EEF statement

Achievement for All Trial 2016-2018

At the outset, we were excited to be able to work with Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) on a trial that we were confident would validate and support the plethora of evidence that has endorsed the effectiveness of Achievement for All (AfA) programmes and practice over the past decade. This evidence has been drawn from a wide range of sources, including independent impact reports (2,500 schools, PwC Social Impact Report), pupil-level data from over 5000 education settings, school leader attestations (surveys and independent statements), and detailed case studies (120 schools). **This previous longitudinal evidence demonstrates that AfA target group children achieved above national expectations.** This was our hope for the EEF AfA trial.

The EEF state, *'Every EEF-funded trial – whether positive, negative or no-impact - has been delivered by a team that is open and willing to find out about the impact of their programme. They take the risk of doing so to learn and improve their programme and out of a commitment to providing schools with high-quality information. This merits great credit, regardless of the evaluation findings – especially as there are many programme developers who avoid the challenge of rigorous or independent evaluation and so deprive schools of the evidence, they need to inform their decisions.'*

In hindsight it was an error to agree to a trial that attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of our broad and bespoke approach through the narrowing lens of two school improvement parameters within two consecutive primary year groups (Years 4 and 5).

Throughout our shared 10-year history we have had confidence in the EEF, its mission, its purpose, and its attempts, to develop a comprehensive bank of evidence-based approaches to closing the gap [A randomised controlled trial was used to compare outcomes in reading and maths, resilience-related outcomes and attendance among pupils in 66 schools who received Achievement for All (AfA) with those who attended 68 schools who continued with business as usual (EEF Addendum Report, 2021)].

2017
Winner, Early Years Award, Children & Young People Now

2012
Education Investor "New Boy" Award

Organisation for the Year, commended

2015
Winner, Early Years-Inclusive Practice Award, Nursery World Award

However, we deliver programmes that are bespoke to all schools depending on their needs *at a specific point in time.* In contrast, there is not one AfA programme but a central methodology that is constantly tailored to schools' particular circumstances. All participating AfA trial schools had positive outcomes when compared with national expectations.

Professor Philip Garner comments:

This blind allegiance to RCT contradicts notions of individual agency and empowerment - especially amongst marginalised groups. The absence of granularity and the over-bearing positivist stance fails to recognise the important small steps that individual learners make. I think this is a major shortcoming of such methodology - it encourages both the continued gaze at the problem and professional inertia. The latter is especially damaging to teachers working with those CYP experiencing barriers to learning.

During the trial, leadership development was a priority for many of these schools, and AfA coaches supported this. Also, parental engagement, the key to sustaining improved outcomes for vulnerable learners was highly evident, with hundreds of structured conversations taking place on a termly basis.)

70% of participating schools in the AfA intervention strand within the EEF trial continued with the programme, which included support highly focused on their circumstances.

It should be noted that the EEF AfA trial concluded three years ago. As part of our continuous development of the AfA model introduced in 2011 we make changes to the Achieving Schools programme, our leadership development and professional training portal (The Bubble) informed by a range of research and evaluation methodologies. We have launched a series of well-being programmes to support our schools and settings.

Achievement for All programmes remain evidence-informed and with a profound emphasis on putting wellbeing at the heart of learning and leadership, something that resonates loudly with the schools joining us currently as they plot a journey through the Covid crisis and beyond.

All our programmes are subject to robust evaluation captured in reports compiled 2012 – 2020:

2016
Thanks from Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, for commitment and participation in London Schools Excellence Programme

2013
School Improvement Service of the Year Award, Education Investor

https://afaeducation.org/our-impact/impact-reports/impact-reports/

We continue with drive, determination, passion, and commitment to do what we do best. To support education settings to transform academic and life outcomes for every vulnerable and disadvantaged child, regardless of the barriers to learning that have to be overcome.

This year we celebrate ten years of practice, delivering 11,000 programmes that impacting on the lives of 220,000 children and their families and 110,000 teaching professionals.

We look forward to the next ten years with confidence as illustrated by case studies from EEF AfA trial schools:

Kensington Primary School

https://sway.office.com/GZiZ6t8EkI8HhXHO?ref=Link

St Johns C of E Primary School:

2015
Inclusive Practice
Winner- Nursery World-
Achieving Early
Programme

https://youtu.be/KxuO1i6VNG0

Thank you for your engagement with Achievement for All.

Professor Sonia Blandford Founder Achievement for All

Awards presented to Achievement for All

2017   Winner, Early Years Award, Children & Young People Now - 2017   Howard League Organisation for the Year, commended: Youth Justice SEND project - 2016   Highly Commended, Early Years- Inclusive Practice Award, Nursery World Awards - 2015   Winner, Early Years- Inclusive Practice Award, Nursery World Awards - 2014   School Improvement Service Award, Education Investor - 2013   School Improvement Service of the Year Award, Education Investor

Achievement for All Quality Mark and Quality Lead

Achievement for All offers two 'post programme' awards: Quality Mark and Quality Lead. Quality Mark is normally assessed within the second year of a settings' engagement on an Achievement for All Core Programme. Once a Setting has been awarded the Quality Mark, it may then move on to achieve Quality Lead status.

Each setting is asked to capture and highlight on a standard accreditation template the key processes and associated outcomes that demonstrate they have successfully achieved the standards set out in the Quality Scheme guidance required for the Achievement for All Quality Mark Award.

Evidence collected by settings includes Self Evaluations, Improvement Plans, and Ofsted/Estyn Reports. Achievement for All Coaches support Settings to populate the template and once completed, they assess the evidence presented for each element. Once satisfied that the setting meets the standard to be awarded Quality Mark, the coach makes a recommendation to their Regional Lead (RL) or programme lead. The setting's evidence is then verified during a short visit to the Setting.

To be eligible to apply for Quality Mark the minimum expectation is that Settings will be in at least Term 4 of the Programme to enable sufficient evidence of impact to be evidenced.

Key expectations are that:

- All elements of the framework have been addressed and embedded which has led to whole-setting impact with improved outcomes across the setting.
- Leadership of the Programme is secure.
- The quality of teaching throughout the setting is mostly Good or Outstanding/ Excellent (minimum of 70%)
- Significant improvements in progress and attainment in reading, writing and maths, successfully closing the gap between vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils and their peers (nationally)
- The Setting was judged good or outstanding at their last Ofsted/ Estyn inspection.
- Structured conversations are an established routine for target groups, with a clear intention to extend them to pupils beyond the initial groups with evidence of significantly improved setting relationships with parents.
- Improved wider outcomes such as behaviour, attendance, and engagement in extracurricular activities.

In the following case study example, data that could potentially identify pupils or professionals has been replaced with the legend [****].

Case Study: [****] School

Section 1: Setting Details:

Setting Name:	[****] School	Date:	27.01.19
URN:		Headteacher/Manager:	[****]
Phase:		Setting Champion:	[****]
Latest Ofsted/ Estyn rating:	Good	AfA Governor:	[****]
QM Award	QM Schools/QM Achieving Early/QM Combined		

Section 2: Setting Self Evaluation:

Leadership for Inclusion – The Setting has maintained a sharp focus on the aspiration, access, and achievement of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, including those identified with special educational needs and disabilities.

Evidence: Note good practice developed and evidence of meeting Quality Mark criteria

Just prior to officially starting the AfA programme [****] School's OFSTED judgement was raised from RI to Good. Determined not to be complacent the Headteacher and the SLT used the Needs Analysis to further critically audit their practice and use the findings as part of their mission for continuous improvement. Their aspirations are for all pupils to achieve and therefore the programme was rolled out to all classes not just the EEF year groups. The School Champion and the SLT are rigorous in their analysis of progress data and using their own points- based assessment system vulnerable pupils are easily identified. Subsequent interventions and strategies are put in place and their progress is closely monitored by the school champion. Each of the selected AfA modules were delivered monitored and reviewed and findings shared with the HT and the staff to ensure that agreed outcomes were met. Dissemination of good practice is embedded in the school culture, for example [****] is a 'Language First Excellence Hub'. The School Champion along with Early Years staff have had extensive training around the key principles of language development. This is having a positive impact on outcomes for PP pupils across all areas of the EYs curriculum. This training is being disseminated across the whole school for all staff. The strategic implementation of the AfA programme enabled links between existing and new pedagogy e.g., the use of metacognition and resilience and improved outcomes for all pupils. The published KS2 results in 2017 placed [****] Primary in the top 2% nationally.   This recognised the improvement in teaching and learning driven by the Headteacher and leadership team.

- In 2017 the % of PP children in KS2 achieving the expected standard in reading, writing, maths, and SPaG was above national, Reading 91%, Writing 82%, Maths 91%, SPaG 100%.
- 2017 results for all pupils were as follows: Reading 83%, Writing 79%, Maths 97%, SPaG 93%

- In 2018 the % of PP children achieving the expected standard at the end of KS2 was also above national in reading, maths, and SPaG; Reading 82%, Writing 73%, Maths 91%, SPaG 91%. Reading was highlighted as a particular strength for PP pupils with 36% of PP pupils achieving Greater Depth compared to 33% nationally.

2018 results for all pupils were as follows; Reading 90%, Writing 87%, Maths 93%, SPaG 90%

- Reading and maths progress was in the top quintile (20%) for at least two years for all pupils, middle prior attainers and disadvantaged pupils. Progress in reading and mathematics was significantly above average and in the highest 10%. Progress scores for 2018 were as follows; Reading +4.5%, Writing +0.7%, Maths +3.7%.
- KS1 PP results for pupils achieving the expected standard were as follows; Reading 62%, Writing 54%, Maths 62%. 58% of the PP pupils in this cohort achieved GLD at the end of reception compared to 89% of NPP. Results at the end of KS1 show the gap between PP and NPP is narrowing.
- 2018 EAL figures have continued to be above national across all areas; 75% of EAL pupils in Reception achieved a Good Level of Development. In KS1, 90% of EAL pupils achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths. 100% of EAL pupils in KS2 achieved the expected standard across all subjects, Reading, Writing, Maths and SPaG. This included one of our AfA pupils, this pupil in particular was new to England when she joined us in Year 4. She achieved the expected standard across all subjects in Year 6.
- Phonics screening in Year 1 has continued to be above national, 94% of PP pupils passed the phonics screening test compared to 86% of NPP pupils.
- 80% of pupils in Early Years achieved GLD in 2018 compared to 72% nationally. 72% of PP pupils achieved GLD.

Best Practice: Unique examples of best practice – bullet point the key developments in the Setting for Leadership.

- Half Termly pupil progress meetings with a strong focus on disadvantaged pupils and targeted AfA pupils to raise their attainment – tracking of pupils' assessment following analyses of data.
- Delivery of interventions for underachieving pupils across all year groups - pre-teach, close the gap interventions and booster phonics to accelerate learning.
- Cluster moderations for reading, writing and maths to validate teachers' judgements.
- Train the practitioner training delivered to all staff**.**
- Weekly support from external English advisor to team teach and plan with teachers across KS1 and KS2.
- External agencies (SEN advisory teacher, speech, and language therapist, EYs SEN advisory teacher) carry out regular visits to review SEN pupils and provide support and guidance to staff to raise attainment.
- Robust monitoring systems by senior leaders with a clear focus on vulnerable pupils' progress; learning and planning scrutinies, observations, drop ins, TA review meetings, pupil interviews.

Teaching and Learning/Progress and Learning – leading to improved progress for all pupils

Evidence: Note good practice developed and evidence of meeting Quality Mark criteria

Leaders at [****] School successfully drive to ensure the highest quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make good to outstanding progress. During the Needs Analysis audit, the School Champion along with the SLT identified the need to analyse target cohorts regularly in order to make strategic improvements in teaching. To begin to implement the AfA programme, staff were focussed from the start on improving planning of the use of strategies and scaffolds to support underachieving pupils, this was strongly linked to providing planned opportunities to develop pupils' oracy skills and language development. The School Champion along with the Headteacher hold half-termly pupil progress meetings and have ensured that AfA pupils along with additional targeted pupils have been a focus for acceleration. All of the teachers make very effective use of the school's rigorous assessment system to identify what pupils know, understand, and can do and to ensure that pupils are given the right amount of support or challenge. The Senior Leadership Team used the 'Coaching Review and Evaluation' module to support the implementation of a coaching programme delivered by SLT members with all of the teaching staff. The programme focussed heavily on nurture and AFL with links to metacognition and resilience to improve pupil outcomes. Pupils are routinely identified who need additional support, extra time to practise a particular skill or opportunities to explore ideas in smaller groups. Support staff are used effectively to address any misconceptions by providing immediate 'close the gap' interventions with underachieving pupils. This practice is highly effective because support staff are experienced and understand each individual pupils' needs.

- Language development is a key driver in the school development plan and is a focus for all staff.
- Spring 18 – A coaching programme with all staff was completed. The programme was focussed on AFL and providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for all.
- Mid-term evaluations with support staff have strengthened effectiveness of interventions for targeted pupils.
- Metacognition training was delivered by an SEN advisory teacher in autumn term 2017, this was followed up with a learning walk and a staff CPD session to review strategies implemented.
- Staff training has focussed on key areas to develop teaching and learning; Inclusion for all training, Developing Greater Depth in Reading, and Writing, Thematic – planning for progression of skills, RWI spellings and phonics, Reading and Writing success training.
- A peer reading intervention programme has continued to be a success in developing PP pupils' fluency and expression in reading.
- Non-negotiable expectations for English; underachieving pupils are heard daily by teachers/TAs to develop key reading skills.
- Times tables challenges: pupils are taught timetables weekly and complete rainbow times tables challenges; times tables interventions are carried out weekly for underachieving pupils to ensure they are on target to achieve ARE by the end of the year.

Best Practice: Unique examples of best practice – bullet point the key developments in the Setting for Teaching and Learning/Progress and Learning

- Assessment judgements are made in steps – curriculum for 1-6 is organised into six 'chunks' of learning (one for each half term). Progression is mapped out allowing the 'steps' tracker to guide the planning, teaching, learning and assessment.
- Letter formation, handwriting and spelling are identified as a key focus for improvement, particularly in Year 1. Letter rhymes are used consistently through EYs to develop correct letter formation and support pupils' handwriting as they transition into KS1.
- Lesson planning identifies PP pupils and underachieving pupils and clearly shows what provision is required to move pupils learning on.
- An additional TA [****] focuses on the development of early reading and mathematics skills for vulnerable pupils and additional TAs are funded through the PP grant to deliver core skills intervention to boost PP progress.
- An additional [****] teacher is funded through the PP grant to deliver guided support to AfA pupils and PP pupils who require additional provision to accelerate their learning.

Parent and Carer Engagement – Improved Parents' and Carers' engagement with Setting and their involvement in their child's learning and achievement

Evidence: Note good practice developed and evidence of meeting Quality Mark criteria

The AfA programme has supported [****] in developing home-school relationships. The 'structured conversations' module has impacted positively on teacher-parent communication. Pupils appreciate that their learning continues at home and parents are increasingly supportive of this. The School Champion, along with the Senior Leaders have embedded the use of a parent app, 'Marvellous Me' to engage parents further in their child's learning. Parents of vulnerable pupils and those with highly complex needs are effectively supported and meet regularly with the School Champion. The implementation of 'Structured Conversations' has enhanced parent review meetings by strongly focussing on parents' voice.

- Structured conversations have taken place with targeted AfA pupils' parents and additional vulnerable pupils' parents across the school (including 2-year-olds), this has enabled parents to gain a greater understanding of their child's development and learning needs.
- ·A 'Marvellous Me' parent app engages more than 90% of parents (current engagement is 94%), parents receive regular messages, activities, and badges about their child's learning. Home-school relationships are improving as parents are confident to talk about their children's learning at home.
- SEND parent reviews take place termly to share pupils' progress and next steps in their learning, pupil and parent voice is a key focus.
- In Early Years, home visits and stay and play sessions prior to children starting nursery are key to developing positive relationships with parents.

- Weekly reading mornings have been well established in Nursery and Reception for parents to come along and share a reading book with their children.
- The school champion and behaviour support worker work closely with vulnerable families, at single agency level and Early Help to address social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. Parental engagement with these families has been very positive with most families attending regular review meetings. Pupils' voice has been a focus in this area to determine the barriers to individual pupils' learning and emotional development. Wishes and feelings work, My Star intervention and social and emotional groups have all been used to develop positive learning behaviours and to address any issues that arise.
- Persistent absences are below national; 5% (Spring term 2018) compared to approx. 8% nationally. Children whose absences are of concern are picked up immediately by the attendance officer. Attendance meetings with parents are held with the HT and attendance officer to address concerns.
- Attendance to parents' evening continues to be high. In autumn 2018 89% of parents attended. 87% (108) of PP and 87% (118) of NPP parents attended.
- In November 2018, 195 parents completed an Ofsted questionnaire (250 pupils were registered at the school). 99% of parents agreed that their child makes good progress at school, 98% agreed that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved and 99% of parents agreed that the school is well led and managed.

Best Practice: Unique examples of best practice – bullet point the key developments in the Setting for Parent and Carer Engagement

- Inspire mornings and workshops are held for parents across the school.
- Phonics teaching sessions for parents in Reception – parents have been able to observe phonics lessons in school to enable them to support their teaching of phonics at home.
- 1:1 pupil session with the behaviour support worker. Pupils have developed positive relationships with the behaviour support worker which has developed their confidence in talking about their barriers to their learning. These have then been shared with parents during structured conversations which has led to discussions with parents on how to support and address their child's barriers at home.
- One of the school's big 5 targets for 2018-19 is focussed on targeting PP pupils and families due to poor attendance. Following parent meetings, attendance during autumn term has been increasing for PP pupils, this is closing the gap between them and 'other' pupils.

Wider Outcomes and Opportunities/Well-being – Improved behaviours for attendance and learning and support for the participation, enjoyment, and achievement of children in all elements of Setting life

Evidence: Note good practice developed and evidence of meeting Quality Mark criteria

'Developing behaviours for attendance' has been a key focus throughout the AfA programme, pupils at [****] School take pride in their learning and enjoy coming to school. The Headteacher, attendance officer and governors meet regularly with vulnerable parents to ensure attendance remains high priority. Pupils are motivated through prize incentives resulting in attendance being above average for an increasing proportion of underachieving pupils. The School Champion along with other leaders provide children with additional responsibilities to support and accelerate other pupils' learning. Interventions to target EEF pupils and other vulnerable pupils have been embedded to develop pupils' confidence and develop their knowledge and understanding. Learning at [****] is extended through a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Throughout the programme these opportunities have been an essential part of the curriculum to promote target pupils' academic achievement. After school clubs have had a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem and confidence, the School Champion has selected AfA pupils to join after school clubs resulting in improved pupil outcomes.

- Focus on persistent absences and lateness to improve attendance. 2017-18 attendance was 96.3% (above national 96%). PP attendance was at 95.6%. Autumn term 2018 is above national at 97.4%, PP attendance is also above national at 96.6%.
- After school dance clubs have had a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Pupils have been involved in performances off site as well as performing for parents during assemblies and Sports Day. Pupil voice indicates that they feel so much more confident in school due to attending dance classes and having the opportunity to perform for others.
- Two lunch time behaviour observations have been carried out by an external behaviour support advisor over the last 2 years. Feedback has acknowledged the positive behaviour displayed by pupils.
- *'Wow! The combination of professional, calm, respectful staff, modelling proper use of good, plentiful resources, alongside high expectations of appropriate behaviour and the apparent teaching of good manners, has made this playground a happy, inviting place to spend time'* Jan 2017.
- *'This school represents a very positive model of how effectively behaviour can be managed during the lunch breaks. The Midday Supervisors themselves are at the very heart of this. They demonstrate that really engaging with the pupils in play and activities is absolutely key to successful lunchbreaks.'*

Jan 2019

- The school provides children with a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Children have attended trips off-site and workshops relating to their thematic topics. The whole school visit Llandudno each year in September. These opportunities have had a positive impact on pupils' writing outcomes.

- Year 4 will attend 30 swimming sessions throughout the year. September 2018 baseline indicated that 3% of Y4 pupils could swim, this increased to 17% at the end of autumn term. The target for the end of the year is for 100% of Y4 pupils to be able to swim.
- Year 5 were provided with 6 intensive catch up swimming sessions during autumn term 2018. Baseline indicated that 20% of pupils could swim. At the end of the 6-week program, 47% of pupils were able to swim unaided.

Best Practice: Unique examples of best practice – bullet point the key developments in the Setting for Wider Outcomes and Opportunities

- Attendance awards are given to pupils achieving 100% attendance; termly bikes for individual attendance incentives, class incentives of film show and popcorn, class parties and a final trip. Termly challenges are also used as an incentive to improve attendance.
- Fortnightly meetings with dinner supervisory staff which has had a positive impact on expectations and behaviour management.
- A daily 'Kick Start' breakfast club provides opportunities for children to develop their collaborative skills with other pupils across the school. The club is also used to target pupils whose attendance and punctuality has been a concern, this has been particularly effective for a family where lateness was becoming a significant issue.
- Extra-curricular activities are provided to develop the confidence and aspirations for our pupils, these include steel pan drums, cookery, football, dance, gymnastics, and cardio. An inclusive sports session is delivered weekly to a group of SEN pupils to boost their self-esteem and to develop their social skills.
- During lunch times, play leaders are selected to harmonise play by supporting children in using and playing with a range of practical resources and equipment. The school council select children each week to present positive behaviour awards to in achievements assembly.
- Reader leaders take an active role three times each week, during their lunch times, to support younger pupils in developing their fluency and expression in reading.
- A Stars Sheriffs are selected to work alongside the behaviour support worker to promote safer and healthier lifestyle choices for pupils.

Section 3 – Feedback from stakeholders:

Please add in comments from a variety of stakeholders that have been impacted on by the Settings' involvement in the Achievement for All Programme.

Comments from Parents and Pupils

Quotes/statements from a selection of Parents, Carers and Pupils regarding the impact of the programme

'Structured Conversations have developed our relationship with our child's class teacher, it has provided us with a good insight into our child's learning and has helped us support our child further at home'.

'My child's teacher and teaching assistant keeps me regularly updated each week on my child's progress, there has been a real focus on meeting my child's individual needs to allow her to catch up with other children in her class'.

'I am so pleased with the journey my child has been on at this school, his confidence and self-esteem has excelled over the last 18 months. The after school 'Cardio Club' has enabled him to widen his friendship group and has encouraged him to access other clubs outside of school'.

Comments from Governors/Owners

Quotes/statements from AfA Governor and/Chair of Governors or Owners regarding the impact of the programme

'During this programme, all staff have been committed in accelerating the learning for our underachieving pupils. Effective interventions targeting our most vulnerable pupils have had a significant impact on pupils' progress'.

'Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are extremely positive, staff provide a supportive environment allowing all children to feel valued. The staff have high expectations for pupils of all abilities and continually celebrate pupils' achievements.

Comments from Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Staff

Quotes/statements from staff members regarding the impact of the programme

'Pupil progress meetings have had a sharp focus on the vulnerable pupils in my class, this has allowed me and my TA to discuss individual pupils in detail to ensure the correct provision is provided to excel learning'.

'Structured conversations with parents have given me a good insight into my pupils' interests outside of school. I have been amazed by what some of my pupils can do!'

'Some of my parents have been regularly updating me about what their children can do at home, it is lovely to see children in my class come into school and share their home learning with staff and their peers'.

Comments from Headteacher/Setting Manager

Quotes/statements from the Headteacher/Setting Manager regarding the impact of the programme.

'The AfA programme has made us really focussed on the vulnerable pupils in our school, particularly of our pupil premium pupils and families. The programme has raised pupil aspirations and self-belief that high achievement is a possibility for all.

The programme has increased parental engagement and particularly developed a real interest in the parents for their child's education and learning. The school, via the programme, have made their child a priority for focus and development and parents have recognised this. The 'structured conversations' between school and home have provided a forum to have a two-way interaction between school and home; to really discuss the child's needs, identify how parents can offer support and discuss the impact of interventions and support.

This has raised the importance of learning to parents but has also shown to parents that with the right kind of partnership working between home and school there can be quality impact on children's learning.'

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/achievement-for-all/