



## **Educating for the Future Project: Developing New Locality Models for English Schools: First 6 monthly progress report**

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### **Selecting and setting up the pilots**

The Educating for the Future project has been designed to test out new locality models for the English school system led by Local Authorities (LA), Combined Authorities (CA) and School Led Partnerships because they are the three key bodies that have a locality focus and accountability. The rationale for this approach can be summed up by a phrase from Michael Fullan:

*“Leadership from the middle through locality-based governance and partnership working is key to building school systems that can deliver excellence and equity”.*

The Steering Group in January approved seeking expressions of interest from these three key bodies to select pilots from them using the agreed criteria. The Pilots, designed to run from April 2022-April 2024, cover three areas:

Pilot 1: Support for vulnerable pupils

Pilot 2: Combined Authority as the base for supporting school improvement

Pilot 3: Towards a new model of accountability

12% of the LA/CAs and School Led Partnerships responded to the invitation, although only one Combined Authority, but fortunately they already had an established £1m programme that they wanted support to develop.

The following were selected:

#### **For Pilot 1**

Local Authority led: Rochdale, Wiltshire, Wakefield and Coventry

#### **For Pilot 2**

Combined Authority led:

The North of Tyne Combined Authority

#### **For Pilot 3**

All School Led Partnerships:

Surrey, Sheffield, Milton Keynes and Ealing

Pilots 1 and 2 are supported by Ben Bryant and Simon Day respectively from the Isos Partnership, and Pilot 3 by Dame Christine Gilbert former head of Ofsted and Simon Rea from the Isos Partnership.

## **Pilots progress**

Project plans have been agreed with all the Pilots. There are examples of really ambitious and potentially significant strands of work emerging:

- Pilot 1 is focusing on making vulnerable pupils more visible to all partners with an innovative set of vital signs.
- In Pilot 2 the provision of an externally validated programme for school improvement stands out, that brings together 36 leads from schools, multi-academy trusts and LAs.
- And in Pilot 3 the innovative exploration of school report cards and what a rigorous, professionally focused approach operating within a national system could look like.

The contribution of locality working to the Pilots will be teased out with the help of the external evaluators.

Plans have been agreed with all the Pilots setting out what they want to achieve in the two years. The next key stage is to complete the sign up of all the key partners, schools, trusts, and agencies. As you can see from the summary reports of the three pilot areas (available under each Pilot page on the website) this is well under way and the target will be hit largely before the end of October.

We can say with confidence that there will be very significant numbers of schools, both primary and secondary, and trusts involved. What we can pick out in these early stages is:

- The commitment is impressive given everything else that everyone is grappling with.
- The enthusiasm shown in the workshops for Pilot leads to learn from each other.
- There is every indication that the pilots want to do groundbreaking work.
- Pilots have given hard thought, even at these early stages, as to how best to pilot and how to use and develop their partnerships to roll out what is learnt across the locality.

## **External evaluation**

Tenders were invited from UCL Institute of Education, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), Sheffield Hallam and Nottingham University. The Nottingham University bid was chosen because of the expertise the very strong team had in evaluating locality working. The team is led by Professor Toby Greany who is supported by Dr. Susan Cousin, and they have been working well with the LocalED Project Team.

Their approach to the external evaluation is set out drawing on their expression of interest in the [monitoring and evaluation section of the website](#).

We are currently in Phase 1 of the LocalED project, further detail on this is available below. The evaluation team has produced the updated literature review (available on the [LocalED website](#)) and a baseline survey has been circulated to Pilots.

We will shortly be moving into Phase 2, which involves the process of baselining the evaluation using surveys and workshops with the pilots. Originally these were planned for September but have moved to November.

## **LocalED 2025 wider engagement**

The aim at this stage has been to support the Pilots in engaging schools, trusts and other partners and to secure national visibility for the Project.

The Project has partnered with Consilium Communications, a PR and communications company to help with this. The engagement routes used so far have been:

- To set up a website [LocalED 2025](#) which has been live since 17<sup>th</sup> January. The website provides an overview of the Project and updates, with recent updates including summaries for the Pilots and the Literature Review. The hits on the website have been as follows:
  - The site has had nearly 400 visitors to date. Average time on the site is 1 minute 50 seconds (this is above average and a positive indicator people are finding the site interesting/informative)
  - 69% of visitors are landing on the site directly, 14% are finding the site using a search engine and 9% are finding the site via social media
  - Most popular pages (after the home page) are: News, Our Team and Pilot 3 summary page
- To place national articles: Schools Week printed an article '[Strong Local Partnerships are the key to successful implementation of the White Paper](#)' in June.
- Utilise social media: Using [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to spread messages.

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