Measuring impact: A guide for partnerships practitioners

2023

Welcome

We are delighted to introduce ImpactEd's Cross-Sector Partnerships Impact Evaluation Guide, in collaboration with Astin Consulting.

In this guide, we will lead partnership practitioners through the journey of impact evaluation: understanding what to measure, how to measure it and what to do with the data. We hope the guide supports those who may not be sure where to start, or perhaps those that might be frustrated by the limitations of feedback questionnaires or basic satisfaction surveys.

Effective impact evaluation of partnership work contributes to ImpactEd's ultimate aim of improving outcomes for pupils, and we hope this guide will help more practitioners feel confident to measure, reflect, celebrate, and develop their partnership work to best support all pupils taking part.

To access further support on impact measurement, or arrange a conversation with ImpactEd's team, visit www.impacted.org.uk.

John Atkinson

School Partnerships Officer
ImpactEd

Christina Astin

Education Consultant
Astin Consulting

Get involved

Partnership with ImpactEd includes full access to the ImpactEd evaluation platform, and all the support needed to evaluate your own programmes and partnership work. We are currently actively recruiting additional schools who may be interested in measuring the impact of their partnerships or internal provision.

To find out more, please email

schoolpartnerships@impacted.org.uk

ImpactEd

ImpactEd is a social enterprise empowering schools and school partnerships to understand the impact of their work with pupils to:

- Guide decision making, informing on whether to expand, modify, or stop doing a programme or initiative within a partnership.
- Improve outcomes for pupils involved in the partnership - both other schools' pupils and your own.
- Save time, helping those working on the partnership to work smarter, not harder, to improve outcomes.

We established ImpactEd to help schools and school groups understand what is and isn't working in their context, giving them access to robust research methods to assess impact and making evaluation quicker, easier and more effective.

We believe that, when done well, meaningful impact evaluation can help drive meaningful decision making to do more of what is working best, and less of what is not. This guide will support schools to measure the impact of their partnership work to do just that.

Astin Consulting

Christina Astin is a prominent thought-leader on partnerships, especially cross-sector, and helps schools build strategic partnerships for mutual benefit. She is Founder-Chair of the Schools Together Group (precursor to the School Partnerships Alliance), established whilst she led partnerships at King's Canterbury. In 2022 she launched #PartnerChat, with its series of online monthly Breakfast Briefings and in June 2023 her Partnerships WorkBook was published: a DIY course on leading partnerships.

Christina offers bespoke consultancy and mentoring for schools, directs training programmes for organisations such as HMC, GSA, GDST and ImpactEd and speaks and writes extensively on partnerships.

schoolpartnerships@impacted.org.uk

Contents

How to use this document

This guide is designed to give an overview of how to effectively evaluate the impact of partnership work.

We believe this guide will be supportive to those looking to overhaul their whole approach to impact evaluation of partnerships, as well as simple enough to help those looking to make that important first step into impact evaluation of an individual project.

The document is designed to provide a holistic understanding of the process of impact evaluation of partnerships. We recognise that partnership leaders will likely be at different stages of this journey and therefore expect that, for some, certain sections of the document will be more pertinent than others. By clicking on the linked titles above, readers can jump to specific sections that are most relevant to them and their work.

Why measure impact?

Understanding impact on pupils is fundamental to successful partnership work.

At ImpactEd, we work with schools to understand the impact on pupils of their programmes to inform programme design, and to communicate to other partners and stakeholders the value of their partnership work. Ultimately, our mission is to support schools to put impact evaluation at the heart of what they do and the decisions they make.

We all know how busy teachers and schools are, and how tight resources are in schools. Therefore, being confident that your energy and resources are having the impact that both you and partner schools are hoping for is core to building effective working relationships and developing impactful programmes for pupils.

To address this, ImpactEd and Astin Consulting convened a roundtable to facilitate a discussion between leaders in cross-sector partnerships and draw out best practice and shared challenges from their experience. These leaders expressed the benefit and importance, as well as the frustrations and challenges of measuring the impact of partnership work in school. However, it was clear that it is only by exploring which programmes and interventions are working, in what ways, and for which pupils, that they can make the most effective and informed decisions to maximise the potential of their partnership work and ensure better outcomes for all pupils.

What do we mean by measuring impact?

Measuring the impact of partnership work will look and feel different for each partner and in each setting. However, as was highlighted at the roundtable, it's important to recognise that understanding and unpicking the impact of specific interventions can be complex.

Pupils at partner schools will be taking part in a range of programmes, interventions, and support at their own school as well as through other partnership work. Measuring impact should focus on what changes and outcomes are happening as a result of your partnership work. This could include attainment, but exploring other skills and competencies can help to uncover the strengths and targeting of your interventions.

"If it's worth doing, it's worth evaluating"

.ıImpactEd

What do you want to find out?

The importance of considering the need that you're addressing is vital. What would a successful project look like? What changes do you hope to see in pupils because of your partnership work?

Tightly defining the aims of your cross-sector partnerships is a great starting point to developing your evaluation processes. In this section, we describe the Theory of Change process - one way of ensuring that your outcomes align closely with your aims and the need that you are addressing.

A clear vision with a flexible approach

A Theory of Change is an excellent method of getting to the heart of what your partnership work aims to achieve and identify ways to effectively measure progress towards outcomes.

This can capture the outcomes across a range of stakeholders and those involved, from partner school pupils to pupils and staff across your own school.

Here is a very simple example of how a Theory of Change could be created when considering impact evaluation.

What is a Theory of Change?

A theory of change is a description of how an intervention or programme will be effective. It was originally developed to help charities define and measure success in the absence of a 'profit motive'. It sets out the steps by which outcomes are achieved and is typically represented in a visual diagram.

Challenge	Activities	Outcomes	Overall aims
Local primary pupils lacking inspiration and confidence in their learning of science. School is running a series of partnership activities from one-day events and workshops, to weekly tutoring sessions, but there isn't an overall understanding of the impact of these and it's hard to improve and effectively target these to individual pupils	Summer activity day Science workshop with primary school Weekly tutoring with primary school	Primary pupils' confidence, motivation and self-efficacy improved Pupils in own school develop their teamwork skills	To further support pupils at the local primary schools to feel inspired and confident in their learning, to increase the ability of own-school pupils to work as a team, and to develop stronger relationships with the local schools to benefit all young people in the community.

Tips for creating a great Theory of Change

- **Not too simple.** It needs to be robust and sufficiently detailed to help drive action.
- **Not too complicated.** Your Theory of Change shouldn't reflect 'depth' at a snapshot in time, it has got to be useful for the longer term and help with clearly articulating and explaining your purpose.
- **Precise.** The language and choices should be clear; it needs to be a thoughtful distillation of what is important, not a record of everything that you might do or achieve.

Some considerations

- **You can still get started without a Theory of Change.** At our recent roundtable discussion, it was highlighted that whilst completing a Theory of Change might provide an "overhaul" of a partnership strategy and a long-lasting longitudinal approach, there is also real merit in acting now to evaluate success of individual projects as well.

  Although a useful tool when considering your partnership work, not having a Theory of Change does not need to limit your approach to evaluation and assessing impact for specific interventions across your partnerships.

- **Using the Theory of Change and being responsive to need.** The roundtable stated how being flexible in one's approach and open to developing and adding to outcomes as they evolve can help to keep the document live. It's important to ensure that the Theory of Change guides evaluation and decision making, but it should not feel restrictive or set in stone. Instead, it can be revisited as partnerships and programmes mature.

- **Being flexible and embracing other opportunities**. It was also recognised that at times there can be real benefit in embracing partnership opportunities that don't necessarily "fit" with previously identified outcomes. Partnership opportunities can be responsive and arise organically. The roundtable was keen to highlight that such opportunities should continue to be welcomed where possible if there's clear benefit for pupils, even if these do sit outside the overarching Theory of Change.

- **Sharing your vision**. Consider sharing all or part of your Theory of Change with partner schools. It was highlighted how important it is to both have mutually agreed aims internally but also with partners. This can help facilitate collaboration and being open with your aims can help prompt additional partnership opportunities in other areas.

> **Reflection Prompt:** What is your vision for your partnership work, and how do you communicate this with colleagues and partners?

Outputs vs. Outcomes

Moving from the measurement of *outputs*, such as counting the number of pupils who attended a series of science masterclasses, to *outcomes*, like investigating the effect of those masterclasses on those pupils, is an important step.

There will be moments when measuring and assessing outputs is essential for reporting. Distinguishing these from outcomes you expect from partnership work can help focus and communicate the wider impact of partnership work and resources.

Outputs	Outcomes
🔴 Number of pupils attending a session. 🔴 Time spent on specific programme. 🔴 Projects completed by pupils.	🔴 Increased confidence and motivation 🔴 Stronger relationship with partner school 🔴 Increased skills or knowledge

The Independent Schools Council have created a useful evaluation tool kit which includes examples of the difference between outputs and outcomes **here** (please note, you need to be signed into the ISC Members' Zone to access this link. If you need a login, you can sign up via your school at https://www.isc.co.uk/member-zone/sign-up/). This tool also illustrates how to effectively enhance your output by adding measurable outcomes. This is a great starting point when considering outcomes.

Measuring outcomes to better understand the impact of programmes

Whitgift Community Summer School presents an example of how they have avoided just measuring outputs, and instead focused on pupil outcomes to get a better understanding of their programmes and what they offer to pupils.

Context: Local pupils attended a Community Summer School programme at Whitgift School. This programme was targeted towards pupils of local partner schools to provide an enjoyable, engaging experience, to improve a range of social and emotional skills.

Evaluation question: What impact did the Whitgift Community Summer School have on pupils' motivation, metacognition?

Reporting: The school used ImpactEd's academically validated surveys to collect data from pupils before and after their participation in the programme. They also used a custom survey that was developed by the school and ImpactEd to explore pupils' attitudes towards their learning and enjoyment at summer school. The survey consisted of quantitative questions scored on opinion scales and qualitative questions of drop-down and open-text responses.

These findings suggested that participation in the Whitgift Community Summer School programme had a positive impact on pupils' levels of metacognition and motivation. Importantly, comparison against a national benchmark from the tools suggested positive change: metacognition skills were 17.5% above the national average for similar age pupils.

Get involved

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Principles for an effective evaluation question

Bearing the above distinctions in mind, we would suggest structuring impact measurement through a clear evaluation *question*. Examples are shown below and principles are:

- **Measurable**. The question needs to include something you can measure, and it's important to be open about what this could be. As we'll explore later in this guide, there are reliable measures for skills and social emotional competencies you can use, and 'measurement' doesn't need to be restricted to traditional measures of progress. You may be surprised to see what's possible in terms of measuring other skills such as wellbeing, growth mindset and grit.

- **Specific**. Be clear about which groups of pupils you want to see changes in and over what period of time you would expect to see changes.

- **Clear timelines**. Indicate how much time until you expect to see the desired impact. After one session, term, year?

- **Realistic aims**. Your measures may include skills and competencies that take a while to embed and change so it's important to be realistic about what you can expect in your timelines. An increased growth mindset of pupils attending 10 science sessions is realistic, but would you genuinely expect to see a measurable change in growth mindset for a one-day event?

Examples of evaluation questions

- Do STEM-based careers events for Year 10 girls inspire them to pursue a career path into STEM?
- Does our after-school book club increase pupils' confidence and love of reading?
- Does the Physics Revision Day for Year 11 students aiming for grades 7-9 affect their final grade in Physics?
- Do after school sports clubs impact pupils' grit and teamwork?
- What is the impact of after school tutoring having on Year 7 pupils' motivation over the Autumn term?

Evaluating common themes across a number of partnership activities

Looking for common themes across partnership activities can help compare their efficacy in line with your partnership aims and Theory of Change.

At the roundtable, it was commented that although streamlining evaluation in this way can make the design more complex, it will make both comparison between programmes easier, and data processing quicker.

Below, we show how Alleyn's School structured their projects to include a common thread to help compare how each project contributed towards the aims of the programme.

Alleyn's School were interested in the effect their Alleyn's Academy programme had on their "grit", a measure of resilience and persistence, of participating partner pupils.

By using an academically validated questionnaire to measure baseline and final scores for grit of participating pupils across all strands of the programme (digital, sport and music), Alleyn's could compare the relative benefits of the programme for all pupils.

Collecting demographic information, such as Pupil Premium (PP), gender, English as an Additional Language (EAL), also allows insight into who the programmes are working best for, allowing the school to best direct the provision, or amend to better suit attendees.

| Sport	Digital	Music
Measure 1	Measure 1	Measure 1
Measure 2	Measure 2	Measure 2
Grit		
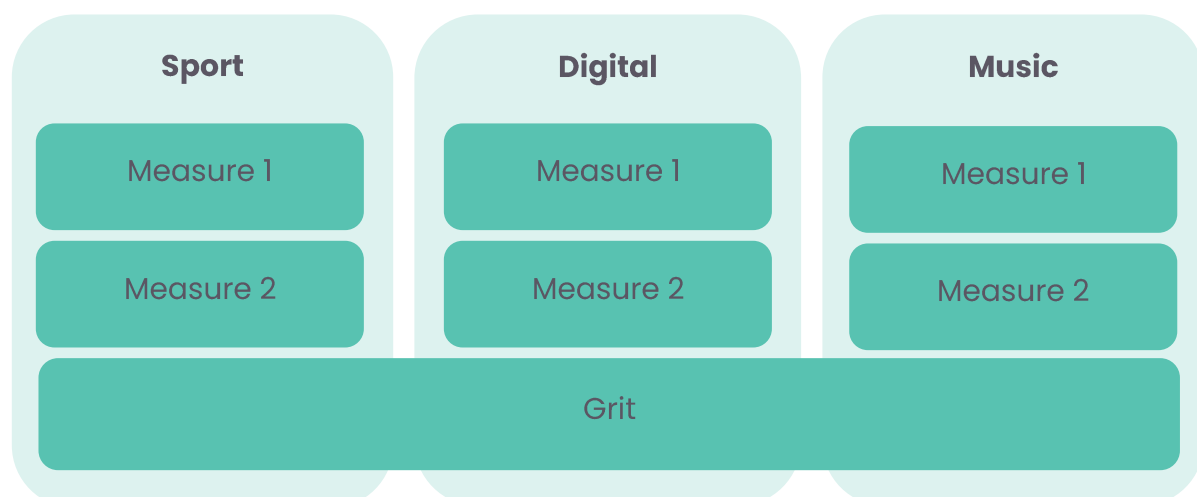
Measuring non-cognitive skills: developing growth mindset through a primary school partnership programme

At ImpactEd, we have supported independent schools to use a data-driven approach to refine and improve partnership programmes, as well as quantify the effects on the pupils that take part in them. We have worked with St Paul's School for several years to help them understand the impact of their work in the community.

Context: Year 5 pupils from local primary schools took part in the St Paul's Primary Professors programme. Specialist St Paul's School teachers led sessions in Maths and Science in purpose-built facilities. The children focused on a range of problem-solving activities and there were opportunities for collaborative work within a friendly, competitive, and supportive environment.

Our key question was to understand the impact the Primary Professors programme had on participating pupils' growth mindset and openness to new experiences.
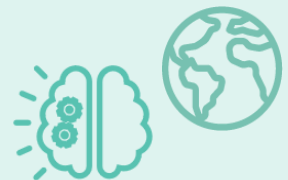
Reporting: St Paul's used ImpactEd's academically validated questionnaires to measure the level of growth mindset and openness of pupils before and after the programme. The growth mindset of pupils increased on average by 12.2% for those pupils who completed both the baseline and final surveys. Beginning from an already high baseline score (6% above national average), this left pupils with a growth mindset score 18.8% higher than the national average.

The data suggests that the programme has a strong positive impact on the growth mindset of participating pupils, allowing St. Paul's to direct this opportunity in future to pupils who would benefit most. By better understanding the benefits to pupils of their programmes, St Paul's can both refine them and communicate those benefits to stakeholders such as governors, partner schools and parents.
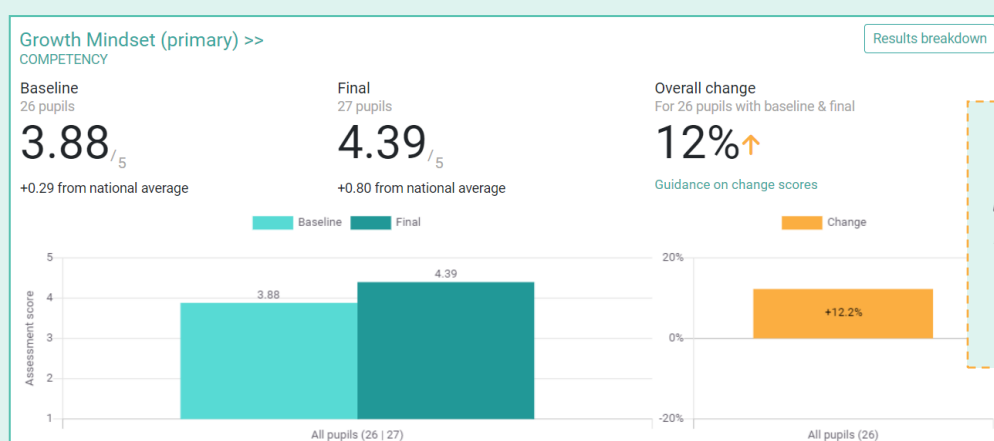
Screenshot of live reports from ImpactEd digital platform – St Paul's School

Who are you asking?

Evaluating impact for different groups of pupils and stakeholders.

As we saw from the last section, being clear and specific about who you are asking is a key step in working out which tools are most appropriate for your evaluation and ensuring you get the most out of your data collection. Most impact evaluation for partnership work will focus on pupils at the partner school(s). In this section we explore considerations when evaluating impact for different groups of pupils, but also different stakeholders and approaches.

Surveying other stakeholders

There may also be moments when gathering insights from teachers or parents will further support you to understand the impact of your partnership work. Here are some benefits and considerations the roundtable highlighted to bear in mind when surveying these other groups.

Respondent	Benefits	Considerations
Parents	Particularly valuable with younger pupils and can help to understand the extent to which pupils have gone on to demonstrate the desired outcomes.	Surveying parents can be particularly challenging in some schools, and so it would be important to work closely with the school on both the suitability and feasibility of running parent surveys with their parent cohort.
Teachers at partner schools	Particularly valuable to understand the implementation of interventions and can also help to understand the extent to which pupils have demonstrated the desired outcomes in other settings.	To ensure you collect honest and open feedback, assurances around data privacy or anonymity where appropriate can help further response rates.
Teachers at your own school	This can help to highlight any impact internally on implementation of partnership activities and also to what extent teachers value and understand the importance of partnership work and how to get involved.	Where possible, aligning teacher surveys with other staff surveys or appraisal processes can help with completion rate. avoid overburdening teachers, and help place partnership work as a core school activity

Data sharing with partner schools

Ensuring the appropriate data sharing agreements are in place is helpful. When building your consent forms, roundtable participants highlighted the value of ensuring that they are broad enough not to restrict your impact measurement, but in order to do this, it's important to be extremely clear about what data you need and for what purposes. This resource from BERA provides guidance and considerations when collecting pupil information.

Ensuring you have robust data sharing agreements in place will increase the possibilities of the amount of data you're able to collect and use. You can find advice for writing data sharing agreements online from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). At the roundtable it was emphasised that it can sometimes take time to get data sharing agreements confirmed with schools but that the key is being as clear as possible about how and why you want to use the data can help increase confidence and clarity in these discussions. This doesn't mean you need your whole evaluation framework questions and methods prior to seeking data agreements, but it does mean you need to be clear on your approach and what information you need most to get the most out of your evaluation. We certainly want to avoid data sharing agreements becoming a block to effectively evaluating impact of partnership work.

At ImpactEd for example, we use a service called Wonde that enables us to integrate with and therefore access partner school's Management Information Systems. By doing so, we can avoid manual data entry for pupil information, and ensure the data is kept safely and securely. This helps ensure that the data we collect is accurate, reliable, and can be viewed through different lenses, all without creating additional workload for teachers at either school.

Free resources

ImpactEd is currently developing a school impact network involving access to free impact measurement resources. To receive early access to these resources, or to discuss working with ImpactEd, get in touch.

How will you collect the data?

Different tools will be suited to different stakeholders, projects, and evaluation aims.

Attainment measures

When looking at impact on academic outcomes, there are 3 main types of assessment you can use: national assessment (e.g., SATs, GCSEs), externally standardised tests (e.g. NFER, GL), and internal assessment (designed by a school's own teachers). Choosing which one will be the best fit for your particular evaluation will be dependent on context and involve you weighing up which is best when balancing cost, reliability and standardisation.

Whilst useful, attainment measures alone are unlikely to capture the full benefit of your projects and really highlight their wider impact and value-add to partner schools.

Non-cognitive measures

Non-cognitive measures assess pupils' skills and competencies, and these can be measured through pupil questionnaires. Where possible, use academically validated scales to provide insight into non-cognitive, "soft" skills.

These are scales to measure social and emotional skills such as grit, wellbeing and motivation, linked to academic achievement and long-term life outcomes that have been developed and peer reviewed by academic researchers within the fields of education and psychology.

Below, are just two examples of measures we commonly use at ImpactEd when focusing on motivation or grit. We also often use measures for meta-cognition, self-efficacy, teamworking, openness and school engagement in our partnership work evaluations.

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Tool	Description	Example statements – pupils respond on a Likert scale
The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)	Scales of the MSLQ can be used to measure both meta-cognition ('thinking about thinking': pupils' ability to think explicitly about their own learning) and intrinsic motivation (what causes a pupil to want to do one thing, and not another).	Compared with other students in my year I expect to do well. I'm certain I can understand the ideas taught in my lessons. I expect to do very well in this school. Compared with others in my year group, I think I'm a good student. I am sure I can do an excellent job on the tasks I am assigned.
The Grit-S Scale	This scale is used to measure grit, which relates to perseverance and passion for long-term goals. Pupils with high levels of grit will tend to be resilient and work persistently over years to achieve goals despite experiencing setbacks.	New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones. Setbacks don't put me off. I have been interested in an idea or project for a short time but later lost interest. I keep going even when things are hard.

At ImpactEd, due to the large numbers of pupils across the country taking these questionnaires, we're also able to provide relevant national benchmarks to help put results into context. A few tools will also come with pre-existing national benchmarks that you can also use. Please find some links below to help in finding other academically validated scales of non-cognitive skills which may be relevant to desired outcomes of your partnerships:

- Google Scholar
- Rand.org – Education Assessments
- The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) – Spectrum Database

Validity

Being able to say with confidence that any survey or questionnaire is a valid method of measuring a non-cognitive skill is a challenge. Non-cognitive skills assess social and emotional skills such as self-efficacy, meta-cognition, and confidence. At ImpactEd we particularly focus on those areas that are most closely associated with pupil success both in and beyond school. Our measures have been developed to ensure predictive, construct and test-retest validity: in short, they represent skills closely linked to desirable life outcomes, the measure tests for the skill that it says it does, and the results stay the same when tests are repeated.

Ensuring that you make the most of existing academic research for your evaluation means that you can confidently act on the reliable data accordingly, to improve pupil outcomes.

Custom questions

Sometimes, validated measures that fit the desired outcomes in your partnership might not be available, or there may not have been research in this area. Custom questions that you write yourself provide the flexibility to create questions that give specific feedback regarding a programme. Here are some examples shared by those attending the roundtable discussion.

Examples of custom questions in different formats:

Free text responses
- Describe your experience of the summer school in one word.
- What one thing can you take away from this experience that you can use back at your school?
- What did you most enjoy about the sports club?

Multiple choice and ranking questions
- Rank these different aspects of the activities we completed.
- Which of the following was your favourite part of the activity?

Likert scale
- On a scale of 1-5, how likely would you be to recommend that one of your friends attend the science club?
- I would like more opportunities to work on similar projects with people from different areas.
- I feel I know how to give other people feedback successfully.
- I feel more confident to listen and work alongside people from different areas.

Pre and Post surveys

Pre and post surveys can help demonstrate change over time for pupils taking part in partnership work. These types of evaluation are well suited to activities and partnerships that take place over a longer period of time.

One-off events

At times there can be a tension between a long-term approach to evaluation (e.g., Theory of Change), and completing evaluations on more "opportunistic" partnership opportunities. Being open to both of these is key to an impact-led evaluation approach and whilst ideally all activities will be aligned towards overall aims, this should not be at the cost of evaluating individual programmes that might sit outside of overall strategy.

Participants at the roundtable event spoke of the danger of expecting large changes in non-cognitive skills as a result of one-off, or short, events. Whilst these may not lend themselves to these changes, it was highlighted that a school shouldn't miss the opportunity to collect feedback from these events.

Examples of useful questions asked at one-off events:

- If you could change one thing about today, what would it be?
- Describe our event today in one word.
- What did you enjoy most about the day?
- Is there anything you have learnt/experienced today that you will use in the future?
- In today's event I felt confident about working in a team
- In today's event I enjoyed learning new approaches for tasks or problems

When is the best time to run a survey or collect feedback?

At the roundtable, it was recognised that finding the 'perfect' time to run a survey with pupils from partner schools can be particularly challenging. For example, you may want pupils to leave feeling excited, inspired, and energised by their partnership activity with you, and at times, sitting quietly to complete a series of questions can feel like it is taking away from the 'buzz' you've worked so hard to facilitate. However, this doesn't take away just how valuable it is to collect and analyse your impact and the event.

Here are just some of the considerations and different approaches partnership practitioners took in search of that 'perfect' time.

- For older pupils and longer-term partnerships where pupils access resources using their school email, one expert recommended emailing out the surveys. This can be more challenging in terms of survey completion rates and so this is best suited to groups you work closely with and have worked with over a few terms.

- Run one short final activity after the questionnaires have been completed to help pupils to leave with that 'buzz'.

- Complete the surveys in small groups during the final session of the day. In smaller groups, pupils may find it easier to focus and therefore complete the questions quicker and more efficiently before re-joining the rest of the group.

- Ask schools to disseminate surveys before an event to provide information for you to build on and shape your event. This can be challenging for schools, so this is best done in close collaboration with the partner school to ensure they are able to do this in the required conditions and timeframe.

Control group

A control group is composed of students who do not participate in the programme and who closely resemble the pupils who take part in the programme in attainment and demographic traits. It is used to get an indication of whether a change in results over the course of the programme can likely be attributable to the programme itself, or whether changes can be attributed to the input pupils are receiving across their schools in any case. Also known as a comparison group, it can help isolate the impact of partnership work.

At the roundtable, experts also commented on the importance of ethics when selecting a control group, and making sure that all pupils involved in the study are still getting benefit from their participation in the evaluation. As an alternative, experts suggested using national metrics or benchmarks as another approach where it's not possible to create control groups. For this reason, using repeated questionnaires and academically validated surveys can help highlight significant results and provide greater context to results.

Tools for data collection

- **Google Forms and other online surveying platforms.** Google Forms can also be used to create questionnaires and basic data analysis. The benefit of these is that they can be quick to set up without any need to upload or synchronise any information. They feed into a spreadsheet which provides flexibility with what to do next with the information. They can also be shared easily with respondents with a link for pupils/teachers/parents to complete. The main drawback highlighted is that is can then be harder to identify which pupils have and have not yet completed the surveys and that once the data has been collected, you will then need to cut up and analyse the data yourself to draw out they key highlights.

- **ImpactEd platform.** The ImpactEd platform helps schools measure pupils' outcomes, easily report to key stakeholders, and review impact of programmes. The platform combines data from school systems with measures of social and emotional skills in live, interactive reports. It is also connected to a school's MIS system, to ensure schools can report on the effect of programming on specific demographics.
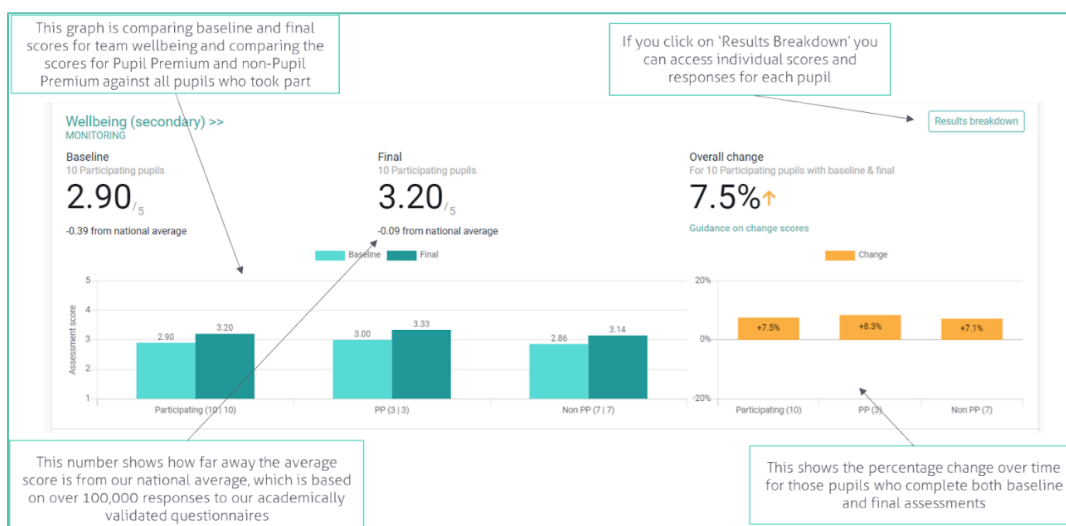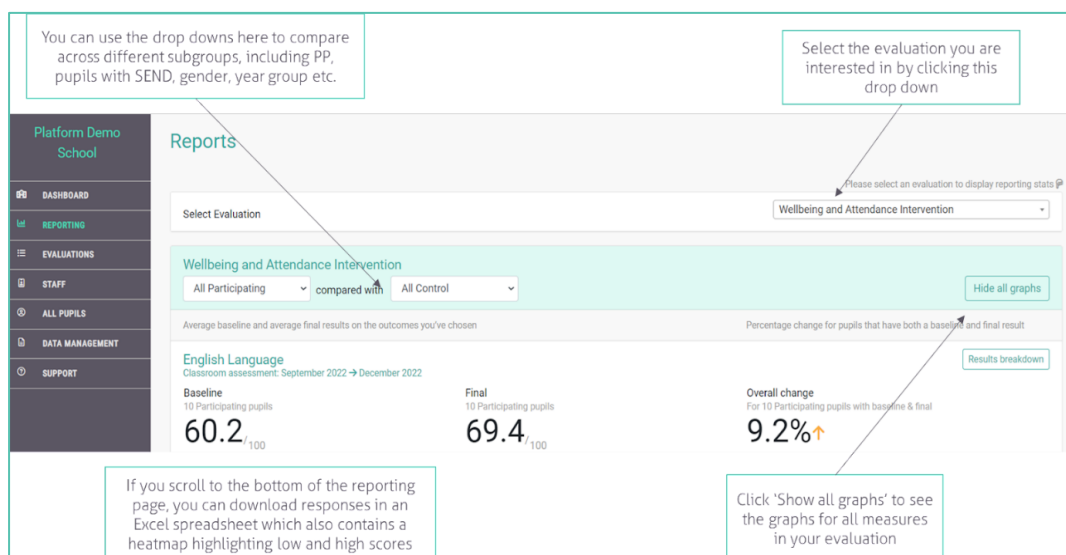
🔴 **Paper surveys.** For some partnership activities, getting access to devices and laptops can be too challenging for online surveys.

Paper surveys, although often a lot of work overall, can make for a smooth data collection where devices are not accessible. These can work well for some of the younger pupils in particular and are often easier to monitor and support than when using devices.

Using paper surveys can also allow for some more creative ways of capturing pupil feedback. Here is a primary school example a school used for one of their partner school competition activities. Here they based the scales on their desired outcomes and mixed these with some free text responses to gather further pupil feedback.

ROBOCON 2022/3

Thank you for taking part in the competition. We hope you had fun! Please complete this quick form to help us plan more events.

1. Circle how you feel about the competition

2. Would you recommend the event to a friend?

YES! ☐   NO! ☐

3. What would you rate the competition out of 10?

☐

4. Please think of a word to describe the day

☐

5. What have you enjoyed about RoboCon?

....
....
....

6. Mark on the lines what you think about the following statements

RoboCon has improved my teamwork skills

strongly disagree _____ strongly agree

RoboCon has improved my design skills

strongly disagree _____ strongly agree

RoboCon has improved my building skills

strongly disagree _____ strongly agree

RoboCon has improved my programming skills

strongly disagree _____ strongly agree

RoboCon has helped me think about related careers

strongly disagree _____ strongly agree

I am proud of our achievement so far

strongly disagree _____ strongly agree

When using paper surveys, it was suggested that ensuring the vast majority of questions are on a Likert scale or similar is important for ensuring pupils are able to respond quickly. It was also noted that there are never enough pens, paper, and things to lean on! Bringing spares of everything is always a must! The main drawback with using paper surveys is the cost in terms of printing but also the time to input and link up the data. Planning this into overall project costings and resources should be considered before opting for paper surveys.

Accessibility and ensuring respondents understand the question

Ensuring pupils understand the question and answer genuinely is vital for accurate and inclusive evaluation to take place. At ImpactEd, we are developing surveys to be as inclusive as possible. Being innovative in how you use and adapt questionnaires can support feedback from demographics that might be harder to reach. For example, using symbol-based surveys and ensuring teachers are given appropriate supporting documentation to help interpret questions for younger pupils, has allowed us to include young pupils and those with younger reading ages in evaluations.

🔴 **Symbol based surveys.**

ImpactEd has worked with school partners to develop symbol-based surveys for some of our social and emotional measures. These surveys are targeted at pupils with lower reading ages, or with learning difficulties that would make reading a text survey challenging. These tend to be simpler than text-based surveys but are valuable in ensuring that we are able to get feedback from all participating pupils, and that pupils with different learning needs and backgrounds are heard from.

🔴 **Explain how the scale system works.**

Pupils across all age groups may not have previously completed surveys on a Likert scale. Explaining the meaning of these with images or statements like those below can help ensure they are confident getting started.

Here is an example resource to help explain to younger children the meaning of the numbers on the Likert scale to support them how to respond to a survey. Similar such prompts suitable for pupils in your context can help communicate effectively what the number mean. Other ideas could be using thumbs up, down and in the middle, or a series of smiley faces.

> **What is a Likert scale?**
>
> A Likert scale is psychometric scale commonly used in research. It is widely used in questionnaires to scale responses, for example from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

For each statement, choose how much you agree by clicking on a number.

1 is 'strongly disagree and 5 is 'strongly agree'.

1. No, I don't agree at all   3. Hmm, a bit of both   5. Yes, I really agree

🔸 **Read out the statements to pupils.** Reading out the questions can help pupils who may find it difficult to read through the questions independently, especially if they're in an environment with more distractions.

🔸 **Explain the statements to pupils.** Include definitions of tricky vocabulary. You could put together a 'crib sheet' explaining the tricky words, to ensure that staff explain the words consistently to pupils. Here's an example of one support resource from ImpactEd for teachers disseminating surveys with younger pupils.

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Goal Orientation

Introduction for pupils

Goal orientation is about how you set goals for your future – things you want to do and achieve.

Some ideas to get you thinking:
- Do you have goals in your life? Are there things you want to be able to do, but can't do yet?
- Do you make plans in your life to be able to reach your goals?

Free resources

ImpactEd is currently developing a school impact network involving access to free impact measurement resources. To receive early access to these resources, or to discuss working with ImpactEd, get in touch.

Further considerations

🔻 **Delivery.** It is important to consider your voice, tone and facial expressions when you are supporting pupils in completing surveys to ensure that they understand the importance of the survey, but also so the statements do not become leading.

🔻 **Reflection time and teacher support.** Some pupils will require time for reflection when responding to surveys and may benefit from support. At the roundtable it was suggested that having additional staff or older students circulating the room as pupils complete them can help ensure they have the necessary support. Additionally, having a simple activity or question to think about afterwards can help to ensure pupils who finish quickly are engaged in an activity while others have the time required to complete surveys fully.

Other ways to collect data

One of the participants at the roundtable suggested printing off a QR code for sessions with older pupils so they could complete surveys on devices they have with them. One consideration with this approach is just making sure you know the group extremely well. There could be instances where a pupil does not have access to a device, and it would not be fair for this to be highlighted in this way. Another consideration would just be ensuring there is Wifi so pupils aren't expected to use mobile data.
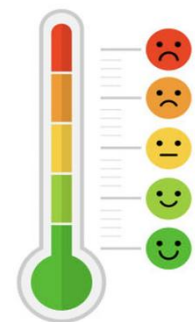
More informal means of collecting feedback can also include using temperature scales for example where pupils can rate where their confidence is for particular outcomes. In this example pupils were asked to stick post-it notes where they were on the scale. This could also be done on a smaller scale on paper and handed in.

Using counters or post-it notes and asking pupils to put them under the most appropriate heading, such as which skills they felt they developed most during the session, or to indicate how much they enjoyed the day can also be a great way to get a snapshot of pupils' feedback.

Still unsure what to choose?

Christina Astin has also put together the following decision tree to help practitioners decide which tool is going to be most suitable for their particular group and interventions.
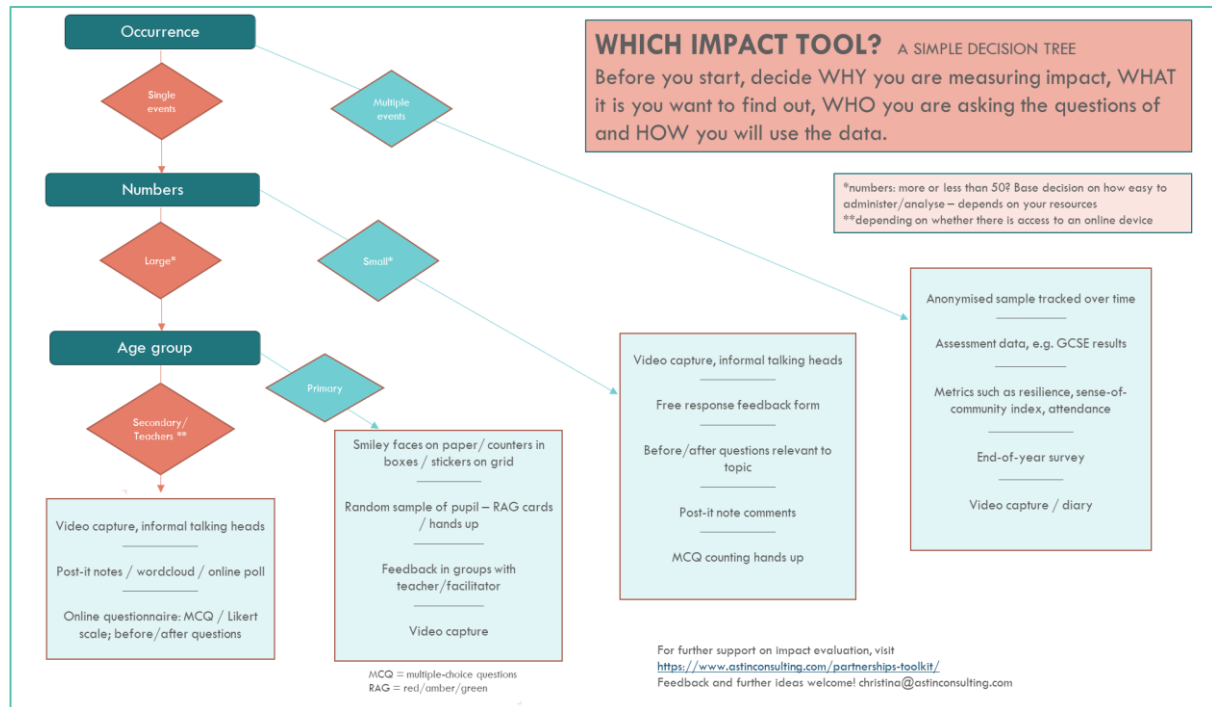
Reflection Prompt: What tools are you currently using to collect data and are there any additional methods you could try for a future partnership activity?

Get involved

Partnership with ImpactEd includes full access to the ImpactEd evaluation platform, and all the support needed to evaluate your own programmes and partnership work. We are currently actively recruiting additional schools who may be interested in measuring the impact of their partnerships or internal provision.

To find out more, please email

schoolpartnerships@impacted.org.uk

How will you use the data you collect?

The data collected to measure the impact of partnership activities is only as valuable as the action that takes place as a result of the insights.

Some elements of evaluation may be for reporting back to various stakeholders, whilst others are about informing future partnership work. Here we will look at some considerations when assessing the reliability of your results and how to get started analysing the results.

Data analysis and interpretation

Understanding impact is complex and so results from an evaluation process should always be considered against other factors, such as teacher or student feedback, ease of implementation, and other qualitative data.

Particular areas to consider when reflecting on the reliability of your results are:

- **Sample size.**
  Typically, results from a greater number of pupils will lead to findings that can be more easily generalised. As a general rule, a sample size of 20-30 pupils or more is better suited to detailed statistical analysis. Smaller sample sizes are valid, but you may want to consider multiple terms or years of data where possible.

- **Implementation.**
  It is rarely the case that partnership projects do or don't 'work'. Most often, the quality and consistency of how they are implemented will have the largest bearings on their success. As such, findings reported here should be reviewed against considerations around to what extent implementation and the particular cohort of students may influence results.

- **Timeframe.**
  Any changes that are found need to be investigated further and over longer periods of time to ensure valid and reliable results are generated.

How to analyse your results:

🔴 **Examine the demographics.**
If you have the data, consider the effect of programming on different demographics. Is the impact on Pupil Premium pupils more pronounced? How do boys and girls differ in their response to the programme?

🔴 **Return to the evaluation question.**
It might be that you were particularly interested in the effect of a programme on Pupil Premium pupils, but that an interesting "story" emerges on the effect of your programming on, for example, girls rather than boys. Be open to discovering these stories when analysing the data.

🔴 **Which groups have the highest and lowest scores?**
Look at groups with the highest and lowest scores, then consider why and about the attributes of pupils who benefited the most or least from the intervention. Next steps could be adapting the intervention so more pupils can benefit or using the data to support pupils who saw the least favourable outcome.

🔴 **How do these results compare to national or other benchmarks?**
Comparisons to the national average are another good way to analyse findings. Using this as a benchmark may help uncover whether the intervention is targeted at those most in need and those who will benefit the most.

🔴 **View the data through each of the outcomes and draw comparisons where possible.**
You can also look at the data by each outcome to consider which outcome measure saw the biggest or smallest change. This could also prompt further questions around the aims of the evaluation and whether they are aligned with the outcomes being measured or conducting further rounds of data collection to see long-term changes.

🔴 **Consider if your intervention is targeting the right pupils and outcomes.**
With some partnership work you may not have control over the pupils taking part and especially where pupils volunteer to take part, they may be more likely to be those who also report very high baseline motivation for example. Of course, this is positive however if the programme targets motivation, then it's also important to think about whether the targeting and key outcomes here provide the greatest value-add for participants.

🔴 **Compare the results with previous similar interventions where relevant.**
Where the same activity is being repeated, keeping your impact evaluation similar year on year can also help compare with other years and help to also demonstrate whether your partnerships' impact is becoming more effective over time and in what areas. It can also help to highlight the impact of any changes or alterations in implementation.

Reporting to share with funders, parents and governors

Participants at the roundtable spoke of the importance of measuring impact to share with funders and partners and any other stakeholder who have invested time and resource in the project, including parents! Feeding results back to partner organisations, with (hopefully) positive data regarding the impact on their pupils can help to maintain and build those relationships over time.

Formal reporting vs. informal reporting

Whilst at ImpactEd we value the improvements to pupil outcomes that can come from effective impact evaluation, we recognise that reporting successes are a vital part of the cross-sector partnership process. Formal reporting against evaluation questions is valuable here, but more informal reporting can also be useful.

Here's an example of more formal reporting from ImpactEd.

🔴 Detailed impact reporting
Detailed impact reports may be most useful for those investing resource and leading on the partnership work.

Part 2: Executive Summary

Over 2021/22, Example School worked with ImpactEd to answer the following questions:

Evaluation A: What changes were there in pupils' levels of wellbeing, anxiety, metacognition and the ImpactEd learning index between Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022?

By Summer 2022, KS3 pupils scored higher than the national average in wellbeing, but lower than the national average in anxiety. The opposite pattern was found for KS4 and KS5 pupils. As anxiety is an inversely scored measure, a low score indicates lower levels of anxiety. This suggests that **KS3 pupils at Example School compared favourably to the national average in measures relating to mental health**.

Metacognition increased over the course of the diagnostic for pupils in KS3 and KS4, but remained stable for KS5. **KS5 pupils' final score in metacognition and baseline ImpactEd learning index was the highest reported** out of all key stage groups.

Interesting variations were observed between pupil subgroups. KS3 pupils with English as an Additional Language saw an increase of 6% in wellbeing, KS4 pupils eligible for Pupil Premium saw a decrease of 5.7% in anxiety, and KS5 pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities saw improvements in wellbeing, increasing by 5.4% from Autumn to Summer.

Evaluation B: What impact did breakfast reading club have on KS3 pupils' attitudes towards reading for pleasure and reading comprehension?

Overall, **the percentage of KS3 pupils who reported that they enjoyed reading for pleasure increased following the breakfast reading programme**. Year 9 pupils saw the biggest change in attitudes towards reading for pleasure out of all year groups. Similarly, pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities saw an increase of 3.3% and pupils with English as an Additional Language saw an increase of 2.8% in this measure, the two largest changes out of all pupil groups.

Evaluation C: What impact did the boxing and reading intervention have on KS3 pupils' grit, conscientiousness...

Evaluation A: Learning and Wellbeing Diagnostic

Over the course of the 2021/22 academic year, Example School have used ImpactEd's Learning and Wellbeing Diagnostic to better understand the wellbeing, anxiety, metacognition and learning index levels of their pupils. Large sample sizes were obtained across KS3, KS4 and KS5. Analysis will focus on outcomes for these groups between Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022. Note that learning index scores were not obtained during the summer term.

A1: What changes were there in pupils' levels of wellbeing, anxiety, metacognition and the ImpactEd learning index between Autumn 2021 and Summer 2022 for KS3?

Outcome	Out of (total)	Autumn 2021	Summer 2022	% change for matched pupils	% variance from national average (final)
Wellbeing	5	3.45	3.42	-1.1%	+3.0%
Anxiety	5	2.46	2.55	+2.7%	-2.8%
Metacognition	5	3.46	3.48	+0.9%	+2.3%
ImpactEd Learning Index	5	3.40	N/A	N/A	N/A

Between Autumn and Summer , KS3 pupils' average score in wellbeing decreased by 1.1%. However, their score was 3% higher than the national average in the Summer. Similarly, **whilst pupils' levels of anxiety increased, their final score was 2.8% lower than national levels**. As anxiety is an inversely scored measure, a low score indicates a low level of pupil anxiety. Metacognition increased by 0.9% over the course of the 21/22 academic year, bringing pupils final score 2.3% higher than the national average.

🔴 **Shorter slide presentations**

These can be very effective at communicating key findings in platforms such as governor meetings or school staff meetings. Making reports accessible and shareable is helpful to ensure they are used and acted upon. This is an example of how we report at ImpactEd on interventions and programmes in school.
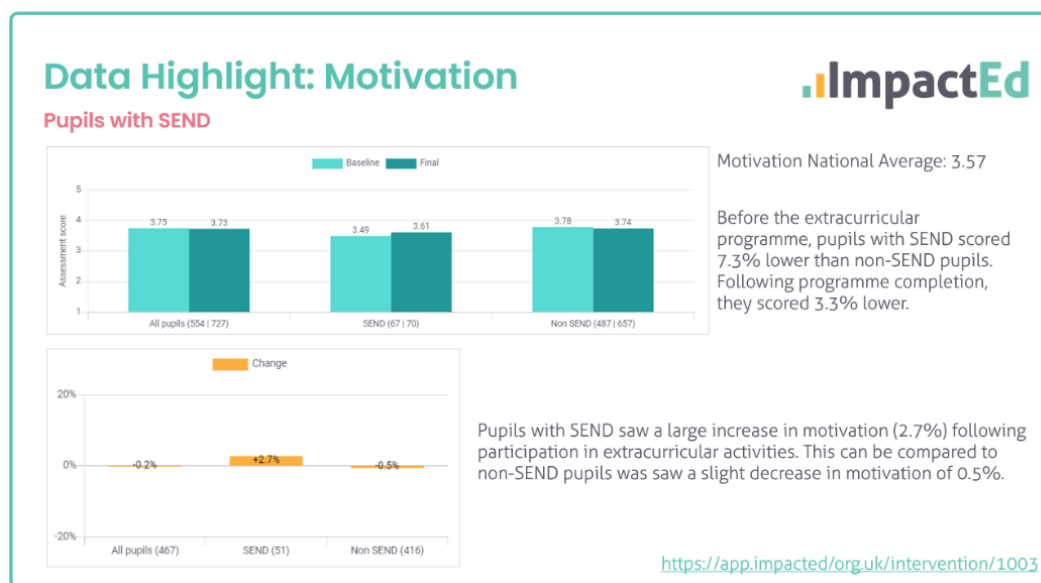
More informal methods of reporting may include:

🔴 **Word Clouds**

These can represent pupils' experiences of partnership work and communicate what pupils have learnt or benefitted from, as gleaned from free responses to survey questions, during smaller scale or more short-term events. One participant at the roundtable commented that sharing these straight after the event with partner schools and staff involved (at both their own and participating schools) can also be really motivating and a popular gesture when thanking them for their involvement.

🔴 **Videos, audio, and photographs**

Using a range of media, such as video or audio recordings, and photographs of activities can also be powerful methods of informal reporting. Particularly for much younger pupils, photographs during an activity or of a particular output can help communicate some of their engagement, and short video or audio clips are an effective way to get their input.

🔴 **Physical polls**

Earlier in the guide, we suggested using counters or post-it notes and asking pupils to put them under the most appropriate heading as a form of data collection. Including photos of this process can create an excellent visual representation of the impact of a project on an individual pupil.

What next?

As we stated at the start of the guide, impact evaluation is only as valuable as the activity that then happens as a result.

At ImpactEd, we have supported partner schools to make practical changes to their programmes because of the insight they have gained from evaluation. For example, we partner with several schools who have identified projects that have been shown to boost specific non-cognitive skills (such as growth mindset). As a result, those schools have been able to direct these projects to those pupils most in need of a boost in that skill. This is just one example of how a better understanding of the effect of programming through evaluation can support schools with their decision making.

Most changes to consider will focus on one of the following areas:

🔺 **Pupil targeting**
Is your project targeting the group who need it most? Are there different levels of impact for different age groups or groups of pupils?

🔺 **Time in the year, or length of time of the activity**
Is your activity long enough to see the changes you are hoping to achieve? Should some areas of the partnership project be extended, or the order changed? Is this the right time in the year for the project?

🔺 **Implementation**
Are there areas where the implementation could be improved? Do pupils and staff involved understand the aims of the project? Are there particular activities that seemed to work better in some settings than others?

There may also be times when results from your evaluation are perhaps not as conclusive as you had hoped. Revisit the activity and consider how you may change your evaluation question and approach for the next cohort. Impact evaluation is usually run as a cycle, and each time you are planning and getting ready for the next cohort, is also a time to plan and get the evaluation set up.

Over time, continuing to iterate and respond to your evaluation outcomes can help ensure that you maximise the impact of your resources, and deepen impact for the pupils engaging in all aspects of your partnership work.

Conclusion

Impact evaluations of cross-sector partnerships play a vital role in assessing the effectiveness and outcomes of collaborations between independent schools and external organisations. By following the steps outlined in this guide, independent schools can conduct rigorous evaluations that inform decision-making, improve partnership outcomes, and contribute to the broader knowledge base in this field.

Regular evaluation and learning will help schools maximise the potential benefits of cross-sector partnerships for their students, staff, and the wider community.

Free resources

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or by visiting www.impacted.org.uk