

Working in partnership: A guide to regional partnerships with the EEF



Education
Endowment
Foundation

About the Education Endowment Foundation

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent charity supporting teachers and school leaders to use evidence of what works—and what doesn't—to improve educational outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children and young people.

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Introduction

The [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\)](#) is dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement.

Our work is organised into three main strands:

Generation, We generate new evidence of what works to improve teaching and learning, funding independent evaluations of high-potential projects.

Synthesis, We summarise the best available evidence for teachers and senior leaders through our Teaching and Learning and Early Years Toolkits.

Mobilisation, We support teachers and senior leaders across the country to use this evidence to achieve the maximum possible benefit for young people, working in partnership with a national network of [Research Schools](#).





Breaking the link through bespoke partnerships

Our regional partnerships are an opportunity for education settings, and local system leaders to work with the EEF and Research Schools Network (RSN) in a sustained and structured manner. We know that access to research alone isn't sufficient to tackle the attainment gap, and that evidence-informed approaches have the most impact when implemented using school and system leaders' professional expertise.

Partnerships enable groups of schools to identify priorities, co-develop solutions, and engage with the evidence base to meet specific challenges. They are co-constructed and co-funded with strategic partners, drawing on the best available evidence and local expertise, to implement and embed approaches aimed at improving outcomes for all children (especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds).





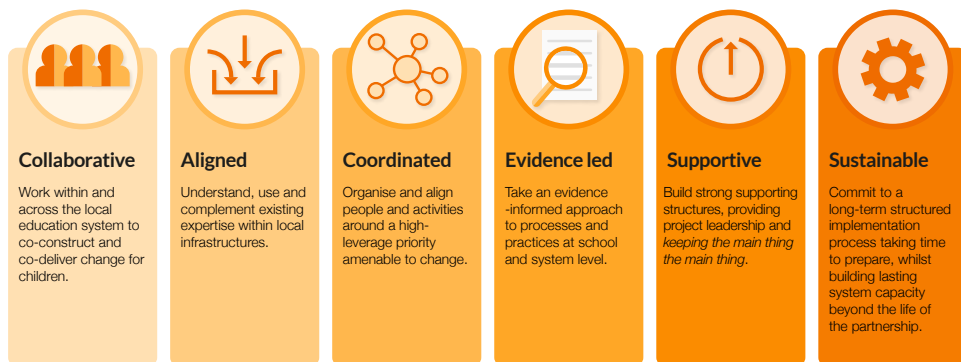
Partnership aims

The overarching purpose of our partnerships is to **contribute to closing the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils**. To achieve this, we have the following aims which seek to make an impact at different levels, from the classroom to the local education system:

- Support evidence-informed improvement in classroom practice through meaningful and sustained behaviour change
- Build the capacity of schools, settings and systems to be self-sustaining in their engagement with research evidence
- Develop coherence and co-ordination in the use of evidence, to support and complement local and regional school improvement approaches

- Exemplify evidence in action through deep, embedded partnerships that enable us to increase our understanding of evidence mobilisation, and share this learning

To achieve these aims our partnerships approach is underpinned by six **Partnership Foundations**. The Foundations are distilled from research evidence and the collective learning and expertise gained through extensive experience of supporting schools through partnerships.





Partnership development process



Identifying potential partnerships

Partnerships involve one or more strategic partners. These are usually local authorities or multi-academy trusts, along with other organisations committed to evidence-informed school improvement. Together, we collaborate to enhance educational outcomes for pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In line with our mission, to break the link between family income and educational achievement, we want to focus our partnership efforts to support groups of schools who are working hard to improve the attainment of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and to and narrow the attainment gap. These might be schools where:

- There are high numbers or proportion of FSM eligible pupils and lower than average attainment
- There is a stubborn or widening attainment gap



Partnership development process



Evidence Exploration

All partnerships follow a structured, collaborative approach to gathering and analysing data, identifying priorities and potential solutions and planning for evaluation. The aims of an Evidence Exploration partnership are to work together to identify a priority that can be effectively addressed and develop a solution to collectively address it.

The EEF funds and facilitates Evidence Exploration partnerships, with support from the Research School Network and commitment from strategic partners to working together over a period of around six to nine months.

Depending on the outcomes of Evidence Exploration partnerships there are two potential pathways:

- Partnerships may have the opportunity to continue the journey through developing plans for a bespoke Evidence into Action partnership.
- Alternatively, they may be supported to develop their own plans and/or explore other available support through Research Schools, the EEF and other relevant sources.



Evidence into Action

Evidence into Action partnerships typically involve a combination of tailored professional development, access to evidence-based interventions, implementation planning, and ongoing support over a sustained period. The EEF's [Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation Guidance Report](#) identifies a range of leadership knowledge, behaviours, and actions that are associated with effective implementation, and by extension, school leadership.

In addition, our Evidence into Action framework underpins the collaborative development of customised training for school and system leaders. The framework enhances the content of the training to address the specific priorities identified within the partnership and covers key areas such as:

- Evidence literacy
- Understanding disadvantage
- Effective implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Effective Professional Development

Evidence into Action partnerships are co-funded, with a commitment to working together to support schools and build capacity over a period of two years.

Throughout, the partnership, we work together to evaluate progress towards the priorities identified during Evidence Exploration. As we near the end of the partnership, we focus on capturing and sharing the knowledge gained. We also develop plans to sustain the improvements achieved and identify future priorities.





Partnership examples

Evidence Matters with Delta Academies Trust

Delta Academies Trust is a multi-academy trust responsible for the leadership and governance of 49 academies across Yorkshire and the Humber, and serves many disadvantaged communities.

This partnership between DELTA, Bradford Research School and the EEF followed an in-depth exploration process which identified key priorities. The programme was designed and implemented over a three-year period in three distinct phases.

The initial phase offered senior leaders across the trust the opportunity to develop and deepen their knowledge of using the evidence around effective implementation for school improvement through

a professional development programme and coaching.

The second phase was co-constructed by Bradford Research School and senior leaders within Delta, with the aim of supporting middle leaders across the trust to tackle disadvantage through a sharp focus on specific areas identified through the implementation cycle.

In the partnership's final phase, the Research School worked with leaders across the trust who led professional development for teachers to ensure that the learning from phases 1 and 2 is sustained in years to come.

“Being part of the Evidence Matters project has improved my professional practice immeasurably, especially in regard to designing and delivering an implementation plan for my school. Our staff, and by extension our students, are realising tangible improvements in reading attainment already.”



Michaela Shaplin, Teacher of English and Literacy Lead, Ash Hill Academy, Doncaster

Learn to Read, Read to Learn with Derbyshire County Council

This partnership (developed by the EEF, Derbyshire Local Authority, Derby Research School and a steering group of local school leaders) explores practical, evidence-informed approaches for improving pupils' reading skills at key transition points.

The programme has a focus on curriculum design and sequencing; pedagogy; and transition strategies to promote a county-wide approach to reading. The partnership includes a Key Stage 1 and 2 strand, which focuses on reading fluency and comprehension to equip pupils to read with confidence and understanding, and a Key Stage 2 and 3 strand, exploring disciplinary literacy, structured talk through the lens of reading academic texts.

Both strands include three face-to-face days which include continuing professional development input sessions in the morning (with content drawn from EEF guidance reports) and cluster work groups in the afternoon to enable schools to focus on challenges specific to their local context, share effective implementation approaches and strengthen collaboration (particularly in relation to transition).

The project is co-delivered by colleagues from Derbyshire LA and Derby Research School and has been heavily subsidised through funding from Derbyshire Local Authority and the EEF. Through a phased approach over two academic years, it has been made available to all schools in the county.

Get in touch

The EEF works across six regions in England and our partnership work is coordinated by a team of Regional Delivery Leads, supported by the Research Schools Network.

If you represent a group of schools and are interested in exploring the potential for a partnership contact us on: info@researchschool.org.uk or visit our [website](#)



Notes

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