECEMBER 2021)**

WSS Project Directors will undertake a one-day support visit (or half-a-day depending on school/SENDCo preferences) to all intervention schools in the autumn term to meet the SENDCo and a senior leader, and review the school's SEND Development Plan. The meeting is only with the focal school – the partner school does not attend. School visits will include members of the senior leadership team and governors to ensure high-level buy-in.

The aims of the first visit will be to:

- Address the SENDCo-led agenda for the day
- Provide a one-to-one coaching session with a Project Director
- Have a meeting with the headteacher
- Review the SEND Development Plan.

The SENDCo will be expected to work with senior leaders to implement the SEND Development Plan following the first support visit. Less confident SENDCos (ascertained at Engagement Day 1) will be visited first to ensure that they are better placed to implement their plans straight away.

### **4. ENGAGEMENT DAY 2 (JAN 2022 – FEB 2022)**

This will provide partner schools with another opportunity to network with each other, creating a horizontal space for sharing concerns and experiences.

The aims of the one-day f2f event for SENDCos, facilitated by WSS Project Directors, are to:

- Provide tailored SEND CPD based on regional feedback from school visits;
- Review engagement of stakeholders;
- Facilitate regional sharing of best practice.

Following this event, SENDCos will continue to work with senior leaders to implement SEND Development Plan. The WSS Review team will ensure that SENDCos and SLT reflect regularly on progress through email and telephone contact, with a focus on teacher self-efficacy and school-wide responsibility for ensuring access and progress of all children.

### **5. SECOND SUPPORT VISIT FROM WSS PROJECT DIRECTORS (MARCH 2022 – JUNE 2022)**

The second visit to each school will discuss the action plan implementation.

The aims of the visit are to:

- Provide a one-to-one coaching session with a Project Director;
- Review progress and identify next steps for SEND provision;
- Collect anecdotal evidence to support a final review report (one year on) from the WSS Review team.

SENDCos will be expected to continue to work alongside the headteacher to ensure prioritisation of and commitment to high-quality SEND provision, guided by the SEND Development Plan.

### **CONTROL SCHOOLS**

Schools allocated to the control group will receive a financial payment of £1,500, in two instalments (July 2022, July 2023), on completion of the follow-up administration of the SDQ with students in Year 9 and Year 8 in, but will not participate in the WSS Review process. Schools in the control group will not have access to the WSS Review process during the study period. They will, however, be able to access the WSS Review process from September 2024. We recognise that schools in the control group may decide to develop SEND provision by accessing alternative resources during the intervention period. The implementation process evaluation (IPE) carried out as part of this trial (see below) will gather data about this. It is an issue that will be considered when interpreting impact

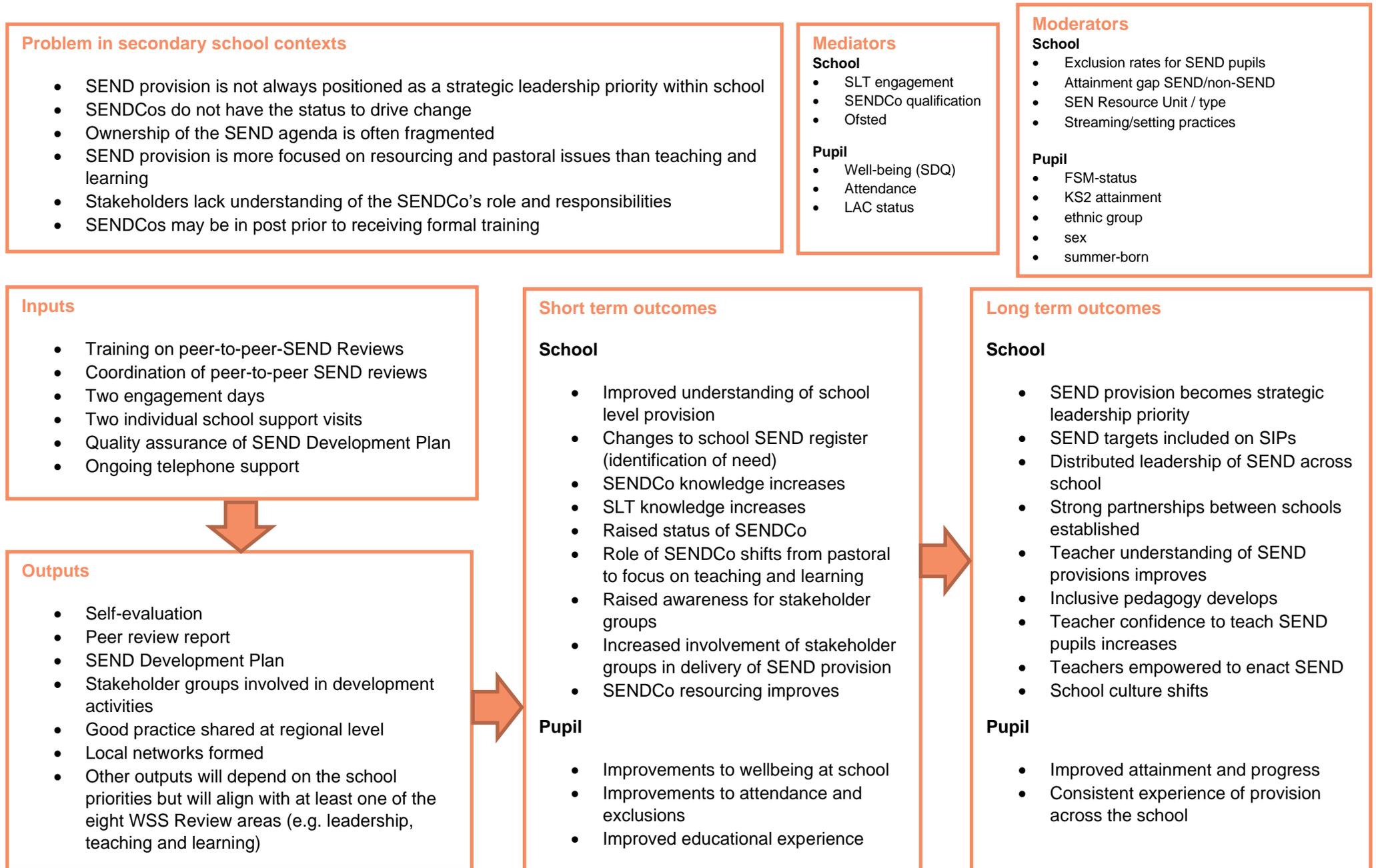
analyses. In this project, 'business as usual' will not necessarily mean that no changes in practices have taken place; in fact over such an extended period time it is highly unlikely that there will be no changes to SEND provision among control group schools. The issue, from a research design perspective, is whether school's knowledge of the trial and their allocation to control influences their decisions around the development of support for SEND students.

### THEORY OF CHANGE

The logic model below (Figure 1) captures our understanding of the WSS Review core inputs, the WSS Review outputs in terms of what will be produced or happen as a result of the process, the short term outcomes at both the school level and the pupil level, and the long term outcomes. The short term outcomes are effectively mediators of the causal impact on students. These are the changes that need to take place in order for the student experience to improve, for their sense of well-being to increase, for them to be more engaged in learning, leading to reduced absenteeism, as well as reduced fixed-term and permanent exclusions. In turn, this will lead to longer term cultural shifts and ultimately to improvements in students' attainment and progress.

The model was developed initially by the delivery team and revised following the IDEA workshop in September 2019.

**FIGURE 1: LOGIC MODEL**



Though the development of a theory of change for WWS Review, four main levels of change were identified:

### **1. Improved understanding of a school's current level of provision**

The immediate outputs will be the self-evaluation and the peer review report. These documents will detail the strengths and weaknesses of each school's current provision, some reflection on whole school SEND provision, and a line of direction for change.

The peer review could identify a range of issues. These are likely to be very diverse, relating to school level policy, deployment of school personnel, the knowledge base across the school, patterns of identification, curriculum, behaviour policies, attendance and school communications (visibility and participation of SEN pupils).

### **2. Shifting the culture of the school**

The aim is not for a list of SEND policies and specific SEND strategies to be created as a result of the review; instead, whole school policies, systems and structures need take account of SEND and build in an inclusive assumption such that all pupils are recognised and considered. There are also likely to be changes on the SEN register. The volume of Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) designations is expected to reduce and the proportion of pupils on the register is expected to reduce as a more precise understanding of individual needs is developed and a whole school approach is adopted.

The WSS Review is designed to give SENDCos the knowledge and status to influence the leadership and culture of the school such that school culture becomes more inclusive at all levels. It is assumed that changing the culture in this way will lead to improvements in pupil outcomes. To ensure that the SENDCo can be an agent of change they need to be recognised as a member of the senior leadership team or at least have strong and influential links with the SLT. This collaborative approach will allow the SLT to build an understanding of SEND provision in their school, and also the role and responsibilities of the SENDCo. The outcomes of the WSS Review are likely to differ across schools depending on the extent to which SENDCos can enact a strategic leadership role.

Thus, SENDCos will be better resourced and enabled to challenge the structures and priorities of the school, and to engage with teachers too.

### **3. Shifting classroom culture and practice**

The SENDCo becoming an agent of change through strategic leadership can impact on classroom practice. The WSS Review process shifts the SENDCo role from exclusively pastoral to one that encompasses attainment, teaching and learning. The programme aims to empower SENDCos to reach teachers and middle leaders, by giving them a monitoring and challenge function, and an accountability framework to enable the interrogation of teaching practice and attainment gaps.

### **4. Teacher outcomes**

As a result of this engagement with the SENDCo, teachers will feel more confident about teaching pupils with SEND. They will have an increased understanding of inclusive pedagogy. Responsibility for SEND provision will be distributed from the SENDCo to classroom teachers, enabling them to lead on inclusive learning and to have the tools to interrogate their practice and the resultant opportunities and outcomes for all pupils.

This equates to four outcomes at teacher level:

1. Understanding of SEND increases
2. Understanding of inclusive pedagogies develops
3. Confidence and efficacy in addressing SEND increases
4. Teachers are empowered to enact the SEND agenda

## Impact evaluation

In the light of the nature of the WSS Review, its theory of change, its aspiration to influence classroom and teachers' practices and raise general school-understanding in relation to SEND, the impact evaluation of the WSS Review will address the following questions:

### PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION:

1. What is the difference in average **Marks in GCSE English Language** among **pupils with a SEND designation**, in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils with a SEND designation in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?

### SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

2. What is the difference in average **Marks in GCSE English Language** among **all pupils** in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to all pupils in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?
3. What is the difference in average **Marks in GCSE Mathematics** among **pupils with a SEND designation**, in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils with a SEND designation in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?
4. What is the difference in average **Marks in GCSE Mathematics** among **all pupils** in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils with a SEND designation in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?
5. What is the difference in average **Grade in GCSE English Language** among **pupils with a SEND designation**, in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils with a SEND designation in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?
6. What is the difference in average **Grade in GCSE Mathematics** among **pupils with a SEND designation** in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils with a SEND designation in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?
7. What is the difference in the probability of observing at least one **unauthorised absence** among **pupils with a SEND designation** in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils with a SEND designation in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?
8. What is the average number of **all absences** among **pupils with a SEND designation** in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils with a SEND designation in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?
9. What is the difference in the probability of observing **at least one exclusion** (fixed term or permanent) among **pupils with a SEND designation** in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils with a SEND designation in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?
10. What is the difference in the average **score for total difficulties** obtained from the student self-completion SDQ among **pupils with a SEND designation** in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils with a SEND designation in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?
11. What is the difference in the average **score for total difficulties** obtained from the student self-completion SDQ among **all pupils** in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to all pupils in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS - SUBGROUPS:

12. What is the difference in **average Marks in GCSE English Language** among pupils that **have ever qualified for free school meals** in schools exposed to Whole School SEND Review, compared to pupils that have ever qualified for free school meals in control schools exposed to business as usual conditions?

## DESIGN

**Table 1: Trial design**

<b>Trial design, including number of arms</b>		Two arm cluster randomized controlled trial
<b>Unit of randomisation</b>		School
<b>Stratification variables (if applicable)</b>		Region
<b>Primary outcome</b>	variable	Mark obtained in GCSE English language
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	Standardised/equated marks in GCSE English language obtained via schools from exam boards
<b>Secondary outcome(s)</b>	variable(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark obtained in GCSE Mathematics</li> <li>• Grade obtained in GCSE English Language</li> <li>• Grade obtained in GCSE Mathematics</li> <li>• Unauthorised absences</li> <li>• Authorised absences</li> <li>• Exclusions from school</li> <li>• Total difficulties reported</li> </ul>
	measure(s) (instrument, scale, source)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardised/equated Marks obtained from exam boards via schools</li> <li>• Grades recorded as 0-9, where 0 is an unclassified score at GCSE, obtained from schools (equivalent to results reported in NPD)</li> <li>• Count of authorised absences in the last full academic year – school records</li> <li>• Binary zero/one indicator – whether a least one unauthorised absence recorded in the last full academic year</li> <li>• Binary zero/one indicator – whether a least one exclusion recorded in the last full academic year</li> <li>• Total difficulties reported – child self-completion age 11-17 single-sided SDQ questionnaire.</li> </ul>
<b>Baseline for primary outcome</b>	variable	Prior attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling at KS2
	measure (instrument, scale, source)	Raw continuous score at KS2 obtained from schools <sup>1</sup>
<b>Baseline for secondary outcome</b>	variable	<p>As appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior attainment in either Mathematics or English grammar, punctuation and spelling at KS2 as appropriate</li> <li>• Count of authorised absences in the School Year prior to randomisation</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> We understand that schools received raw and scaled scores at KS2 and that the scaled score is used to facilitate comparisons in relative performance across school years.

measure (instrument, scale, source)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count of all absences in the School Year prior to randomisation</li> <li>• Total difficulties reported prior to commencement of the intervention</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For attainment baseline measures these are raw continuous scores at KS2 obtained from schools</li> <li>• Absence measures obtained from school records – coded as counts (authorised or all absences)</li> <li>• Total difficulties obtained as a continuous measure derived from self-reports via SDQ student self-completion questionnaire for 11-17 year olds</li> </ul>

The primary objective of this research is to test the efficacy of the WSS Review at raising attainment in English Language at GCSE among pupils that have special educational needs. The focal cohorts are SEND pupils entering Years 8 and 9 in September 2020, who will be exposed to the consequences of the SEND review for at least two years and whose outcomes will be observed at summer 2024 and 2023 respectively. The focal cohorts are pupils that are identified as either in need of 'support' or with an ECHP at the point of randomisation. Research evaluating the effectiveness of the WSS Review on the Year 8 cohort will only take place subsequent to satisfactory implementation, and therefore it is deemed possible for an effect to emerge in the Year 8 cohort data. There is also interest in identifying whether the WSS Review raises attainment in mathematics at GCSE, reduces absences and exclusions from school as well as improves pupils' wellbeing, for both pupils with SEND as well as all pupils. In this way, the research is designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the WSS Review theory of change.

It is theorised that the intervention will have widespread effects and bring about transformational change both for pupils with special educational needs and all pupils within schools. This is achieved through fostering and promoting a more inclusive and supportive school culture. Furthermore, that the intervention will have a direct effect on the classroom, through encouraging SENDCos to engage more fully with both teaching practice and the learning environment. These aspects of the intervention theory of change suggest that the intervention will improve pupils' attainment, particularly among pupils with special educational needs. GCSE English language is chosen as the primary outcome because its acquisition is important in accessing a wide range of learning and for its significance in relation to future advancement for pupils, both in education, further training and in the labour market. Likewise, attainment in GCSE mathematics is a secondary outcome measure because of its importance in facilitating further study, access to future opportunities and its use by employers in screening job candidates. National examination results are chosen as outcomes because they represent a form of assessment that more or less all pupils participate in. As outcome measures, marks and grades at GCSE can be obtained at relatively low cost and are not affected by loss to follow-up in the same way that primary standardised assessment data often are. Results in national examinations are also of interest in and of their own right, as they represent a key metric toward closing the gap attainment between SEND and non-SEND pupils.

Whole School SEND Review is hypothesised to enhance the inclusivity and supportiveness of the school. As such it is anticipated the programme will reduce absences and exclusions particularly among pupils with SEND. For this reason, absence and exclusion outcomes are included among the study's secondary outcomes. It is also anticipated that Whole School SEND will improve pupils' wellbeing through similar mechanisms to those hypothesised to reduce exclusions and absences. The pupil self-completion Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is administered to all pupils in the focal cohorts at both baseline and follow-up. From the resulting data the total number of difficulties reported by each pupil is derived forming a further secondary outcome of interest.

To test the effectiveness of the WSS Review, a research design is required that will provide results interpretable as causal effects. That is a design that will enable us to draw inferences as to the existence or otherwise of a causal relationship between the intervention and outcomes of interest. To achieve this objective, a cluster randomized trial is proposed that involves the recruitment of a sample of schools that are subsequently assigned at random to intervention and control groups. Whilst the WSS Review is a whole school initiative potentially benefitting all pupils, the design focuses on pupils in two year-group cohorts in each school assigned to the intervention that are exposed to the full consequences of the WSS Review for a minimum of two years. These year-group cohorts are pupils in Years 8 and 9 at September 2020. Likewise the same year-group-cohorts in control schools are not exposed to the WSS Review but instead receive business as usual support for special educational needs. Comparison of post-exposure average outcomes in these two groups, across a range of outcomes, are interpreted as the average causal effects of the WSS Review. Randomisation provides the basis for estimation of unbiased treatment effects and also, given certain assumptions, a range of parameter values consistent with the data in the form of 95 per cent confidence intervals.

Schools are chosen as the unit or level at which randomisation occurs because of the 'whole-school' nature of the intervention. This feature of the intervention makes randomisation of individual pupils or whole classes infeasible. Randomisation of schools and a focus of outcomes measured at the pupil level implies a multi-level or hierarchical data structure, with pupils clustered within classes and classes with schools.

As has been discussed above, the intervention is delivered to schools on a regional basis with schools paired within regions. Pairing occurs in order that SENDCos within participating schools can support one another during the review process and in some cases beyond. In order to facilitate regional recruitment and training, avoid unnecessarily delay and achieve balance in the number of schools within intervention and control arms randomisation is stratified by region.

### RANDOMISATION

As mentioned previously, randomisation is stratified and performed regionally in batches. There are five regions in total in which the developers will recruit schools to the trial. Based on the sample size calculations presented below, the developers are set a quota for each region. This quota represents the minimum number of schools the developer is required to recruit. For practical reasons, developers will aim to recruit the same number of schools in each region. Based on the required sample numbers, developers are aiming to recruit a minimum of 32 state secondary schools in each region, more if possible; though for the purposes of pairing an even number of schools is required in each region.

Once this number of schools is recruited per region, the developers pass details of the schools to Manchester Metropolitan University (Man Met). Man Met upload these to FFT's secure portal so that FFT can append a sample file comprising baseline records for all pupils belonging to the focal cohorts (that is Year 8 and 9 pupils at September 2020) within the recruited schools. Where schools use the FFT's Aspire reporting and data tool, the records are taken directly from this system by FFT. Otherwise FFT contact schools directly to request the baseline data. In this way, the sample of schools and pupils is fully enumerated prior to randomisation.

Man Met then initiate the randomisation procedures. These are the same for each region and comprise the following steps (a random number seed will be set and stored so that it can retrieved at a later date):

- Man Met will assign each recruited school a random number drawn from a uniform distribution in STATA v16
- Schools will be ordered by the uniform random number on an ascending basis
- Two groups of schools will be formed by splitting the ordered list of schools in half – the first group will be Group 1 the second Group 0
- Group 1 will be assigned to the treatment condition and Group 0 will be assigned to the control condition

Randomisation will be performed by researchers based at the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit at Man Met. Randomisation will be performed such that researchers are blind to the identities of the schools involved. Once randomisation has been performed and the identities of schools revealed to the researchers, details of those schools assigned to the intervention will be passed to the developers such that regional training events can commence.

## PARTICIPANTS

In this section we discuss the trial inclusion criteria that will be applied at both the level of the school and pupil. Schools with the following criteria will be recruited to the study sample:

- The school is a mainstream secondary school
- The school must not have previously commissioned a SEND Review
- The school must be located in one of the following regions (based on Regional School Commissioner areas): North East, North West, South Central England & North West London, South West and West Midlands
- The school SENDCo and other members of the school leadership team have not previously engaged with the WSS Review or similar audit

In order to participate in the trial, schools are required to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU), which sets out their obligations as well as those of the developers and evaluators. The MoU is signed by the chair of governors, headteacher as well as the school SENDCo.

Only one school will qualify for inclusion in the study per Multiple Academy Trust (this is because MATs often set policy in relation to SEND centrally and we wish to avoid a situation where schools from the same MAT are assigned to intervention and control groups).

Within each recruited school the following pupils will be in range of this study:

- All pupils in Years 8 and 9 at Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.
- The sample upon which primary outcomes will be estimated is pupils designated SEND; that is either 'support' and/or with an ECHP at Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

## SAMPLE SIZE CALCULATIONS

Table 2 sets out the assumptions upon which sample size calculations are based as well as the relevant minimum detectable effect sizes (Bloom, 2006) associated with the primary analysis (SEND only pupils), analysis for all pupils (the sample upon which many secondary outcomes will be estimated) and subgroup estimates for pupils ever in receipt of free school meals (the main subgroup analysis).

**Table 2: Sample size calculations**

		All pupils	SEND pupils	FSM pupils
<b>Minimum Detectable Effect Size (MDES)</b>		0.19	0.20	0.19
<b>Pre-test/ post-test correlations</b>	level 1 (pupil)	0.70	0.70	0.70
	level 2 (class)	n/a	n/a	n/a
	level 3 (school)	0.32	0.32	0.32
<b>Intracluster correlations (ICCs)</b>	level 2 (class)	n/a	n/a	n/a
	level 3 (school)	0.20	0.20	0.20
<b>Alpha</b>		0.05	0.05	0.05
<b>Power</b>		0.80	0.8	0.8
<b>One-sided or two-sided?</b>		Two	Two	Two
<b>Average cluster size</b>		180	25	42
<b>Number of schools</b>	Intervention	80	80	80
	Control	80	80	80
	<b>Total</b>	160	160	160
<b>Number of pupils</b>	Intervention	14,400	2,000	3,360
	Control	14,400	2,000	3,360
	<b>Total</b>	28,800	4,000	6,720

The size of the anticipated sample available for this trial is influenced by the following factors:

- The costs to the developer of working with schools and the available programme budget which determines the maximum possible size of the intervention group
- The number of schools that the developer could reasonably be expected to recruit in the time available based on experience of recruiting secondary schools to other similar EEF-funded studies
- The average size of schools; and
- The likely proportions of pupils within schools that are SEND and have ever qualified for free school meals

In addition, the sample size calculations here are based on a number of further assumptions in relation to:

- The correlation between KS2 English raw scores and GCSE English marks;
- The intra class correlation coefficient at the school level; and
- Whether information on the class that individual pupils were in at randomisation for the teaching of English language is available, and if available, is reliable.

In addition to these factors, it is proposed that schools are assigned to intervention and control groups on a 1:1 basis, that statistical tests are conducted on the basis of two-sided tests of statistical significance and that standard assumptions are made regarding Type I and II statistical error rates (five and 20 per cent respectively).

At the outset of the study, the developers informed the research team that they had a budget sufficient to work with around 100 schools. This implied the need to recruit some 200 schools to the trial such that subsequent to randomisation 100 schools would be assigned to the intervention (assuming an allocation ratio of 1:1). However, previous experience within the research team led to

the conclusion that the developers would struggle to recruit 200 schools to this study in the time available. For example, the “Evaluating the effectiveness of Eedi formative assessment programme” study, which also involved the recruitment of mainstream secondary schools to an EEF-funded trial, set out to recruit 180 schools but despite the best efforts of the developers, only 158 schools agreed to take part in the trial (Morris, Smith, & Kiss, 2018). Given this experience and the fact that the WSS Review will be more demanding on school resources in general, it was felt that 160 schools would be a reasonable but ambitious target that could be achieved by developers in the time available.

With an achieved sample of some 160 schools we can obtain estimates for the average number of pupils in a given focal-year-cohort, the number of pupils that are likely to be SEND as well as the expected number of pupils that had ever qualified for free-school-meals:

- Based on previous studies we expect on average six classes in each year group in mainstream secondary schools and each class will comprise approximately 30 students
- Thus we expect to find on average about 180 students in each Year-group cohort per school (and that there are two cohorts per school)
- Drawing on national publicly available estimates, we expect that around 14 per cent of pupils to be designated SEND (Department for Education, 2019a). This means that on average we expect to find 25 SEND pupils in each year-based cohort per school
- Nearly a quarter of pupils in maintained secondary schools have qualified for free school meals at some point in their school careers (see Morris, Seymour, & Limmer, 2019). This means we can expect around 42 pupils per cohort, per school to have been in receipt of free-school meals.

Given these estimates, it is anticipated that in some schools the numbers of pupils in our sample that will be both SEND and FSM will be very small. For this reason, the sample size estimates above are for all FSM, rather than SEND pupils that are also FSM. Likewise, as set out in the analysis section below we do not propose estimating effects for that subgroup of SEND pupils that are also ever-FSM, due to anticipated small sample sizes.

We obtained an estimate of the correlation between KS2 Raw score for English and GCSE English Language attainment from analysis provided by the Education Endowment Foundation (Education Endowment Foundation, 2013). The assumption used for the intra class correlation coefficient is 0.20 (proportion of the total variance at the school level), and though possibly conservative is the assumption used for many EEF-funded studies with GCSE attainment as a primary outcome.

Taken together these assumptions and other information lead to estimated minimum detectable effect sizes for the primary analysis of 0.20 of a standardised mean difference, and 0.19 for samples based on all pupils and those ever-FSM respectively. Given the prospects for school recruitment, the time frame over which recruitment needed to take place and the available budget, assuming 80 per cent power, these effects are the smallest true effects that would lead to results reaching levels of statistical significance at the 95 per cent level. If we assume a standard deviation of around 50-60 marks in GCSE English Language, an effect size of 0.20 translates, very approximately, into an average improvement among SEND students in intervention over control schools of around 10-12 Marks.

One further issue that requires some consideration is whether clustering of pupils by class should be taken into account in both sample size calculations and the analytical models used to analyse the trial data. The teaching of maths and English language at GCSE in secondary schools tends to be conducted within classes arranged by prior attainment. This means we would expect average GCSE results to vary across classes within schools and that this variation might be quite significant (Demack, 2019). The discussion in this protocol effectively ignores clustering within schools by class. Moreover, it is not clear how SEND pupils will be distributed over classes within schools, or whether some classes will contain any SEND pupils at all. As part of the baseline data collection to be undertaken by Fisher Family Trust, we are attempting to find out from schools which classes pupils

are taught in for English language at September 2020; that is at or prior to randomisation. At present we do not know how successful we will be in asking schools for this information.

The software PowerUp was used to conduct the calculations presented in Table 2.

## **OUTCOME MEASURES**

In this section we provide a fuller description of the baseline, primary and secondary outcomes measures chosen for this study. Records supplied to Man Met from the school by the Fisher Family Trust (FFT) will be linked to trial records using UPN, full name and date of birth.

### **PRIMARY OUTCOME**

Following discussions with the intervention developers and the Education Endowment Foundation, attainment at GCSE in English language for pupils designated SEND, in the form of exam marks, was chosen as the primary outcome. Roughly four in ten of the GCSE cohort of 2016 had been designated SEND at some point during their prior school career, suggesting that the GCSE entry rate for SEND pupils is very high – we estimate around 96 per cent (Department for Education, 2020). It is worth noting that over the lifetime of this study policy changes might influence the GCSE entry rates for SEND pupils. Such developments will be kept under review and their implications for the design of this study considered carefully. The intervention logic model suggests that the WSS Review is hypothesised to raise attainment in national examinations at the end of KS4, particularly for students with SEND. The intervention is theorised to bring about a change in school culture, promoting a supportive and inclusive environment in which students with SEND can flourish. It is also anticipated that the intervention will directly influence teaching and classroom-practice toward the needs of SEND pupils. Further, that these changes will be reflected in improved attainment for SEND as well as non-SEND pupils.

English language was chosen as the primary outcome measure because command of written and spoken language is important in accessing learning in general and is a determinant of future advancement. The reliance on national examinations for assessment is partly a practical decision but also one that reflects substantive concerns. From a practical perspective, adopting attainment at GCSE as the primary outcome has a number of advantages. First, considerable resources are devoted by exam boards to the writing and validation of GCSE questions, therefore examination Marks might be considered reliable and valid measures of attainment in and of themselves. Second, the costs of collecting pupil level GCSE results are low compared to the costs of the alternative, which is administering commercial standardised assessment tests. Third, unlike administering separate standardised assessments of literacy and language, using GCSE Marks as the primary outcome imposes no additional data collection burden on schools. Fourth, as a measure it is also less affected by loss to follow-up than the alternatives.

Whilst our focus is on Marks, given these might be considered sensitive to small changes in attainment and provide a continuous attainment score, GCSE grades are also of interest. Grades are well understood. Results showing an intervention has an effect on average GCSE grade is clear to, and interpretable by, stakeholders. Moreover, as closing the attainment gap is a central concern to EEF and it is Grade that ultimately determines advancement, Grade in English is included as a separate secondary outcome measure.

In order to obtain Marks, schools in our sample will be approached by the Fisher Family Trust and asked for the Marks obtained by individual students at GCSE and provided to the school by exam boards.

### **SECONDARY OUTCOMES**

Secondary outcomes can be grouped into three categories: a) further attainment outcomes; b) attendance and exclusions outcomes; and c) wellbeing.

#### ***Further pupil-level attainment***

The underlying intervention theory provides an account of how the WSS Review is expected to raise general attainment, specifically for SEND pupils but also among the wider student body. As a result the selection of secondary outcomes is informed by the expectation that aspects of attainment other than language and literacy will improve as a consequence of the WSS Review. Given the importance of attainment in mathematics for future advancement, Marks at GCSE mathematics are chosen as a secondary outcome for SEND and all pupils respectively. As discussed above, interest lies not only in performance in national examinations as a form of assessment but also achievement in terms of Grade. For this reason Grades achieved in mathematics and English language are specified as separate secondary outcomes.

The process of obtaining the Marks for pupils in our sample in GCSE mathematics will be the same as that described above for English Language. Grades will be obtained on behalf of Man Met by FFT using their Aspire system at September 2023 for Year 9 pupils (at September 2020), and September 2024 for Year 8s (at September 2020). Grades obtained in both English and mathematics will be on a 1-9 scale with unclassified marks coded to '0'. The measures of Grade achieved by pupils will be equivalent to those available through the National Pupil Database (NPD).

### ***Pupil attendance and exclusions***

The programme theory of change suggests that Whole School SEND Review aims to bring about a change in school culture, promoting an inclusive and supportive environment as well as addressing specifically the needs of children with SEND in the classroom. These needs can often go unmet leading to poor attendance and in some cases exclusion from school.

At the point GCSE Grades are extracted from school data systems by FFT, data will be obtained on authorised and unauthorised absences for pupils for the school year 2022/23 for Year 9 pupils (at September 2020) and the school year 2023/24 for Year 8 pupils (at September 2020). These data will be transformed into outcome measures and used as dependent variables in the secondary analysis. For authorised absences, the outcome measure will be a count of the number of authorised absences in the relevant school year depending on the cohort being considered. For unauthorised absences, because there are fewer of these, a binary dependent variable will be created for each pupil coded to '1' where an unauthorised absence is observed in the relevant school year, '0' otherwise.

At the same points in time that attainment and attendance data for each pupil in the relevant-year-group-cohorts are extracted, data on exclusions from school will also be collected for the same school years: 2022/23 for Year 9 pupils and 2023/24 for Year 8 pupils. Data on both temporary fixed term and permanent exclusions will be obtained. From these data binary outcome measures will be derived capturing whether exclusions from school, either fixed term or permanent, were recorded in the relevant school years.

### ***Pupil wellbeing***

As discussed above, it is anticipated and consistent with the intervention theory of change, that pupil wellbeing will improve as a result of exposure to the WSS Review. Pupil wellbeing is measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)<sup>2</sup>, a behavioural screening questionnaire for 3-17 year olds. The SDQ provides a measure of the psychological adjustment of the respondent (or their psychopathology) (Goodman, 2001). There are three versions of the questionnaire, one that can be administered to parents, one administered to teachers/practitioners, and a self-completion instrument for young people. We will administer the single-sided self-completion SDQ for 11-17 year olds to the enumerated sample of pupils in both Years 8 and 9 at baseline in January/February 2021, prior to randomisation (that will take place in February/March 2021) and then again at June/July 2022 (for Year 9s) and June/July 2023 (for Year 8s). The choice of timing of the follow-up SDQ measurements was informed by the need to avoid administering the instrument in Year 11, when there are significant calls on teachers' time and school resources in general, and also to provide for the possibility of using

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<sup>2</sup> For full details of this measure see <https://youthinmind.com/products-and-services/sdq/>

well-being as a mediating variable in analyses of attainment (Hayes, 2017), thereby taking into account the required temporal ordering of measurements to permit this.

The SDQ measure of interest is the 'total number of difficulties' score. The SDQ contains 25 items, 20 of which form four sub-scales: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention and peer problems. A score on each sub-scale is obtained and then the total number of difficulties derived from summing across the subscales. The additional five items form a separate prosocial behaviour scale which we are not intending to use in our analysis. The validity and reliability of the SDQ are discussed in Goodman & Goodman (2009), Goodman & Goodman (2011) and Goodman, (2001). The SDQs at baseline and follow-up are administered online and overseen by teachers and teaching assistants. Baseline administration will take place over the first half of the spring term in 2021. A 2 week additional window has been planned in case of any disruption due to Covid-19. In the worst case scenario (national lockdown in January and February) administration will be undertaken in pupil homes but still co-ordinated by teachers (online) in a 'live' online session.

Completed SDQ questionnaire records will be linked to a sample master file containing details of each pupil at enumeration using school identifier and full name, with the complete record including personal identifiers linked to the trial data base. A full description of the administration of the SDQ is provided below in the section of this protocol that describes the implementation process evaluation.

### **BASELINE MEASURES**

In this section we describe the baseline measures that will be used in the adjusted analysis of trial data for both primary and secondary outcomes. Where possible for each primary and second outcome, a pre-randomisation measure on the same outcome will be obtained in order to form a baseline covariate in the relevant analyses.

#### ***Baseline measures for attainment outcomes***

For outcomes in English and mathematics at GCSE, regardless of whether defined in terms of Grade or Marks, a baseline covariate will be derived for inclusion in adjusted analysis from the raw test scores in Reading and mathematics at KS2, as appropriate, collected direct from schools at baseline for each enumerated pupil in Years 8 and 9 at September 2020.

#### ***Pupil attendance and exclusions***

Analysis of attendance and exclusions outcomes will be adjusted on the basis of baseline measures of attendance for the school year 2019/20 (bearing in mind the shortening of the school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of schools). These measures relate to the period of time prior to randomisation, which will take place in February/March 2021. The covariate will be derived by summing the total number of absences (both authorised and unauthorised) for each pupil for the school year 2019/20.

#### ***Pupil wellbeing***

An SDQ will be administered to each enumerated pupil at baseline in Years 8 and 9 in January and February 2021, prior to randomisation. For each pupil that completes the baseline SDQ we will derive a baseline total difficulties score to be used in adjusted analysis as a covariate.

#### ***Additional baseline data items***

In addition to the baseline data items mentioned above, that will be used as 'pre-test' covariates in the adjusted primary and secondary analysis, further items will be collected at baseline for use in analysis. These are:

- Date of birth
- Sex
- FSM status
- SEND (EHP or support)
- Primary identification of need

- Current class for English (at September 2020)

The analysis discussed below provides for the estimation of effects through a) an unadjusted analysis; b) an analysis adjusted for the inclusion of a baseline measure on the dependent variable as a covariate at the pupil level only; and c) full adjusted specification which includes a baseline measure of the dependent variable entered as a covariate at the pupil and school levels as well as further covariates for month of birth, Sex and FSM. All specifications will include a region indicator that reflects randomisation by region. Further, the SEND indicator is required in order for the primary analysis to be performed on the subset of the two cohorts Years 8 and 9 that are designated either 'support' or 'EHP' at the point of randomisation. An FSM indicator is required in order for subgroup analysis to be performed.

### ***Linking records for primary, secondary and baseline measurements***

Attainment outcomes at KS2, attendance, exclusions, sex, date of birth, FSM, SEND, primary identification of need are collected at baseline direct from schools, from Years 8 and 9 pupils, over the period October to December 2020 that is prior to randomisation in February / March 2021. Outcome measures are collected at September 2023 (Year 9) and September 2024 (Year 8). These data are linked together to form the trial data base using full name, date of birth, URN and UPN.

SDQs are administered separately at January / February 2021 (at baseline, Years 8 and 9), June/July 2022 (follow-up Year 9) and June/July 2023 (follow-up Year 8). Pupil level records generated from the SDQs will be linked to the records obtained direct from schools using full name and date of birth.

### ***Multiple testing***

The number of secondary outcomes implies a large number of hypotheses tests, which when considered together implies an increase in the Type I error rate over the nominal rate of 5 per cent chosen for this study. To adjust for this, the Bonferroni test is often deployed, where the standard threshold for statistical significance is divided by the number of tests to yield a new threshold below which the p-value from subsequent null hypothesis tests must fall before statistical significance is declared. The Bonferroni adjustment, is however, a conservative adjustment. To avoid this overly-conservative approach, we propose instead to apply the Holm-Sidak step-down procedure to control the family-wise error rate in the secondary analysis (Ludbrook, 1998).

### **COMPLIANCE**

Where units assigned to intervention and control group fail to abide by their allocation and in the case of the former are not exposed to the intervention, whilst in the latter are exposed, it is common place to attempt to estimate the average effect of treatment on the treated, or the local average treatment effect, depending on whether single or two-sided non-compliance arises (Gerber, Alan & Green, Donald, 2012). In order to perform instrumental variables regression and recover estimates of these parameters the point at which a unit is understood to have complied with their assignment needs to be determined. Given that the intervention is a whole school programme, pupil's exposure is determined by school compliance. In order to use instrumental variables, we must also be sure that among other things, pupils in schools we declare to be non-compliant (among intervention schools) are not affected in any way by the intervention.

A conservative, minimal and therefore strict definition of compliance would be that schools assigned to the intervention that do not take-up the one-day SEND Reviewer training are non-compliant. Likewise, schools assigned to control that take-up training are also non-compliant. The only other source of exposure to Whole School SEND, outside the control of the developers, that a school assigned to control or intervention groups might be subject to, is downloading the intervention brochure/guidance from the developer website. In order to prevent this, the developer has removed the guidance and taken down the link for the duration of the study. Therefore we proceed on the basis that in order for an intervention school to be minimally compliant they must have received

training. Likewise for a control schools they must receive no training. We propose to consult the developers' records of training received in order to extract a measure of compliance.

## ANALYSIS

Both primary and secondary analysis will follow the intention to treat principle.

Focusing first on the primary analysis, statistical estimates of the effect of exposure on marks at GCSE English will be obtained from a hierarchical linear model (the estimator), in which pupils are clustered within schools. This model will be fitted to data for SEND pupils only. Three regression models specifications are proposed, where the standardised or equated mark for each pupil is the dependent variable<sup>3 4</sup>, and the regression models include the following covariates :

- Model 1: binary intervention group indicator coded to '1' if the school is assigned to the intervention '0' otherwise, plus regional fixed effects (representing strata);
- Model 2: As above, with KS2 Reading raw score as a covariate expressed as a departure from the school mean for each pupil at the pupil level, and as a school average departure from the overall mean at the school level (this is the primary analysis as specified by EEF in their guidance);
- Model 3: As specification 2, with additional covariates representing sex, month of birth, unauthorised absences in the year prior to randomisation, and FSM variables.

The effect size, consistent with Hedges' g, will be obtained from Specification 2, as set out in EEF guidance (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018). The effect size parameter is written:

$$ES = \frac{\mu^T - \mu^c}{\sqrt{\sigma_i^2 + \sigma_j^2}}$$

A sample estimate of  $\mu^T - \mu^c$ , where  $\mu^T$  is the mean of the outcome in the treatment group and  $\mu^c$  the mean in the control group, is derived from the coefficient obtained on the binary intervention group indicator from Specification 2 above. The denominator  $\sigma_i^2 + \sigma_j^2$ , where  $i$  indexes for the school and  $j$  the pupil, are the variances at the school and pupil levels respectively, such that the intraclass correlation coefficient is  $\sigma_i^2 / \sigma_i^2 + \sigma_j^2$ . A sample estimate for the denominator is obtained from the total unconstrained pooled variance as described in Hedges (2007), who also provides an equation for the variance of the sample estimate for the effect size. Uncertainty will be assessed through computation of 95 per cent confidence intervals and p-values.

The secondary analysis will involve estimation of effects on a range of outcomes discussed previously for the full year-group cohort samples (Years 8 and 9) and for SEND pupils only (Years 8 and 9).

Table 3 sets out the secondary analysis to be conducted on the full cohort samples. The analysis for Years 8 and 9 will appear in separate reports. Hypothesis tests for the treatment effects in each specification will be reported in the form of p-values and 95 per cent confidence intervals. As

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<sup>3</sup> The specification of the dependent variable as a standardised/equated transformation represents a departure from EEF analysis guidelines but is required as GCSE marks are obtained from different examination boards.

<sup>4</sup> Given that the primary analysis will be performed on the subset of the sample designated SEND at September 2020, the sample observations on marks and grades might not be normally distributed and/or sample data might contain extreme values. The approach to tackling this problem will depend on the characteristics of the resulting distributions. For example, if a small number of pupils record high marks causing the distribution of marks to be right skewed then the marks might be log transformed, and sensitivity analysis performed with the log transformed measure as the dependent variable. Alternatively sensitivity analysis might be performed on a transformed dependent variable that is trimmed of extreme values; for example 5 per cent of the sample at the extremes might be dropped for such an analysis. Finally, we do not anticipate floor effects in the data, but if these are encountered sensitivity analysis can be conducted using a maximum likelihood Tobit regression model.

discussed, to limit the problems associated with family-wise error rates in considering so many hypotheses tests in the secondary analysis the Holm-Sidak step-down procedure will be used to limit Type I error rate inflation, separately for analyses conducted on the full cohort samples and the SEND only samples (Ludbrook, 1998). For secondary analysis, treatment effect estimates based on continuous outcomes will be reported as effect sizes (Hedges  $g$ ), where outcomes are binary as relative risk ratios and for count outcomes as incident rate ratios. .

Table 4 sets out the secondary analysis to be performed on the SEND only subsamples.

**Table 3: Secondary analysis – model specifications - full cohort samples Years 8 and 9 cohorts (as at September 2020)**

Dependent variable	Model	Intervention group indicator	Strata indicator	Covariates	Cohort (at 09/20)
<b>Attainment outcomes</b>					
GCSE English language Mark (standardised)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 Reading raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> <li>• FSM</li> </ul>	Year 9
GCSE English language Mark (standardised)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 Reading raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> <li>• FSM</li> </ul>	Year 8
GCSE Mathematics Mark (standardised)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 mathematics raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> <li>• FSM</li> </ul>	Year 9
GCSE Mathematics Mark (standardised)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 mathematics raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> <li>• FSM</li> </ul>	Year 8
<b>Wellbeing outcomes</b>					
Total difficulties (SDQ)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total difficulties baseline score</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> <li>• FSM</li> </ul>	Year 9
Total difficulties (SDQ)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total difficulties baseline score</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> <li>• FSM</li> </ul>	Year 8

**Table 4: Secondary analysis – model specifications – SEND only samples Years 8 and 9 cohorts (as at September 2020)**

Dependent variable	Model	Intervention group indicator	Strata indicator	Covariates	Cohort (at 09/20)
<b>Attainment outcomes</b>					
GCSE Mathematics Mark (standardised)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 mathematics raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 9
GCSE Mathematics Mark (standardised)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 mathematics raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 8
GCSE English Language Grade 1-9	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 reading raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 9
GCSE English Language Grade 1-9	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 reading raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 8
GCSE Mathematics Grade 1-9	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 mathematics raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 9
GCSE Mathematics Grade 1-9	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS2 mathematics raw score at pupil and school levels</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 8
<b>Attendance and exclusion outcomes</b>					
Number of authorised absences in previous school year 2022/23	Count negative binomial hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of authorized absences in school year 2019/20</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 9
Number of authorised absences in previous school year 2023/24	Count negative binomial hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of authorized absences in school year 2019/20</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 8
At least one unauthorised absence in school year 2022/23	Binary logistic hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of absences in school year 2019/20</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 9
At least one unauthorised absence in school year 2023/24	Binary logistic hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of absences in school year 2019/20</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 8
At least one exclusion from school in school year 2022/23	Binary logistic hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of absences in school year 2019/20</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 9
At least one exclusion from school in school year 2023/24	Binary logistic hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of absences in school year 2019/20</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 8
<b>Wellbeing outcomes</b>					
Total difficulties (SDQ)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total difficulties baseline score</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 9
Total difficulties (SDQ)	Linear hierarchical	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total difficulties baseline score</li> <li>• month of birth</li> <li>• sex</li> </ul>	Year 8

### **EVER FREE SCHOOL MEALS SUBGROUP ANALYSES**

Consistent with EEF's analysis requirements (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018), we will run a specification similar to that for the primary analysis, where the FSM indicator is interacted with the intervention group indicator variable and separately on the ever-FSM subsample.

### **LONGITUDINAL FOLLOW-UP**

There are two cohorts of pupils that are the focus of this trial, those pupils in intervention and control schools in Years 8 and 9 at September 2020. Following training, it is anticipated that school plans will reflect Whole School SEND processes and actions from Spring 2021. Longitudinally therefore, Year 9 cohort would capture the near-term effects of the intervention at GCSE and Year 8 the more medium term effects. Primary and secondary analysis of outcomes for these two cohorts are discussed above. Analysis of outcomes for the Year 8 cohort will only proceed if acceptable implementation fidelity is achieved.

## Implementation and process evaluation

Implementation and process evaluation (IPE) will focus on implementation delivery (e.g. engagement with the review process and follow-up support from Whole School SEND, implementation of action plans, changes to policy and practice) and, for comparison, what takes place in relation to SEND provision in control schools. The IPE will be underpinned by the theory of change as developed in the IDEA workshop, and discussed above, investigating implementation dimensions and influential factors. Particular attention will be paid to the diversity in action plans, the reach and uptake of proposed developments, any adaptations that take place during implementation and costs of delivery (fixed and variable). We intend to consider fidelity in depth in the case study schools. This will include ascertaining levels of engagement with the SEND Review Process steps and activities, involvement of SLT and governors, development and implementation of action plans.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How is the WSS Review process implemented in secondary school contexts?
  - (a) What are the areas of focus that schools prioritise and how are these understood by stakeholders?
  - (b) What initiatives and/or actions are taken by stakeholders in response to the WSS process?
  - (c) What levels of support do SENDCos require and from whom?
  - (d) What are the strengths and challenges of the WSS Review process, e.g. pairing, networking, training?
  - (e) How do different stakeholder groups (e.g. students, teachers, governors) experience the WSS Review process and how does it impact on them?
  - (f) What factors contribute to the SEND Review process being effective (or not)?
2. What comparable initiatives and/or actions are taken within control group schools? What is the initial position? How does this change over time?
3. How was the WSS Review process delivered and supported in relation to compliance, fidelity, quality, reach, responsiveness and programme differentiation?
  - a) What is the reach in terms of the involvement of departments, staff members (from senior leaders to teaching assistants), governors and other stakeholders such as parents?
  - b) What is the responsiveness in terms of how each of the stakeholder groups involved engage with the outcomes of the WSS Review process?
  - c) What is the programme differentiation in relation to how the outcomes of the WSS Review process differ from prior SEND and inclusion practices in the intervention schools?

### RESEARCH METHODS

Compliance has been defined above. A school is considered to be compliant if the SENDCo attends the first training event. Fidelity relates to following the full WSS Review process including attendance at training and engagement days, conducting a peer review, producing and implementing an action plan, and hosting a support visit by a member of staff from the WSS team. The action plans may differ by region and by school. Other implementation dimensions that are relevant to the delivery of the WSS Review as identified above include: quality of provision, reach, responsiveness and programme differentiation.

Minimising bias and ensuring rigour will be achieved in the following ways:

- Case study schools will be selected according to specified criteria to ensure that schools reflecting different circumstances are represented.
- Stakeholder surveys will be administered to all eligible participants at the school (e.g., all teachers, all governors).
- Interviewees will be selected to be representative of the school population (e.g., taking account of gender, role, etc).
- Multiple sources of data collection in case studies (e.g., observations, interviews, surveys) will support triangulation and minimise bias.
- Interviews will be semi-structured. Observations will be informed by guidance notes so that different researchers undertake these in a similar fashion and that field notes that are generated are comparable.
- Researchers will attend the first case school site visit together so that a shared understanding of the foci of data collection will be developed.
- Qualitative data will be coded and analysed thematically, ensuring that a consistent approach is adopted by all those involved.

In addition, the SDQ will be administered online as part of the impact evaluation (see above); unbiasedness and rigour will be achieved in the following ways:

- A video will be developed to encourage students in both intervention and control schools to complete the SDQ. This will emphasise the importance of the data for the project and present other students' perceptions of the measure to ensure students realise it is not onerous and data will not be shared with their teachers.
- Man Met will produce a short report of findings from the SDQ data for each school in the trial in order to encourage their engagement and achieve a high response rate. Schools will receive these reports at the end of the trial after GCSE examinations.
- The SDQ and the SENDCoSLT survey will be piloted in 1-3 non-trial schools in Greater Manchester (SDQ) and with students undertaking the PgCert in the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (SENDCo/SLT survey). The pilot for the SDQ will emulate the full process including FFT.

## **SAMPLING**

5 pairs of case study schools will be selected (10 schools in total), one pair from each participating region. Schools will be purposefully selected to meet criteria. This will ensure that a range of schools that differ in ways that may affect the outcome of the intervention are included in the IPE.

Case study schools will be selected according to the following dimensions :

- Proportion of pupils on SEND register: high/low
- Proportion of fixed term exclusions: high/low
- National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (mandatory qualification): yes/no

## **OBSERVATIONS OF TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT DAYS**

As discussed above, the WSS Review commences with regional training and engagement days. There will also be follow-up engagement events conducted regionally. The initial training will be observed at three different sessions. The training materials and implementation support manual will also be considered. One researcher will attend each event (either f2f or online depending on national and regional circumstances).

All five regional engagement days will be observed on both occasions (e.g., engagement day 1, engagement day 2). This is because regional engagement days will be tailored to meet regional needs and so may differ somewhat. Two researchers will attend each of these events (again, either f2f or online) as the engagement days will involve schools working on their action plans and it will be important to capture as much as possible from these observations.

## CASE STUDIES

During the intervention, five pairs of intervention schools will be visited on three separate occasions. Firstly, a visit will be undertaken during September – December 2021 (as the action plan is beginning to be delivered in schools). Follow-up visits will be undertaken in June/July 2022 (after one year of implementation) and June/July 2023 (after two years of implementation). One researcher will attend. We anticipate that these visits will be f2f but they could be replaced by virtual meetings, observations and interviews if required.

The first IPE visits to each school will coincide with a support visit from WSS Review Project Directors where possible (depending on staff availability). This will enable the support process to be observed while ensuring that disruption to schools is kept to a minimum. In addition, activities relating to the implementation of the school WSS Action Plan (e.g. planning meetings) may also be observed. Data from observations will be recorded via field notes, with guidance for the researcher on the activities and aspects that need to be prioritised. Key stakeholder groups will be interviewed, selected in relation to the focus of school action plan. This might include senior leaders, governors, department heads, SENCOs, teachers and students. Semi-structured interview schedules will ensure that data are gathered consistently whilst allowing for differences in action plans to be explored. To minimise the burden, group interviews with different stakeholder groups will be held where appropriate. At least 5 interviews (including individual and group interviews) will be conducted during each visit. The focus of the interviews will explore levels of buy-in, collect cost data, examine fidelity and the impact of the intervention on the school policies, practices and culture as well as on key stakeholders. Students selected as representative of different SEND designations in case study schools will provide perspectives on their experiences of school changes. It will also be important to gather data on the pairing process and the relationship between the paired schools.

In addition, short online surveys of key stakeholder groups (governors and staff) will be conducted in June 2022 to establish buy-in and gather perspectives on experiences of the WSS Review process and its outcomes within the participating schools. These surveys will be repeated in June 2023 to identify any subsequent learning and developments.

## DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Key documents gathered from case study schools will be reviewed prior to the intervention beginning (April/May 2021), at the end of the intervention (June 2022), and one year later (June 2023):

- School Improvement Plan
- SEND information report
- SEND policy
- LA local offer
- WSS Review Action Plan

These documents will contribute to creating a baseline profile of SEND provision in schools prior to the intervention. The WSS Review Action Plan is an essential document which will inform the design of data collection in each of the 10 schools (for example, which stakeholder groups to collect data from) and will subsequently be used in analyses of what actually happens in these schools over the intervention period.

## SENDCo/SLT SURVEYS

A baseline online survey of SENCOs will be conducted in November 2020, with follow-up surveys in June 2022 and June 2023. The baseline survey will provide a record of current SEND provision in schools (that is usual practice) prior to the intervention beginning and the follow-up will enable any key changes (for example, an overall increase in the number of SEND governors) to be identified. Differences between the intervention and control group schools will also be explored. Data will include the following:

- No's of: permanent exclusions, fixed term exclusions, pupils on SEN support, pupils with EHC plan
- SEND governor appointment and involvement
- SENDCo member of SLT
- SENDCo experience and qualification
- SENDCo time protected for SEND work
- SENDCo additional remuneration
- SENDCo support/resources
- Financial resources directed to SEND
- Staff development time devoted to SEND
- Staff development time for SENDCo

The survey will be piloted with local SENDCos via the Manchester Met SENDCo Stakeholder Group who have agreed in principle to support this.

Follow-up surveys in intervention schools will include progress made in relation to delivering the action plan, the challenges faced and how they were overcome, and the perceived strengths and impact of the intervention.

Follow-up surveys of SENDCos in control schools establish what changes might have been made to SEND provision during the intervention period (June 2022, June 2023). Cost data will also be gathered and reviewed at these points.

#### **SDQ – A MEASURE OF STUDENT WELL-BEING**

As discussed above, an SDQ will be administered to all participating students (those in Year 9 and Year 8 as of September 2020) prior to randomisation in January/February 2021. This will be undertaken on behalf of Man Met by FFT. A second administration of the SDQ will take place in the July before students sit GCSEs in the following summer. The Year 9 cohort as of September 2020 will complete the SDQ again in July 2022. The Year 8 cohort will complete the SDQ in July 2023.

The SDQ will be piloted with a small group of students in one schools, and subsequently with a minimum of one class in one school. FFT will participate in the second phase of piloting following the procedure outlined below.

The process of administering the SDQ is as follows (subject to final piloting and agreement with FFT):

- School receives SENDCo audit form; once completed it is returned to FFT to include in school packs.
- School receives pack for administration with covering letter (via FFT). Pack includes teacher guidance including completed SENDCo audit form and detailed guidance on online administration of the SDQ..
- Teacher guidance includes information for teacher and statements that we will ask to be read out loud:
  - Statements about what to do and why it is important
  - Brief, simple statements about ethics
  - Video clip – with an evaluation lead and clips of young people who have completed the SDQ, no more than 3 minutes. Hosted on YouTube.
  - Brief statement about right to withdraw and what to do if so.
- Students are provided with the URL for the online survey. The first page of the survey has a statement about withdrawing, with organisation logos (nasen, EEF, Man Met). Students can exit the survey at this point if they do not wish to participate. If not, then students are presented with the 25 statements forming the SDQ measure over a series of pages so that scrolling is not required.
- FFT will monitor school responses and chase those that have not administered the survey to all required classes.

- FFT will perform quality check and checks for completeness before passing the data on to Man Met.

### **TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS**

Towards the end of the first year of the intervention (June 2022), semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the WSS Review process team by telephone to alleviate the necessity for travel. These interviews will focus on fidelity, collecting further cost data and the support process. Monitoring data from the delivery team will also be collected if relevant.

Follow-up telephone interviews will be conducted with 10 SENDCos selected from survey responses from control schools where support for SEND pupils has changed or been developed. These will form pen portraits to illustrate the range of activities that control schools have undertaken.

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **ONLINE SURVEY**

The online SLT/SENDCo survey will be formed of closed and open questions. Closed questions will be analysed with SPSS generating descriptive statistics including cross-tabulations to illustrate similarities/differences between intervention and control schools, and between baseline and post-intervention administrations. Open questions will largely feature in the post-intervention administration and will focus on progress, strengths, challenges and impact in intervention schools. Similarly, control schools will be asked to describe any changes to SEND provision. These qualitative data will be analysed using NVivo and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using a mixed coding method. A coding framework derived from the logic model will be applied deductively and additional themes may be derived inductively particularly in relation to challenges faced which may differ across schools.

#### **OBSERVATIONS OF TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT DAYS**

Data collected will include field notes and the resources used to support the delivery. These data will be used to describe the process experienced by school staff, and to consider quality, strengths and challenges of the WSS Review process.

#### **SDQ**

The SDQ will be analysed quantitatively as described above in the impact evaluation design.

#### **CASE STUDIES**

Qualitative data will be analysed using NVivo and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using a mixed coding method. A coding framework derived from the logic model will be applied deductively and additional themes may be derived inductively particularly in relation to challenges faced which may differ. Cross-case analyses (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2019) will be undertaken to explore similarities and differences by the selection criteria (high/low proportions of pupils on SEND register, high/low proportions of fixed term exclusions, SENDCo award at start of intervention). This will inform understanding of possible moderators/mediators on the effectiveness of the intervention. In other words, findings from case studies will be used to aid interpretation of results from the impact analyses; particularly, providing the opportunity to develop further hypotheses around possible mediators and sources of heterogeneity in treatment effects to inform future research.

#### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH WSS STAFF**

Qualitative data will be analysed using NVivo and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using a mixed coding method. A coding framework derived from the logic model will be applied deductively and additional themes may be derived inductively.

Data collection and analyses will be guided by the logic model presented above. In particular, interview schedules and questionnaires will be designed to collect stakeholder experiences of the

inputs and outputs, and their perceptions of short and long term outcomes. Documentary evidence (e.g. school SIP, staffing structure, evidence of training events, lesson plans etc) will be gathered and observations of lessons and activities undertaken as a form of triangulation. The outcomes of the analyses of impact data including the SDQ data will be used to interrogate qualitative data further (e.g. to explain differences by moderator variables). This analysis, drawing on patterns and themes emerging, will in turn motivate further exploration and analysis of qualitative data by way of providing explanation for observed statistical estimates, and yield insights for future research.

**Table 3: IPE methods overview**

Research methods	Data collection methods	Participants/ data sources (type, number)	Data analysis methods	Research questions addressed	Implementation/ logic model relevance
Survey (pre/post-test)	SLT/SENDCo online survey	SLT/SENDCo (180)	Descriptive Inferential Cross-tabulations Mixed coding Thematic analysis	RQ1 RQ2 RQ3 RQ4	Moderators Usual practice Context Cost
	Telephone semi-structured interviews	10 control group SENDCos	Description – pen portraits	RQ2	Usual practice
Observations	Observation of WSS regional training	3 (of 5) events		RQ3	Compliance Activities Fidelity Quality
	Observation of WSS regional engagement days 1 and 2	5 events x 2		RQ1 RQ3	Activities Fidelity Quality
Test	SDQ online test (baseline, follow-up)	Pupils (57,600)	Inferential	RQ1	Moderators Secondary outcome
Case Studies (5; case study unit = pair of secondary schools; analytical approach = methodological and participant triangulation)	Document analysis	SIP SEND information report SEND policy LA local offer WSS Review SEND Development Plan	Mixed coding Thematic analysis Cross-case analysis	RQ1 RQ3	Context Quality Moderators
	Observation of WSS support visit	10 case study schools	Mixed coding Thematic analysis Cross-case analysis	RQ1 RQ3	Activities Fidelity Quality
	Interviews with key stakeholders in case study schools	Depends on focus of school action plan. 5 interviews x 3 visits	Mixed coding Thematic analysis Cross-case analysis	RQ1 RQ3 RQ4	Fidelity Cost Context Moderators Quality Reach Responsiveness Programme Differentiation
	Observation of activities relating to delivery of action plan	Depends on focus of action plan. Maximum of 2 observations x 3 visits	Mixed coding Thematic analysis Cross-case analysis	RQ1 RQ3	Activities Context Quality Reach Responsiveness
	Stakeholder groups surveys	Depends on focus of action plan. Maximum of 3	Descriptive Cross-tabulations	RQ1	Context Moderators Quality Reach

		surveys x 2 administrations			Responsiveness
Semi-structured Interviews	Telephone interviews with WSS staff	5 key staff from WSS	Mixed coding Thematic analysis	RQ1 RQ3 RQ4	Context Cost Fidelity

## Cost evaluation

The cost of programme delivery will be estimated using the principles set out in the 2019 cost evaluation guidance for EEF evaluations. The primary question to be addressed is: what is the per-pupil cost of the intervention? Data collection for this estimation will largely take place alongside that of the IPE. Our key methods of gathering this information will therefore be the surveys of SENCOs (baseline and at follow-up in 2022 and 2023), telephone interviews with SENCOs, and face-to-face interviews with key stakeholder groups. In addition, financial documents pertaining to the intervention will be sought where appropriate (e.g. from nasen, selected school) and will be analysed in order to triangulate findings from the surveys and interviews.

Estimation will be in line with the ten principles of EEF cost evaluation. For example, costs per SEND pupil will be estimated from the perspective of the school as the crucial decision-maker. We do not expect that other stakeholders will accrue costs, but will design data collection in order to understand whether this is the case. In addition, costs will be estimated for the programme as it was implemented in the study, and we will ascertain whether these costs are expected to differ from implementation of the intervention at scale. We will also compare the costs of programme delivery to those of a counterfactual (i.e. the control group), and present the programme costs in terms of additionality (i.e. the additional resources required for programme delivery). Costs will be divided into pre-requisites, start-up costs and recurring costs and will be adjusted for inflation and value-of-money over time to enable us to derive a cost per pupil for the programme as if implemented over three years. This estimate will be subject to sensitivity analysis in order to address heterogeneity between schools and uncertainty about the value of resources.

## Ethics and registration

Ethical approval has been obtained through Manchester Metropolitan University. The original submission was made on October 10<sup>th</sup> 2019 and approval was granted following revisions on October 31<sup>st</sup> 2019. Following a project extension, an amendment was submitted on and approval was granted on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. The process includes providing details about the project design, information about the ethical procedures that will be adopted, and copies of participant information sheets and consent/withdrawal forms. We also included the Memorandum of Understanding and privacy notice. The main changes resulting from the review process were to develop a video to support the administration of the SDQ to students. The video will include clips of young people describing what it is like to complete the SDQ. The aim of this is to enable students to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in this aspect of the data collection without the need for them to read a lengthy participant information sheet. The teacher administering the SDQ will also read out some statements that relate to informed consent. The amendment also included a shift from paper-based to online administration of the SDQ in case home administration is required. The intention is to administer the online survey in schools however as this will result in more reliable data.

The school recruitment process is as follows. The WSS team will identify schools and collect initial data. Schools will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding which provides information about the project and its aims, potential benefits for participating schools, a timetable of activities, data protection issues and responsibilities of all parties involved. Schools will issue a withdrawal notice to all parents of students in Year 8 and Year 9. Parents will have 2 weeks to respond to this although they have the right to withdraw their child at any time. FFT will then collect baseline data from each school.

This trial is registered at the ISRCTN registry, registration number ISRCTN11339306. The entry can be viewed here: <http://www.isrctn.com/ISRCTN11339306>

## Data protection

Manchester Met will process the personal data of pupils and school staff for the purposes of this study and will act as evaluators. This processing is regulated by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

- The National Association of Special Educational Needs (nasen) are a Data Processor as they will collect the data specified by Manchester Met during recruitment;
- FFT Education (FFT) are a Data Processor as they will collect the data specified by Manchester Met at baseline and after the intervention has been delivered;
- Manchester Metropolitan University (Manchester Met) are a Data Controller in respect of any personal data of pupils/and or teachers which they process for the purposes of the project;
- The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) becomes the Data Controller at the end of the project once the data is submitted to the EEF Data Archive, currently managed by FFT Education (Data Processor for the archive).

Manchester Met will ensure that all personal data collected and processed by Manchester Met, nasen and FFT for this research project are:

- Processed in a manner that is fair, transparent and lawful;
- Adequate and relevant to the study, and are processed solely for the purposes set out in this document;
- Accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date;
- Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary and;
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data.

This evaluation will be assessed for data protection and ethics as part of the embedded research ethics approval process in place at Manchester Met. All personal data will be treated with strictest confidence by the evaluators in accordance with the requirements of the GDPR 2018.

Manchester Met shall ensure that a data sharing agreement (Annex 5) is in place as required by the GDPR and DPA. This document will clearly outline the data sharing and protection responsibilities of the four parties involved with this arrangement (Manchester Met, nasen, FFT and EEF).

Data will be processed by Manchester Met in order to ascertain the impact of the intervention on the pupil outcomes above, and to make judgements about compliance and fidelity. So that the processing of personal data relating to the pupils is fair, lawful and transparent we will use a parent information sheet (Annex 4), parental withdrawal form (also Annex 4), and a privacy notice agreed with the University's Data Protection Officer:

[https://www.mmuperu.co.uk/assets/uploads/files/Privacy\\_Notice\\_WSS\\_Review\\_Evaluation.pdf](https://www.mmuperu.co.uk/assets/uploads/files/Privacy_Notice_WSS_Review_Evaluation.pdf).

Pupils will also receive information about the SDQ prior to its completion and given the right to withdraw. Pupils may also withdraw from data processing at any time during the study.

As a public authority conducting research and analysis in the public interest which has undergone ethical approval the lawful basis for the processing of:

- Personal data is 'Public Task' – GDPR Article 6(1)(e);
- Personal data defined as special category is 'Research purposes in the public interest' – GDPR Article 9(2)(j).

Any information identifying students will be given a unique code immediately after collection and prior to analysis in order to reduce risk. Archived data will include pupil UPNs and matching to the NPD and other administrative data may take place by the Data Archive Manager. However, data will only be released subsequently to interested parties in an anonymised format. The information collected will be used for research purposes only and no information that can identify individuals will be used for any other purpose. Any personal data collected and held by Manchester Met, nasen and FFT will be destroyed in accordance with the GDPR when it is no longer required, and no later than July 2025.

## Personnel

Researchers assigned to this evaluation are drawn from the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (<https://www.mmuperu.co.uk/>) and Education and Social Research Institute (<https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/esri/>), both based at Manchester Metropolitan University.

The intervention developers and delivery team are based at nasen and led by Anne Heavey (<https://nasen.org.uk/>).

The Fisher Family Trust are responsible for the collection of administrative data from schools and for the collection and processing of SDQs where the team is led by Laura James (<https://fft.org.uk/>).

Professors Cathy Lewin and Stephen Morris take overall responsibility for the delivery of this evaluation and are co-Principal Investigators. From the Education and Social Research Institute, Cathy and Stephen are joined by Peter Hick, Principal Lecturer and Kate Wicker, Research Assistant. From the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit, Andrew Smith (Research Associate), Jordan Harrison (senior research assistant) and Zsolt Kiss (Visiting Fellow) complete the team.

Professor Morris along with Smith, Harrison and Kiss will take the lead on the impact evaluation, and oversee the sample design, randomisation, statistical analysis and reporting.

Professor Lewin, along with Hick and Wicker, will oversee the design and execution of the IPE.

## Risks

Risk	Probability (1=low, 2=medium & 3=high)	Impact (1-3)	Severity (probability * impact)	Mitigation
Recruiting sufficient numbers of schools that have not previously participated in SEND Review	2	2	4	It will be necessary to recruit schools that have not previously engaged with SEND Review. This will take a substantial effort by both the developer and ourselves. Members of our team have extensive experience of working with schools, in a wide variety of studies in different contexts. We will work closely with the developer to help shape a recruitment and retention strategy for schools; one which communicates clearly the benefits to schools of participating in the trial.
Substantial variation in SEND education in special and mainstream schools across different areas	3	1	3	It will be important to collect rich school level data and possibly also area data to enable the analysis to explore variability across areas and improve the precision of sample estimates. We will examine census data for schools that take part, extract variables from previous census extracts and add these to our trial data – we will also add in further contextual variables such as IDACI scores, etc. There might also be benefit to considering recruitment and how the initial sample might be structured to reflect dimensions over which provision might vary.
Missing data and sample attrition	3	2	6	There is a high chance that some schools recruited to the trial decide to withdraw, and this sample loss might both reduce precision of statistical estimates and introduce bias. Drawing on our experience and that of the developer, we will devise a strategy to limit school level attrition. Where attrition occurs, steps can be taken in analysis to test various assumptions regarding missingness and assess consequences for bias and precision (described above). Other sources of missingness can result from miss-recording of identifying data for pupils. This can be mitigated through carrying out extensive checks on students records at randomisation.
Addressing and measuring compliance	2	2	4	In many studies, schools assigned to an intervention fail to engage with it and those in the control group take part. We need to limit this. This requires a strong communications strategy that emphasises the importance of schools engaging

Risk	Probability (1=low, 2=medium & 3=high)	Impact (1-3)	Severity (probability * impact)	Mitigation
				with the intervention and stressing the benefits of their involvement. It will be important to communicate expectations clearly to the control schools given that they will have signed up to the project because of an identified need. Identifying whether control schools make any changes to their SEND provision during the evaluation will be essential. It is also important to explore the extent to which the developer might place restrictions on who they work with to avoid contamination of the control group. Where non-compliance occurs, it will be important for us to work closely with the developers to arrive at a meaningful definition of compliance.
Variation in school action plans	3	2	6	This variation will be a key concern for IPE. Some actions may be more likely to impact on GCSE outcomes than others or to impact on certain subjects only. Individual action plans may vary in relation to the amount and extent of change proposed. Schools are also likely to have different levels of engagement and success in implementations. We intend to develop measures that allow us to capture such variations quantitatively. Also, student wellbeing measures can account for the more proximal effects of SEND Review on pupils.
Staff shortages and retention in the evaluation team	2	2	4	Studies that run over extended periods of time will experience research staff turnover. Both PERU and ESRI have a large number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff and flexible workload and staff management systems that will enable us to ensure this project is always appropriately staffed and managed
Poor communications between evaluators and developers	1	3	3	As part of our project planning we will hold regular catch-up meetings with the developers and these will be of greater frequency around important milestones (e.g. school recruitment, enumeration, etc.). We will also share our project plans and risk management documents with the developer on a regular basis and ensure our management processes align where possible with those of the project team ensuring collective and appropriate responses to emerging challenges.

## Timeline

**Table 4: Timeline**

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
<b>Nov 2019 – Mar 2020 and Sep to Oct 2020</b>	School recruitment. MoU signed. Note school recruitment was suspended due to the Corona Virus pandemic from March 2020 and recommenced at September 2020.	Helen Prosser (nasen)
<b>Nov 2020 – Feb 2021</b>	Schools then provide student data to FFT on behalf of Manchester Met.	Laura James (FFT)
<b>November 2020</b>	Schools complete SLT/SENDCo survey	Peter Hick (Manchester Met)
<b>Jan – Feb 2021</b>	SDQ administered to cohort 1 and 2 (Year 8 and Year 9 in Sep 2020).	Laura James (FFT)
<b>Jan 2021 – Feb 2021</b>	Ten case study schools recruited and baseline documentation collected.	Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Feb to Mar 2021</b>	Schools are randomised to either receive the intervention or be in the control group.	Andrew Smith (Manchester Met)
<b>Mar 2021</b>	WSS Review training takes place (Manchester Met observes).	Katherine Walsh/Margaret Mulholland (nasen)  Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Apr 2021 – Jun 2021</b>	Schools complete their self-evaluations and peer-to-peer visits.	SENDCos
<b>April 2021 – June 2021</b>	SDQ data analysis	Stephen Morris (Manchester Met) Andrew Smith (Manchester Met)
<b>Jun 2021</b>	First engagement day (Manchester Met observes).	Katherine Walsh/Margaret Mulholland (nasen)  Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Sep 2021 – Dec 2021</b>	Support visits from nasen to each participating school (Manchester Met observes in case study schools).	Katherine Walsh/Margaret Mulholland (nasen)  Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
<b>Jan – Feb 2022</b>	Second engagement day (Manchester Met observes).	Katherine Walsh/Margaret Mulholland (nasen)  Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Mar – Jun 2022</b>	Support visits from nasen to each participating school.	Katherine Walsh/Margaret Mulholland (nasen)
<b>Jun – Jul 2022</b>	Case study school visits and updated documentation collected.	Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Jun – Jul 2022</b>	SLT/SENDCo survey, stakeholder groups short surveys.	Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met) Peter Hick (Manchester Met)
<b>Jul 2022</b>	Follow-up telephone interviews with sample of control group SENDCos.	Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Jun/Jul 2022</b>	SDQ administered to cohort 1 (Year 9 in Sep 2020).	Laura James (FFT)
<b>Sep – Oct 2022</b>	SDQ data analysis	Stephen Morris (Manchester Met) Andrew Smith (Manchester Met)
<b>Oct 2022 – Nov 2022</b>	IPE data analysis	Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Jun – Jul 2023</b>	Case study school visits and updated documentation collected.	Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Jun – Jul 2023</b>	SLT/SENDCo survey, stakeholder groups short surveys.	Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met) Peter Hick (Manchester Met)
<b>Jul 2023</b>	Follow-up telephone interviews with sample of control group SENDCos.	Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Jun/Jul 2023</b>	SDQ administered to cohort 2 (Year 8 in Sep 2020).	Laura James (FFT)
<b>Sep 2023 – Oct 2023</b>	SDQ data analysis	Stephen Morris (Manchester Met)

Dates	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
		Andrew Smith (Manchester Met)
<b>Oct 2023 – Nov 2024</b>	IPE data analysis	Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Sep 2023</b>	GCSE and student data for cohort 1 (Year 9 in Sep 2020) collected.	Laura James (FFT)
<b>Jan 2024</b>	Data linking, cleaning and structuring	Andrew Smith (Manchester Met)
<b>Jan/Feb 2024</b>	Impact data analysis	Stephen Morris (Manchester Met)
<b>Jan-Jul 2024</b>	Reporting	Stephen Morris (Manchester Met) Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)
<b>Sept 2024</b>	GCSE and student data for cohort 2 (Year 8 in Sep 2020) may be collected.	Laura James (FFT)
<b>Nov 2024</b>	Data linking, cleaning and structuring	Andrew Smith (Manchester Met)
<b>Nov/Dec 2024</b>	Impact data analysis	Stephen Morris (Manchester Met)
<b>Nov 2024 - Feb 2025</b>	Reporting	Stephen Morris (Manchester Met) Cathy Lewin (Manchester Met)

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## Annex 2 – Memorandum of Understanding

### **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

#### **Evaluation of the Whole School SEND Review Process**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets out in detail the nature of the study your school is agreeing to take part in by signing it. It is important that you read it very carefully before you decide to proceed. If you have any questions, please contact Helen Prosser, Project Manager by email: [helenp@nasen.org.uk](mailto:helenp@nasen.org.uk).

#### **Project overview**

The Whole School SEND Review (WSS Review) is a framework that enables school leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of current Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision through a structured self-evaluation and peer review. The WSS Review outlines eight areas for review:

- Outcomes for pupils with SEND;
- Leadership of SEND;
- The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEND;
- Working with pupils and parents/carers of pupils with SEND;
- Assessment and identification;
- Monitoring, tracking and evaluation;
- The efficient use of resources;
- The quality of SEND provision.

The WSS Review process supports school leaders in identifying strengths and weaknesses in existing provision to devise a bespoke action plan, with clear targets identified to drive improvement.

Participating schools will engage in a peer review audit process, supported by two Project Directors who are experienced practitioners with knowledge and expertise in SEND. Each school will be paired with another school undertaking a WSS Review for this process and will undertake a visit to the partner school. After an initial WSS Reviewer training event in Spring 2021, participating SENDCos will also take part in two engagement days focusing on developing a bespoke action plan that targets areas of priority to drive improvement in provision for all children, including those with SEND. Furthermore, the SENDCo and Senior Leadership Team will benefit from two school visits from one of the Project Directors to support the implementation of the action plan.

The programme is being run by the Whole School SEND Consortium, which brings together schools, organisations and individuals who are committed to ensuring that every child and young person with SEND can achieve their potential at school. The Whole School SEND Consortium is hosted by the National Association of Special Educational Needs (nasen), a charity that supports practitioners by providing relevant information, training and resources to enable staff to meet all pupils' needs.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is funding a study of the programme to evaluate the impact on educational and wellbeing outcomes for young people with SEND.

#### **Aims of the evaluation**

The aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of the WSS Review process. A Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) is being funded by the EEF and will focus on improvements in academic outcomes for pupils with SEND, as well as other outcomes such as attendance, exclusions and well-being. The evaluation is not an assessment of individual pupils or schools but is about understanding how effective the programme is overall. Building on the EEF-Sutton Trust Toolkit, the results of this research will make an important contribution to understanding how and why the WSS Review process affects academic and behavioural outcomes across a school.

## School and pupil eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible, no member of SLT or the SENDCo can have previously received training on using the WSS Review Guide, and the school must not have previously commissioned or conducted a WSS Review through nasen (after July 2016). Particular focus will be given to secondary schools in the following regions in England: The North; East Midlands, South Yorkshire and Humber; Southwest; South Central England and Northwest London, and West Midlands.

Schools must also be willing to release the SENDCo for four days, for the following commitments off-site:

- Initial WSS Reviewer Training (1 day);
- Peer Review of partner school (1 day);
- Engagement days (2 days).

Furthermore, schools must provide the following release time for SENDCos to complete responsibilities:

- Preparation for WSS Review (1-2 days);
- Written report following the WSS Review of the partner school (1 day);
- Project Director visits (2 days).

A Senior Leader, in addition to the SENDCo, must support the SENDCo in preparing for the WSS Review, participate in the WSS Review and meet with the Project Director on each of the school visits.

The school must provide key data for all students in Years 8 and 9 as of September 2020– these are outlined in detail in the 'Responsibilities' section below. We are also leaving open the possibility of also collecting data from Year 7s as of September 2020 but we will not ask you for this data initially.

## How does my school benefit?

All participating schools have the opportunity to be part of a high-quality research trial, working with experienced researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University (Manchester Met), that will provide insights into whether and how the WSS Review process leads to improvements in attainment and other outcomes for SEND pupils. Manchester Met will be supported by FFT Education (FFT), part of the Fischer Family Trust who will be responsible for collecting the data described below from your school. The trial will also use the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to measure any impact on student well-being, and this data will be shared with each school. The SDQ consists of 25 statements (eg 'I usually do as I am told') and takes 5-10 minutes to complete. Guidance for teachers will be provided along with the SDQs to support teachers in managing this process with their pupils.

In addition, **intervention schools** (that is those participating schools allocated to the intervention group) will benefit from taking part in the WSS Review process, which includes a day's WSS Reviewer training, following which schools will undertake a peer-to-peer review process in pairs. Schools will also then have two engagement days focusing on developing and delivering a bespoke action plan to drive improvement, and two follow-up support visits from a Project Director. Preliminary research suggests that the WSS Review can improve attainment scores and accelerate progress for learners with SEND.

**Control schools** (those schools not allocated to the intervention group) will receive a financial payment of £1,500, in two instalments, on completion of different elements of the study, but will not participate in the WSS Review process.

## Why a randomised controlled trial?

The EEF regularly evaluates its projects through an established evaluation process called a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT). In an RCT, participation in the intervention is determined by

random selection from a group of schools that decide to participate in a study and sign an MOU. For this project, that means each school's involvement in the WSS Review process will depend on whether they are randomly assigned into the intervention group or the control group. Once the intervention has been completed, outcomes for pupils in the intervention group will be compared to those in the control group to find out whether the intervention has made a measurable difference.

The random allocation of schools is essential to the evaluation as it is the most rigorous way to find out the effects of the WSS Review process on pupils. It is therefore important that school leaders, teachers, form tutors and pupils commit to engaging in whichever of the groups they are randomly assigned to and undertake the evaluation tasks associated with that group.

Schools in the control will not have access to the WSS Review process during the study period. We recognise that schools allocated to the control group may be disappointed not to be taking part in the WSS Review process. However, we hope that recognising that every school has equal opportunity of being assigned to the intervention, a financial incentive for schools in the control group and understanding the essential role played by control schools in helping to further understand the effectiveness of the WSS Review will coalesce to ensure equal commitment to the evaluation. Schools in the control group will be able to access the WSS Review process from September 2024.

## The research team and evaluation

The evaluation is being independently carried out by a team at Manchester Met, led by Professor Stephen Morris and Professor Cathy Lewin, who have a considerable amount of experience of conducting studies similar to this in schools. The team also includes Peter Hick, a Principal Lecturer in inclusive education who has professional experience as a SEND teacher and has developed postgraduate programmes for SEND teachers. Support will also be provided by Dr Zsolt Kiss, Mr Andrew Smith, Mr Jordan Harrison and Dr Kate Wicker.

This study will recruit 160 secondary schools with particular focus on five different regions: The North; East Midlands, South Yorkshire and Humber; Southwest; South Central England and Northwest London, and West Midlands. In each region, half of the schools will be allocated to the intervention group (the WSS Review process), and half will be in the control group.

As part of your involvement in this study you will be approached by FFT, on behalf of Manchester Met, and asked to provide a range of data. These data relate to students commencing Years 8 and 9 at September 2020 (we are leaving open the possibility of also asking you for data from students in Year 7 at September 2020, but we will not do so initially). Further details of the data required are provided below. Much of these data you will have already. You will also, however, be asked to administer an SDQ questionnaire to all students in these year groups in January or February 2021, July 2022 for those students currently in Year 9, and July 2023 for those students currently in Year 8.

The main evaluation will take place from September 2020 to September 2023 with a focus on students who are currently in years 8 and 9 (at least initially). During the study period, 10 intervention group schools will be recruited to participate as case study schools; these schools will be visited on three occasions (autumn 2021, summer 2022, summer 2023). Case study visits will include observations of key events relating to the delivery of the WSS Review process, interviews with key stakeholders such as the SENDCo and SLT with responsibility for SEND, and focus groups with teachers and students involved in SEND initiatives.

Surveys will be administered to the SLT/SENDCo in all intervention and control group schools in January or February 2021 and then repeated in July 2022 and July 2023. Follow-up telephone interviews will be conducted with SENDCos from a sample of control schools to ascertain any school changes relating to SEND provision over the study period. Short surveys will be administered in July 2022 and July 2023 to stakeholder groups such as teachers and students in intervention schools depending on the actions taken following the WSS Review process.

FFT will collect GCSE and student data, for pupils who were Year 9s at the start of the study, in September 2023. If the data collected from the Year 9s are robust, then FFT will collect GCSE and student data from the students who are in year 8 at the start of the study, in September 2024.

## Timetable of key evaluation activities throughout the trial

Date	Activity
<b>Sep - Oct 2020</b>	Schools return the signed MOU (to be signed by the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and SENDCo) and any parental withdrawal forms.
<b>Nov 2020 – Feb 2021</b>	Schools provide student data to FFT on behalf of Manchester Met
<b>Jan – Feb 2021</b>	Schools complete the baseline SDQ and SLT/SENDCo survey
<b>Jan – Feb 2021</b>	Ten case study schools recruited and baseline documentation collected
<b>Feb – Mar 2021</b>	Schools are randomised to either receive the intervention or be in the control group
<b>Mar 2021</b>	WSS Review training takes place (Manchester Met observes)
<b>Apr – Jun 2021</b>	Schools complete their self-evaluations and peer-to-peer visits
<b>Jun 2021</b>	First engagement day (Manchester Met observes)
<b>Sep – Dec 2021</b>	Support visits from nasen to each participating school (Manchester Met observes in case study schools)
<b>Jan – Feb 2022</b>	Second engagement day (Manchester Met observes)
<b>Mar – Jun 2022</b>	Support visits from nasen to each participating school
<b>Jun – July 2022</b>	Case study school visits and updated documentation collected
<b>Jun – July 2022</b>	SLT/SENDCo survey, stakeholder groups short surveys
<b>July 2022</b>	Follow-up telephone interviews with sample of control group SENDCos
<b>July 2022</b>	SDQ administered to cohort 1 (Year 9 in Sep 2020)
<b>Jun – July 2023</b>	Case study school visits and updated documentation collected
<b>Jun – July 2023</b>	SLT/SENDCo survey, stakeholder groups short surveys
<b>July 2023</b>	Follow-up telephone interviews with sample of control group SENDCos
<b>July 2023</b>	SDQ administered to cohort 2 (Year 8 in Sep 2020)
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	GCSE and student data for cohort 1 (Year 9 in Sep 2020) collected
<b>Autumn 2024</b>	GCSE and student data for cohort 2 (Year 8 in Sep 2020) may be collected

## Data protection

Manchester Met will process the personal data of pupils and staff in your school for the purposes of this study and will act as evaluators. This processing is regulated by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

- **The National Association of Special Educational Needs (nasen)** are a Data Processor as they will collect the data specified by Manchester Met during recruitment;
- **FFT Education (FFT)** are a Data Processor as they will collect the data specified by Manchester Met at baseline and after the intervention has been delivered;
- **Manchester Metropolitan University (Manchester Met)** are a Data Controller in respect of any personal data of pupils/and or teachers which they process for the purposes of the project;
- **The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)** becomes the Data Controller at the end of the project once the data is submitted to the EEF Data Archive, currently managed by FFT Education (Data Processor for the archive).

Manchester Met will ensure that all personal data collected and processed by Manchester Met, nasen and FFT for this research project are:

- Processed in a manner that is fair, transparent and lawful;
- Adequate and relevant to the study, and are processed solely for the purposes set out in this document;
- Accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date;
- Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary and;
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data.

The evaluation of the WSS Review process will be assessed for data protection and ethics as part of the embedded research ethics approval process in place at Manchester Met. All personal data will be treated with strictest confidence by the evaluators in accordance with the requirements of the GDPR 2018.

Manchester Met shall ensure that a data sharing agreement is in place as required by the GDPR and DPA. This document will clearly outline the data sharing and protection responsibilities of the four parties involved with this arrangement (Manchester Met, nasen, FFT and EEF).

Data will be processed by Manchester Met in order to ascertain the impact of the WSS Review process on the pupil outcomes above, and to make judgements about compliance and fidelity. So that the processing of personal data relating to the pupils is fair, lawful and transparent we will use a parent information sheet, parental withdrawal form, and a privacy notice agreed with the University's Data Protection Officer: [www.sendgateway.org.uk/download.D9A99B43-7236-4702-8E477FB83A1ADD5A.html](http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/download.D9A99B43-7236-4702-8E477FB83A1ADD5A.html). Pupils will also be given information about the SDQ prior to its completion and given the right to withdraw. Pupils may also withdraw from data processing at any time during the study.

As a public authority conducting research and analysis in the public interest which has undergone ethical approval our lawful basis for the processing of:

- Personal data is 'Public Task' – GDPR Article 6(1)(e);
- Personal data defined as special category is 'Research purposes in the public interest' – GDPR Article 9(2)(j).

Any information identifying students will be given a unique code immediately after collection and prior to analysis in order to reduce risk. Archived data will include pupil UPNs and matching to the NPD and other administrative data may take place by the Data Archive Manager. However, data will only be released subsequently to interested parties in an anonymised format. The information collected will be used for research purposes only and no information that can identify individuals will be used for any other purpose. Any personal data collected and held by Manchester Met, nasen and FFT will be destroyed in accordance with the GDPR when it is no longer required, and no later than July 2025.

## Responsibilities

### Responsibilities of nasen

- Recruitment of schools to the trial. Schools will be recruited in a regional sequence, with use of local knowledge of Regional SEND Leaders.
- Incentive payments to control schools. nasen will make payments (subject to compliance with the evaluation) to the control group in two sums (£250 in July 2022 on completion of the follow-up SDQ with Year 9 students and £1,250 on completion of follow-up SDQ with Year 8 students and receipt of GCSE data from Year 9 students in September 2023).
- Communicating with schools about recruitment to the trial up to randomisation.
- Acting as a point of contact for queries about the delivery of the WSS Review process.
- Acting as a point of contact for sending signed MOU's and parental withdrawal forms.
- Informing schools of the randomisation result.
- Delivering to each region:
  - WSS Reviewer Training;
  - Two engagement days.
- A Project Director visiting each intervention school twice.

### Responsibilities of FFT

- Acting as point of contact for collection of all data with the exception of the baseline and follow-up surveys, and case study data collection.
- Collection of baseline student data during the recruitment process.
- Administration of SDQ to both cohorts (January/February 2021).

- Administration of the SDQ to the Year 9 cohort (July 2022).
- Administration of the SDQ to the Year 8 cohort (July 2023).
- Collection of GCSE and student data for the Year 9 cohort (Autumn 2023).
- Collection of GCSE and student data for the Year 8 cohort if required (Autumn 2024).

### **Responsibilities of Manchester Met**

- Obtaining institutional ethical approval for the evaluation.
- Ensuring that data protection procedures meet the requirements of GDPR. This includes setting up data sharing agreements between Manchester Met, FFT and nasen.
- Collating and storing securely all data collected by FFT.
- Providing summary reports of SDQ data to all participating schools.
- Acting as a point of contact for the administration of baseline, follow-up and stakeholder surveys to all schools.
- Acting as point of contact for any queries to do with the evaluation.
- Observing the WSS Reviewer Training and Engagement days.
- Acting as a point of contact for case study schools.
- Collecting data from case study schools including documentation, observations of visits by Project Directors, interviews with key stakeholders such as the SENDCo, administering surveys of key stakeholders.
- Analysing all data.
- Writing the report.

### **Responsibilities of all schools recruited to the trial**

- Initially, schools will need to provide to nasen:
  - Full name of the School;
  - Full address and postcode of the School;
  - Number of pupils on the roll in Years 7, 8 and 9 at the beginning of September 2020;
  - School URN;
  - Identity of the exam board for GCSE English and maths;
  - Named contact at the school for supplying data – telephone and email address.
- Once the school has signed the MOU, the following information will need to be supplied for all pupils in Years 8 and 9 initially (with an option to return to you at a later date and ask for data for Year 7 as well) to FFT who are collecting data on behalf of Manchester Met:
  - UPN;
  - Full name;
  - Date of birth;
  - Sex;
  - Ever-FSM status;
  - SEND (EHP or support);
  - Primary identification of need;
  - Current class for English (at September 2020);
  - Number of temporary exclusions in the previous school year (Sep 2019 – Feb 20);
  - Number of authorised absences in the previous school year (Sep 2019 – Feb 20);
  - Number of unauthorised absences in the previous school year (Sep 2019 – Feb 20);
  - Scaled score and test score for KS2 Reading;
  - Teacher assessment for KS2 Writing;
  - Scaled score and test score for KS2 Maths.

For schools that use FFT Aspire, FFT will pre-populate a spreadsheet for the school with most of the data from the list above. Schools will need to verify the data and complete any missing data and provide the spreadsheet to FFT using FFT's secure data transfer website.

For schools that do not use FFT Aspire, FFT will provide a spreadsheet template for the school to complete. Schools will need to complete the data and provide the spreadsheet to FFT using FFT's secure data transfer website.

- Complete a SLT/SENDCo survey in January-February 2021, June-July 2022 and June-July 2023.

- Facilitate the distribution and retrieval of parental withdrawal forms.
- Administer an SDQ questionnaire to all students in January-February 2021 for those students currently in Year 9 and Year 8, July 2022 for those students currently in Year 9, and July 2023 for those students currently in Year 8.
- Provide the following data to FFT in Autumn 2023 for those students currently in Year 9 and in Autumn 2024 for students currently in Year 8 if required:
  - UPN;
  - Full name;
  - Date of Birth;
  - URN (school identifier to link to school record);
  - School postcode (back-up in case of URN change);
  - GCSE grade for English language;
  - GCSE mark/raw score for English language;
  - English language exam board;
  - GCSE grade for English literature;
  - GCSE mark/raw score for English literature;
  - English literature exam board (if different to language);
  - GCSE grade for Maths;
  - GCSE mark/raw score for Maths;
  - Mathematics exam board;
  - Mathematics tier;
  - SEND (ECHP or support);
  - Primary identification of need;
  - Number of temporary exclusions in the previous school year (Y9: 2022/23, Y8: 2023/24);
  - Number of authorised absences in the previous school year (Y9: 2022/23, Y8: 2023/24);
  - Number of unauthorised absences in the previous school year (Y9: 2022/23, Y8: 2023/24).

For schools that use FFT Aspire, FFT will pre-populate a spreadsheet for the school with most of the data from the list above. Schools will need to verify the data and complete any missing data and provide the spreadsheet to FFT using FFT's secure data transfer website.

For schools that do not use FFT Aspire, FFT will provide a spreadsheet template for the school to complete. Schools will need to complete the data and provide the spreadsheet to FFT using FFT's secure data transfer website.

### **Responsibilities of intervention schools**

- Schools are expected to cover release time for participating staff and travel expenses.
- The SENDCo is to attend WSS Reviewer Training and then undertake a review in their setting. The WSS Review is a structured self-evaluation of SEND provision across the school, resulting in a bespoke action plan to target areas of priority to drive improvement. The WSS Review will be led by a trained member of staff from the partner school.
- The SENDCo and a senior leader are to participate in the WSS Review of the school, providing information as requested, to its partner school's SENDCo.
- The SENDCo is to visit its partner school, conducting a WSS Review, identifying strengths and weakness in the school's existing SEND provision and then devise and implement an action plan with other school staff to address weaknesses and improve SEND provision. The WSS Review will be written, in an agreed format, and submitted to the Project Director for quality assurance.
- The SENDCo is to develop an action plan following its WSS Review.
- The SENDCo is to attend two engagement days.
- The SENDCo and a senior leader are to participate in the two school visits by the Project Director.
- For a subset of intervention schools, allow Manchester Met to undertake case study research activities.

**Responsibilities of control schools**

- The control schools must continue to send relevant data, as requested, until Autumn 2024.
- The control schools must not use the WSS Review, or access training, until September 2024.

## Agreement

Please ensure that all signatories have all carefully read this MOU document.

If you have any queries relating to the delivery of the WSS Review process please contact the Project Directors Katherine Walsh and Margaret Mulholland at [wssapply@nasen.org.uk](mailto:wssapply@nasen.org.uk) or telephone 020 3925 3581.

If you have any queries relating to the evaluation please contact Cathy Lewin at [c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk) or telephone 0161 247 5191.

If the above terms are acceptable, please complete the form below, sign and date two copies of this document, keeping one copy for your records and returning the other copy to nasen at [helenp@nasen.org.uk](mailto:helenp@nasen.org.uk)

<b>School name</b>		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Name:  Signature:	Date
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Name:  Signature:	
<b>SENDCo</b>	Name:  Signature:	

## Annex 3 – School information sheet

# School Information Sheet: Whole School SEND Review Process Evaluation

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is funding a two-year Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) of the Whole School SEND Review (WSS Review) process, developed by the Whole School SEND Consortium at nasen. We are seeking to recruit 160 secondary schools with particular focus given to schools in the following regions in England: The North; East Midlands, South Yorkshire and Humber; Southwest; South Central England and Northwest London, and West Midland, to take part in this exciting study.

### What is it?

The WSS Review process enables school leaders to improve Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision at their setting. It was created in partnership with forty outstanding special and mainstream schools, parents and carers of children with SEND and organisations including Ofsted, the Council for Disabled Children and the Teaching Schools Council.

The WSS Review provides a framework that enables school leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of current SEND provision through a structured self-evaluation and peer review from another school undergoing a review. The WSS Review Guide helps schools identify areas for improvement within their SEND provision, equips schools to review and create improvement plans for SEND provision and helps embed a focus on SEND into normal school improvement practices. The Review Guide outlines a step-by-step audit process, including examples of good practice, guidance on how to carry out a review of SEND provision and self-evaluation templates. The WSS Review outlines eight areas for review:

- Outcomes for pupils with SEND;
- Leadership of SEND;
- The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEND;
- Working with pupils and parents/carers of pupils with SEND;
- Assessment and identification;
- Monitoring, tracking and evaluation;
- The efficient use of resources;
- The quality of SEND provision.

Professor Philip Garner's evaluation of the WSS Review (2016) found that teachers engaged in the process demonstrated a clear understanding of the importance of assessment for learning and targeted teaching for pupils with SEND. Furthermore, some participants secured improved attainment scores and evidence of accelerated progress for learners with SEND.

### Who can take part?

Secondary schools in England that have not commissioned a WSS Review, and whose SENDCo has not undertaken WSS Reviewer training since July 2016.

Particular focus will be given to schools located in the following regions aligned with the Teaching Schools Council:

Region	Local Authorities
The North	Cumbria, Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, North Tyneside, North Yorkshire, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton, Sunderland
East Midlands, South Yorkshire and Humber	Barnsley, City of York, Derby, Derbyshire, Doncaster, East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull City, Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northeast Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Rotherham, Rutland, Sheffield
Southwest	Bath and Northeast Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole Borough, Scilly, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay, Wiltshire
South Central England and Northwest London	Barnet, Bedford, Bracknell Forest, Brent, Buckinghamshire, Camden, Central Bedfordshire, City of London, Ealing, Enfield, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hertfordshire, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Luton, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Westminster, Wokingham
West Midlands	Birmingham, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire

## What does taking part in an evaluation involve?

The EEF regularly evaluates its projects through an established evaluation process called Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs). In an RCT, participation is determined by random selection. For this project, that means each school's involvement in the WSS Review process will depend on whether they are randomly assigned into the **intervention group** or the **control group**. Once the intervention has been completed, outcomes for pupils in the intervention group will be compared to those in the control group to find out whether the intervention has made a measurable difference.

The random allocation of settings is essential to the evaluation as it is the most rigorous way to find out the effects of the programme on pupils. It is therefore important that school leaders, teachers, form tutors and pupils commit to engaging in whichever of the two groups they are randomly assigned to and undertake the evaluation tasks associated with that group.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for this project fully describes the responsibilities of schools taking part in the evaluation, including the data that will need to be provided to FFT Education (FFT), part of the Fischer Family Trust on behalf of the evaluators.

## What are the potential benefits for my school?

All participating schools have the opportunity to be part of a high-quality research trial, working with experienced researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University (Manchester Met) – the independent evaluators - that will provide insights into whether and how the WSS Review process leads to improvements in attainment and other outcomes for SEND pupils. Manchester Met will be supported by FFT who will be responsible for collecting the data from your school.

The trial will also use the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to measure any impact on student well-being, and this data will be shared with each school. The SDQ consists of 25 statements (eg 'I usually do as I am told') and takes 5-10 minutes to complete. Guidance for teachers will be provided along with the SDQs to support teachers in managing this process with their pupils. Summary reports of the

SDQ data will be shared with participating schools and could support the identification of issues in relation to Government advice on mental health and behaviour in schools<sup>5</sup>.

In addition, **intervention schools** (that is those participating schools allocated to the intervention group) will benefit from taking part in the WSS Review process which includes training and support. Preliminary research suggests that the WSS Review may improve attainment scores and accelerate progress for learners with SEND.

**Control schools** (those schools not allocated to the intervention group) will receive a financial payment of £1,500, in two instalments, on completion of different elements of the study, but will not participate in the WSS Review process. Schools in the control group will be able to access the WSS Review process from September 2023.

## What are the potential risks for my school?

The SENDCo and other staff may feel professionally vulnerable if for any reason the process is not followed in a supportive way. The Project Directors will oversee the delivery of the WSS Review process and will take action to address this if perceived necessary.

Staff deployment may change as a result of the process, which can be stressful and may temporarily increase staff workload. However, such changes should lead to improvements in students' attainment and well-being.

Students completing the SDQ may be made aware of well-being issues that relate to themselves. Students will be told to tell their teacher if they feel any negative emotions as a result of completing the SDQ and staff will be made aware of the support required for students in these circumstances.

## Does your school and its students have to take part?

It is up to your school to decide. Nasen staff will describe the study and go through this information sheet, which they will give to your school. Nasen staff will then ask your school to sign the MOU to show your school agreed to take part. Your school is free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

If your school decides to take part and a parent does not want their child to be involved in the research, they will sign a withdrawal form on the Parent Information Sheet and return it to the school. The school will pass on the pupil name, DOB and school to Helen Prosser, Project Manager at nasen by email at [helenp@nasen.org.uk](mailto:helenp@nasen.org.uk) or by phone 020 3925 3596, in order for nasen to instruct Manchester Met to remove the child's data. A parent is free to withdraw their child at any time, without giving a reason.

## What exactly will the programme involve?

SENDCos from schools assigned to the intervention group will receive a day's WSS Reviewer training then undertake a review in their setting with a partner school. The review process normally takes a school two-three days, including preparation for review, the review and follow up. A School Leader will participate in the WSS Review, alongside the trained SENDCo. The SENDCo will also travel to his/her partner school and conduct a WSS Review in the partner's school.

Following on from the WSS Reviews, the SENDCo will attend two engagement days, focusing on developing and delivering a bespoke action plan targeting areas of priority to drive improvement. The

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/755135/Mental\\_health\\_and\\_behaviour\\_in\\_schools\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools_.pdf)

SENDCo will receive two visits from a Project Director to support the development and implementation of the bespoke action plan.

## Does it cost anything?

The EEF is covering the cost of delivery of the WSS Review. Therefore, schools assigned to the intervention group will not need to pay to receive the WSS Review process. However, they are expected to cover release time for participating staff and travel expenses, including:

### SENDCo release time

- 1 day release for attendance at initial WSS Reviewer training (plus travel expenses)
- 1-2 days release for preparation for the WSS Review
- 1 day release to visit to partner school (plus travel expenses)
- 1 day release to write partner school's WSS Review report
- 2 days release to attend engagement days 1 and 2 (plus travel expenses)
- 2 days release to meet with Project Director at school

### Senior Leader release time

- 1 day release to support SENDCo in preparing for WSS Review
- 1 day release to participate in WSS Review
- 0.5 day release to meet with Project Director on school visit

Schools in the control group will need to provide data to Manchester Met, and in return will receive **£1,500** following the submission of data to the evaluators.

## What will happen with the data that is collected?

We will collect from your school personally-identifiable information relating to students in Year 9 and Year 8 as of September 2020. We are leaving open the possibility of also collecting data from Year 7s but we will only request this if delays are encountered in getting the scheme up and running across schools.

Manchester Met is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and manages personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Manchester Met's Data Protection Policy.

Data will be transferred and stored securely, and only retained for as long as is necessary. If your school withdraws from the study, we will destroy any information about your school and your students that we have already obtained.

It is Manchester Met's policy to only publish anonymised data unless you have given your explicit written consent to be identified in the research. **Manchester Met never sells personal data to third parties.**

Please read the privacy notice which explains in more detail how your students' data will be processed and stored ([www.sendgateway.org.uk/download.D9A99B43-7236-4702-8E477FB83A1ADD5A.html](http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/download.D9A99B43-7236-4702-8E477FB83A1ADD5A.html)).

For further information about use of your students' personal data and their data protection rights please see Manchester Met's Data Protection Pages (<https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/data-protection/>).

## What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the main phase of the research, focusing on students in Year 9 as of September 2020, will be published in a report in January 2024. If the data from the main phase are robust, then the results of the additional phase of the research, focusing on students in Year 8 as of September 2020, will be published in a report in February 2025. The evaluation team may publish articles in academic journals once the main reports have been published. All participants and schools will be fully anonymised in any reporting.

## Who has reviewed this research project?

This research project has been reviewed by the funder, EEF, and has received ethical approval. A protocol for the research will be published, as will a statistical analysis plan. These will be peer reviewed.

## Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

Please contact Professor Cathy Lewin at Manchester Met in the first instance at [c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk) or telephone 0161 247 5191, or in writing to: Faculty of Education, Manchester Metropolitan University, Brooks Building, 53 Bonsall Street, Manchester, M15 6GX.

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical procedures adopted during this research, please contact the Faculty Head of Research Ethics and Governance at the University, Professor Ricardo Nemirovsky at [R.Nemirovsky@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:R.Nemirovsky@mmu.ac.uk), or telephone 0161 247 2023, or in writing to: Faculty of Education, Manchester Metropolitan University, Brooks Building, 53 Bonsall Street, Manchester, M15 6GX.

If you have any concerns regarding the personal data collected from you, the Data Protection Officer at Manchester Met can be contacted at [legal@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:legal@mmu.ac.uk), or telephone 0161 247 3331 or in writing to: Data Protection Officer, Legal Services, All Saints Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M15 6BH. You also have a right to lodge a complaint in respect of the processing of your personal data with the Information Commissioner's Office as the supervisory authority. Please see: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

**THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT**

## **Annex 5 – Data sharing agreement**

### **Parent /Guardian Information Sheet: Whole School SEND Review Process Evaluation**

The school your child attends has agreed to take part in a two-year research project funded by The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to undertake a review of their Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision and produce an action plan. The Whole School SEND Review (WSS Review) process is designed to support this and was developed by the Whole School SEND Consortium at the National Association for Special Educational Needs (nasen). Below, we describe why we are doing this research project, and what is involved for you and your child.

#### **What is the WSS Review process?**

The WSS Review process enables School Leaders to improve SEND provision in the school. The process was created in partnership with forty outstanding special and mainstream schools, parents and carers of children with SEND and organisations such as Ofsted.

The WSS Review provides a framework that enables school leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of current SEND provision through a structured self-evaluation and peer review from another school also undergoing a review. The WSS Review helps schools identify areas for improvement within their SEND provision, equips schools to review and create improvement plans for SEND provision and helps embed a focus on SEND into normal school improvement practices. The WSS Review outlines eight areas for review:

- Outcomes for pupils with SEND;
- Leadership of SEND;
- The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEND;
- Working with pupils and parents/carers of pupils with SEND;
- Assessment and identification;
- Monitoring, tracking and evaluation;
- The efficient use of resources;
- The quality of SEND provision.

An evaluation of the WSS Review (2016) found that teachers engaged in the process demonstrated a clear understanding of the importance of assessment for learning and targeted teaching for pupils with SEND. Furthermore, some participants improved their attainment scores and there was evidence of accelerated progress for learners with SEND.

#### **What is involved if my child takes part?**

The EEF regularly evaluates its projects through an established evaluation process called a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT). In an RCT, participation in the intervention (in this case a school doing the WSS Review) is determined by random selection from a group of schools that decide to participate in a study. For this project, that means each school's involvement in the WSS Review process will depend on whether it is randomly assigned to the intervention group (doing the WSS Review) or the control group (not doing the WSS Review). Once the intervention has been completed, outcomes (eg GCSE scores, well-being) for pupils in the intervention group will be compared to those in the control group to find out whether the intervention has made a measurable difference.

Irrespective of whether or not your child's school is assigned to the intervention group or control group, your child will complete the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to measure any impact on

student well-being, and this data will be shared with each school. The SDQ consists of 25 statements (eg 'I usually do as I am told') and takes 5-10 minutes to complete. Your child will complete the SDQ in January or February 2021 and then in July 2022 if your child is currently in Year 9 or July 2023 if your child is currently in Year 8. Your child will be presented with a short video explaining the purpose of the SDQ and the potential benefits of the project. Your child's teacher will also talk about the project and the importance of the SDQ. Your child will then be able to choose whether or not to complete it.

Also, the school will also provide assessment and behaviour data (for example, SATs scores, SEND status, authorised/unauthorised absences) relating to your child in the next few weeks to FFT Education (FFT), part of the Fischer Family Trust, who are responsible for collecting data from your school on behalf of Manchester Metropolitan University (Manchester Met). FFT will collect similar data (and GCSE scores) in September 2023 if your child is currently in Year 9 or may collect it in September 2024 if your child is currently in Year 8.

If your child attends a school that is allocated to the control group, then the school will carry on as usual and will not undertake the WSS Review process.

If your child attends a school that is allocated to the intervention group, then the school will undertake the WSS Review process. As a result, some changes may be made at your child's school such as re-arranging classes or re-deploying classroom assistants.

10 schools in the intervention group will be recruited as case study schools. If your child is involved in any research conducted in a case study school, you will receive further information.

## **What are the potential benefits for my child?**

All participating schools have the opportunity to be part of a high-quality research project, working with experienced researchers from Manchester Met – the independent evaluators - that will provide insights into whether and how the WSS Review process leads to improvements in attainment and other outcomes for all pupils and SEND pupils in particular.

If your child attends a school that is allocated to the intervention group, it may positively impact on their well-being, behaviour and attainment. Although the WSS Review process is concerned with students who have SEND, it is likely that all students will benefit as initiatives that your school puts in place will be inclusive, targeting all learners in the school.

## **What are the potential risks for my child?**

When your child completes the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), he/she may be made more aware of their personal well-being issues. Your child will be told to tell his/her teacher if they have any concerns as a result of completing the SDQ and staff will be made aware of the support required for students in these circumstances. We will put clear procedures in place to make sure that this happens and that any students who need support are directed to the right services.

## **Does your child have to take part?**

It is up to you and your child to decide. Please read the information carefully, discuss the project with your child and keep this sheet for future reference. If you are happy for your child to be involved in the research, you do not have to do anything. If you decide that you do not want your child to be involved in the research, then please sign the attached form and return it to the school. You are free to withdraw your child from this research project at any time.

## **Organisations involved**

The programme is being run by the Whole School SEND Consortium, which is committed to ensuring that every child with SEND can achieve their potential at school. The Whole School SEND Consortium is hosted by nasen, a charity that supports practitioners by providing relevant information, training and resources to enable staff to meet all pupils' needs.

Manchester Met is independently evaluating this programme. FFT will be collecting data about your child's behaviour and attainment on behalf of Manchester Met. FFT will also arrange for the SDQ questionnaires to be completed. The evaluation is not an assessment of individual pupils or schools but is about understanding how effective the programme is overall.

EEF is funding the delivery of the WSS Review process by nasen and the evaluation by Manchester Met.

## What will happen with the data that is collected?

We will collect information from your school relating to students in Year 9 and Year 8 as of September 2020 including their names and dates of birth (that is information from which they can be identified). We are leaving open the possibility of also collecting data from Year 7s but we will only request this if delays are encountered in getting the scheme up and running across schools.

Manchester Met is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and manages personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Manchester Met's Data Protection Policy.

Data will be transferred and stored securely, and only retained for as long as is necessary. If you withdraw from the study at any time, we will destroy any information about your child that we have already obtained.

It is Manchester Met's policy to only publish anonymised data (with no personal data that can identify an individual). **Manchester Met never sells personal data to third parties.**

Please read the privacy notice which explains in more detail how your students' data will be processed and stored ([www.sendgateway.org.uk/download.D9A99B43-7236-4702-8E477FB83A1ADD5A.html](http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/download.D9A99B43-7236-4702-8E477FB83A1ADD5A.html)).

For further information about use of your child's personal data and your child's data protection rights please see Manchester Met's Data Protection Pages (<https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/data-protection/>).

## What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the main phase of the research, focusing on students in Year 9 as of September 2020, will be published in a report in January 2024. The results of the additional phase of the research, focusing on students in Year 8 as of September 2020, may be published in a report in February 2025. The evaluation team may publish articles in academic journals once the main reports have been published. All participants and schools will be fully anonymised in any reporting (that is your child will not be identifiable in the project reports or any articles that are published).

## Who has reviewed this research project?

This research project has been reviewed by the funder, the EEF, and has received ethical approval. Detailed design documents will be produced and reviewed by colleagues who understand what should be covered in these documents. This ensures that the design is the best that it can be and that all participants (that is your child) are treated with respect and provided with information so that the ways in which personal data are collected and used are clear to everyone concerned.

## Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

If you have any concerns about the Whole School SEND Review process, please contact the Project Directors Katherine Walsh or Margaret Mulholland at [wssapply@nasen.org.uk](mailto:wssapply@nasen.org.uk) or telephone 020 3925 3581. Nasen are the organisation that is helping schools to go through this process and to reconsider how the school provides for students with SEND.

If you have any concerns about the evaluation please contact Professor Cathy Lewin at [c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk), or telephone 0161 247 5191, or in writing to: Faculty of Education, Manchester Metropolitan University, Brooks Building, 53 Bonsall Street, Manchester, M15 6GX.

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical procedures adopted during this research, please contact the Faculty Head of Research Ethics and Governance, Professor Ricardo Nemirovsky at [R.Nemirovsky@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:R.Nemirovsky@mmu.ac.uk), or telephone 0161 247 2023, or in writing to: Faculty of Education, Manchester Metropolitan University, Brooks Building, 53 Bonsall Street, Manchester, M15 6GX.

If you have any concerns regarding the personal data collected from you, the Data Protection Officer at Manchester Met can be contacted at [legal@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:legal@mmu.ac.uk), or telephone 0161 247 3331 or in writing to: Data Protection Officer, Legal Services, All Saints Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M15 6BH. You also have a right to lodge a complaint in respect of the processing of your personal data with the Information Commissioner's Office as the supervisory authority. Please see: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

**THANK YOU FOR GIVING CONSIDERATION TO YOUR CHILD PARTICIPATING IN THIS  
PROJECT**

**RESEARCH PROJECT WITHDRAWAL SLIP**  
**THE WHOLE SCHOOL SEND REVIEW EVALUATION**

If you are happy for your child's data to contribute to this project, then you do not have to do anything.

Please only complete if you **DO NOT** want your child's data to be used in this research project.

If you **DO NOT** want your child's data to be used for this evaluation, you can withdraw your child by returning this form to the school.

I, the undersigned, hereby **DO NOT** give permission for my child's data to be used for the purposes of the evaluation of the WSS Review process.

Child's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Class/form \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex 5 – Data sharing agreement

### Data Sharing Agreement for The Evaluation of Whole School SEND Review Project

#### 1. Project

The evaluation of Whole School SEND Review ('the Project')

#### 2. Organisations involved

Manchester Metropolitan University ("MMU") (whose registered address is Manchester Metropolitan University, All Saints Campus, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6BH),

NASEN ("NASEN") (whose registered address is nasen House, 4/5 Amber Business Village, Amber Close, Tamworth, B77 4RP),

FFT Education ("FFT") incorporated and registered in England and Wales with company number 03685684 whose registered office is at Unit 7, 127 Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4SA

#### 3. Definitions

Agreement: means this Agreement

Controller, Processor, Personal Data, Processing and Personal Data Breach shall have the meaning given to them in the General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679)

Effective Date: means the date on which all parties have signed this agreement

Parties: means the organisations listed in clause 2 above

Privacy Laws: the Data Protection Act 2018 (the DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679) as amended from time to time and all applicable laws and regulations relating to the processing of personal data and privacy in force in England and Wales, including where applicable the guidance and codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner.

Term of the Agreement: from the Effective Date until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

#### 4. What is the nature and purpose of the data sharing and data processing?

4.1 The data sharing and processing is necessary for the parties to undertake a research project. The data will permit the parties to recruit schools to a randomised controlled trial, create intervention and control groups at random, and at the point of randomisation collect information from each school in the sample. Pupils within participating schools will also complete questionnaires. At two further points in time, additional data will be collected from schools in order to track pupils' progress. Further questionnaires will also be distributed to pupils, again to track their outcomes over time. SENDCos will complete a survey at baseline and two further points in time. Case study data collection will be undertaken by MMU staff in 10 schools. Surveys of key stakeholders such as teachers and governors will also be undertaken. Survey and case study data will be used to conduct the implementation and process evaluation. This will enable strengths and challenges of the SEND Review Process to be identified. It will also enable the research team to check if control schools undertake any school initiatives that may affect the results of the trial.

#### 5. Roles of Parties, types of Personal Data processed and categories of data subject

Participating schools provide consent for school and pupil data to be processed as outlined below. Informed consent is given when the school signs the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MMU at the start of the project. Parents are issued with a Parent information sheet and withdrawal slip. They may withdraw their child from the study at any point. Nasen is responsible for overseeing the administration and collection of these documents. The school, pupil and teacher data to be collected are outlined below. If separate informed consent is required, this is stated.

Nasen will recruit schools to the trial and record basic information about the schools:

- Full name of the school
- Full address and postcode
- Region
- Number of pupils on the roll in Years 8 and 9 at the beginning of September 2019
- School URN
- Identity of the exam boards for GCSE English and maths.

- Named contact at the school for supplying data – telephone and email address

This information will be passed to MMU subsequent to the completion of recruitment to the trial

Nasen will also collect signed MoUs from the participating schools and parent withdrawal notices. They will pass this information to MMU.

FFT, prior to the randomisation of pupils, will collect the following data items from the schools in the sample, for each pupil in the relevant cohorts (these are year 8 and 9 pupils at September 2019)

- UPN
- URN (school identifier to link to school record)
- School postcode (back-up in case of URN change)
- Full name
- Date of birth
- Sex
- FSM status
- SEND (EHP or support)
- Primary identification of need
- Current class for English (at September 2019)
- Number of temporary exclusions in the previous school year (2018/19)
- Number of authorised absences in the previous school year (2018/19)
- Number of unauthorised absences in the previous school year (2018/19)
- Scaled score and test score for KS2 Reading
- Teacher assessment for KS2 Writing
- Scaled score and test score for KS2 Maths

FFT will also administer an SDQ<sup>6</sup> survey to all pupils in Years 8 and 9 in the schools in the sample before or just after randomisation.

These data will be passed to MMU, who will create a trial database with these records and then conduct randomisation.

In June/July 2021 FFT will administer another SDQ questionnaire to Year 9 pupils in the school samples

In June/July 2022 FFT will administer another SDQ questionnaire to Year 8 pupils in the school samples

Subsequent to both these data collection exercises the resulting data will be passed by FFT to MMU.

Further data from schools relating to individual pupils in Year 9 (September 2019) will be collected by FFT in September 2022

- UPN
- Full name

<sup>6</sup> Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – see <http://www.sdqinfo.com/a0.html>

- Date of Birth
- URN (school identifier to link to school record)
- School postcode (back-up in case of URN change)
- GCSE grade for English language
- GCSE mark/raw score for English language
- English language exam board
- GCSE grade for English literature
- GCSE mark/raw score for English literature
- English literature exam board (if different to language?)
- GCSE grade for Maths
- GCSE mark/raw score for Maths
- Mathematics exam board
- Mathematics tier
- SEND (EHP or support)
- Primary identification of need
- Number of temporary exclusions in the previous school year (2021/22)
- Number of authorised absences in the previous school year (2021/2)
- Number of unauthorised absences in the previous school year (2021/22)

Further data from schools relating to individual pupils in Year 8 (September 2019) will be collected by FFT in September 2023:

- UPN
- Full name
- Date of Birth
- URN (school identifier to link to school record)
- School postcode (back-up in case of URN change)
- GCSE grade for English language
- GCSE mark/raw score for English language
- English language exam board
- GCSE grade for English literature
- GCSE mark/raw score for English literature
- English literature exam board (if different to language?)
- GCSE grade for Maths
- GCSE mark/raw score for Maths
- Mathematics exam board
- Mathematics tier
- SEND (EHP or support)
- Primary identification of need
- Number of temporary exclusions in the previous school year (2022/23)
- Number of authorised absences in the previous school year (2022/23)
- Number of unauthorised absences in the previous school year (2022/23)

These data will then be passed to MMU.

All data received by MMU will be appended to the trial data set that will contain records for participating schools and pupils. This data set will be used to

assess the impact of the Whole School SEND Review on GCSE attainment, exclusions and absences, and wellbeing using the SDQ measure. MMU will collect the following data. These data will be accessed by members of the evaluation team who are based in the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit and the Educational and Social Research Institute.

SLT/SENDCo survey will be administered November 2019 – February 2020, as schools are recruited. The survey with additional questions about the strengths and challenges faced will be administered again in June/July 2021 and June/July 2022. Telephone interviews will be undertaken with a sample of SENDCos from control schools. Informed consent will be obtained separately and at the time for these interviews by MMU staff.

The SEND Review Process training sessions and engagement days will be observed.

Nasen staff will be interviewed in May 2021. Informed consent will be obtained by MMU at the time.

Observations and interviews will take place in case study schools in September-December 2020, June/July 2021 and June/July 2022. Interviews will take place with SENDCos, governors, teachers, and students depending on the types of initiatives that schools put in place. Informed consent will be obtained separately and at the time for case study data collection by MMU.

## 6. Data Protection Responsibilities

MMU, acts as Controller and FFT and NASEN shall be Processors for the purposes of the Agreement.

### Data Protection Compliance

6.1 All parties agree to process any Personal Data processed under this Agreement in accordance with the Privacy Laws and not do anything to place another party in breach of its legal obligations, including the obligations under the Privacy Laws. The Processors agree that they shall only act on the documented instructions of the Controller and shall not process Personal Data except on the instructions of the Controller.

### Limitation of Purpose

6.2 All parties agree to only process the Personal data under this Agreement for the sole purpose of delivering the Project and agree not to use the Personal Data for any other purposes. The Parties agree to ensure that the processing

of Personal Data is in accordance with the information provided to the Participating Schools in the MoU and School information sheet, the information provided to Parents in the Parent information sheet and withdrawal slip, and the privacy notice provided to schools and parents.

#### Accuracy and Data Minimisation

6.3. MMU, NASEN and FFT agree to ensure the accuracy and quality of any personal data they process under the Agreement and confirm that they have all appropriate consents necessary for such processing.

6.4. All parties agree to only process the minimum amount of personal data necessary to achieve the Project's purposes as described in clause 3.

#### Data Security

6.5 All parties agree to implement and maintain the technological and organisational measures to protect the Personal Data processed under this agreement against accidental or unlawful loss, alteration, destruction, or unauthorised disclosure, dissemination or access, or alteration. In particular all parties agree that the Personal data will be;

- (i) only processed on the Parties' premises, the Parties' IT infrastructure or at school sites
- (ii) only Processed on the Parties' official devices and not on staff members' personal devices

6.6 The Processors agree to notify the specified point of contact below within 24 hours, in the event that any party knows or suspects that any Personal Data processed under this agreement has or potentially has been, lost, disclosed to an authorised third party, accidentally destroyed or altered:

- (i) MMU point of contact: Chris Woolley, Data Protection Officer, Manchester Metropolitan University, All Saints, Manchester, M15 6BH, [legal@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:legal@mmu.ac.uk) with copies to [s.morris@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:s.morris@mmu.ac.uk) and [c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.lewin@mmu.ac.uk)
- (ii) NASEN point of contact: Helen Prosser, Project Manager, Whole School Send Review Project, Nasen, LABS 90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6LJ, [helenp@nasen.org.uk](mailto:helenp@nasen.org.uk), with copies to [anneh@nasen.org.uk](mailto:anneh@nasen.org.uk)
- (iii) FFT point of contact: Sarah Williams, Information Security and Project Manager, FFT Education Limited, First Floor, 79 East gate, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan, CF71 7AA, [sarah.williams@fft.org.uk](mailto:sarah.williams@fft.org.uk)

#### Confidentiality and Third Parties

6.7 All parties agree to take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of their personnel who have access to any Personal Data under this Agreement, and that such personnel are subject to a duty of confidence in relation to that data

and have undergone adequate training in the care, protection and use of personal data in compliance with the Privacy Laws.

6.8 All parties agree not to disclose or transfer the Personal Data to any third parties other than where;

- (i) disclosure to Participating Schools is necessary for the purposes of the Project; or
- (ii) disclosure is required by law.

#### Non-European Transfers

6.9 All parties agree not to transfer the personal data to any country outside of the European Economic Area (EEA).

#### Sub-processors

6.10. The Processors shall not engage another Processor without prior written authorisation of the Controller. The obligations in this Agreement must be imposed upon any sub-processor engaged by a Processor by way of a written agreement with the sub-processor.

#### Individuals' Data Protection Rights

6.10 MMU will be responsible for handling any requests from individuals to exercise their rights under the Privacy Laws including requests for access to personal data ("DSARs"). All parties agree to provide MMU with reasonable assistance to ensure that MMU can respond to such requests in compliance with the Privacy Laws. If NASEN or FFT receive any DSARs these shall be notified and passed onto MMU without undue delay MMU shall keep the relevant party apprised of the conduct of the request and shall take that party's views into account when responding to the data subject provided that these are in line with the Privacy Laws although the decisions as to how to deal with such requests ultimately rests with MMU .

#### Data Retention

6.11 Nasen will provide FFT with details of schools recruited to the trial and that have completed an MoU. FFT will collect data from these schools and transfer these data at various points during the study to MMU who will process and analyse these data, unless advised otherwise in writing by the Controller. Once all data has been securely transferred to MMU, with receipt confirmed by MMU and the processing and analyses are complete, NASEN shall securely delete any personal data relating to the project within the relevant retention period, unless advised otherwise in writing by the Controller.

At the end of the study, MMU shall then transfer the data back to FFT for archiving in accordance with the terms agreed with the funder.

## 7. Standard Terms

7.1 Parties shall review the effectiveness of this data sharing initiative upon the addition and removal of a party, having consideration to the aims and purposes set out in *Clause 3*. The parties shall continue, amend or terminate the Agreement depending on the outcome of this review.

7.2 The Processors shall make available to the Controller all reasonable information necessary to demonstrate compliance with the obligations laid out in this Agreement and allow for and contribute to audits including audits inspections conducted by the Controller to representatives of the Controller

7.3 The Processors agree to assist the Controller to meet its data subject rights obligations

7.4 Other than as expressly set out in this Agreement, or otherwise agreed by the parties in writing, a person who is not a party to this Agreement is not entitled to enforce any of its terms, whether under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 or otherwise. If a person who is not a party to this Agreement is stated to have the right to enforce any of its terms, the parties may rescind or vary this Agreement without the consent of that person.

7.5 In the event of a dispute or claim brought by a data subject or the ICO concerning the processing of Shared Personal Data against any party, the parties will inform each other about any such disputes or claims, and will cooperate with a view to settling them amicably in a timely fashion.

7.6 The parties agree to respond to any generally available non-binding mediation procedure initiated by a Data Subject or by the ICO, If they do participate in the proceedings, the parties may elect to do so remotely (such as by telephone or other electronic means). The parties also agree to consider participating in any other arbitration, mediation or other dispute resolution proceedings developed for data protection disputes.

7.7 This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English Law and each party irrevocably agrees to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English Courts as regards any claim or matter arising under this Agreement.

7.8 Any notice given to a party under or in connection with this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be addressed to the address set out in this Agreement or to such other address as that party shall have previously notified the sender.

Any notices to MMU shall be sent to:

Manchester Metropolitan University  
Legal Department

All Saints  
Manchester  
M15 6BH

NASEN  
Head of Operations  
Nasen House  
4/5 Amber Business Village  
Amber Close  
Tamworth  
B77 4RP

FFT Education Ltd  
First Floor, 79 East gate,  
Cowbridge,  
Vale of Glamorgan,  
CF71 7AA

7.9 Any such notices under this agreement shall be deemed to have been served if delivered at the time of delivery and if sent by first class post, two (2) working days after posting.

7.10 Where variation of this agreement is necessary to reflect changes to the project or the roles of the parties the parties agree to negotiate in good faith in order to agree reasonable variations. No variation of this agreement shall be effective unless it is in writing and signed by the parties (or their authorised representatives).

7.11 In case the applicable Privacy Laws change in a way that the Agreement is no longer adequate for the purpose of governing lawful data sharing exercises, the Parties agree that they will negotiate in good faith to review the Agreement in light of the new legislation.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties have executed this Agreement by their duly authorised officers as of the date first above written.

Signed by and on behalf of The )  
**Manchester Metropolitan University** )  
acting by a duly authorised signatory: )  
)

Signed by and on behalf of the **FFT** )  
acting by a duly authorised signatory: )  
)

Signed by and on behalf of the **NASEN** )  
acting by a duly authorised signatory: )  
)