THE **CAREERS** &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

Primary Fund Evaluation

For The Careers & Enterprise Company

About The Research Base

The Research Base is an international social research consultancy

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1 | Foreword

The case for starting careers education in primary school, promoted in recent literature reviews and backed in the Careers Strategy 2017, is based on evidence that children to start to understand their world and their place within it earlier than previously thought.[1] 'Identity capital' (comprising expansive social networks, financial support, self-efficacy, motivation, adaptability and resilience) forms in the primary phase and informs a child's sense of what is possible.[2]

The Careers & Enterprise Company commissioned this research to provide monitoring, evaluation and learning for its Primary Fund, a programme funded by the Department for Education which aimed to provide schools and policy-makers with evidence and examples of what effective career-related learning (CRL) in primary education looks like.

Overall, the Primary Fund has been effective in its delivery and implementation; a particularly impressive feat in the face of the school closures and other disruption resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite inevitable challenges with data collection and intended methodologies, the Fund significantly exceeded targets for stakeholder reach across all groups, and school survey respondents and interviewees were generally positive about the effectiveness of programme delivery, the levels of stakeholder engagement and the support offered to participating schools.

The ability of providers and primary schools alike, to flex and adapt in the face of challenging circumstances and competing priorities is hugely commendable, supporting the evidence that there is an appetite for career-related learning at the primary level. This appetite and learnings from the Primary Fund give a strong foundation on which to build future programming and research.

Together with providers, and with funding from the Department for Education, we have brought together best practice, case studies and resources on our Primary Platform to support primary schools with career related learning for their children.

Thank you to Laurenne Ajayi and Tara Kennedy from The Research Base and all the providers, schools and teachers who took the time to participate in this valuable research.

Nicola Hall
Director of Education
The Careers & Enterprise Company
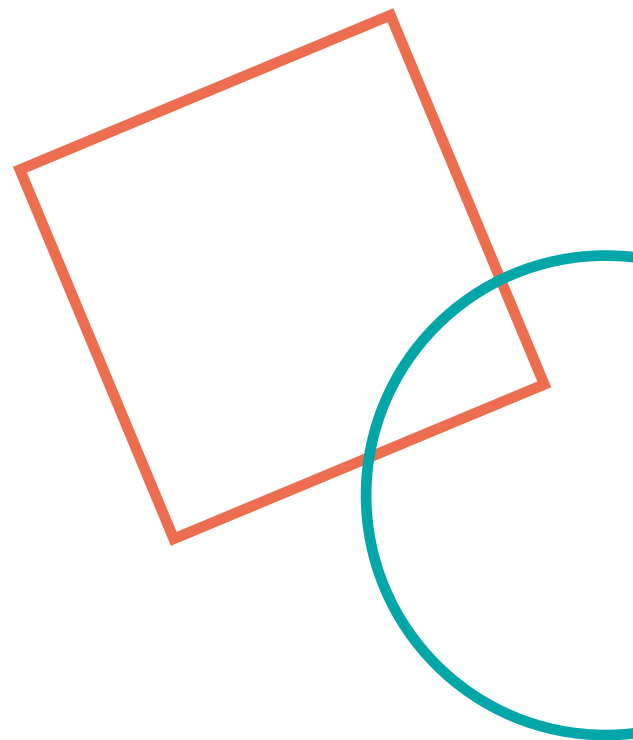
1. "https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/1145_what_works_primary_v7_digital.pdf" Kashefpakdel, E., Rehill, J. and D. Hughes (2018). What Works? Career-related learning in primary schools. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.
2. Côté, J. E. (1997). An empirical test of the identity capital model. Journal of Adolescence 20(5), 577-597.

2 | Executive Summary

2.1 Programme Overview

The Careers & Enterprise Company commissioned this research to provide monitoring, evaluation and learning for its Primary Fund, a programme funded by the Department for Education which aimed to provide schools and policy-makers with evidence and examples of what effective career-related learning (CRL) in primary education looks like. The Fund was established to (i) scale and evaluate existing programmes, (ii) develop and test new programmes through incubation and support and (iii) build a primary toolkit (Primary Careers Resources Platform) to facilitate sharing of resources and case studies.[3]

The Primary Fund was made up of 15 providers, with key interventions including: the creation of networks and partnerships between schools, employers and parents; CRL interventions focusing on challenging stereotypes, widening aspirations and increasing awareness; and Continued Professional Development (CPD), support and resources for schools and teachers to deliver CRL. The Fund had two key components: Scaling Existing Programmes (SEP) and Developing New and Innovative Programmes (DNIP).

- Scaling Existing Programmes: SEP enabled organisations to bid for funding to develop and expand programmes already in operation. The nine organisations selected were Education and Employers; East Sussex County Council; Enabling Enterprise/Skills Builder;[4] National Literacy Trust; Learn By Design; Regenda Homes; Teen Tech; 15billionebp; and Gro Organic.

- Developing New and Innovative Programmes: DNIP was for organisations seeking to develop and test innovative career-related learning activities. Six organisations were selected: North East LEP; White Room Consultancy/Digital Advantage;[5] LOUD/Kidspiration;[6] Eden Project; Black Country Consortium; and Academy FM Folkestone.

This report explores the extent to which the intended dimensions of the Fund's Theory of Change have been met, along with the effectiveness of its delivery, engagement and implementation, programme impact and learning, and recommendations for future practice.

This report explores the extent to which the intended dimensions of the Fund's Theory of Change have been met, along with the effectiveness of its delivery, engagement and implementation, programme impact and learning, and recommendations for future practice. The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the ability to engage pupils and other stakeholders in the evaluation and as a result, the sample sizes are smaller than intended and some messages indicative rather than conclusive.

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3. Programme documentation.
4. From here referred to as Skills Builder.
5. From here referred to as Digital Advantage.
6. From here referred to as LOUD.

2.2 Key Findings

Theory of Change

- **Primary Fund Theory of Change:** All dimensions of the Primary Fund Theory of Change have been met to some extent. However, there were challenges assessing programme delivery and impact against the Theory of Change due to insufficient evidence collection arising from the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, it is not possible to validate the Theory of Change at this time.

- **Cross-cutting outcomes:** While areas of strong practice have been identified against each of the intended cross-cutting outcomes through qualitative and secondary research, it was challenging to draw conclusive Fund-level findings from the evidence overall. It is important to note that the lack of robust evidence does not necessarily indicate that outcomes have not been successfully achieved.

Effectiveness

- **Fund management:** The programme team was positive about the effectiveness of the Fund's management, with CEC's willingness to incorporate lessons learned to improve delivery a key factor influencing success.

- **Programme reach**: The Fund significantly exceeded targets for stakeholder reach across all stakeholder groups, from pupils, schools and teachers to parents and employers. While this is a considerable feat, especially considering the challenges of operating under Covid-19 restrictions, inconsistent methods for quantifying reach across the various providers means it is unclear whether engagement - particularly for virtual opportunities - was always meaningful.

- **Covid-19 impact:** 91% of school survey participants reported that delivery had been effective to a high or very high extent, even though disruption from the pandemic had a significant impact on programme delivery. Across providers, key areas of disruption included programme delays, shifts to virtual delivery models and adapting resources for home and virtual learning. However, the impact of this disruption on programmes' perceived effectiveness was mixed, with around a third of providers feeling delivery was as effective and just under a third feeling it was less effective.

- **Areas of effective delivery:** Some key areas of effective delivery include employer engagement; the accessibility and reach of programmes; parental engagement through home learning; the quality of resources; and the quality of delivery teams. Some examples of particularly strong practice, as perceived by the programme team, included localised approaches; built-in teacher CPD; a focus on skills development; and curriculum alignment.

- **Provider support:** CEC reported its support for providers across the programme as being effective, with key areas including support for innovation, particularly in the context of the pandemic; organisational flexibility and receptiveness to change; and knowledge sharing opportunities.

- **School support:** A significant majority of both provider and school interviewees were positive about the level of support provided to schools for programme delivery. Where a need for additional support was identified, it primarily fell into one of two categories: increased budget or financial support, or increased support for teachers, which included better informing teachers of programme objectives and the provision of additional support for the administrative load of programme delivery.

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Stakeholder engagement was perceived to be high across the programme. A significant majority of school survey participants reported that programme engagement levels had been high with students (88%), senior leadership teams (82%), other teachers (80%) and employers (76%). Engagement with parents and carers was perceived to be lower, with 45% considering it to be high/very high, and 48% of respondents considering it to be low/moderate. For programmes where parent/carer engagement was specifically targeted as a key focus area, results were still mixed but engagement was generally felt to be lower, with just over half (55%) of respondents reporting low or moderate engagement and just over a third (37%) reporting high or very high engagement.

- **Facilitators:** Factors driving programme success, as cited by providers, included good communication with schools, planning and SLT buy-in. Schools' key success factors included good communication with and support from providers, good resources and in-house capacity for programme delivery.

- **Barriers:** Barriers to successful programme delivery diverged between schools and providers. The former reported a lack of time for delivery, complex timetabling requirements and volunteers not understanding schools' socio-economic contexts as key barriers, whilst the latter cited changes to school staff, low levels of teacher buy-in and budget limitations.

Impact

Attitudes to learning: 59% of school survey participants felt the programme had a positive impact on pupils' general school engagement to a high/very high extent, while just over half of school survey participants felt the programme had a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress across the curriculum to a high/very high extent.

- **Motivations for work:** Pupils were asked to report what they thought were the most important reasons for working. The top three responses - earning money, learning new things, and using their skills - stayed the same, though there was some movement in the proportion of pupils reporting against each of these options, potentially suggesting that programme participation encouraged survey participants to place greater importance on their own personal development and skills, with fewer regarding finances as the main motivation for working.

- **Pupil survey:** The results of the pupil survey have been less positive than programme data collected through other means, with a large amount of the evidence analysed inconclusive in terms of impact. While this may be partially the result of poor-quality data, impacted by data collection challenges through lockdown and the fact findings could not be triangulated with additional data sources, such as focus groups, it may also indicate that a survey is not the best method of assessing impact with primary age pupils, particularly in terms of the self-assessment of skills.

Understanding the world of work - 71% of school staff thought the programmes had a high impact on pupils' understanding of the world of work and two-thirds thought the same of engagement with jobs and careers learning.

- **Essential skills:** Over half of school survey participants reported that programme participation had an impact on pupils' essential skills to a high/very high extent, with creativity (63%) and teamwork (62%) considered to be the highest, along with aspirational skills including aiming high (74%) and staying positive (67%). Pupil survey results were inconclusive, however.

- **Impact on schools:** 65% of school survey participants reported that the programme had impacted their understanding of how to prepare young people for the world of work to a high or very high extent. Similarly, when asked about embedding careers learning within the curriculum, 59% of school survey participants thought the programme had impacted this to a high/very high extent.

2.3 Recommendations

Key Learning

Drawing on evidence from across the evaluation, the following key areas of learning emerged at the programme-level include:

- **Appetite for primary CRL:** The programme has demonstrated that there is an appetite for primary CRL, evidenced by interviews with the programme team, providers and schools, along with the number of schools that took part in the programme, even in the face of delivery challenges and competing priorities. This is a strong foundation on which to build future programming, and as such, continued delivery of, and research into, primary CRL is recommended.

- **What Works:** While the programme was conceived around the What Works principles, programme design as a whole could have been more closely aligned with these outcomes. It is recommended that clearer definitions of the principles, and how they work in practice, are developed to more tightly align future iterations of the programme with the principles for good practice in CRL.

- **Suggestions for future practice:** While there was less conclusive evidence for these, some areas of suggested improvement included the inclusion of practical activities for pupil engagement; a greater focus on essential skills, along with a greater focus on diversity of the roles represented; improved opportunities for engagement including showcases, in-person trips and whole school delivery; ensuring volunteer preparedness for pupil engagement; investing in greater teacher, SLT and school buy-in; setting up school partnerships to strengthen delivery and learning; improving planning practices; and creating more opportunities for knowledge sharing between various stakeholders.

Theory of Change

The following recommendations indicate possible strategies to improve the relevance and robustness of the Theory of Change and outcomes framework for future iterations of the Primary Fund programme:

- **Alignment:** While there is significant overlap between outcomes specified in the Theory of Change and cross-cutting outcomes, these could be more closely aligned to ensure that both the programme team and providers are clear about the core outcomes to be measured.

- **Measurement:** There is considerable scope to clarify the indicators and targets used to assess both the outcomes specified in the Theory of Change and cross-cutting outcomes, as well as to develop appropriate tools to enable providers to collect data against these indicators and/or targets.

- **Clarity of definitions:** At present, there is a lack of clarity around the definition of the five cross-cutting outcomes, meaning that providers are developing and working towards their own definitions of what these outcomes should constitute. Clearly defined outcomes, accompanied by appropriate indicators and targets would enable more effective and consistent data collection across the Primary Fund providers.

- **Developing data collection tools:** The Primary Fund programme is made up of multiple providers each delivering bespoke programmes using a diverse range of tools and approaches; however, there remains considerable scope to develop a centralised, user-friendly data collection tool that aligns with the cross-cutting outcomes in order to support analysis of outcomes for both individual programmes and the Primary Fund programme as a whole.

- **Theory of Change validation:** While the evidence collected indicates positive impact across all dimensions of the evaluation framework, this is not conclusive. As such, it is recommended that further research and evaluation is undertaken to generate a broader evidence base for each of the cross-cutting outcomes, as well as thoroughly evaluate and validate the Primary Fund Theory of Change.

Engagement and Reach

Engaging with and working across a high number of diverse stakeholders is a key feature of Fund programmes, and has been identified as a key strength. The following recommendations suggest ways to build on this in future programming:

- **Prioritising disadvantage:** Interviewees reported that more strategically targeting the most disadvantaged pupils could lead to greater levels of impact.

- **Parental engagement:** Where it was achieved, parental engagement was considered beneficial by evaluation participants and, in comparison with other age groups, one of the key lessons learned working with primary age children is the relative ease with which schools can engage and include parents in learning. This presents a justification for continued research to test the value of parental involvement in primary CRL. Further research could be delivered into the most effective methods of involving parents in primary CRL, as well as into the impact of parental involvement on pupils and parents themselves.

- **Schools buy-in:** The evidence suggests that securing school buy-in is a meaningful facilitating factor. A such, it is recommended that programmes focus on securing school buy-in as a priority, engaging with both SLT and class teachers to improve chances of effective delivery.

- **Employers:** Employer engagement is likely to be more effective outside of lockdown, though the evidence indicates that virtual delivery models increase accessibility for employers to engage with schools. As such, it is recommended that future programme delivery incorporates virtual models for engagement, offering opportunities to increase both the range and diversity of volunteers and/or employers who can interact with pupils.

- **Covid-19:** The pandemic forced providers to approach delivery creatively, though the majority of participants to comment felt that virtual opportunities could not replace face-to-face engagement entirely. Future programming should incorporate lessons learned from operating in the pandemic, including:

  – Virtual models can be successfully applied to core programme delivery and to employer and volunteer engagement, improving their representation within the programme; and

  – Developing 'off-the-shelf' resources can significantly enhance programme accessibility and reach, and can be used by teachers in a flexible manner.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

There were several areas of the Fund and provider evaluations that could have been more effective. The overall approach to the Fund-level evaluation may have yielded more insightful data had greater consideration been given to the differences between providers, as well as the capacity of participating schools to carry out data collection on behalf of the evaluation. The following recommendations are specific to the Fund-level evaluation of the programme. Whilst several evaluation challenges were specific to the disruption caused

by Covid-19, there are some areas of the evaluation approach that could be strengthened:

- **Programme differences:** The difference between providers' models and interpretation of the cross-cutting outcomes made a Fund-level evaluation challenging. It is recommended that either providers are encouraged to work within a shared evaluation framework, or the evaluation is conducted on a provider-by-provider basis to allow for insightful assessment of best practice and lessons learned.

- **Evaluation guidelines:** Similarly, developing clearer guidelines for providers for measuring impact would improve understanding and buy-in, as well as ensuring consistency across provider data sets. Including measures for things like the standard threshold to quantify stakeholder engagement would allow for more effective evaluation of components such as delivery and value for money.

- **External evaluation:** If a Fund-level evaluation was to be delivered again, ensuring external evaluators were in place prior to the start of the Fund, and ensuring capacity to meaningfully work with providers on evaluation, would facilitate buy-in and better align evaluation approaches.

- **Streamlining reporting:** A review of reporting templates would benefit both providers and CEC. Improved document management would also be beneficial; reporting documents were often resubmitted with unclear amendments, and a lack of version control proved challenging.

3 | Introduction

3.1 Programme Overview

With a £2 million investment from the Department for Education, The Careers & Enterprise Company's Primary Fund (referred to interchangeably as 'the Primary Fund' or 'the Fund') aimed to provide schools and policy-makers with evidence and examples of what effective career-related learning (CRL) in primary education looks like. The Fund was established to (i) scale and evaluate existing programmes, (ii) develop and test new programmes through incubation and support and (iii) build a primary toolkit (Primary Careers Resources Platform) to facilitate sharing of resources and case studies.[7] Key interventions include networks and partnerships between schools, employers and parents; CRL interventions focusing on challenging stereotypes, widening aspirations and increasing awareness; and Continued Professional Development (CPD), support and resources for schools and teachers to deliver CRL.

Developed in line with the Careers Strategy 2017,[8] which called for more evidence on effective approaches in primary to facilitate schools' learning from best practice along with the development of expertise,[9] the focus of the Fund was shaped by the recommendations from the 'What Works? Career-related learning in primary schools' report.[10] The What Works? report outlines the principles for effective practice: involving external organisations and employers; embedding career-related learning within the curriculum as part of a whole-school strategy; and making opportunities open to all.

There are two key components of the Primary Fund: Scaling Existing Programmes (SEP) and Developing New and Innovative Programmes (DNIP).

- **Scaling Existing Programmes:** SEP enabled organisations to bid for funding to develop and expand programmes already in operation. The nine organisations selected were Education and Employers; East Sussex County Council; Enabling Enterprise/Skills Builder;[11] National Literacy Trust; Learn By Design; Regenda Homes; Teen Tech; 15billionebp; and Gro Organic.

- **Developing New and Innovative Programmes:** DNIP was for organisations seeking to develop and test innovative career-related learning activities. Six organisations were selected: North East LEP; White Room Consultancy/Digital Advantage;[12] LOUD/Kidspiration;[13] Eden Project; Black Country Consortium; and Academy FM Folkestone.

This report explores the extent to which the intended dimensions of the Fund's Theory of Change have been met, along with the effectiveness of its delivery, engagement and implementation, programme impact and learning, and recommendations for future practice.

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7. Programme documentation.

8. Department for Education (2017) Careers strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents

9. primary_fund_prospectus_v7_digital.pdf

10. Kashefpakdel E., Rehill J. and Hughes D. (2018) What works? Career-related learning in primary schools

11. From here referred to as Skills Builder.

12. From here referred to as Digital Advantage.

13. From here referred to as LOUD.

Programmes included a range of activities tailored to disseminate and embed CRL in school curricula around the country, with the aim of achieving impact against the Fund's cross-cutting outcomes.[14] Activities included practical engagement with the world of work through professional volunteer school visits, events and workplace trips; broadening horizons through the creative development and use of resources, including film and audio; teacher professional development opportunities, including training for in-service teachers and teachers in training; embedding CRL in the curriculum by incorporating it with other areas of focus, such as literacy, STEM and PSHE; parental engagement opportunities through celebration events and showcasing parents' careers; and the development creative outputs, from interviews with professionals and parents to building prototypes of future cities.

For a full summary of each provider's programme, please see Appendix 3.

3.2 Evaluation Overview

The Research Base was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of The Career & Enterprise Company (CEC)'s Primary Fund. The aim of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of a wide range of CRL in primary schools to create an evidence base from which to support future practice.

The Fund was originally intended to conclude in September 2020, but the changes to delivery - both adaptations to activities and extensions to timeframes - necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic meant that some providers continued with their programmes until the end of March 2021. There have also been significant changes to the evaluation approach as a result of this, with the period for data collection extended until mid-April 2021 to allow for meaningful evaluation of the extended programmes. Some elements of the method, such as the focus groups, were unable to go ahead; significant limitations were also placed on the amount of data able to be collected, particularly in the case of the pupil and school surveys.

The evaluation findings, especially those drawn from the quantitative data, should be interpreted with caution. Section 3.4 and the method in Appendix 2 outline the limitations relating to the project generally, as well as the data submitted to us as part of this evaluation; these are extensive. The key findings and recommendations have been informed by the evidence available, and we have taken care to outline the extent of supporting evidence where appropriate. The data limitations should nevertheless be taken into account when reading and interpreting this report, particularly in the application of quantitative findings to the Primary Fund as a whole. Whilst the focus of this evaluation is the Fund overall, it is recommended that for greater detail on specific programmes' delivery, impact and effectiveness, this report is read alongside providers own programme evaluations.

14. Educational outcomes, attitudes to learning, understanding the world of work, essential skills and parental engagement.

3.3 Methodology

The key elements of the evaluation method are included below. Some planned elements - the pupil and parent focus groups - had to be excluded as a result of Covid-19 disruption, and other components, namely the pupil and school surveys, were significantly affected by lockdown disruption. For the evaluation framework please see Appendix 1; for the full method, including method-specific limitations, please see Appendix 2.

Pupil Surveys

Baseline and endline surveys, designed to measure the impact of the programmes on pupils' attitudes, essential skills and understanding of the world of work, were conducted with pupils from across the Fund, with sufficient data for analysis received from nine of the 15 provider programmes.[15] Surveys were distributed online using SurveyMonkey or on paper, depending on the preference of the provider and the associated schools. After preliminary data cleaning, where duplicate and unusable responses were removed, baseline and endline responses for individual survey participants were matched (using names or other identifiers) in order to ensure that the responses for the same pupils were being considered, ensuring that a direct comparison can be made. This resulted in a final sample of 653 matched responses available for analysis.

School (Teacher) Survey

Endline surveys, designed to capture the perceptions of school staff on the effectiveness and impact of the programmes, were distributed to participating teachers by providers at the end, or as close to the end as possible, of the various programmes. With the extension of certain programmes and disruption to delivery, some providers were delayed in disseminating or re-disseminating the survey; all surveys were completed by mid-April 2021. The majority of the 101 participants, representing 14 of the 15 providers,[16] were classroom teachers, though there was also some senior leadership team (SLT) representation.

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15. North East LEP was excluded as it was not working directly or indirectly with pupils. Academy FM Folkestone, East Sussex County Council, the Eden Project, Skills Builder and Gro Organic were excluded from survey analysis due to lack of data.

16. North East LEP was excluded as its delivery model meant the school survey was not relevant to its participants.

Stakeholder interviews

Interviews were designed to explore and develop a more nuanced contextual understanding of the various research dimensions: theory of change, effectiveness, impact and learning. Interviews generally lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and were carried out over the phone or Zoom, recorded with participant permission. Interviews were scheduled for after the end of programme delivery, or where that was not possible (due to programme extensions) as close as possible to the end of delivery.

- **Provider interviews** were carried out with each of the 15 Primary Fund Providers, with either one or several nominated individuals representing the provider.

- 42 **school interviews** were conducted with teachers at nominated schools, with those represented identified and introduced to The Research Base by the relevant providers.

- Four **programme team** (CEC Primary Fund staff) interviews were conducted, with representatives nominated by CEC.

To ensure the report is accessible and easy to read, footnotes have only been included where more than one person mentioned a particular item of interest to this evaluation (in these cases, footnotes are included so that readers can gauge the level of support for a particular statement or idea). Individual quotes, where not clearly indicated in the surrounding text, come from school or provider interviews.

Data Review

Provider monitoring data, primarily in the form of quarterly reports, claims forms and final evaluation reports, was reviewed in order to supplement evidence collected through other means. As the evaluation is focused on the Fund overall rather than the individual providers, and the providers' programmes, evaluations, and self-collected data varies significantly, this evidence has provided important context for the main analysis but has not been integrated with the overall findings outside of quantifying programme reach and summarising facilitators and barriers (in Section 5.4).

3.3.1 Data Overview

The table below includes all the primary data included for analysis in this report, other than the four interviews conducted with the CEC programme team.

Where it has been noted that a data set has been excluded due to lack of data, it means the survey

was either discontinued (as a result of Covid-related disruption) or providers were unable to collect adequate data for meaningful analysis. It is important to note also that North East LEP's delivery model meant that neither survey was relevant, as it was not working directly with pupils.

Provider	Pupil survey			School Survey	School Interviews	Provider Interviews
	Baseline	Endline	Matched			
Academy FM Folkestone	Excluded due to lack of data			4	3	1
Black Country Consortium	61	41	19	17	4	1
East Sussex County Council	Excluded due to lack of data			3	2	1
Eden Project	Excluded due to lack of data			1	3	1
Skills Builder	Excluded due to lack of data			0	1	1
Gro Organic	Excluded due to lack of data			1	1	1
LOUD	45	47	8	0	3	1
National Literacy Trust	86	84	77	2	4	1
North East LEP	N/A				3	1
TeenTech	224	25	19	4	3	1
Digital Advantage	508	62	26	8	3	1
Education and Employers	231	77	74	21	3	1
15 Billion	460	185	120	31	3	1
Learn By Design	149	140	114	2	3	1
Regenda	471	196	196	7	3	1
Complete			653	101	42	15

3.4 Limitations

- **Covid-19 disruption:** The key challenge for the evaluation has been the disruption caused by the pandemic and the subsequent school closures. This has had a considerable effect on the implementation of the Primary Fund programmes, with providers adapting and extending their plans for delivery. The degree of impact that can be expected is therefore less than what may have been the case if the programmes were delivered as originally planned. This has also skewed responses to the evaluation, particularly in interviews, with a focus on the impact of and learning from Covid-19. It has not been possible to isolate the effect of Covid-19 as part of the analysis as so many different versions of the programmes were received by the participants; not just across providers, programme cohorts and schools, but also within single schools. Providers also adapted their programmes to varying degrees, with some making fairly modest changes (e.g. amending timeframes for delivery), and others amending their delivery approach to a more considerable extent, such as moving from in-person to online delivery and cancelling certain activities.

- **Limited evaluation data:** Covid-19 disruption has also influenced the amount of data it was possible to collect for the evaluation. Some of the planned activities had to be abandoned, such as focus groups with pupils and parents. The pupil survey was also abandoned for five providers at their request and/or due to a lack of responses received. Even where data collection continued, the responses received were far lower than the number expected initially, with targets shifted from statistically significant samples (initially based on a 95% confidence level and confidence interval of five percentage points) to as many responses as could feasibly be collected. Findings in this report should therefore be interpreted cautiously as they are unlikely to be representative of the whole Fund and/or individual provider programmes.

- **Diversity of provider models:** It is challenging to assess impact and best practice across the Fund due to significant differences between provider models, including i) differences in the precise outcomes targeted by each provider, as well as the programme length, size and delivery approach adopted from the very outset; ii) differences in how the programmes have adapted in response to Covid-19 and the degree of disruption experienced; and iii) differences in the quantity of evaluation data collected by each provider. The Fund-level focus of this report means that some examples of provider-specific best practice may have not been represented. As such, it is recommended that this report is considered alongside the accompanying case studies and providers' own programme evaluations.

- **Data collection timeframes:** Due to the school closures during lockdowns, some school and pupil surveys were disseminated by providers either too early or too late in relation to when the schools actually received the programme. In addition, some of the school staff interviewed had not received the full programme by the time of their interview. There is a risk that the actual impact of the programme may not have been captured fully where there was a slippage of data collection timeframes.
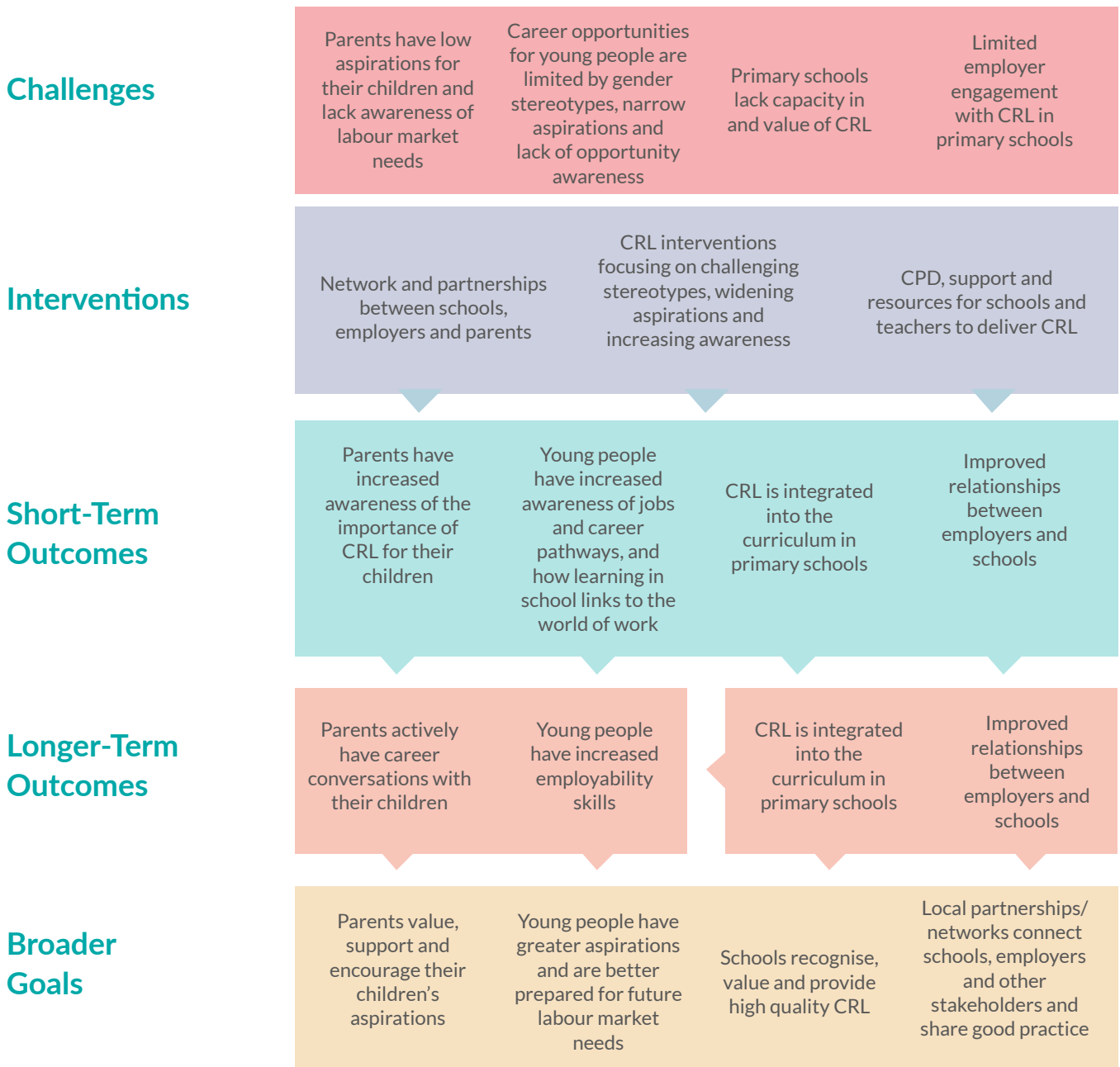
- **Survey limitations:**

  – Although some schools were involved with multiple providers, they were only considered as being part of the provider programme for which The Research Base had survey data. Therefore, intersecting programmes have not been fully considered as part of this analysis.

  – Any impacts measured by the surveys cannot be separated from other causative factors and, as such, may not be fully attributable to the programme.

  – Patchy survey delivery combined with a lack of comparability between some questions in the pupil survey meant that the data was insufficiently robust to enable further segmentation beyond that noted in the method (for example by age group), weighting, or statistical testing.[17]

  – A large number of adjustments and exclusions were required in the pupil survey, both at provider and individual question level. It should be noted that given the scale of exclusions and adjustments that had to be made to this dataset, interpretation of the results of the pupil survey, particularly in terms of its inconclusive evidence of impact, needs to be undertaken with a degree of caution.

17. See full method in Appendix 2 for further information regarding statistical testing

4 | Theory of Change

Challenges

Parents have low aspirations for their children and lack awareness of labour market needs	Career opportunities for young people are limited by gender stereotypes, narrow aspirations and lack of opportunity awareness	Primary schools lack capacity in and value of CRL	Limited employer engagement with CRL in primary schools

Interventions

Network and partnerships between schools, employers and parents	CRL interventions focusing on challenging stereotypes, widening aspirations and increasing awareness	CPD, support and resources for schools and teachers to deliver CRL

Short-Term Outcomes

Parents have increased awareness of the importance of CRL for their children	Young people have increased awareness of jobs and career pathways, and how learning in school links to the world of work	CRL is integrated into the curriculum in primary schools	Improved relationships between employers and schools

Longer-Term Outcomes

Parents actively have career conversations with their children	Young people have increased employability skills	CRL is integrated into the curriculum in primary schools	Improved relationships between employers and schools

Broader Goals

Parents value, support and encourage their children's aspirations	Young people have greater aspirations and are better prepared for future labour market needs	Schools recognise, value and provide high quality CRL	Local partnerships/ networks connect schools, employers and other stakeholders and share good practice

Assumptions

- Opportunities for parents to be involved are sufficient
- Parents are willing and able to engage with interventions successfully
- Young people lack awareness of the jobs and careers presented
- Programme activities resonate with young people and get them excited about careers
- Schools release staff when needed to deliver interventions successfully
- Teachers are motivated, and have the time and resources necessary, to increase CRL in schools
- Employers are motivated to engage with primary schools' CRL and to support young people and teachers with activities
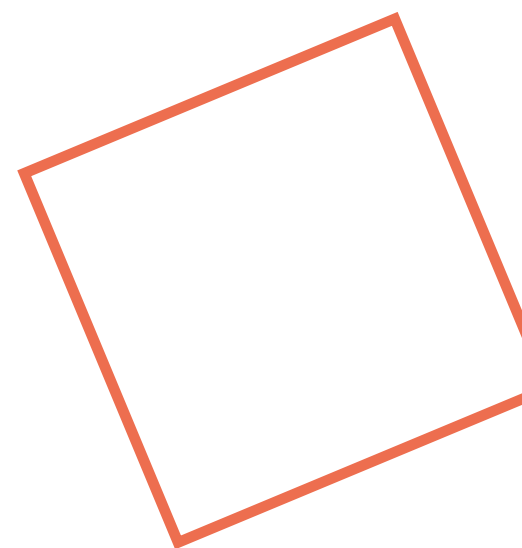
4.1 Primary Fund Theory of Change

A visual representation of the Theory of Change for the Primary Fund as a whole - provided on the previous page - outlines the challenges, interventions, intended outcomes and assumptions for parents, young people, schools and employers that are common across the provider programmes. The framework was developed by the Phase 1 (incubation stage) evaluator and then adapted by The Research Base, informed by the programmes participating in the Primary Fund as a whole.

Key Findings: Theory of Change

- **Primary Fund Theory of Change:** All dimensions of the Primary Fund Theory of Change have been met to some extent. However, there were challenges assessing programme delivery and impact against the Theory of Change as a result of insufficient evidence, and as such, it is not possible to validate the Theory of Change at this time.

- **Cross-cutting outcomes:** While areas of strong practice have been identified against each of the intended cross-cutting outcomes through qualitative and secondary research, it was challenging to draw conclusive Fund-level findings from the evidence overall. It is important to note that the lack of robust evidence does not necessarily indicate that outcomes have not been successfully achieved.

4.1.1 Theory of Change Review and Recommendations

The following table provides a summary of available evidence drawn from both quantitative and qualitative data collected for the evaluation of the Primary Fund relative to the Theory of Change (ToC).

ToC Outcome	Available Evidence
Short-term outcome 1: Parents have increased awareness of the importance of CRL for their children	• Two providers reported increased parental awareness of the importance of CRL for their children in qualitative interviews. • School survey data indicates teachers considered parental engagement to be limited, with 45% considering the extent of parental engagement to be high/very high, whilst 48% thought it was low/moderate. While 10 of 15 providers had parental engagement as an intended outcome, this element appears to have been one most affected by lockdown restrictions.
Short term outcome 2: Young people have increased awareness of jobs and career pathways, and how learning in school links to the world of work	• 71% of school survey participants reported high/very high impact for pupils' understanding of the world of work. • 66% of school survey participants reported high/very high impact for pupils' engagement with jobs and careers learning. • 47% of school survey participants reported high/very high impact for pupils' ability to set goals and devise a route to achieving them. • Qualitative data indicates that the majority of providers and nearly half of schools believed that the Primary Fund programme had a high level of impact on pupils' understanding of the world of work.
Short-term outcome 3: Schools have increased confidence, capacity and skills to deliver CRL	• 65% of school survey participants felt the programme had impacted their understanding of how to prepare young people for the world of work to a high or very high extent. • 80% of school survey participants reported high/very high levels of teacher engagement with the programme from other teachers within their school

ToC Outcome	Available Evidence
Short-term outcome 4: **Increased employer confidence in working with schools**	• There is no available evidence specifically related to increased employer confidence; however, school survey data indicates that 76% of participating schools rated employer engagement as high/very high.
Long-term outcome 1: **Parents actively have career conversations with their children**	• Pupil survey data points towards an increase in pupils' talking to family members as a means of obtaining careers information from 63% to 69% (baseline to endline). • Qualitative evidence is highly limited; only one school interviewee referred to being aware of children discussing careers with their parents.
Long-term outcome 2: **Young people have increased employability skills**	• Evidence from school surveys indicates a high/very high impact for pupils' employability skills in following areas: creativity (63%); teamwork (62%); presenting (52%); leadership (50%); listening skills (46%); and problem solving (46%). • There is no evidence from the pupil surveys that the Primary Fund programme has had a positive effect on students' employability skills. • There is some, limited evidence from qualitative data that the Primary Fund had a high level of impact on pupils' employability skills.
Long-term outcome 3: **CRL is integrated into the curriculum in primary schools**	• 51% of school survey participants reported high/very high impact on attainment and progress across the curriculum as a result of programme activities. • 59% of school survey participants felt the programme had a high/very high impact on the extent to which careers learning has been embedded within the curriculum. • There is some, limited evidence from qualitative data that the Primary Fund had an impact on embedding careers-related learning within the curriculum.

While the evidence present in the table above indicates that certain outcomes may have been met to some extent, there is insufficient evidence to assess them fully. However, this does not necessarily mean that these outcomes have not been met.

4.2 Cross-cutting Outcomes

In addition to the outcomes specified in the Theory of Change, the cross-cutting outcomes of the Primary Fund include the five key focus areas, aligned with the principles of the What Works? report: educational outcomes; positive attitude to learning; understanding the world of work; Skills Builder's eight essential skills; and parental engagement. The framework and research tools for the Fund-level evaluation were developed to consider programme outcomes across each focus area.

An overview of how each of the provider programmes relate to the five focus areas has been provided below. Within each area, key outcomes shared by a number of the providers are as follows:[18]

Educational Outcomes

A majority of the providers identified educational outcomes as an intended effect of the programme, although the exact outcomes varied. For four providers, this included improved pupil performance, such as improved literacy and numeracy,[19] technical skills[20] and other personal skills;[21] one provider also mentioned greater enthusiasm about learning.[22] For two providers,[23] the educational outcomes were the same as the outcomes related to Skills Builder's essential skills. Other educational outcomes mentioned included curriculum support, such as greater embedding of CRL,[24] and development of relationships between schools and businesses or other organisations.[25]

Positive Attitude to Learning

The change in learning attitudes was the focus area mentioned by the lowest number of providers. For three[26] of the providers, this included increased awareness of the link between the school curriculum and the wider world. Another three providers[27] mentioned approaches to tackling gender equality or other social barriers in the classroom. Four providers[28] referred to outputs instead of outcomes, however, such as programme enjoyment and engagement.

18. Provider and programme documentation.
19. National Literacy Trust and Digital Advantage.
20. Teen Tech.
21. Eden Project.
22. 15billionebp.
23. Learn By Design and Academy FM Folkestone.
24. Gro Organic, Regenda Homes, North East LEP and Black Country Consortium.
25. Teen Tech and Black Country Consortium.
26. Education and Employers, National Literacy Trust and Teen Tech.
27. National Literacy Trust, Teen Tech and 15billionebp.
28. Learn By Design, Gro Organic, Digital Advantage and Academy FM Folkestone.

Understanding the World of Work

All but one provider said their programme aims to improve pupils' understanding of the world of work. Just under half of providers[29] said they would achieve this through engagements with employers, industry experts and volunteers. Two providers[30] mentioned changing industry perceptions and challenging stereotypes, while a further two[31] mentioned integration of CRL in schools; one provider[32] also mentioned increasing parents' understanding of CRL.

Skills Builder's Eight Essential skills

The majority of providers included pupil skills development in the eight essential skills as a key outcome. These skills are listening, presenting, problem solving, creativity, staying positive, aiming high, leadership and teamwork. Some employers only mentioned some of the eight skills, however, or had included additional skills, such as confidence and self-belief,[33] as well as understanding of the world of work.[34] Some providers[35] also referred to the integration of these skills as part of the school curriculum.

Parental Engagement

Ten providers included parental engagement as an intended outcome of their programme. For the majority,[36] this included greater ability among parents in supporting their children with careers. Three of the providers[37] appeared to refer to outputs, such as parental involvement in the programme itself, rather than any subsequent effects of their participation. One provider also included greater capacity among teachers to engage parents as an outcome for this focus area.
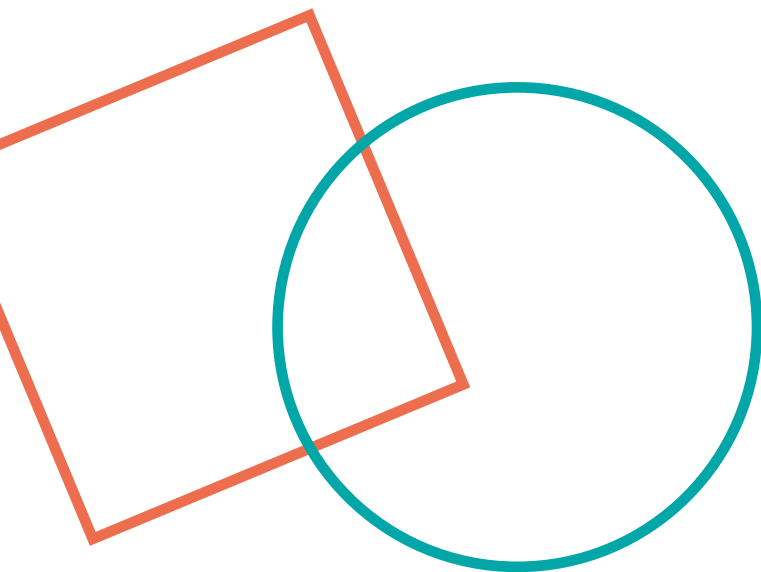
29. East Sussex County Council, Education and Employers, Learn By Design, National Literacy Trust, Regenda Homes, Teen Tech and Black Country Consortium.

30. Teen Tech and North East LEP.

31. East Sussex County Council and Education and Employers.

32. Eden Project.

33. 15billionebp.

34. Learn By Design and Academy FM Folkestone.

35. Gro Organic, Regenda Homes, North East LEP and Black Country Consortium.

36. East Sussex County Council, Education and Employers, Regenda Homes, 15billionebp, Gro Organic and Digital Advantage.

37. Learn By Design, Teen Tech and Academy FM Folkestone.

4.2.1 Application of Intended Outcomes

Further information on how each provider has understood and applied these outcomes for their various programmes is provided in Appendix 4, in summaries drawn from their original theories of change. While these summaries have not been updated to reflect changes to programming and delivery models over the course of the Primary Fund, they still serve to reflect providers' interpretations of the intended cross-cutting outcomes.

The table below shows cross-cutting outcomes across the Primary Fund programmes according to the five key focus areas: educational outcomes; positive attitude to learning; understanding the world of work; Skills Builder's eight essential skills; and parental engagement.

Focus of Provider Programmes According to Key Focus Areas[38]

Provider	Educational outcomes	Positive attitude to learning	Understanding the world of work	Skills Builder's eight essential skills	Parental engagement
Education and Employers					
East Sussex County Council					
Enabling Enterprise (Skills Builder)					
National Literacy Trust					
Learn By Design					
Regenda Homes					
Teen Tech					
15billionebp					
Gro Organic					
North East LEP					
Digital Advantage					
LOUD/Kidspiration					
Eden Project					
Black Country Consortium					
Academy FM Folkestone					

38. Provider and programme documentation.

4.2.2 Achievement of Outcomes

The extent to which each of the five cross-cutting outcomes have been met is explored more fully in Section 6 on Programme Impact. The following table provides a high-level summary of the evidence available to assess impact across these outcomes.

Cross-cutting Outcome	Summary of Evidence
Educational outcomes	• Qualitative evidence points towards specific providers developing areas of best practice in relation to educational outcomes. These areas of best practice are highlighted in the case studies accompanying the main report. • There was insufficient evidence available to include this outcome within the current evaluation.
Positive attitude to learning	• Qualitative evidence indicates a number of ways in which providers have developed best practice in relation to attitudes to learning. These areas of best practice are highlighted in the case studies accompanying the main report. • There is no evidence from the pupil survey to suggest that the programme has affected pupils' attitudes to learning, with no meaningful change between the baseline and endline mean scores for all questions in this area.
Understanding the world of work	• The results of the pupil survey indicate that the programme may have had some impact on pupils' knowledge of various careers, indicated through a slight shift in the aspirational careers selected by pupils and through a change in their reported motivations for work. Additionally, there was a slight increase in those who reported feeling they could do any job they wished between the baseline and endline surveys, and some evidence to suggest that the programme has had some impact on pupils' views of gender stereotypes around careers. This was supported by the findings of the school survey, in which teachers were positive about the impact of the Fund on pupils' understanding of the world of work and their engagement with jobs and careers learning. • Qualitative evidence is more positive, with an understanding of the world of work and broadening of horizons a recurring theme in terms of pupil impact across school and provider interviews. Key areas of best practice have been highlighted in the case studies accompanying the main report.

Cross-cutting Outcome	Summary of Evidence
Skills Builder's eight essential skills	• While the evidence from the pupil surveys regarding pupils' employability/essential skills is inconclusive, the results from the school survey of participating teachers was positive. Over half of participants reported that the programme had a high or very high impact on the eight essential skills. • This is further supported by additional qualitative evidence, with school and provider interviewees positive about the effect of the programme on the children involved. Key areas of best practice have been highlighted in the case studies accompanying the main report.
Parental engagement	• Targets for parental engagement were exceeded across the programme, with 7,403 parents engaged against a target of 4,202. It is, however, unclear from provider reporting how these figures have achieved, with different methods for quantifying engagement appearing to have been used. • School survey participants reported mixed levels of engagement with parents and carers, with 48% reporting low to moderate levels of engagement and 45% reporting high to very high levels. Interestingly, for programmes where parent/carer engagement was specifically targeted as a key focus area, results were still mixed but engagement was generally felt to be lower, with just over half (55%) of respondents reporting low or moderate engagement and just over a third (37%) reporting high or very high engagement. • Qualitative evidence reflects similar findings, though examples of provider capitalising on unplanned engagement opportunities with parents have also been captured. These, plus other areas of good practice, have been highlighted in the case studies accompanying the main report.

Overall, the table above points towards the lack of sufficiently rigorous evidence to assess fully the extent to which the five cross-cutting outcomes have been met. As mentioned previously, however, it should be noted that the lack of available evidence does not necessarily indicate that these outcomes have not been successfully achieved, but rather that there is a need to refine the processes used within programme design and delivery to ensure that consistent and reliable data can be collected.

5 | Effectiveness of Delivery

The evaluation has considered interview, survey and provider reporting data to assess the effectiveness of programme delivery. Elements considered included the fidelity of delivery; actual and intended stakeholder engagement; factors that contributed to effective delivery; and potential areas for improvement.

Key Findings: Effectiveness

- **Fund management:** The programme team was positive about the effectiveness of the Fund's management, with CEC's willingness to incorporate lessons learned to improve the delivery a key factor influencing success.

- **Programme reach:** The Fund significantly exceeded targets for stakeholder reach across all stakeholder groups, from pupils, schools and teachers to parents and employers. While this is a considerable feat, especially considering the challenges of operating under Covid-19 restrictions, inconsistent methods for quantifying reach across the various providers means it is unclear whether engagement - particularly for virtual opportunities - was always meaningful.

- **Covid-19 impact:** 91% of school survey participants reported that delivery had been effective to a high or very high extent, even though disruption from the pandemic had a significant impact on programme delivery. Across providers, key areas of disruption included programme delays, shifts to virtual delivery models and adapting resources for home and virtual learning. However, the impact of this disruption on programmes' perceived effectiveness was mixed, with around a third of providers feeling delivery was as effective and just under a third feeling it was less effective.

Areas of effective delivery: Some key areas of effective delivery include employer engagement; the accessibility and reach of programmes; parental engagement through home learning; the quality of resources; and the quality of delivery teams. Some examples of particularly strong practice, as perceived by the programme team, included localised approaches; built-in teacher CPD; a focus on skills development; and curriculum alignment.'

- **Provider support:** CEC reported its support for providers across the programme as being effective, with key areas including support for innovation, particularly in the context of the pandemic; organisational flexibility and receptiveness to change; and knowledge sharing opportunities.

- **School support:** A significant majority of both provider and school interviewees were positive about the level of support provided to schools for programme delivery. Where a need for additional support was identified, it primarily fell into one of two categories: increased budget or financial support, or increased support for teachers, which included better informing teachers of programme objectives and the provision of additional support for the administrative load of programme delivery.

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Stakeholder engagement was perceived to be high across the programme. A significant majority of school survey participants reported that programme engagement levels had been high with students (88%), senior leadership teams (82%), other teachers (80%) and employers (76%). Engagement with parents and carers was perceived to be lower, with 45% considering it to be high/very high, and 48% of respondents considering it to be low/moderate. For programmes where parent/carer engagement was specifically targeted as a key focus area, results were still mixed but engagement was generally felt to be lower, with just over half (55%) of respondents reporting low or moderate engagement and just over a third (37%) reporting high or very high engagement.

- **Facilitators:** Factors driving programme success, as cited by providers, included good communication with schools, planning and SLT buy-in. Schools' key success factors included good communication with and support from providers, good resources and in-house capacity for programme delivery.

- **Barriers:** Barriers to successful programme delivery diverged between schools and providers. The former reported a lack of time for delivery, complex timetabling requirements and volunteers not understanding schools' socio-economic contexts as key barriers, whilst the latter cited changes to school staff, low levels of teacher buy-in and budget limitations.

5.1 Delivery

5.1.1 Primary Fund Management

The programme team was positive about how effective the management of the Primary Fund had been, even in the face of what was characterised as 'a very difficult set of circumstances.' Programme team members spoke of the institutional willingness within CEC to learn and improve programming as a key benefit, both in terms of the design of the Primary Fund itself - with its two part incubation/delivery approach and its objective to support the testing and innovation of new approaches - and in terms of the opportunity to learn from other CEC Funds: 'We started to adjust our processes and improve as we saw things working in these other Funds… given the experiences we've had before, we sought to use those lessons and apply them here.'

The two-phase delivery of the Fund was also mentioned by the programme team as an example of effective provider management, offering an opportunity to tailor provision to the 'level of maturity of the programmes' and nurture programmes in their early stages. Strong communication between CEC colleagues and providers was cited as an area of programme management that had contributed to the overall effectiveness, with the team responsible having 'kept a very strong handle on how things are going, how things are being delivered'. This was seen to be crucial in the CEC's response to Covid-19, in the early stage of which there had been 'a lot of very intense work between that team and the providers to explore what kind of adaptations were possible.'

Covid-19 Response

Whilst operating in lockdown enhanced the perception of the Primary Fund as being adaptable and innovative, with providers supported to pivot in their approach to delivery, challenges were still significant and, in some cases, led to early completion of the programmes. The assessment of the impact of the pandemic across the Fund is challenging, however, as impact varied from programme to programme.[39] One programme team member said: 'Some [providers] had almost completed when Covid began or were able to adapt quite quickly, so for some the impact was not as great as others.'

Challenges

One of the challenges at the Fund-level was the necessity to negotiate any amendments to the Fund with the Department for Education, prior to working with providers to adjust their models and approaches. One programme team member spoke of the challenges involved in these various steps, and the components of CEC's approach that made such significant changes possible: 'What's been helpful is lots of close negotiation, having those relationships of trust and being able to provide an environment where innovation and adaptation could take place.'

The complexity and range of geographic responses to the pandemic was cited as a challenge by one programme team member: 'I think we've seen a lot of variance across the country depending on which schools providers were operating in.' Providers' resourcing was also cited as a challenge, with the difficulties of maintaining programme delivery with staff shortages (as a result of furlough) mentioned by one of the programme team.

An additional challenge raised by one programme team member was the difficulty of engaging primary school pupils through virtual programme delivery, compared to older students: 'In primary it's just a whole different kettle of fish the way that young people are going to engage and the fact that it's so important for engagement to be experiential, that's incredible difficult for a primary phase just staring into a screen.'

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What's been helpful is lots of close negotiation, having those relationships of trust and being able to provide an environment where innovation and adaptation could take place.

Programme Team Interview

39. Two programme team interviews.

Opportunities

Whilst acknowledging the challenges, one of the CEC programme team commented on the positive outcomes of having operated throughout the pandemic, namely the agility, communication and relationship management skills providers have had to strengthen out of necessity. The need to think outside the box in terms of delivery has offered opportunities for providers to be more flexible and accessible, developing approaches that will help tackle pre-existing delivery challenges, such as scheduling and timetabling: 'The pandemic has opened up spaces for them to explore different ways to do that.'

The shift to virtual modes of delivery also offered the opportunity for providers to increase programme reach, though whether that allows for the same depth of impact is unclear.[40] However, the opportunity to test virtual delivery models with primary age children is an opportunity in itself, according to one CEC programme team member: 'It'll be interesting for us to see how engaged young people have been in a virtual scenario and whether that's something that is impactful at a primary level, because it's not something that generally people have done before. It's usually much more interactive and face to face, so I think the learning from that will be interesting, even if the answer is "actually, no, it's not as impactful and we do need to have face to face"'.

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I think organisations overall are better at tailoring their offer in a way that suits the schools, not that they weren't before, but maybe just the communication of that has improved, also because of the timelines we've had to operate in.

Programme Team Interview

40. Two programme team interviews.

5.1.2 Primary Fund Delivery

Programme Reach

While delivery plans were required to change for the majority of providers, on the whole the programmes were still reported by interviewees to have reached the anticipated target groups.[41] Where delivery to the full cohort of original beneficiaries was not possible, some providers were able to open access to a wider range of beneficiaries: 'So we got more teachers...taking part, which we think was beneficial but wasn't the intended target group.'

Programme Reach: Target vs. Actuals[42]

Stakeholder Group	Intended Reach	Actual Reach	%
Schools	630	859	116%
Pupils	77,158	131,980	161%
Teachers	1,478	1,968	133%
Parents	4,202	7,403	176%
Employers	626	1,868	144%

At a Fund-level the programme exceeded all of its targets, with the figures for intended reach adjusted in the process of re-contracting under Covid.[43] This is positive, particularly when considering the challenging circumstances in which providers have had to operate. However, it is crucial to note that without a standardised threshold for reporting engagement figures, providers may have used different methods to quantify their reach.[44] Additionally, the figures above include both 'light' and 'intensive' models of delivery, meaning that even within individual providers' programmes, the level of stakeholder impact and engagement may differ. Similarly, these figures include stakeholders who received face to face programmes, pre-Covid, and virtual engagement opportunities once operating in lockdown.

Concerns regarding reach were also reported by the programme team. Along with the stakeholders reached being over target across the Fund, the majority of providers also exceeded their targets.[45] Even so, programme team members raised that, because of delays and challenges to the continued evaluation of participating cohorts, it is challenging to understand the real impact of the various interventions: 'Some of the organisations that hit massive numbers, may not necessarily have reached the young people we've identified as needing it most or the parents that needed it most.'

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41. Two programme team interviews.

42. The programme reach figures were updated by CEC following the end of the fund.

43. For details of provider-specific reach, this analysis should be viewed alongside individual provider reports.

44. example: The CEC, in line with the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, defines a meaningful virtual encounter as something that involves two-way interaction: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/1361_online_engagement_guidance_option_2_v6_.pdf

45. While there are a few providers significantly over target, these did not skew overall results; just six of 15 providers did not reach their stated engagement targets across all stakeholder groups.

Changes to Delivery Models

Covid-19 had a significant impact on programme delivery, with almost all providers[46] indicating that it had caused their delivery plans to change. Unsurprisingly, schools were less likely to have been aware of the extent to which Covid-19 had an impact on intended programme delivery, with around half reporting that from their perspective, the programme had been delivered as planned. For providers already experiencing some delays in timelines, the advent of Covid-19 restrictions complicated delivery yet further. One provider said: 'Once handover to schools happened, timelines went a bit fluffy which meant that once Covid started, some schools from the first cohort hadn't finished the programme and most schools from the second cohort didn't complete the programme.'

Programme team members had mixed opinions in response to the extent to which programmes were delivered as intended. One felt the extent to which delivery had been as intended was high, with the key contributing factor to that being the focus on ensuring programmes continued to achieve stated outcomes, even if the delivery models were different: 'Obviously there have been adjustments in terms of sometimes the scale, sometimes the intensity of programmes, but… they've been true to the original intended impact.'

Changes to delivery models reported by providers and schools primarily focused on the shift to virtual delivery of programmes.[47] Interviewees noted that other adjustments included delays to delivery,[48] changing scheduled trips to be virtual[49] and adapting programme resources.[50] One provider and two schools, not from the same programme, noted that the impact of Covid-19 had caused their project to end early.

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> **I'd say it was all delivered as intended as we ensured that in the redesign of the programme the learning objectives stayed the same. So although the model looks very different and I still say nothing can replace going into a workplace, we found that from feedback from teachers in the last term that it still has been really impactful for children.**
>
> **Provider Interview**

46. 12 of 15 providers.
47. 12 providers and 15 schools.
48. One provider and six schools.
49. Three providers and three schools.
50. Five providers and one school.

Comparison of Delivery Models

When asked to compare actual delivery with their original plans, providers were almost evenly split as to whether they felt that the amended programme had been as effective or less effective than planned, or had been a mix (with some elements being as effective and others less).[51] Schools were also divided on the issue, with 17 reporting that their programme had been delivered as effectively as originally planned, compared to 10 who had thought it was less effective and two which reported a mix.

One provider noted that while their delivery through Covid-19 was effective from the outset, the iterative approach to the programme saw effectiveness increase over time: 'There were a few things that as we went along we adapted and improved, so I'm sure with the very first group it worked, but it probably didn't work as well as the second one and the third one because as we went along we've always improved it wherever needed.' Another provider reported that the revised delivery model, which focused more on a virtual approach, has been so successful that they plan to retain it for future use: 'It was really praised by the participants…. we learned from that, and it is a model we will take forward.'

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> **We found that some of the activities have actually worked better when they've been done at home…teachers have told us that pupils actually felt more confident working on their own ideas at home and having the time and space to think about them rather than doing it in a group setting.**
>
> **Provider Interview**

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51. Five providers felt that delivery had been as effective as planned; four less effective; five felt that it had been a mix

5.1.3 Areas of Effective Delivery

The majority of participants in the school survey felt that the programme was run effectively in their school. Most (91%) felt that it was effective to a high or very high extent, with a further 8% reporting it was effective to a small or moderate extent. The remaining participants reported that they did not know, or felt that the question was not applicable.

According to interviewees, areas of delivery that worked particularly well included:

- **Engagement with professionals and/or employers:** Several interviewees[52] commented on the effective engagement methods demonstrated in the various programmes, with lockdown delivery models often offering more accessible engagement opportunities. One provider commented: 'What had already started to be a bit of a challenge was getting employers involved in sessions and actually the move to virtual really helped for that. Employers didn't need to come to the school for the day.'

- **Increasing the accessibility and reach of the programme:** The switch to virtual delivery was also considered by several interview participants[53] to be beneficial in terms of general accessibility: 'I found it absolutely amazing to be honest, the way that it was dealt with after Covid and the way that we moved to online, I kind of found it better to be honest just in terms of my time.'

- **Home learning parental engagement:** While not always an intended outcome of the various programmes, four providers commented on the fact that home learning has provided a previously inaccessible opportunity for parental engagement: 'What has been interesting is because the parents are doing home learning with their children, and more actively involved, they are seeing what is being done, and are very impressed.'

- **Quality resources:** Several interviewees[54] commented on the opportunities the various programmes offered to improve, develop, and tailor resources. One provider said: 'Doing those materials on video with accompanying activities allowed us to standardise

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I think what's been effective is just how adaptable the virtual models are. So we have been able to have children joining from home with parents and carers, as well as children joining from the classroom, and we have also been able to have sessions with multiple schools.

Provider Interview

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52. Eight providers and two schools.
53. Five providers and three schools.
54. Five providers and four schools.

the learning and messages that we want to get to the young people, which in many ways is very useful.' Two teachers also reported that the resources were diverse in terms of both gender and ethnicity: 'One of the positives that I like about this programme, is not only are the jobs cool and varied and I feel like they broaden minds of a lot of children... [I] love that they subverted the gender norms, that's just powerful and good for boys and girls to see things in a way that they may not have been socialised to imagine. I thought it was awesome that they used so many people of different ethnicities. I think that is really important.'

- **Quality of delivery staff:** Five teachers commented positively about delivery staff: 'It was a really positive experience, and the people that took part, the volunteers, and even the two people who were running it, they were so positive and very encouraging.'

Other areas that were perceived to work well included virtual trips,[55] having more time to amend the programme[56] and delivering engaging content over Zoom.[57] Two providers also pointed to the accessibility and cost advantages of utilising a virtual delivery model, with one noting that avoiding travel time and costs are really important for schools. The other commented that an 'additional positive of the digital model is that it doesn't matter where the school's based. So we always manage to find a business for a class of children to come to, regardless of where the school is based.'

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> **It was a really positive experience, and the people that took part, the volunteers, and even the two people who were running it, they were so positive and very encouraging.**
>
> **School Interview**

55. Eight providers and two schools.
56. Five providers and three schools.
57. Five providers and four schools.

Examples of good practice

Considering delivery across the Fund, programme team members commented on areas of good practice:

- **Localised approaches:** Whilst larger programmes with wider reach were considered to have their benefits, an example of good practice given in programme team interviews was of the ability of smaller programmes to tailor provision to individual school needs: 'That really made a difference to the quality of engagement that they were able to get from the school, the pupils…a greater ability to personalise the experience. Whereas with some of the larger organisations - that still have made a great difference, and I think just as fantastic - they went for more of a breadth and far-reaching approach. The plus side is you can engage with more people, but I think that it lacks the ability to have a personalised [approach, and] adapt the programme to the needs of the young people in the room.'

- **Built-in teacher professional development:** An area of good practice, both in terms of general delivery and programme sustainability and legacy, is the building in of CPD into programme delivery: 'The providers who made sure that teacher CPD was a really focused part of the programme… [this] is excellent practice, and is absolutely aligned to what we're seeing coming from government at the moment… The providers who have already been doing that at primary level are ahead of the game and I think that's really smart and really good practice.'

- **Focus on skills development:** In terms of programme content, the programme team commented on the focus of skills development as a key area of good practice, particularly in the context of identified skills gaps and a rapidly changing employment landscape: 'They're really focused on addressing the skills gap, particularly in light of Covid, I think that's really smart practice in whatever provision young people have been given.'

- **Curriculum alignment:** Aligning and embedding programme content with the curriculum was also perceived as an area of strong practice across the Fund. Providers that had worked to build a programme that was complementary to pupils' schoolwork were viewed as beneficial, in terms of delivery, sustainability and the ability of these programmes to be embedded in ongoing learning: 'It goes back to that point of making sure that CRL is part of a young person's everyday experience in school. A one-off experience is not going to make a dramatic difference, in my opinion, but if every day young people are being taught how to link their learning to the world of work, I think that's going to make the difference.'

5.1.4 Delivery Challenges

Interviewees cited a range of challenges associated with delivery, including: virtual delivery not being as effective as in-person engagement;[58] the cancellation of activities;[59] CEC delays impacting providers' ability to pivot;[60] schools dropping out as a result of Covid-19;[61] changes to timing and/or delays in scheduled delivery;[62] the ability to secure the engagement of parents;[63] and the evaluation of programme delivery and outcomes.[64]

Other areas of delivery that did not work as well, or were perceived to be challenging, included:

- **Home learning:** Three providers and four schools commented on the challenges of engaging pupils working from home: 'So it was really difficult just to get children and parents online to even view messages, there are a lot of issues with families without devices, internet, low income, general lack of confidence from parents to support their children in their education.'

- **Lockdown delivery:** Four providers and four school interviewees commented on the challenges of transitioning to virtual models, along with the difficulties of integrating their programmes during the phase of returning to school. One school interviewee said: 'It was quite challenging to be able to go through [the revised programme] with all of the teachers, and for all of them to be able to put that in. I think with the catch-up programmes that we have got going on, where children have missed a lot of learning, the teachers' plates were quite heavy.'

- **Pupil reach and engagement:** Three providers and six schools commented on the challenges not only engaging, but reaching pupils who were working remotely: 'Volume is the issue, some children don't have access to internet, some choose not engage, that's the only problem I'd say with Covid and doing these [activities].'

"

It goes back to that point of making sure that CRL is part of a young person's everyday experience in school. A one-off experience is not going to make a dramatic difference, in my opinion, but if every day young people are being taught how to link their learning to the world of work, I think that's going to make the difference.

School Interview

58. Four schools.
59. Seven schools.
60. Two providers.
61. Four providers.
62. Three providers and five schools.
63. One provider and three schools.
64. Seven providers and two schools.

5.2 Support and Resources

This section considers the extent to which schools and providers had access to the resources they needed to deliver the programme effectively.

5.2.1 Support for Providers

There were various elements of the CEC's relationships with providers that were considered to be particularly effective by the CEC programme team.

- **Support for innovation:** The programmatic focus on innovation not only allowed for providers to be responsive to the findings of their own delivery, but meant that pivoting in response to the pandemic was less of a challenge than it otherwise might have been. This innovation was supported by hands on support from CEC, including regular check-ins and knowledge sharing opportunities. One programme team member said: 'The idea was always to enable providers to experiment and be a bit more flexible, even before the pandemic, on adjusting their offers. If something they were piloting wasn't working really well they could revise that and adjust on the back of the feedback that they were getting. So from the start, we had plans of having regular check-ins with the providers.'

- **Incubation phase:** The two-phase structure of the Primary Fund was regarded positively by the programme team, both in terms of being able to provide appropriate levels of support to providers or programmes that needed it, and in facilitating access for organisations that might otherwise be excluded. The incubation phase also allowed for stronger

relationships to be built between participating organisations and CEC: 'From our perspective, I think we were quite excited [about the incubation period] because it enables new players to come into the sector as well, to further develop their ideas, so in that sense I think we became more engaged with providers even before the programmes actually started.'

- **CEC flexibility:** The programme team spoke of internal procedural adjustments that were made in order to better respond to the needs of providers during the pandemic: 'Adjusting our processes so we'd be able to respond more quickly to providers from our side, the whole decision-making process of what we can approve and what we can't approve has been improved, and in that sense has become more effective.'

- **Knowledge sharing opportunities:** Programme team members spoke of how relationships with providers were 'nurtured well in terms of the Fund events.' These events acted as opportunities for knowledge sharing, 'enabl[ing] providers to learn from each other, and I think that has been really appreciated on this Fund.' These opportunities have, in some cases, led to collaboration and co-learning, as well as 'facilitat[ing] the exchange of good practice, where people could share what they had learned, ask questions and comment on their challenges.'

Appreciation for this support was reflected in the interviews of several providers, who reported that participation in the programme had positively impacted their organisations. One provider commented that lessons learned will help shape their other programmes: 'It's maximised our learning as an organisation and now that learning will be taken on into all of the other programmes that we deliver, and I think it will really help to shape and inform them.'

5.2.2 Support for Schools

Both provider and school interviewees felt strongly that schools and teachers had received the support and resources needed to deliver the various programmes effectively. Of the providers, the majority[65] felt this support had been of a high level: 'I would say I am really confident in the support that the schools had, I don't think any school would have gone away and thought 'I could have had a bit more on x, y, z.''

This sense that the programmes had adequately resourced and supported delivery was echoed in the responses from school interviewees, with a significant majority - 31 of 43 interviewees - reporting that those needs had been met to a high extent: 'The [provider] that I have been in contact with provided us with everything we needed; they went above and beyond when asked to. They came into school and demonstrated the resources…. I do feel like they couldn't have done more, to be honest.'

Two providers reported room for improvement, or challenges in the provision of resources and support. Of these, one provider cited schools' challenges with navigating their selected approach to resource sharing: 'One of the things that we learned was that Dropbox is not ideal for everybody. Some people don't like it.' Another raised the challenges schools faced in delivering over and above their current workload: 'I think they would have preferred it if we'd come and done everything, but as well as making it more complicated and expensive, actually there was a reason that I wanted the programme to move from being delivered by [us] to being delivered by the teachers. If you want to have any legs, legacy or sustainability, then it has to be embedded in some sort of way.'

Seven school interviewees also felt that their resourcing and support needs had not been met to the extent that they would have wished. One school spoke of how the programme had required them to provide the resources themselves, although this had not impacted delivery: 'We are a lucky school to have a resource room. We had a list from [the] team with all materials that we need, we ordered anything that we didn't have in school [and] children brought from home a lot of materials.' Another reported that the programme could have benefited from stronger framing from the provider: 'I would look at it as a teacher to say… "This is what the [provider] programme is about. This is its purpose, these are the aims, here are some examples of how it could be implemented, and its success criteria: this is what we are looking for." That would be really helpful.'

"

We were delivering it, not the schools. So they had what they needed…we tried to make it so that it was an easy day for the teachers, that we would go in and we would do the delivery but there were follow up resources that were left with the schools for them to do that were optional, [so] they had all the tools to continue the learning should they wish to.

Provider Interview

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65. 10 of 15 providers.

Areas for Additional Support

In the cases where interviewees were able to identify where additional support was needed, responses fell primarily into two categories: extra budget and support for teachers.

- **Budget:** One provider felt that being able to provide budget specifically for the delivery of the programme in school might incentivise teachers' participation, whilst another provider and one school interviewee - from different programmes - mentioned that a greater budget for trips would be beneficial to programme delivery: 'The only thing I could say could be improved is when they do the visits to industry, it's limited numbers and makes it hard to choose, 50 children in a year group and 25 children in a class and only 20 can go, how do you decide?'

- **Teacher support:** Five interviewees - one provider and four schools - reported areas of support to teachers that could be beneficial. Examples included greater investment in helping teachers understand the intended outcomes of the programme[66] and greater organisational support to help schools with the administrative load of programme delivery.[67]

5.3 Engagement

Engagement levels across the various programmes were considered to be high by participants of the school survey.

Programme Engagement Levels (%)

	Low/ Moderate	High/Very high
Students	12%	88%
Senior leadership team	16%	82%
Other teachers	15%	80%
Employers	21%	76%
School governing board	37%	53%
Parents and carers	48%	45%

"

If you were able to provide teachers with a whole bunch of exemplar material, like this is what one school's mind map looks like, and here's a presentation from one school, here's a video of an interview that the children ran, etc., painting a more vivid picture of how it might unfold in their school.

Provider Interview

66. One provider and three schools.
67. School interview.

Students

Student engagement was viewed the most positively, with 88% reporting this group was engaged to a high or very high extent.[68] A contributing factor to these engagement levels are the tailoring of activities to different age groups, which across the programme was perceived to have been effective by the vast majority of provider and school interviewees.[69] Examples of good practice included designing different themes for different years;[70] teachers and schools taking responsibility for tailoring approaches for different groups;[71] and allowing child-led choices for trips or activities.[72]

Senior Leadership Teams

Engagement levels were also considered to be high amongst SLTs, with 82% of school survey participants reporting high/very high levels of SLT engagement.[73] Positive perceptions of SLT engagement were also reflected in provider interviews, with almost all providers reporting that the SLTs they worked with were either involved or very involved in the programme, a finding also reported by the majority of schools interviewed.[74] The importance of this investment was seen to be a crucial component of delivery: 'We know that having buy-in from the SLT is vital to having the programme run well. We try to ensure this with all our programmes - it means they'll give the teacher time to deliver the programme if they've got buy-in.' This was also given as a key example of good practice by programme team interviewees: 'The [programmes] that are most successful are the ones who have that senior leadership buy-in, and those are the ones that'll be more successful long term.' Fewer respondents indicated that their governing boards were involved in the programme, though it is important to note that this was not an explicit aim of any of the programmes.[75]

Teachers and Employers

High levels of engagement were also reported by school survey participants with respect to other teachers (80%). Programme team interviewees referred to the strong practice observed across providers in terms of teacher engagement practices, ensuring school buy-in and contributing to programmatic success. Having someone champion in-school work and investing in pre-programme planning and communication with participating teachers were mentioned not only as examples of good practice for positive delivery outcomes, but also as contributing components to ongoing sustainability. Employer engagement was also considered positively by school survey participants, at 76%.

Parents and Carers

The school survey results were mixed for parents and carers, with 48% reporting low to moderate levels of engagement and 45% reporting high to very high levels. Interestingly, for programmes where parent/carer engagement was specifically targeted as a key focus area, results were still mixed but engagement was generally felt to be lower, with just over half (55%) of respondents reporting low or moderate engagement and just over a third (37%) reporting high or very high engagement.

This feedback was also reflected in the perceptions of the programme team, who reported that whilst actual levels of parental engagement might be mixed, the programme had still managed to demonstrate some areas of strong practice. While Covid related disruption has had a negative impact in some cases where parental engagement was a stated programme outcome, it has also meant that more parents have engaged in initially unplanned ways, including in programmes where it wasn't a stated objective, as a

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68. School survey.

69. 12 providers and 34 schools.

70. Two providers and three schools.

71. Four providers and 13 schools.

72. Three providers and one school.

73. School survey.

74. Six providers very involved and nine involved: 20 schools very involved and 14 involved.

75. Six providers slightly involved and five not involved; four schools very involved, 11 slightly involved and four not involved.

result of home learning: 'There was an element with children being home most of the time, parents were also looking for activities to do with their children. Like teachers were as well, any type of fun, engaging activities that parents could do were very welcome, so on the back of that we've seen a lot of providers putting out resources for parents or designing new things that parents could use at home with their children.'

5.4 Factors Driving Success

5.4.1 Facilitators

When asked about key enabling factors driving programme success, there were a wide range of responses from interviewees. Most frequently, providers cited: good communication with schools;[76] planning;[77] and having SLT buy-in.[78] One provider said: 'The schools I would say that really had the sort of power behind them were obviously those that had their headteacher 100% behind the project.' Schools equally felt that having good relationships with, and support from, providers was critical,[79] but also noted that having good resources[80] and in-house capacity to drive the programme[81] was key.

Similar themes were also reflected in the providers evaluation reports. Where facilitators were included in reporting, key themes included:[82]

- **School buy-in:** Five programme evaluations highlighted the importance of school buy-in for effective delivery. SLT buy-in and teacher buy-in and collaboration were mentioned specifically as

facilitators, with in-school coordinators/programme leads mentioned as a method of securing successful delivery. Along with delivery benefits, school investment was also considered important for long-term sustainability.

- **Employer investment:** Three provider evaluations cited buy-in from employers as a key facilitator. Businesses understanding of the importance of working with primary schools, along with the range of diverse volunteers employers provided access to, were cited specifically.

- **Programme establishment:** Four provider evaluations considered that the level of maturity of their programmes was a facilitating factor, with existing (pre-Covid) virtual infrastructure, broad geographic spread and provider reputation cited as key components.

- **Context and tailoring:** Four evaluations cited the ability or willingness to tailor programmes to context as a facilitating factor, including tailoring resources to need, with an additional beneficial component being a regional or contextual desire for programmes that raise aspirations.

- **Virtual reach:** The benefit of virtual delivery models in allowing greater programme reach and stakeholder engagement was included in six provider evaluations. A wider geographical spread of employers, improved parental engagement and broader stakeholder reach generally were given as specific examples.

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76. Four providers.

77. Five providers.

78. Six providers.

79. Nine schools.

80. Six schools.

81. Three schools.

82. Provider data review.

- **Flexibility:** Whilst a broad factor, the willingness to operate with flexibility was considered a key facilitator in eight provider evaluations. Perseverance in maintaining partnerships; agility, particularly in response to the pandemic; and flexibility with timetabling were all specifically mentioned. Responding flexibly to school and stakeholder needs was considered a factor for impact, with outcomes including pupil engagement, creativity and greater parental and industry engagement.

5.4.2 Barriers

Key barriers - primarily contextualised within Covid-19 disruption - differed between providers and schools, with the former reporting that school staffing changes,[83] lack of teacher buy-in[84] and school/provider budgets[85] were challenges. Limited parental beliefs were also noted by one provider as being a key challenge in some instances: 'Some parents not understanding what we hoped to achieve, that was a hindrance at one point when we were trying to get children off site…Particularly daughters looking at things like construction. They didn't get the reason why they wanted to talk to their daughter [about] construction. We did come across some stereotypes from parents like that.' Schools reported that lack of time for delivery[86] and complex timetabling requirements[87] were key barriers, as well as challenges relating to volunteers not understanding schools' socio-economic contexts.[88]

The review of providers' evaluation reports highlighted overlapping barriers. Where such challenges were included in reporting, the key themes included:[89]

- **Remote delivery:** Remote delivery was cited as a barrier in three provider evaluations, with specific examples including the challenges of remote pupil and parental engagement and the impact of no in-person delivery.

- **Technical difficulties:** More specifically, technical challenges were cited as a barrier in six evaluations. The introduction of new software, a lack of online learning capacity at certain schools, and teachers' digital skills capacity were flagged as specific barriers.

- **Teacher/school capacity:** The capacity of schools to adequately deliver the various programmes was mentioned across four evaluations. Specific examples of this included the challenge of finding time to schedule teacher CPD, the capacity of schools to maintain the delivery of work after the intervention, a greater requirement for provider support than was possible, school recruitment to provider programmes, and the low priority of CRL in the recovery curriculum.

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83. Five providers.
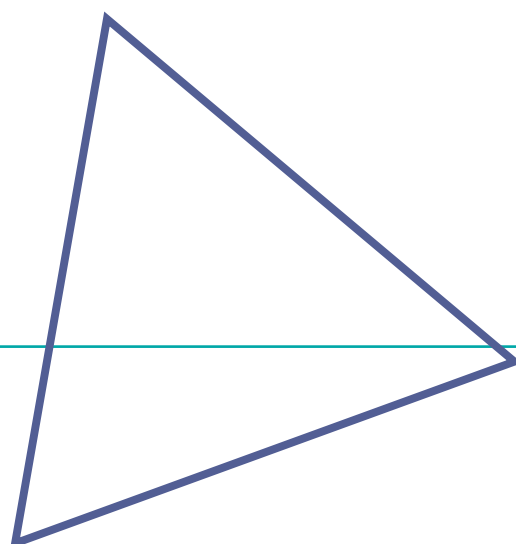84. Two providers.
85. One provider each.
86. Two schools.
87. Two schools.
88. Two schools.
89. Provider data review.

- **Lockdown logistics:** While the majority of barriers were considered as related in some way to Covid-19 disruption, some specific barriers related to Covid-19 included disrupted programme momentum; cancellation of events; school closures; and data collection difficulties.

- **Collaboration and communication:** Seven evaluations cited limitations to collaboration and communication as a barrier to successful programme delivery. Some key areas included general limitations to stakeholder collaboration, limited opportunities to ensure buy-in; cancellation of in-person trips; communication challenges with schools; and issues securing employer collaboration.

6 | Impact

Consideration of programme impact has been carried out through analysis of both school and pupil surveys, and interviews with schools, providers and the programme team. Impact has been considered in terms of the Fund's outcomes framework, considering attitudes to learning, understanding the world of work, essential skills and parental engagement. Full consideration of educational outcomes has been excluded due to a lack of relevant pupil data.

Key Findings: Impact

- **Pupil survey:** The results of the pupil survey have been less positive than programme data collected through other means, with a large amount of the evidence analysed inconclusive in terms of impact. While this may be partially the result of poor-quality data, impacted by data collection challenges through lockdown and the fact findings could not be triangulated with additional data sources, such as focus groups, it may also indicate that a survey is not the best method of assessing impact with primary age pupils, particularly in terms of the self-assessment of skills.

- **Understanding the world of work:** 71% of school survey participants felt the programme had a positive impact on pupils' understanding of the world of work to a high/very high extent, whilst 66% had felt there had been a high/very high impact on pupils' engagement with jobs and careers learning.

- **Motivations for work:** Pupils were asked to report what they thought were the most important reasons for working. The top three responses - earning money, learning new things, and using their skills - stayed the same, though there was some movement in the proportion of pupils reporting against each of these options, potentially suggesting that programme participation encouraged survey participants to place greater importance on their own personal development and skills, with fewer regarding finances as the main motivation for working.

- **Essential skills:** Over half of school survey participants reported that programme participation had an impact on pupils' essential skills to a high/very high extent, with creativity (63%) and teamwork (62%) considered to be the highest, along with aspirational skills including aiming high (74%) and staying positive (67%). Pupil survey results were inconclusive, however.

- **Impact on schools:** 65% of school survey participants reported that the programme had impacted their understanding of how to prepare young people for the world of work to a high or very high extent. Similarly, when asked about embedding careers learning within the curriculum, 59% of school survey participants thought the programme had impacted this to a high/very high extent.

Attitudes to learning: 59% of school survey participants felt the programme had a positive impact on pupils' general school engagement to a high/very high extent, while just over half of school survey participants felt the programme had a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress across the curriculum to a high/very high extent.

6.1 Impact on Pupils

The Primary Fund reached 131,980 pupils in over 859 schools, significantly over the providers' targets. The pupil survey provided very little evidence of change in pupil outcomes after taking part in the programme (see below for more). However, this may be attributable to the poor quality of the survey data, rather than because the programme itself did not have any impact. Similarly, it is worth considering whether pupil self-assessment can adequately measure impact in terms of attitudes and skills, especially as positive impact on pupils was reported by schools and providers. Almost all of the school and provider interviewees to comment felt that the programme had a high level of impact on the children involved,[90] and school survey participants generally felt that the programme had a positive impact on their pupils in terms of careers-related outcomes such as understanding the world of work (71% reporting a high/very high impact) and engaging with jobs and careers learning (66% reporting a high/very high impact). The results for more general outcomes, although positive, were slightly more mixed. Around 59% felt that the programme had a high/very high impact on pupils' general school engagement, while just over half (51%) felt it had a high/very high impact on pupils' attainment and progress across the curriculum.

School Survey: Impact on Pupil Outcomes (%)

	Low/Moderate	High/Very high
Understanding of the world of work	29%	71%
Engagement with jobs and careers learning	34%	66%
General school engagement	41%	59%
Attainment and progress across the curriculum	46%	51%

90. Nine of 10 providers; 31 of 34 schools.

6.1.1 Attitudes to Learning

There is no evidence from the pupil survey to suggest that the programmes have affected pupils' attitudes to learning, with no meaningful change between the baseline and endline mean scores for all questions in this area.

Subject Perceptions

Pupils were asked to rate how much they enjoyed a range of subjects including science, maths, arts and English. They were also asked how important they thought those subjects were for getting a good job when they were an adult. At both time points, art and maths received the highest score for level of enjoyment, while maths and English were deemed to be the most important for future careers.

Notably, although the mean score for the importance of science for future careers did not change in a meaningful way between the two surveys, the percentage of students who reported they felt science to be 'very important' increased from 45% in the baseline survey to 54% in the endline survey. This indicates that the programme may potentially have had some impact on perceptions of this subject.

Pupil Survey: Attitudes to Learning (Mean, 0/2 scale)[91]

	Subject	Baseline	Endline
Subject enjoyment	Science	1.4	1.4
	Maths	1.6	1.6
	Art	1.8	1.7
	English	1.4	1.4
Importance for future careers	Science	1.5	1.6
	Maths	1.8	1.8
	Art	0.9	1.0
	English	1.7	1.7

91. 0=I don't like it at all/Not important, 1=I like it a little/Important 2=I like it a lot/Very important.

Whilst this data is inconclusive, there is some evidence from the interviews[92] that suggests the programme has had some impact on pupils' understanding of why they need school: "I think every [resource] has helped children make that connection between what they are learning in the classroom, to what they will need when they grow up and go out to work.'[93]

Learning About Different Jobs and Careers

Pupil responses in relation to learning about jobs and careers were generally positive. In both surveys, around two thirds[94] reported they liked learning about them a lot and a further third[95] enjoyed learning about them a little. Before taking part in the programme, 63% of pupils reported that they found out about different jobs and careers by talking with family members. This increased to 69% afterwards, suggesting that the

programme may have had some impact in this area. At both time points, it was the second most popular method of obtaining career information.[96]

More broadly, most students reported that they found out about different jobs and careers at school[97] or by looking on the internet.[98] For all information sources, there was an increase in the proportion of pupils who reported accessing them between the two surveys. For example, there was an 11 point increase in those who said they found out about different jobs and careers at school and an eight point increase in those who said did so by looking on the internet. This, along with the small decrease[99] in those who felt they didn't know what sources they used, suggests that the Primary Fund may have had some impact on the range of sources pupils use to find out about jobs and careers.

Pupil Survey: Sources of Jobs and Career Information (%)

	Baseline	Endline
At school	67%	78%
Talking with family members	63%	69%
Looking on the internet	51%	59%
Watching TV	44%	48%
Reading books and magazines	43%	45%
Talking with friends	35%	39%
Don't find out	5%	1%

92. Three providers and four schools.

93. Provider interviews.

94. Baseline: 66%; Endline 65%.

95. Baseline: 32%; Endline 32%.

96. The National Literacy Trust's amended version of the survey asked pupils only whether their family talked to them about different jobs – this was analysed separately as it was incompatible with the question format of the original survey. In the baseline survey, 39 pupils said their family talked to them about different jobs, and 22 did in the endline survey.

97. Baseline: 67%; Endline: 78%.

98. Baseline: 51%; Endline 59%.

99. Four percentage points.

6.1.2 Understanding the World of Work

Career Aspirations

Around four-fifths of pupils[100] reported that they knew what job they would like to do when they were an adult. Although there was no meaningful change in overall proportions before and after the programme, there was some small change in terms of the precise jobs pupils wished to do. For example, of those that listed a specific career aspiration, there was a slight fall in the number who aspired to work in creative and performing occupations (from 18% to 16%).

When looking at specific job titles, the number of those aspiring to be YouTubers fell from 12 to 10, while the number aspiring to be footballers decreased from 40 to 34, which may be an indication that the Fund led to some pupils developing more realistic career aspirations.

In addition, the slight increase in numbers in the 'other' category can at least in part be explained by an increase in the number of pupils who listed multiple potential occupations across more than one occupation category – this may be potential evidence that the programme has led pupils to consider a wider range of careers than those they originally aspired to.

Pupil Survey: Career Aspirations by Occupation Type (% of participants)[101]

	Baseline	Endline
Creative and performing occupations	18%	16%
Sporting occupations	12%	12%
Scientific and medical occupations	27%	26%
Other professional occupations	24%	23%
Other	19%	24%

Children's understanding of the world of work[102] and the broadening of their horizons[103] were the most common areas of impact mentioned by provider and school interviewees. Two school interviewees reported their sense that the programme had given participants more realistic aspirations: '[The programme has] also removed some of the… [I] don't want to say silly [ideas like] footballer. They've got more grounded goals and realistic goals and the ideas of how to get there'.

The impact of participation on young people's aspirations was also raised by the programme team:

> I think the fact that young people are reporting potentially that they don't know anymore what they want to do is a real positive. So the fact that people are not so set and rigid in what they're thinking, but they're being more broad and aspirational and just having their eyes open to opportunities is a real positive.

100. Baseline: 81%; Endline: 82%.

101. Other' includes responses where pupils listed multiple responses across more than one occupation category.

102. Eight providers and 14 schools.

103. Six providers and 16 schools.

Education and Employment Goals

There is little evidence that the Primary Fund programme has had an impact on students' broad education and employment goals. When asked what they would most like to do before they were 30 years old, completing a university course was the most popular option chosen in both the baseline (28%) and endline (26%) pupil survey.

Most notably, before taking part in the programme, 25% of participants reported that their main aspiration was to become famous, making it the second most common option overall. However, after taking part, this fell 6 percentage points to 19%, making it the third most popular response - this may be further evidence of pupils developing more realistic aspirations as a result of the programme.

> **"**
>
> **I think the employer visits have been a really key aspect of children opening their eyes to what's out there beyond what they see their parents doing or the network around them doing, particularly in areas where there's low employment.'**
>
> **Provider Interview**

Pupil Survey: Education and Employment Goals Before 30 (%)

	Baseline	Endline
Completing a university course	28%	26%
Being famous	25%	19%
Setting up your own business	21%	24%
Having a job where you work for someone else	11%	14%
Having a job where you are in charge of other people	6%	7%
Completing a college course	5%	6%
Completing an apprenticeship	3%	4%
Don't know	1%	1%

Motivations for Work

The Primary Fund programme may have had an impact on pupils' motivation for working. Pupil survey participants were asked to report what they thought were the most important reasons to work. The top three responses remained stable between the baseline and endline surveys – earning money was seen to be the most important reason overall,[104] followed by learning new things in second place[105] and to use their skills in third.[106]

However, although the overall rankings remained the same, there was some movement in the proportion of pupils selecting each of these three options. The proportion who felt that earning money was an important reason to work fell by eight percentage points between the two surveys, while the proportion who felt that learning new things and using skills increased by three and five percentage points respectively. In addition, although it was the lowest ranked option overall, the proportion of those who felt that meeting other people was an important reason to work increased by 11 points between the two surveys. These findings may indicate that after the programme, survey participants placed greater importance on their own personal development and skills when considering jobs, with fewer regarding finances as the main motivation for working.

"

> **So I think they are seeing the relevance of some things. There was a lovely text about an inventor, and engineer, and it's linked in really well with that. So there are a lot of curricula points to link in and the children can see the relevance of certain things.**
>
> **School Interview**

Pupil Survey: Reasons for Working (%, Combined[107/108])

	Baseline	Endline
To earn money	86%	78%
To learn new things	61%	64%
To use my skills	56%	61%
To enjoy myself	48%	52%
To meet other people	22%	33%

104. Baseline: 86%, Endline: 78%; combined responses.

105. Baseline: 61%, Endline: 64%; combined responses.

106. Baseline: 56%, Endline: 61%; combined responses.

107. Table shows the percentage of participants selecting each option as either the first, second or third most important reason for work.

108. In the survey disseminated by Learn By Design, an extra option of 'To do something with my life' was included and was selected by 92 pupils in the baseline survey and 62 pupils in the endline survey. These responses were excluded from the main analysis.

Pupils were also asked if they thought there were any other important reasons for working. Of those that answered, one main theme that emerged was one of wanting to help people, with 20 baseline responses and 12 endline responses containing terms such as 'help', 'look after' or 'care'. Similarly, 15 baseline responses and seven endline responses mentioned family, both in terms of supporting them or making them proud.

Another strong theme was that of quality of life, with a number of pupils noting that they thought work was important in order to have a good life and career[109] and other individual responses talking of it being important in being independent, improving confidence and staying healthy (including mental health).

These answers may be an indication that the Fund has led some pupils to gain a broader understanding of the meaning of work and what it means on an individual basis.

Career Confidence and Self-Belief

In order to gauge self-belief and career confidence levels, pupil survey participants were asked if they felt that they could do any job they wished when they were an adult. There was a very slight increase in those that thought they could between the baseline and endline survey (52% and 55% respectively). The proportion of those that didn't know was relatively high in both surveys, but there was a slight decline between baseline (29%) and endline (25%), suggesting that the programme may have had some impact in this area.

Pupil Survey: Pupils' Belief They Can Obtain Any Job They Wish (%)
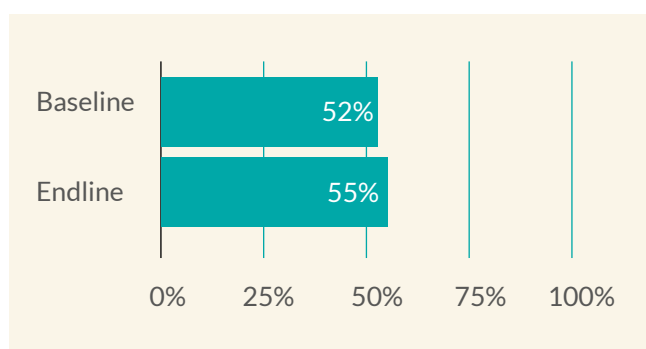
More positively, a number of interviewees felt the programme had had an impact on children's confidence and raising their aspirations:[110] 'I think it has opened and raised their aspirations and made them feel more confident about their own abilities and been able to unleash more creativity and not feel so restricted […] We have always had so many saying "Oh, I didn't know I could do that".'

Another confidence-related area of impact, mentioned by several interviewees,[111] was the impact of the programme on children's preparedness for their secondary transition: 'The SLT is keen on anything that we can use to add value to what we're trying to do with the children, particularly with their secondary transition coming up soon. There's a lot of secondary transition stuff they're missing out on with Covid, you know, going into secondary schools and having secondary school teachers coming in to visit… [Following the programme], the awareness was the importance of still having programmes delivered by external providers; the action we took was to implement some of the strategies we'd learned to support children in their secondary transition; and the impact will be being able to provide some of the transition things they've missed out on.'

109. Six baseline participants and four endline participants.
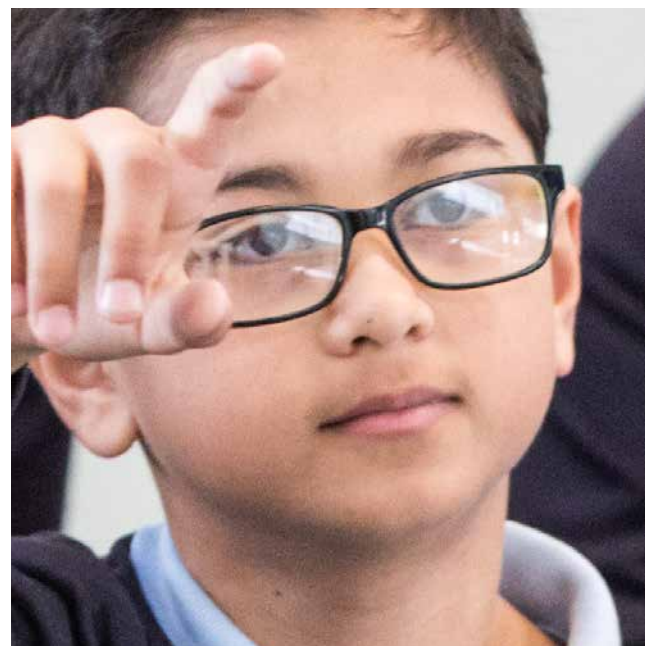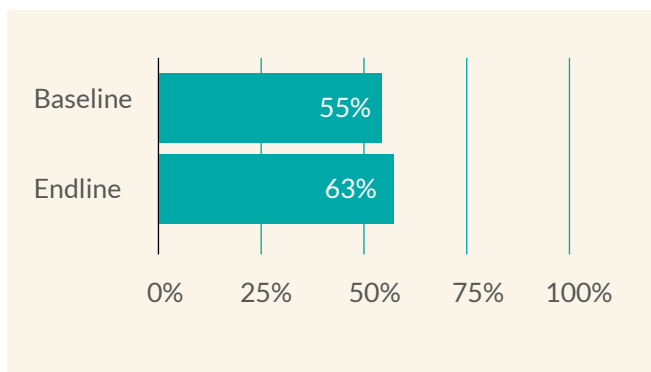110. Seven providers and 13 schools.
111. Two providers and one school.

Awareness of Gender Stereotypes

There is evidence that the programme has had some impact on pupils' views of gender stereotypes around careers. The proportion of pupils that felt that there was no difference in the type of jobs that men and women could do increased from 55% in the baseline survey to 63% in the endline survey.

Pupil Survey: Pupils' Belief That Men and Women Can Do The Same Job (%)

This was also reflected in the interviews, with the impact of the various programmes on challenging stereotypes mentioned by three providers and eight school interviewees. One school interviewee said: 'There's a lot of subversion of gender norms in a lot of the resources, it was cool that the scientist was a woman… So I think that's really good for the children and also for the boys that not every job they have to do has to be so macho.'

Baseline	55%
Endline	63%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

"

There's a lot of subversion of gender norms in a lot of the resources, it was cool that the scientist was a woman… So I think that's really good for the children and also for the boys that not every job they have to do has to be so macho.

School Interview

6.1.3 Employability Skills

There is no evidence from the pupil surveys that the Primary Fund programme has had a positive effect on students' employability skills, with no meaningful change between the baseline and endline surveys for all metrics in this section. As mentioned above, however, this is a difficult area for young people to self-assess, and a survey is perhaps not the best method of measuring or observing change in this area. In general, pupils were most confident in their ability to work with each other, with the highest mean scores reported for helping and encouraging others[112] and working with others.[113] Pupils were generally least confident about their ability to manage their emotions when things aren't going their way.[114]

Pupil Survey: Employability Skills (Mean, 0/2 scale)[115]

Subject	Baseline	Endline
Helping and encouraging others	1.6	1.6
Working with others	1.6	1.5
Listening to others	1.4	1.4
Goal setting	1.4	1.3
Thinking of new ideas	1.4	1.4
Explaining ideas	1.3	1.3
Problem solving	1.3	1.3
Managing emotions	1.0	1.1

112. Baseline: 1.6;Endline: 1.6.
113. Baseline: 1.6,;Endline: 1.5.
114. Baseline: 1.0; Endline: 1.1.
115. 0=Not good 1=Good 2=Very good.

However, while pupils' self-reported impact was inconclusive, teacher and providers' perception of the programmes' impact on employability skills was more positive.

Results from the school survey were generally positive, with over half of participants reporting that the programme had a high or very high impact in the majority of the surveyed metrics. Impact was felt to be particularly high for creativity (63% reporting a high/very high impact) and teamwork (62% reporting a high or very high impact). The programme was also felt to have a particularly high level of impact for aspirational skills related to employability - 74% of participants felt the programme had a high or very high level of impact on 'aiming high' and 67% on pupils' ability to stay positive.

Pupil Survey: Employability Skills (Mean, 0/2 scale)

	Low/Moderate	High/Very high
Creativity	33%	63%
Teamwork	35%	62%
Presenting	42%	52%
Leadership	42%	50%
Listening skills	50%	46%
Problem solving	46%	46%

School survey participants were also positive about the programme's impact on pupils' ability to set goals and devise a route to achieving them, with 47% reporting it had a high or very high impact and a further 50% reporting a small or moderate impact. Just over 42% reported that the programme had a high or very high impact on pupils' ability to use tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks, with 51% feeling it had a small or moderate impact. However, 7% of participants felt that the programme had no impact at all.[116]

Similarly, several interviewees[117] also mentioned the impact of the various programmes on pupils' skills development. One provider commented: 'Meeting new people and the soft skills they get from that, particularly this year where they haven't been standing up and asking questions of strangers... I think that has had a positive impact on children's development as well.'

116. School survey.

117. Four providers and nine schools.

6.2 Other Stakeholder Impact

Parents and Carers

Providers were positive about the programme's impact on parents and carers.[118] Anecdotally, the programme helped parents understand the concept of primary school careers education and the importance of CRL as well as their own aspirations.[119] One provider reported that adjustments made to the programme due to Covid-19 improved some aspects of parental engagement: 'With lockdown, parents have been very involved with online sessions, part of the programme [where] we hadn't made inroads before.'[120] For programme-specific detail, please see providers' own evaluations and the parental engagement case study.

Teachers were less certain of the programme's impact on parents and carers, however. School survey participants felt that the programme did have some degree of impact on parents' and carers' engagement with their children's careers education. 43% felt that it had a small to moderate degree of impact, with a further 20% reporting a high or very high degree. Additionally, 11% felt the programme had no impact in this area and 26% weren't sure.[121]

School Survey: Impact on Parents'/Carers' Engagement (%)
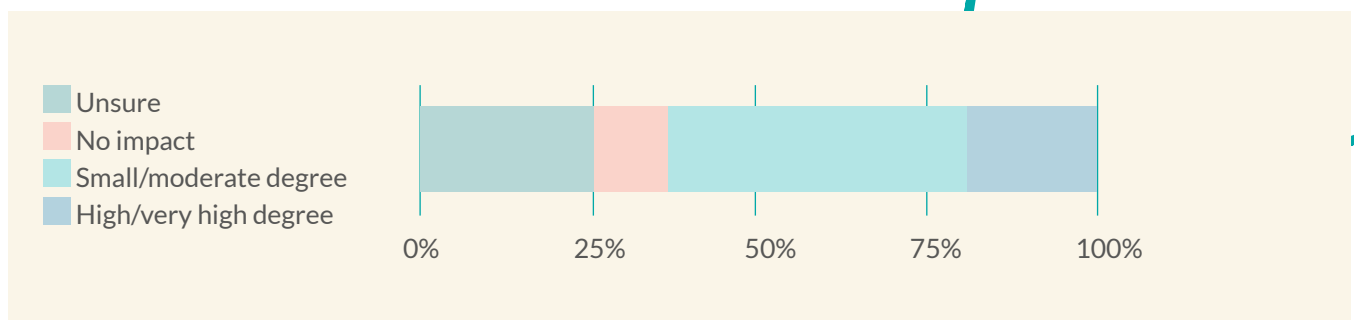
Of the schools interviewed, the majority of those that commented felt that there had been at least some impact, with a small number of those feeling that this had been to a large extent.[122] 'Feedback after, albeit limited as it was just before lockdown, but it was really positive, because they were able to talk to the kids about different books and different jobs. It had that element of discussion, that was the biggest impact I think'.

However, a large number[123] felt that there had been no impact at all, although it should be noted that some of the schools stated that they hadn't purposely attempted to engage parents or carers in their programmes: 'We didn't really bring much parent interaction into that specific thing this year. It is something we could possibly go on to develop.' Another teacher spoke of how impact in this area may have been affected by Covid-19: 'This is the other thing, we would have had the parents in without Covid.'

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118. Three providers reported impact to a small extent and two to a large extent.
119. Two providers.
120. Provider interviews.
121. 22% reported a response of Don't know/not applicable.
122. 16 of 38 schools reported impact to a small extent and six to a large extent.
123. 16 of 38 schools.

Teachers and Schools

Around two-thirds (65%) of participants in the school survey felt the programme had impacted their understanding of how to prepare young people for the world of work to a high or very high extent. A further third (32%) felt their understanding was impacted to a small or moderate extent. Similarly, when asked about embedding careers learning within the curriculum, 59% of school survey participants thought the programme impacted this to a high or very high extent, with a further 37% reporting a small or moderate impact.[124]

Programme team interviewees also spoke of the impact the programme had had on primary schools' ability to continue to deliver and embed CRL, both in terms of their understanding of how to incorporate lessons into the curriculum as well as through the establishment of partnerships to support this area of learning: 'I hope that the schools that have been involved in these programmes will continue to do something in the way of CRL, so perhaps they didn't previously have a relationship with an employer and now they do. I hope they're able to continue to do that.'

Other Impact

- **Employers and volunteers:** Four providers spoke directly about the impact that participation in their programmes had on the employer volunteers involved: 'There's a mental wellbeing element for businesses engaging with children in primary… The response we get is that they're more engaged and more fulfilled with their roles and just motivated a little bit more because they're able to share what's great about their job with some kids who are really interested.'

- **Providers:** Whilst not a stated beneficiary, one programme team interviewee spoke of the benefits the programme had had for the providers themselves, and the potential for ongoing impact this has: 'I think the providers themselves have been impacted by this programme…by this Fund. I think we've seen a real excitement about the prospect of primary CRL and I know that a few of them are thinking about how they can make sure that they continue to deliver these sorts of things in schools because they've seen the difference it makes.'

- **Broader Ecosystem:** Programme team interviewees spoke of the impact of the various programmes in demonstrating the importance of introducing CRL early and deconstructing bias around the suitability of CRL at for primary age children: 'What we're seeing is some deconstruction of a bias there - that you can't really talk about careers with pupils because they are too young - and actually, reframing those conversations, not necessarily using the word careers, but using some type of wording around that that allows for those conversations to take place.'

124. School survey.

7 | Programme Learning

While suggestions for programme improvements have been articulated in response to other dimensions of the evaluation, interviewees were also specifically asked what could be learned from the programme to improve its implementation in the future.

7.1 Lessons Learned

7.1.1 Fund Learning

At the Fund-level, several key lessons learned in the process of delivery were highlighted that could improve future implementation.

Appetite for Primary CRL

Two programme team interviewees commented on how the programme had demonstrated that there is an appetite for CRL at primary, which aligns with a growing understanding of its potential: 'The Skills for Jobs White Paper has highlighted the importance of early intervention which I think is really helpful, I don't think anyone has moved away from thinking that career-related learning in primary is the right thing to do.' The potential role of CRL in the primary transition was also mentioned as an area for further consideration. This was also reflected in interviews with other stakeholders, where a number of providers raised the importance of primary CRL[125] One provider spoke of the role such programmes can play in supporting schools: 'The main difference between secondary and primary is that in secondary they have careers advisors and a dedicated careers programme. Whereas in primary that's still developing and all the primary schools are at different stages… So I think that [this programme] has a really important role to play in supporting schools and being there to help teachers who want to develop an aspirational programme.'

Management Structures

The CEC programme team spoke of the various teams involved, internally, with managing the Primary Fund, speaking of how over the programme of delivery, the Education, Investment and Research teams had all contributed to the Fund's management. This lack of structured involvement from before the start of the Fund was perceived to be a missed opportunity, with a recommendation for future iterations to include all relevant teams from the outset to allow for varied perspectives and stronger strategic management from the start: 'From an internal point of view, definitely the education, investment and research teams-, cross-team working right from the inception of a Fund… designing it through to the very end, I think is really important.'

Programme Design

Programme team interviewees also spoke of the potential to structure any future programming more tightly around the What Works principles, both in terms of Fund design and in provider selection: 'We could have been more focused on the types of providers we were looking for; was there an area of primary CRL that we really wanted to test and look at? I don't think we utilised the fact that the six principles exist enough.' Another interviewee said: 'We already had the research results that showed us about the six key principles for careers-related learning, and so we knew they were really important [around] how young people receive careers education. So I think a learning for the future would be about how you can hang your programme design off those a little bit more strongly.'

Similarly, while the programme was inclusive, one programme team member commented on the potential that future programming had to more incisively target young people who were at a social and/or structural disadvantage, suggesting that the programme could be

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125. Four providers.

more influenced by work on 'how you really identify disadvantaged young people, or the barriers that certain young people face.'

Evaluation and Data Collection

The overall approach to the Fund evaluation was raised as an area for reconsideration. The programme team spoke of how overall fund evaluations, especially those with a wide variety of different activities being delivered, are a challenge to evaluate consistently, and whilst the logic of the current approach - a common outcomes framework set up around the principles highlighted in the What Works report - was logical, there was the potential to rethink how to carry this out. Suggestions included tailoring the evaluation approach around a variety of factors, such as how established the programmes are or how much experience providers have. Other suggestions included making robust and consistent data collection a higher priority for providers, ensuring providers understood all the evaluation requirements from the beginning of the programme, investing in strong relationships from the outset, and ensuring the framework for evaluation is in place early: 'If we had started the Fund evaluation before, there might have been processes that could have improved on the reporting both in terms the monitoring and in terms of the evaluation piece.'

Programme evaluation challenges were also highlighted by interviewees. One provider spoke of the impacts this had on teaching staff: 'I think what's missing in terms of understanding from a CEC perspective is the ability to track to the level that they want tracking in a primary school, in any normal circumstances, never mind pandemic circumstances. It puts a huge amount of pressure on teaching staff. So I think we really need to think about their focus and look at what we're asking them to give information about and why we want it.' Similarly, one teacher commented on the difficulties with the survey: 'The surveys were really difficult… It was a really laborious task.'

Similarly, whilst understanding that Covid-related disruption had impacted providers' ability to collect and share programme data, the programme team still felt that this element of the programme could have been improved to ensure better quality and volumes of monitoring data: 'The lack of data we're getting back has been impacted by Covid but I don't think we can use that as an excuse. I think maybe we need to have thought about those feedback mechanisms and had those built in a little bit more strongly from the beginning.' One option suggested was to reconsider the approach and format of provider reporting to make it more efficient: 'I think potentially reporting can be improved in the way providers get information back to us, I know not everyone is thrilled about having loads of excel spreadsheets to fill out.'

Parental Engagements

Compared to working with other age groups, one of the key lessons learned from working with primary age children is the relative ease with which schools can engage and include parents in learning. One member of the programme team said: 'Parents are more likely to be potentially involved at this level than at a secondary level, and I think that's really important because parents are often the biggest source of information for young people around careers and if they haven't got the most up to date or broad, aspirational views, that can seriously impact on a young person's opportunities.'

Further suggestions from programme team interviews included facilitating more knowledge sharing and provider interaction opportunities, including designing these events in line with programme cycles; ensuring there was a consistent, single contact point for providers; building in a plan for 'next steps' after the Fund comes to a close; and being more proactive in terms of sharing information with providers in advance of when they need it.

7.1.2 Programme Learning

Aside from comments across all interviews that the pandemic was the main factor influencing programme delivery, provider and school interviewee responses on what could be done next time to improve the programme can be grouped into six main themes: pupil experience; programme content; opportunities for engagement; facilitating buy-in; improved planning; pupil experience; and resource and knowledge sharing.

Pupil Experience

A number of individual interviewees provided suggestions around pupils' experience of the programme. One teacher felt that the practical activities were popular with pupils and should be retained, while another praised the story-based learning and role-playing aspects of the programme.

Ensuring that the activities were different to things pupils may already do in school was also suggested: 'We did have the practical session and it did link to team building, building on skills. But I suppose, because it's very similar to our lessons it didn't seem very different to the children, whereas some of the other enrichment activities - a bit like the bush work - that was something that they wouldn't have done in school if it hadn't been for those enrichment sessions.'

Other feedback included having more speakers for the children to interact with; having children interview adults; and ensuring children are given a clear explanation of the programme at the start.

> **I think learning through stories is really useful... anything you're delivering to them in that time when they're super engaged is going to go in. A story-based approach is brilliant. And also the role-playing... dressing up and pretending to be different things. It would be nice to see.**
>
> **School Interview**

Programme Content

One provider felt that refocusing to target particular skills - in this case, leadership - would improve the effectiveness of their programme. Similarly, another provider felt that refocusing content to think about adaptability, particularly in light of this year, would build important skills in the participating pupils: 'I was going to kind of look at it in a new Covid world really. So I guess the focus on which jobs we would talk about would be interesting. The focus on adaptability would be interesting, and the creative jobs are an interesting one.'

Improving programme diversity was cited by interviewees as being important.[126] This included consideration of the range of jobs their programmes introduced pupils to, as raised by a provider: 'I really wanted us to do a hairdresser, plumber or carpenter, but in the end we thought we should work on more aspirational jobs, so I think in hindsight I would have liked to have done a job that some of the kids at the schools could really identify with, because their dads or mothers did that.' One school interviewee also reflected on the possibility of broadening the range of options pupils were introduced to: 'I think having a wider range of career options would have been better. There were quite a few doctors and NHS workers…I think the children, when they did the session, they were going from one NHS to another NHS and hearing the same things really and asking the same questions. So a wider range would have made it better.'

One of the other school interviewees spoke more in terms of diversity of representation, particularly with gender, recognising the opportunity that engagement with the programme had offered to challenge stereotypes: 'Diversity of volunteers is a thing we're looking at the moment. So ensuring having people of different cultures and genders…In terms of the culture it was there, but it would be good to get more [women representing male-dominated sectors] just to show it's not just men that do that.'

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>
> **'I would say looking forward from September onwards, it would be nice having more speakers speaking to the children online, and sharing things and putting experiments and things online that we can share with our classes in the classroom, because that would be really nice. And maybe giving us the ideas for what we can do in class.**
>
> **School Interview**

126. Two providers and four schools.

Opportunities for Engagement

Various suggestions were made to improve opportunities for engagement, including showcasing the work at the end of the programme,[127] reintroducing in-person trips,[128] considering a whole school approach to delivery[129] and focusing on pupils visiting workplaces, rather than employers visiting schools.[130]

A suggestion that came from three school interviewees working with different providers was to ensure that the volunteers working on the programme were prepared for their pupil interactions and able to target their presentations to the relevant age groups: 'I think the only thing we found was the gentleman that came to us, he talked about his life experiences, he showed how it all worked to help him improve…I think sometimes it was probably a little bit too much talking…not necessarily much time for the children to talk…especially with the older ones, because often the talk is more relevant for them than for the younger children.'

Another suggestion related to setting up partnerships between schools as part of the delivery model.[131] For one of these providers, a model utilising communities of practice was already having a positive effect: 'We've been doing that community of practice, so our teacher[s]… are starting to get together, and I think those communities of practice are enabling that… so I think there are some key unique bits on that.' For the other two providers, the establishment of these communities had been more organic, with one facilitating school-school relationships at participating schools' request, and the other recognising the impact of geography on schools' engagement with the programme: 'We had geographies with several schools taking part in the programme we saw that had cluster effect where they would be, not quite competing but feeling united in working on this and this helped to gain momentum.'

> "
>
> **There were four schools in [one county] who know each other very well and the headteachers often speak about aspirations, so they were excited to have a session together…that was a really creative thing that we wouldn't have been able to do before. Those children were able to physically see each other and wave at each other and meet the volunteers together.**
>
> **Provider Interview**

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127. School interview.

128. One provider and one school.

129. School interview.

130. Two school interviews.

131. Three providers.

Facilitating Buy-in

Facilitating greater buy-in was a common suggestion from interviewees in response to how to improve programme effectiveness, as well as in terms of developing clear guidance for and engagement with schools and teachers in future programming.[132]

Two providers suggested that ensuring SLT buy-in would improve programme effectiveness and delivery. One spoke of the method they have put in place for the programme going forward: 'For the 2021 programme there was an application process. So for schools to be considered they have to submit an application demonstrating why they want to get involved, how they are going to oversee the completion of the programme, and who would take responsibility for that in the SLT.'

Similarly, several interviewees[133] felt that greater investment in teacher buy-in would also improve programme effectiveness. One provider spoke of the importance of being clear with the teachers who were delivering the programme: 'I would try and be a bit stricter with the teachers in terms of their responsibility of what they had to deliver... Although I feel that senior management buy in was important at the beginning of the project, in terms of actually following it through, it came down to individual class teachers.' They went on to point out that they felt that this had implications for the recruitment process: 'In terms of the recruitment process you almost need to recruit both senior management and teachers in parallel.'

Seeking school input and not being prescriptive about delivery was also considered advantageous: 'We didn't go in there and say: "This is what we're going to deliver how would you like it?" What we did was sit down with them and say: '"These are the events days - what would you like us to create that would really work for some of your aims as well as the aims of the programme?" ... I think we learned a lot through doing that about what schools really want and what they need and what priorities they have.'

One school interviewee reported that low levels of provider engagement had negatively affected their delivery: 'Maybe for them, it seems rude to say because we are adults on our end, but maybe for them to check in more frequently. ... But I would recommend for them to engage with the schools, drop in an email. I take responsibility for that, but I know that if I had been reminded earlier, it definitely would have had an impact.' Automating routine processes was suggested as a way to provide more space for deepening relationships with schools: 'We spent a lot of time using systems to automate some stuff so that the time that we've got with schools is more about building relationships, so we really learned more about how teachers work, how schools work and fundamentally around the needs of year 5 and 6 teachers and the pressures they're under.'

> **I think going in and speaking to the teachers directly, not relying on one person within the school to relay information to people, and doing that information relaying myself, I think getting that buy in from teachers directly from the class teachers at an early stage would probably really benefit any future programmes that we do.**
>
> **Provider Interview**

132. Three providers and eight schools.
133. Four providers and one school.

Improved Planning

Several interviewees also spoke of the impact that improved planning may have on the effectiveness of their programmes. Two providers both spoke of the potential benefits of improved strategic planning; one in terms of identifying methods in the design of the programme to encourage teacher ownership whilst allowing for provider oversight, and the other taking more time in planning to ensure clarity around intent and intended outcomes, and alignment with these goals: 'We evaluated after the first couple of the events and we said we've got to go back and refocus on the key objectives, so I think we got there in the end. I would say if we were to do this again, I'd take more time in the planning stage.'

Other suggestions of improved planning came from school interviews, including allowing for tailoring of lesson plans,[134] improved communication to schools of programme objectives,[135] and allowing greater time for teachers to prepare for activities:[136] 'Ensuring that all needs [with regard to] resources and classroom layouts [are sorted] before the activity of visit takes place - just to communicate with teachers as early as possible.'

Resources and Knowledge Sharing

A number of interview participants commented on programme resources - one teacher requested that they receive a dedicated resource pack while two others felt that making post-programme resources available would allow them to build on the programme. One teacher felt that more resources that focussed on creativity rather than fact retrieval should be developed. The inclusion of digital resources was felt to be important, both in terms of allowing the programme to expand upon its range of careers;[137] and in allowing ongoing access after the end of programme.

Knowledge sharing and providing feedback opportunities were also seen as important for both providers and schools,[138] with one provider discussing processes and lessons learned with other providers: 'We were happy to share our process for recruiting employer volunteers because we were very successful with that and we thought some of the things we're doing here might help other organisations. We would have been interested to know how other organisations were embedding their curriculum, how other organisations have pivoted to delivering during lockdown.'

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> We spent a lot of time using systems to automate some stuff so that the time that we've got with schools is more about building relationships, so we really learned more about how teachers work, how schools work and fundamentally around the needs of year 5 and 6 teachers and the pressures they're under.
>
> **Provider Interview**

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134. School interview
135. Three school interviews.
136. School interview.
137. Two providers.
138. Four providers and four schools.

7.1.3 Covid-19 Models: Learning

Various recommendations were made as to which elements of the current programmes should be incorporated into post-Covid programme models. Whilst some of the suggestions were focused on taking forward the broader engagement of pupils across schools, for example by holding full key stage assemblies[139] or having all participating pupils engage with each volunteer, rather than seeing various volunteers in smaller groups,[140] the majority of the suggestions were around incorporating more virtual components going forward.

- **Virtual engagement opportunities:** The majority of providers[141], six school interviewees and programme team interviewees recommended taking virtual engagement with employers and professional volunteers forward into future delivery, given the breadth and scope it offered whilst also reducing the time commitments on the part of volunteers themselves: 'The employer take up was much better online because they didn't have to physically travel and the time they needed was more in discrete chunks so that worked really well.'

- **Virtual delivery:** Online delivery was a model recommended for ongoing programming by three providers, six school and programme team interviewees. Whilst many interviewees recognised the greater value of in-person delivery, they also recognised the value and benefits of being able to work online: 'I prefer face to face, but in this day and age of teaching, the ability to do a Zoom chat…it would actually be quite beneficial.' Another benefit of virtual delivery is the opportunity it offers for child-led learning, which can offer higher levels of engagement for pupils: 'Everybody was engaged so it really did reach lots of the children in my class, whatever their background.'

- **Virtual resources:** Including virtual and or online resources created during the pandemic in future iterations of their programmes was recommended by a high number of interviewees.[142] Reported benefits included greater sustainability; improved flexibility and accessibility; and teacher ownership: 'We just tailored [the virtual resources] with what we were doing and it was more about discussion and activity and not necessarily what [the provider] necessarily intended with all the other resources. It is definitely something we want to use because the children really responded to it. So that said to us: "You know the children are interested in this, they are interested in how these skills work, they are interested in what kinds of people are doing these jobs and what the applications are." The children really engaged with that.'

“

> **What we were able to do was make our interactions much more child-led, so they were selecting what they were interested in or we were responding to what they were telling us, where you probably wouldn't be able to do that to such an extent if it was just a normal delivery model.**
>
> **Provider Interview**

139. Two schools.
140. One provider and one school.
141. 10 of 15.
142. Eight providers, five schools and programme team interviewees.

7.2 Recommendations

Key Learning

Drawing on evidence from across the evaluation, the following key areas of learning emerged at the programme-level include:

- **Appetite for primary CRL:** The programme has demonstrated that there is an appetite for primary CRL, evidenced by interviews with the programme team, providers and schools, along with the number of schools that took part in the programme, even in the face of delivery challenges and competing priorities. This is a strong foundation on which to build future programming, and as such, continued delivery of, and research into, primary CRL is recommended.

- **What Works:** While the programme was conceived around the What Works principles, programme design as a whole could have been more closely aligned with these outcomes. It is recommended that clearer definitions of the principles, and how they work in practice, are developed to more tightly align future iterations of the programme with the principles for good practice in CRL.

- **Suggestions for future practice:** While there was less conclusive evidence for these, some areas of suggested improvement included the inclusion of practical activities for pupil engagement; a greater focus on essential skills, along with a greater focus on diversity of the roles represented; improved opportunities for engagement including showcases, in-person trips and whole school delivery; ensuring volunteer preparedness for pupil engagement; investing in greater teacher, SLT and school buy-in; setting up school partnerships to strengthen delivery and learning; improving planning practices; and creating more opportunities for knowledge sharing between various stakeholders.

Theory of Change

The following recommendations indicate possible strategies to improve the relevance and robustness of the Theory of Change and outcomes framework for future iterations of the Primary Fund programme:

- **Alignment:** While there is significant overlap between outcomes specified in the Theory of Change and cross-cutting outcomes, these could be more closely aligned to ensure that both the programme team and providers are clear about the core outcomes to be measured.

- **Measurement:** There is considerable scope to clarify the indicators and targets used to assess both the outcomes specified in the Theory of Change and cross-cutting outcomes, as well as to develop appropriate tools to enable providers to collect data against these indicators and/or targets.

- **Clarity of definitions:** At present, there is a lack of clarity around the definition of the five cross-cutting outcomes, meaning that providers are developing and working towards their own definitions of what these outcomes should constitute. Clearly defined outcomes, accompanied by appropriate indicators and targets would enable more effective and consistent data collection across the Primary Fund providers.

- **Developing data collection tools:** The Primary Fund programme is made up of multiple providers each delivering bespoke programmes using a diverse range of tools and approaches; however, there remains considerable scope to develop a centralised, user-friendly data collection tool that aligns with the cross-cutting outcomes in order to support analysis of outcomes for both individual programmes and the Primary Fund programme as a whole.

- **Theory of Change validation:** While the evidence collected indicates positive impact across all dimensions of the evaluation framework, this is not conclusive. As such, it is recommended that further research and evaluation is undertaken to generate a broader evidence base for each of the cross-cutting outcomes, as well as thoroughly evaluate and validate the Primary Fund Theory of Change.

Engagement and Reach

Engaging with and working across a high number of diverse stakeholders is a key feature of Fund programmes, and has been identified as a key strength. The following recommendations suggest ways to build on this in future programming:

- **Prioritising disadvantage:** Interviewees reported that more strategically targeting the most disadvantaged pupils could lead to greater levels of impact.

- **Parental engagement:** Where it was achieved, parental engagement was considered beneficial by evaluation participants and, in comparison with other age groups, one of the key lessons learned working with primary age children is the relative ease with which schools can engage and include parents in learning. This presents a justification for continued research to test the value of parental involvement in primary CRL. Further research could be delivered into the most effective methods of involving parents in primary CRL, as well as into the impact of parental involvement on pupils and parents themselves.

- **Schools buy-in:** The evidence suggests that securing school buy-in is a meaningful facilitating factor. A such, it is recommended that programmes focus on securing school buy-in as a priority, engaging with both SLT and class teachers to improve chances of effective delivery.

- **Employers:** Employer engagement is likely to be more effective outside of lockdown, though the evidence indicates that virtual delivery models increase accessibility for employers to engage with schools. As such, it is recommended that future programme delivery incorporates virtual models for engagement, offering opportunities to increase both the range and diversity of volunteers and/or employers who can interact with pupils.

- **Covid-19:** The pandemic forced providers to approach delivery creatively, though the majority of participants to comment felt that virtual opportunities could not replace face-to-face engagement entirely. Future programming should incorporate lessons learned from operating in the pandemic, including:

  – Virtual models can be successfully applied to core programme delivery and to employer and volunteer engagement, improving their representation within the programme; and

  – Developing 'off-the-shelf' resources can significantly enhance programme accessibility and reach, and can be used by teachers in a flexible manner.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

There were several areas of the Fund and provider evaluations that could have been more effective. The overall approach to the Fund-level evaluation may have yielded more insightful data had greater consideration been given to the differences between providers, as well as the capacity of participating schools to carry out data collection on behalf of the evaluation. The following recommendations are specific to the Fund-level evaluation of the programme. Whilst several evaluation challenges were specific to the disruption caused by Covid-19, there are some areas of the evaluation approach that could be strengthened:

- **Programme differences:** The difference between providers' models and interpretation of the cross-cutting outcomes made a Fund-level evaluation challenging. It is recommended that either providers are encouraged to work within a shared evaluation framework, or the evaluation is conducted on a provider-by-provider basis to allow for insightful assessment of best practice and lessons learned.

- **Evaluation guidelines:** Similarly, developing clearer guidelines for providers for measuring impact would improve understanding and buy-in, as well as ensuring consistency across provider data sets. Including measures for things like the standard threshold to quantify stakeholder engagement would allow for more effective evaluation of components such as delivery and value for money.

- **External evaluation**: If a Fund-level evaluation was to be delivered again, ensuring external evaluators were in place prior to the start of the Fund, and ensuring capacity to meaningfully work with providers on evaluation, would facilitate buy-in and better align evaluation approaches.

- **Streamlining reporting:** A review of reporting templates would benefit both providers and CEC. Improved document management would also be beneficial; reporting documents were often resubmitted with unclear amendments, and a lack of version control proved challenging.