

EXEMPLAR: PILOT EVALUATION

Project: The Achieve Together Bournemouth Partnership in the UK

The Pilot

The Achieve Together Bournemouth Partnership ('the Partnership') was a pilot collaboration between Teach First, Teaching Leaders, and The Future Leaders Trust. It was a new initiative that aimed to work with primary and secondary schools and the wider community in two socially deprived areas of Bournemouth (Boscombe and West Howe) to improve educational outcomes of children by:

- placing and developing high quality teachers in participating schools;
- delivering individual leadership development programmes (Teach First, Future Leaders, Teaching Leaders Fellows, NPQML and NPQSL) in a co-ordinated way and aligning 'impact initiatives' - leadership projects required of programme participants - within and between schools; and
- uniting a broad community of stakeholders outside the schools to identify common goals and work towards area-based change and improved educational outcomes.

The Partnership was funded by J. P. Morgan and the Education Endowment Foundation and was a three-year programme which commenced in schools in September 2013 and finished in August 2016, following a nine-month set up period.

The Partnership project team recruited two primary schools and six secondary schools to the pilot in the first year of the program. A further primary school joined the pilot in the second year of implementation despite not having participants on the leadership programmes.

Pilot Evaluation Method

This is a mostly qualitative pilot evaluation designed to explore the feasibility and perceived impacts of the model and identify barriers and facilitators to its implementation. In addition, it aimed to track attainment in participating schools over time relative to schools in similar areas.

The evaluation focused on a qualitative assessment of implementation and feasibility, mostly through interviews with participating schools and the project team.

Qualitative data collection and analysis

A longitudinal qualitative research design was used to explore implementation, delivery, and perceived impacts. Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in each of the three years of the pilot to track the progress and development of the pilot over time. Thirty-eight interviews were conducted in total, 23 by telephone and 15 face to face.

Data was analysed using the Framework approach—a systematic and comprehensive approach to data management that facilitates within and between case analyses of qualitative data.

Attainment data collection and analysis

Information on the academic performance of schools involved with the Achieve Together Bournemouth Partnership, before and after involvement with the pilot, was gathered from publicly available school performance tables.

Results

- The Achieve Together Bournemouth Partnership model is not suitable for trial because of difficulties in engaging sufficient schools with all elements of the model.
- Aligning projects undertaken by participants of the different leadership programmes was challenging, despite being a key aim of the model. Of the four school-led projects taken forward, none involved participants on all three of the individual programmes.
- Stakeholders thought a longer timescale was needed to embed area-based change and questions were raised over whether schools have the capacity and are best placed to take the lead on area-based change.
- Average attainment in participating schools has not changed dramatically since involvement with the pilot. However, given the small-scale and area-based nature of the project, it would have been difficult to identify impact with confidence.
- The program changed and developed over the course of the three-year pilot. Initiatives of this type are likely to need to continuously adapt, making it difficult to specify the core components for future evaluations.

Conclusion

The Achieve Together Bournemouth Partnership aimed to improve educational outcomes in deprived areas but faced challenges. The pilot evaluation used a qualitative approach, conducting interviews with key stakeholders over three years. The evaluation found that the pilot had difficulty aligning projects and needed more time for area-based change. Academic attainment in participating schools showed minimal change, but due to the small scale, it was hard to determine significant impact. The partnership model created difficulties in engaging sufficient schools with all elements of the model. These implementation challenges hindered the Partnership model's suitability for a trial.

Note

This example is based on the sources below. Please refer to the sources for a comprehensive understanding of the pilot and its methods.

Skip, A. (). Achieve Together Bournemouth. Protocol. NatCen Education Endowment Foundation.
https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/Round_2_-_Achieve_Together_Bournemouth.pdf?v=1699609047

Meg Callanan, M., Farias, J., Hudson, R. and Greaves, E. (2017) Achieve Together Bournemouth Partnership Evaluation report and executive summary. NatCen Social Research. Education Endowment Foundations.
https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/Achieve_Together_Bournemouth_Partnership_Evaluation_Report.pdf?v=1699609047