



The National School Breakfast Programme

Scale-up Evaluation Report

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About the evaluator

The project was independently evaluated by staff from the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), a social purpose company. The evaluation was overseen by Dr Matthew Barnard (the principal investigator). It was led by Daniel Bogiatzis-Gibbons who was also responsible for the quantitative analysis, with Ingrid Broch-Due leading on qualitative research and scale-up theory and strategy.

Alex Manby, Sarah Breathnach, and Amber Evans also conducted qualitative data collection with Violette Gadenne, Amber Evans, Andriana Vinnitchok, and Dr Matthew Holt contributing qualitative analysis and reporting. Tim Hardy conducted and reported on the cost analysis and quantitative data analysis.

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Executive summary

The project

The National School Breakfast Programme (NSBP) aimed to provide free, nutritious, and universally available breakfast in primary and secondary schools in disadvantaged areas of England. The programme was funded by the Department for Education for an initial two-year period beginning in 2018. The NSBP was co-led by two charities, Family Action (FA) and Magic Breakfast (MB).

The NSBP supported breakfast provision in 1,811 schools in England. Breakfast provision could be delivered through one of several models, including a traditional sit-down breakfast club in the school hall or canteen, a healthy 'grab and go' breakfast usually provided in the playground or school entrance, or classroom breakfast, which could be a 'soft start' where classrooms opened early for breakfast. The NSBP aimed to support schools to establish breakfast provision that could be sustained after the initial period of funded support. The staff members who delivered the breakfast provision varied between schools, often including teachers, volunteers, or catering staff.

The NSBP provided significant support to schools to enable this scale-up, including:

- support from trained staff members (School Partners) who worked with schools over a series of structured visits, as well as providing ad hoc support;
- a grant scheme with one-off grants of £500 and additional grants of up to £2,000 to overcome short term barriers to improving breakfast provision;
- free food in the form of cereals, bagels, and porridge;
- materials directly provided to schools to aid in understanding, running, and promoting the programme; and
- regional events to share best practices.

The objective of the evaluation was to understand and evaluate the NSBP via a scale-up evaluation, including programme changes made as part of the scale-up process, the costs of the programme, and lessons for future scale-up efforts. A mixed-methods approach was taken comprising longitudinal case studies undertaken in ten schools, interviews conducted with key organisational staff, and quantitative data analysis that included cost surveys and analysis of management information. While the funding for the NSBP was extended until March 2021, this evaluation covers the period from August 2018 to March 2020 and is unable to comment on developments outside of this period. As this was a scale-up evaluation, it does not provide insights into whether the NSBP improved attainment outcomes or whether changes made to the original provision model evaluated in 2019 impacted these.

The evaluation focused on three areas:

- the scale-up strategy and high-level programme management led by Family Action and Magic Breakfast, and whether this strategy and management enabled effective coordination of the programme's expansion, adaptation, and sustainability;
- how the scale-up strategy was translated into practice, including recruitment and training of delivery staff for supporting schools; and
- school experiences and how both the programme and scale-up strategy impacted them.

Figure 1: Key conclusions

Key conclusions

1. The NSBP successfully recruited 1,811 schools, exceeding the initial target of 1,775 and equalling the revised target. Within these schools the reach of the programme was extensive, with 38.6% of children at NSBP schools served breakfast compared to 6.5% before the intervention started.
2. The high degree of direction and support provided to schools by the NSBP was important to the successful reach of the programme. This included financial support in the form of grants, resource-based support through provision of free food and promotional materials, and support provided by trained NSBP staff members (School Partners).
3. The scale-up strategy did not sufficiently address sustainability at the outset. The programme focused mainly on expanding the number of schools and pupils receiving breakfast due to tight timelines and ambitious school recruitment

goals, with a lesser focus on ensuring schools would be able to sustain breakfast provision after the initial period of funded support.

4. The NSBP addressed most concerns highlighted in the original evaluation of Magic Breakfast published in 2019 and adopted a more flexible approach, encouraging schools to consider a range of breakfast options from the outset rather than primarily endorsing a traditional breakfast club model. Whether adopting alternative models changes the impact of the programme on pupils is unknown and beyond the scope of this evaluation. However, the alternative models promoted by the NSBP reached more pupils, required less staffing, and were cheaper.
5. Provision accessibility was rated highly by NSBP staff conducting breakfast visits and most schools had reasonable strategies to identify and target pupils in need, with the result that attendance of disadvantaged pupils equalled or exceeded attendance of non-disadvantaged pupils in most schools. However, most schools levied at least some charge for breakfast provision on some students.

Cost

The NSBP provided breakfast food at no cost to schools. If food had been purchased by schools at market rates, the average cost of the programme would have been £16.40 per pupil per year when averaged over three years.

Additional findings

Lessons for future scale-up efforts

From this evaluation of the NSBP, a number of lessons can be drawn that may be applicable to the scale-up of other educational interventions. The evaluators recommend that the following learning points are taken into account in future scale up efforts:

1. Ensure a comprehensive scale-up strategy exists and that it focuses early on embedding the changes made by the programme.
2. Supporting schools is crucial to ensuring the intervention is implemented as intended (fidelity) and ensuring that schools remain in the programme. This support requires effective recruitment, training, feedback, and learning processes. Scale-up ('resource') organisations should consider how they can do this, subject to their own constraints.
3. Flexibility is needed to enable schools to create tailor-made solutions to their unique needs, but does come at the cost of potentially affecting the impact of the intervention.
4. Collaboration between different organisations with different backgrounds and ways of working requires defined roles and operational structures, shared understanding of goals, and planning for how to deal with disagreements.
5. There is a need to assess the implications of planned programme adaptations prior to implementation as well as the way the intervention will be maintained after the end of the programme.
6. Management information (data collected about the programme) needs to balance how burdensome it is to schools with the value of data collected to operational needs.

Glossary of terms

Scaling theory terminology (WHO, 2009)

Resource organisation/s—the organisations or institutions that direct the scale-up process by providing resources (human, informational, and financial) and who usually invented the intervention being scaled.

User organisations—the organisations that implement the intervention in practice. In education, this will be schools or future education institutions in the overwhelming majority of cases.

Environment—the external factors beyond the control of the resource organisation that influence scaling (be they social, political, or economic factors etc.).

Scale-up strategy—the set of active choices made by the resource organisation to guide the scale-up process, which may be implicit or explicit. They are made subject to constraints imposed by user organisations, the scaling environment, and funders.

Innovation—the new set of evidence-based practices being advocated for by the resource organisation/s and implemented by the resource organisations.

Horizontal dimension of scaling—increasing the number of user organisations that implement an innovation in order to increase the number of recipients of the innovation.

Vertical dimension of scaling—embedding the innovation into new institutions or practices past the formal 'life' of the scale-up programme.

Functional dimension of scaling—also called diversification, involves adding new innovations to an existing package of intervention. Diversification can be pursued when new needs are identified during the course of scaling up and interventions to address them are tested and incorporated into the original innovation without losing the core of the innovation that made it 'work' originally.

NSBP terminology

School Partners (SPs)—the staff that were hired by the NSBP to directly work with and support schools in their delivery of the NSBP breakfast provision. They sat in regional teams, which were led by Regional Managers.

Regional Managers (RMs)—the staff that line managed and supported the SPs and who directly supported some schools themselves.

Breakfast Provision Leads (BPLs)—the school staff member (usually a teacher) who led the NSBP breakfast provision in that school, including advocating for and organising it.

Provision model—the way the school chose to implement the breakfast provision, for instance through a formal breakfast club or providing breakfast in the playground or an extended start to the school day.

Evaluation terminology

Moderator—a variable that affects the relationship between two other variables. For example, the effect of School Partner support on the successful delivery of the programme is moderated by pre-existing school awareness of hunger issues (which is the moderator).

Matching—a statistical technique where units are compared to units that are similar to them based on observable characteristics. For example, in this evaluation, schools were matched to other schools based on variables like whether the school was urban or rural. This can help to decrease the bias in impact estimates caused by selection into a programme (here caused by schools selecting which provision model to choose).

Introduction

Background evidence

This report sets out the findings of a mixed-methods evaluation of the National School Breakfast Programme (NSBP), an effort to scale a primary school breakfast club intervention to 1,775 highly deprived primary and secondary schools. The Department for Education (DfE) elected to fund this scaling, in part based on evidence that school breakfast clubs had been found to be effective in improving pupil behaviour and raising test scores (Crawford et al., 2019). The NSBP provided free food to schools for the provision, as well as a small grant and a structured programme of support.

The findings of this study are intended to provide learning and reflections on the NSBP itself, rather than an evaluation of its effectiveness. This is not an impact evaluation and therefore does not definitively answer whether the NSBP improved outcomes or whether the changes made to the provision model (discussed below) impacted these.

This introduction covers a definition of scaling, details on the intervention that was scaled, and high-level notes on the evaluation—its objectives, ethics, and data protection elements.

What does it mean to ‘scale’ a programme?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2009), ‘scaling up’ means taking a successful, evidence-based, small-scale, and often highly prescriptive programme and working to:

- increase the **reach** of the intervention—serving more recipients, which is usually focused on recruiting and supporting institutions (in education, typically schools) to be involved as well as ensuring adequate numbers of people (in education, typically students or teachers) participate within institutions; this is termed the ‘horizontal dimension’ of scaling;
- ensure the programme’s **sustainability**—that changes persist after the end of the programme—by embedding it in existing or new institutions, including engagement in advocacy work to facilitate this happening; this is termed the ‘vertical dimension’ of scaling; and
- allow the programme to **adapt** where appropriate to facilitate **reach** and **sustainability**, while also not losing the **core elements** that made it successful in the first place; this is termed the ‘functional dimension’ of scaling.

Importantly, then, scaling an intervention requires more than just an increase in reach, it encompasses formally or informally embedding that intervention in institutions so that it persists after the initial recruitment and implementation.

Scaling is both a set of goals and the process of achieving those goals. The ExpandNet framework (WHO, 2009) proposes understanding scaling as a system of interrelated elements, which has been slightly modified here to fit the NSBP:

1. **The innovation**—the changes to existing practices that are being scaled up. According to the WHO, interventions should have the following features to ensure a high prospect of successful scaling. They should be:
 - a. credible—evidence-based or advocated by respected individuals;
 - b. observable—users (here teachers primarily) should be able to see the results in practice;
 - c. relevant—address sharply-felt problems, in this case hunger and behaviour primarily;
 - d. relative advantage—need to work better than existing practice;
 - e. easy—to install and understand the key elements;
 - f. compatible—fit in with potential users’ (here schools) established ‘values, norms and facilities’; and
 - g. testable—can be evaluated in new context without committing to a full roll-out.
2. **The user organisations**—in an education context, these are almost always schools but the general term is for the organisations that will implement the on-the-ground delivery of the programme. The key considerations are that they perceive a need for the intervention, have appropriate capacity to implement it, have strong leadership and internal advocacy, and have an appropriate internal environment.
3. **The resource organisation(s)**—the institutions or organisations that will scale the innovation. The key considerations here include effective and motivated leadership, a unifying vision, understanding of the

environment in which the scaling takes place, resources, capacity to train the user organisations, compatibility with the user organisations, and skills and experience of scaling up interventions.

4. **The environment**—the social, political, legal, and economic context into which the scaled-up intervention sits.
5. **The scale-up strategy**—the set of choices made as a result of knowledge of the first four elements, which includes the type of scaling, approaches to dissemination and advocacy, organisation of the scaling-up process, cost of scaling up, mobilisation of resources, monitoring, and evaluation.

This evaluation report will make reference back to this framework throughout.

Intervention

In this section, the main features of the NSBP will be explained. The analysis of how they worked in practice is explained throughout sections on 'Overall scale up strategy', 'Did the NSBP meet its targets' and 'Key drivers to reach, adaptability and quality'.

The innovation and user organisations

The aim of the NSBP, which was a two-year programme funded by the DfE, was to achieve high quality breakfast provision in 1,775 schools in disadvantaged areas, meaning, ideally, that provision would be free, nutritious, and universally available. The universal availability is important as it has been identified that there is a strong stigma surrounding free school meals (FSM). The inclusion criteria for the schools were:

- 50% of pupils fall within the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (MHCLG, 2018) bands A–F (the most disadvantaged categories); AND
- schools had no existing breakfast provision, or breakfast provision that had 'scope for improvement', with clear criteria, the main one of which was that the provision had low take-up overall or among disadvantaged children; in addition, the NSBP was to prioritise schools in 'opportunity areas' (OAs), which are 12 areas of high deprivation identified by the Department for Education as needing targeted support (DfE, 2018).

The breakfast provision could be through one of several models including a traditional sit down breakfast club provided, for example, in the school hall or canteen before the start of the school day, a healthy 'grab and go' breakfast provided either in the playground or on entry to the school, or breakfast provided in the classrooms, defined as a 'soft start' where classrooms opened early for breakfast or, in some instances, breakfast could be provided later in the morning.

The resource organisations

The NSBP was implemented by two resource organisations working together. Magic Breakfast delivered the 2014 DfE-funded breakfast club, including, but not limited to, the research group evaluated by Crawford et al. (2019), and were responsible in the NSBP for implementing and managing delivery. Family Action, a larger multi-purpose charity that held the contract with the DfE, was responsible for 'back-office' functions like HR, management information, employing the School Partners, and overall programme management.

The environment

The environment includes all factors that impact pupils, families, and schools but the six most important general ones for this evaluation are:

- Nationally, school budgets are severely pressured by budget cuts (Britton, Farquharson and Sibieta, 2019) and prioritising issues to focus on is therefore very difficult.
- Hunger and food insecurity for children is a significant and ongoing problem in the U.K. and the system for dealing with this is a patchwork across food banks, schools providing free school meals, and other forms of state support (Forsey, 2019).
- Universal Credit, which began to be introduced in 2013 in a phased rollout, introduced a waiting period for claiming benefits.
- While the percentage of children living in households in poverty after housing costs decreased during the lifetime of the NSBP, the absolute number of children increased (DWP, 2020 and Butler, 2020).

- Stigma to accessing free school meals is strong. Evidence of this stigma is both qualitative and quantitative; qualitative findings—see for example Farthing and Child Poverty Action Group (2012)—emphasise the shame and embarrassment associated with being considered poor by peers and quantitative findings, for instance the work of Holdford (2015), suggest that peer-group take-up is strongly related to individual non-participation in free school meal provision.
- Expanding the programme to more secondary school students brings with it new challenges around older children having more independence and therefore access to alternative food sources (such as nearby shops) as well as stigma that may operate in a more pronounced way.

Brief summary of the scale-up strategy

The NSBP provided free food, support, and funding to schools (for more details see ‘Overall scale up strategy’) to improve or start breakfast provision. In the scaled-up version of the original programme, schools were introduced to the various options for breakfast provision early on in the set-up process. Breakfast could be provided either in a before-school breakfast club or in one of several other modes including providing the food in the playground and in classrooms in the first part of the school day. This was in contrast to the original intervention (evaluated by Crawford et al., 2019) in which schools were primarily introduced to traditional breakfast clubs before the school day began. The NSBP involved horizontal scaling to many more schools (both primary and secondary), vertical scaling through trying to embed the changes after the NSBP had ended, and functional scaling through adding additional elements to the breakfast provision model such as an extended reach model.

Evaluation objectives

The objective of the evaluation was to understand the scale-up process of the NSBP, the changes made due to the scale-up process, and the resulting lessons for future scale-up efforts. The WHO/ExpandNet framework (2010) was used in the research questions and research design as it provided key indicators against which to compare NSBP’s scale-up performance. Despite the use of the framework, the findings are presented thematically, first as an assessment of NSBP target achievement followed by an exploration of key drivers driving scale-up.

The first findings section focuses on Research Area 1 from the study plan, the scale-up strategy. This section describes the overall scale-up strategy of NSBP, specifically responding to the following research question:

1. What was the overall scale-up strategy and organisational setup, and did it attempt to address the challenges identified in the initial evaluation, as well as stigma?

The second findings section focuses on Research Areas 2–4 from the study plan, specifically whether NSBP met its scale-up targets relating to implementation, fidelity, outcomes, costs, and sustainability. This section responds to the following research questions:

2. Did the NSBP manage to meet its recruitment goals?
3. Did the NSBP manage to achieve fidelity to its core tenets?
4. To what extent did schools make adaptations that sat outside the prescribed models?
5. What were the consequences of choosing different delivery models on attendance at school, attendance at the breakfast provision, and costs?
6. How did the scale-up process affect costs?
7. How did the scale-up process affect sustainability?

The third findings section also focuses on Research Areas 2–4 from the study plan, however instead of assessing targets, this section discusses the key drivers and obstacles of programme scale-up success. Specifically, the section, responds to the following research questions:

8. Why did schools choose particular delivery models?
9. Was the organisational set-up and strategic management coordinated and collaborative?
10. Was the delivery of the strategy well supported by effective use of management information?
11. Did the strategy adequately address future sustainability?
12. Did recruitment of School Partners (SPs) succeed at finding experienced, effective staff who could support schools?
13. Did training provide practical lessons which increased SP effectiveness in supporting schools?

14. Did the NSBP encourage a learning and feedback culture that supported good practice?
15. Were materials provided to schools high quality and did they help answer school questions?
16. What aspects of the school environment were barriers or facilitators to NSBP support?

Ethics and data protection

The quantitative data for this project was all collected at the organisation level and therefore includes no personal data.

The arrangements for qualitative data were:

- The data was stored on encrypted password protected devices (secure USB pens and then the laptop of researchers).
- Sound files were deleted immediately after transcription and all written data has been pseudonymised.
- Participants were assigned a unique identifier number through the interview; one protected file will contain participant name and link their unique identifier.
- BIT has not shared, and will not share, the un-anonymised qualitative data with any other organisation for any purposes (including the Education Endowment Foundation). BIT let participants know they can see their pseudonymised transcript to check for themselves identifiable information has been removed.

The participants were made aware they can remove their data at a later date, up until the report is published. BIT kept their name and unique identifier in the protected file until the report was published in case participants decide to remove their data from our research at a later date. BIT was the data controller of these transcripts and our legal basis for processing this data is on the basis of opt-in consent (the procedures for opt-in consent are described in the section of this [study plan](#) on Ethics and Risks, and the consent forms are in the plan as well). Consent applies here as either participants (for students over 16) or their parents or guardians are capable of opting in to consenting to have their data used by us, given the information we will provide to them. BIT has informed consent of the participants to use their data in this way.

BIT undertook an internal ethical review, which followed the Government Social Research Unit (GSRU) guidance.

Project team

The senior NSBP staff consisted of:

- Alex Cunningham, CEO of Magic Breakfast.
- Nicola Dolton, Deputy Director Services and Innovation at Family Action.
- Rachael Anderson, Head of Delivery (Schools) at Magic Breakfast.

The evaluation team at BIT consisted of:

- Leadership: Dr Matthew Barnard, principal investigator, Daniel Bogiatzis-Gibbons, project lead, and Ingrid Broch-Due, qualitative research and scaling theory lead.
- Qualitative researchers: Alex Manby, Amber Evans, Sarah Breathnach, Dr Matthew Holt, Violette Gadenne, and Andriana Vinnitchok.
- Quantitative researcher: Tim Hardy.

Methods

Trial design

The core of the evaluation is a qualitative case study design, which generally involves selecting a small number of cases (here schools) and following them throughout the study period. Case studies allow a detailed analysis of how an intervention is experienced and enables multiple perspectives to be gathered on a particular phenomenon or process leading to a more holistic understanding. As the NSBP was intended to provide support in a fixed sequence of four planning and support visits, this allowed monitoring how the case study schools proceed along the sequence. Data collection was timed to coincide with these visits, which allowed for a careful analysis that accounts for the context of

each particular school and allows for an in-depth understanding of barriers and facilitators along each step of the scaling process.

Practically, it also allowed researchers to build relationships with schools that facilitated higher quality data collection by building trust. At the analysis stage, it also allowed researchers to understand the NSBP, specifically the factors affecting sign-up, delivery, and embedding in a contained context while exploring links and connections.

To supplement these case studies, quantitative data was collected from both the management information systems produced by the NSBP as well as cost surveys sent out by BIT. This data collection gives a broader view of the whole programme as the data is on all the eligible schools.

Interviews were also conducted with staff at Family Action, Magic Breakfast, and the DfE to complement both sources of data by allowing insights into organisational processes and decision-making.

Reporting

This report is framed as a learning report, where insights are drawn from qualitative and quantitative data that largely is about implementation and process issues rather than showing the impact of the NSBP.

The evaluation plan was iterated and adapted where appropriate and, in conversation with the EEF, adapted to capture key programme activities and changes. A reframing of some qualitative research questions to exclude numerical indicators also took place in response to an update in BIT's approach to qualitative research where outputs can only be generalised in terms of range and diversity and not in terms of prevalence. The analytical outputs focus on the nature of experiences, avoiding numerical summaries or statements. There are still high-level discussions of some quantitative indicators in the report but the emphasis is on understanding what can be learned from the NSBP rather than judging whether it was a binary success or failure.

Qualitative methods

Sample size

Purposive sampling was used to select case study schools. Unlike sampling for a survey, where the intention is to achieve a sample that is statistically representative of the population from which it is drawn, the aim of purposive sampling is to achieve diversity against key characteristics that are likely to shape the views and experiences being explored. This enables the research to be generalisable in terms of range and diversity of views and experiences. In this evaluation, the criteria used to select case study schools were refined in collaboration with NSBP. In addition to the proposed criteria set out in the study plan to ensure a mix of primary and secondary schools and a mix of geographical location (coastal/rural/urban) it was thought that a range of school types and Ofsted ratings would be important factors to capture. Schools were therefore primarily selected based on location, ensuring at least one primary and one secondary school in each region, while Ofsted and school type were included as secondary criteria. These criteria were chosen because they would allow for understanding the implementation of the NSBP in a range of diverse contexts, but a limitation is that it does not necessarily guarantee a range of levels of fidelity to the intervention or ways that the intervention is implemented and adapted. Table 1 sets out the achieved case study sample. (To ensure the schools are not identifiable, pupil numbers have been rounded to the nearest 50, pupil capacity over/under to the nearest five, and the FSM percentage to the nearest 5%.)

Table 1: Case study schools

School	Region	Type	Rounded pupil number (number under/over capacity)	Ofsted rating	Rounded FSM-eligible percentage
Primary	NORTH	Academy	450 (50 over)	Good	40%
Primary	NORTH	Community	500 (5 under)	RI	25%
Primary	CENTRAL	Community	500 (10 under)	Outstanding	35%
Primary	CENTRAL	Voluntary aided	350 (20 under)	Good	25%
Primary	SOUTH	Academy converter	450 (15 under)	RI	45%
Primary	SOUTH	Community	300 (65 under)	Good	10%
Secondary	SOUTH	Foundation	850 (20 under)	Good	20%
Secondary	NORTH	Academy	1,350 capacity	N/A	N/A
Secondary	CENTRAL	PRU	--	--	--
Secondary	SOUTH	Academy	1,420 (1,035 under)	RI	30%

As stated above, these case study schools were followed throughout the process of setting up and implementing NSBP, and after the programme had officially finished (seen as the sustainability phase). In each school, over a two-year period the following data collection was undertaken (broken down by the different stages of implementation):

- Set-up: there were observations of recruitment and launch visits.
- Delivery: there were nine observations of breakfast provision, 16 pupils interviewed (some conducted jointly or in groups), eight school Breakfast Provision Leads interviewed, and nine interviews with the School Partners working with the schools. Please note that one school also stopped responding to requests for interviews at the delivery and sustainability phases so they were only tracked through interviews with their School Partner, which meant that there were only nine observations.
- Sustainability: there were eight headteacher or School Partner interviews, two sustainability visit observations, and two sustainability plan reviews. The sustainability phase was substantially affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, which meant that fieldwork was not possible. This also meant that the filling out of sustainability plans (a part of the NSBP) was delayed so there were fewer available to review than anticipated.

Interviews were conducted with five additional school partners and six senior figures in Family Action, Magic Breakfast, and the Department for Education in order to more fully capture the organisational processes that underpinned the scale-up process. These interviews were not audio recorded and transcribed as participants felt more comfortable with only notes due to the sensitivity of discussing organisational matters. Detailed notes were taken and short verbatim quotes noted whenever possible. To maintain confidentiality, in the report, quotes from these interviews are kept to a minimum and examples are only included where a minimum of two interviewees have provided insights on the same issue.

Changes to qualitative data collection

The approach to qualitative data collection and sample was re-assessed throughout the evaluation (a) to balance out the burden on both the delivery organisations and schools ensuring evaluation activities would not compromise programme roll-out, (b) to ensure updates to the data collection approach and timelines that reflected the actual roll-out of the NSBP and changes to timelines or key activities, and (c) was iterated based on emergent themes or data saturation.

Key changes included reducing the number of case studies from 12 to 10. The approach to the additional interviews was also amended: it was agreed to place a greater focus on in-depth interviews related to the organisational and sustainability aspects of the rollout as these emerged as important areas where additional data was needed. The total number of additional interviews was changed from the originally planned 20 to 25 30-minute interviews with BPLs, SPs, and HTs to a total number of 16 additional interviews including nine 30-minute in-depth interviews with the NSBP regional managers and senior leadership team.

Other changes to interviews and observations conducted included one school withdrawing from the evaluation after the initial observation (we were able to follow the school indirectly through interviewing their SP) or participants not consenting to or responding to interview requests. We did not conduct observations of three large regional conferences that did not go ahead as planned within the programme. Only two sustainability plans were available to review within the timelines of the evaluation due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, however we were able to observe two sustainability visits in order to capture further qualitative data on the sustainability phase of the programme. The COVID-19 pandemic also meant additional in depth interviews with HTs were not possible.

The achieved sample and data collection methods including changes from the study plan are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Achieved case study sample

CASE STUDIES			
	Planned	Completed	Reasons for change
Phase 1: Recruitment and set-up			
Recruitment and launch observations	12	10	
Phase 2: Delivery			
Breakfast provision observations and informal interviews	12	9	Withdrawal from evaluation - one school
Student interviews	24	16	Consent obtained - interviews with students conducted where consent was obtained from parents/guardians
BPL interviews	12	8	
School Partner interviews	12	9	Responsiveness - Interviews conducted where possible to arrange
Phase 3: Sustainability			
HT interviews	12	8	Delays to sustainability phase of

Sustainability plan reviews	12	2	programme and COVID-19: HT interviews completed where possible, sustainability plans not completed by schools before end of evaluation.
Sustainability visit observations	0	2	Additional sustainability visit observations added where possible.
ADDITIONAL INTERVIEWS / OBSERVATIONS			
	Planned	Completed	Reasons for change
Phase 1: Recruitment and set-up			
SP/BPL interviews	10	5	Responsiveness - unable to reach BPLs in non case study schools Agreed amendment to focus on in-depth interviews in sustainability phase.
Phase 2: Delivery			
No interviews planned	0	0	N/A
Phase 3: Sustainability			
Regional sustainability conference observations	3	0	Programme change: 50+ smaller events replaced 3 large conferences.
SP/BPL/HT interviews	12	0	Not possible due to Covid-19 and added pressures on schools. Sustainability phase of the programme delayed
RM interviews	3	3	Agreed re-focus on sustainability and organisation: Increased time to 1.5 hr interviews
NSBP senior leadership interviews	0	6	Agreed re-focus on sustainability and organisation: Additional in-depth, 1-2 hr interview on sustainability and organisational elements of programme

Analysis

Verbatim transcripts of the interviews and notes from the observations were analysed using the Framework approach (Ritchie et al., 2014). First, emerging themes were identified through familiarisation with the data. The analytical framework was then created using a series of matrices in Excel each relating to an emergent theme. The columns in each matrix represented the key sub-themes drawn from the findings and the rows represented individual participants interviewed or schools observed.

The interview and observation data was then summarised in the appropriate cell, which meant that all data relevant to a particular theme was noted, ordered, and accessible facilitating a systematic approach to analysis that was grounded in participants' and schools' accounts. Analysis involved working through the charted data to draw out the range of participant views and school's experiences, identifying similarities, differences, and links between them. Thematic analysis (undertaken by looking down the theme-based columns in Framework) identified concepts and themes, and the case-based analysis (undertaken by comparing and contrasting rows in Framework), enabled links within cases to be established and cases compared and contrasted with each other.

During the analytical process, a balance was maintained between deduction (using existing knowledge and the research questions to guide the analysis) and induction (allowing concepts and ways of interpreting experience to emerge from the data) by categorising the data in line with research questions and generating new themes that emerged from the data. The analysis process was conducted in a manner that aimed to be comprehensive and grounded in the data, alongside giving each participant's views and experiences equal weight.

Quantitative methods

In contrast to the case studies, quantitative data was collected from all schools involved in the NSBP, which means that summary data for the whole population can complement the more detailed findings of the case studies. The analysis of quantitative data in this report is aggregated to the school level and usually descriptive, meaning that summary statistics are reported without making any inferences. This is either done by tabulating the means by group, or by linear regressions that adjust for appropriate school characteristics (see Technical Appendix A in the separate Technical Notes Document).

To get a sense of whether the expanded options in terms of provision models were associated with different levels of school and breakfast attendance (controlling for some school characteristics), statistical matching was undertaken using attendance at school and attendance at the breakfast provision as outcomes (see Technical Appendix B). This process compares schools with a given type of provision to schools with another type of provision that are similar in terms of observable factors that influence both the attendance outcome of interest and the type of provision chosen. This is not causal analysis (as it is not plausible that observable characteristics of schools fully explain a school's decision to choose a particular provision model); instead, it describes what happened in the schools that chose different provision models.

Costs

Data collection

Data on costs incurred by schools was collected by surveys sent to school coordinators. The categories of costs included in the surveys—taken from the original impact evaluation (Crawford et al., 2019)—were:

- set-up costs including furniture, improvements to the physical environment, enrichment activities, staff recruitment and training, and appliances;
- ongoing non-staff costs including food outside the NBSP-provided free food and other ongoing costs (such as napkins); and
- staff time, including that of teachers, teaching assistants, catering staff, and others.

This survey data was supplemented by data on the number of pupils on the school roll, which was taken from the NSBP's school breakfast visits if such a visit occurred and recruitment and launch visits otherwise. Data on costs incurred due to the programme overall were collected from Family Action's finance team. Details of the surveys and data cleaning are in Appendix C (in the separate Technical Notes document).

Comparison with original evaluation

Scale-up efforts can change costs by changing the mix of schools involved and as schools adapt elements of the original intervention to their own context. Furthermore, at scale, costs can change by allowing economies of scale. Therefore, it is useful to compare costs to the original evaluation (Crawford et al., 2019) adjusted for inflation.

Changes to study plan

The major changes are as follows:

1. Due to COVID-19, designated sustainability interviews and a survey were not undertaken. Instead, more general interviews with NSBP staff were used to explore high-level concerns relating to sustainability.
2. Organisational interviews were added to capture the processes that drove the scale-up strategy, as well as understand how FA and MB had worked together.
3. Aspects of the regression specifications for the quantitative analysis were changed based primarily on data availability.
4. The cost surveys are primarily based on one time point rather than the sequential surveys imagined by the study plan. Both of these changes are explained in the Technical Appendices in a separate document.
5. The cost analysis no longer analyses the grants disbursed by the NSBP. This was done because the sustainability survey was not sent out, which means the grants disbursed could not be matched back to whether a school felt adequately supported.
6. This evaluation does not try to capture the cost of the entire programme incurred by schools because it was not clear how to divide the total back-office costs among the schools.

Limitations

The evaluation had several limitations, some of which are covered above in the changes to the study plan:

1. This is an evaluation of the programme scale-up and not an impact evaluation of the programme itself. Therefore, we were not able to determine whether the adaptations made to the delivery model impacted students in the same way as addressed by the original evaluation.
2. As a primarily qualitative evaluation, the experience of scale-up for schools cannot necessarily be generalised to all schools involved in the context of prevalence. However, the findings can help us draw meaningful conclusions about the delivery of the programme and to understand better school and organisational challenges and the drivers of success.
3. The intended dataset was incomplete. As explained above, the impact of COVID-19 meant that sustainability plans were incomplete so instead we used additional interview data as a substitute for detailed sustainability data. Cost data was also only collected at a single time point due to concerns over burden for schools if they were asked to complete multiple surveys. This limited our ability to track changes to costs across the evaluation period and therefore cost estimates were based on one time point.

Overall scale-up strategy

As explained in the introduction, a scale-up strategy is the set of choices (mainly made by the resource organisation/s) to help support the horizontal, vertical, and functional dimensions of scaling. This section describes the type of scaling pursued as well as the support provided to schools during the recruitment process.

Type of scaling

It is worth noting that the NSBP is highly unusual for a scale-up effort in that it was started due to a contract with an external commissioner (DfE) rather than initiated by the organisation that developed the intervention.

The NSBP's form of scaling was highly directed by the resource organisations (FA and MB) rather than by spontaneous diffusion or through teacher-led networks. The reason for this was twofold: first, schools may lack the resources to

provide breakfast adequately due to budget cuts and, second, schools may lack both the knowledge and willingness to provide breakfast in a stigma-free, universal, and nutritious way.

The NSBP involved all three dimensions of scaling:

1. horizontal scaling—the contract with the DfE specified a target of 1,775 schools and for the provision to be delivered in new contexts, notably secondary schools;
2. vertical scaling—the changes made to the breakfast provision in schools were meant to be supported to be sustainable after the end of funding and both FA and MB undertook advocacy activities to persuade the DfE to extend the funding of the programme; and
3. functional scaling—the breakfast provision models discussed at the outset of the programme were significantly widened from the original breakfast club model.

As will be explained in the rest of the report, the efforts put into successfully meeting the horizontal scaling goals meant that the vertical scaling elements were not initially prioritised, impacting the sustainability of changes wrought by the NSBP. The functional scaling aspect was successful in many respects as, for example, case study schools felt adequately supported and that the programme was tailored to their needs. However, it does mean that the NSBP was scaling models that are not supported by the same level of evidence as the breakfast club model within a primary school context.

School support

The NSBP chose to provide several types of support to schools to enable this directed scale-up, including:

- SPs who were trained staff with school experience who worked with schools to support their provision over a series of structured visits and *ad hoc* support between them;
- a grant scheme with one-off grants of £500 and additional grants of up to £2,000 to improve breakfast provision to overcome short-term barriers to improving their provision based on identified issues;
- free food in the form of cereals, bagels, and porridge;
- materials directly provided to schools to aid in understanding, running, and promoting the programme; and
- regional events to share best practices.

These were provided because MB had identified that schools need a significant amount of support to implement high-quality breakfast provision, and the contract with DfE enabled their provision.

The scale-up strategy employed by the NSBP was not static; it adapted to the evolving nature of the scale-up process. On the programme implementation side, adaptations included (a) changing regional events, which were initially planned to be large regional conferences to smaller, local conferences due to difficulties for schools to attend and (b) as will be discussed further in a later section, going to significant lengths to help schools recognise and record the impact of provision.

One way of understanding the value of this support is in the division of the total costs incurred by the resource organisations under the NSBP. Of the total budget (approximately £18.7 million), 67.6% was support to schools: 40.5% was on food (including delivery costs), 17.8% was on direct support to schools (delivery staff), 8.4% was on grants and 0.8% was on other intervention-related costs. The remaining 32.4% of the budget was split as follows: 3.7% went to back-office support, 15.5% went to VAT payments, and 13.2% went to a management charge (governance costs covering legal, health and safety, HR, payroll, quality control, facilities, and so on).

The food and grant schemes were crucial to ensuring that schools could afford the provision, as even though it is a cost-effective programme, school budgets are still too pressured to provide it.

The series of structured visits was the lynchpin of school support, the four visits being the recruitment visit, the launch visit, the breakfast delivery visit, and finally the sustainability visit. These were provided by School Partners, who were specially trained staff, usually with significant school experience (their journey in supporting schools is explored in the 'Did the NSBP meet its targets' section). As can be seen below, these visits were a strategic choice to invest a significant amount of NSBP staff resources in helping schools through the entire 'journey' of the programme and tackle practical challenges.

The recruitment visit aimed to get schools on board, explain the benefits of the programme, and for SPs to understand the barriers and facilitators to the provision in that school. SPs were allocated a set number of schools in an area, which they then contacted to organise a recruitment meeting to discuss taking part in the programme. During the meeting, the SP went through the NSBP pack, the conditions of taking part in the programme, and the different breakfast model options were discussed (for example, having classroom bagels, playground bagels, traditional breakfast club, and so forth). The meeting was also an opportunity for the SP to learn about the school context to understand any particular challenges the school has and their pre-existing breakfast provision (if relevant), and for the schools to ask any questions they had about the process. The SP outlined what grant the schools were entitled to to buy equipment for the programme. Finally, the SP discussed targeting the students who were most in need of the support by asking about hunger issues within the school.

In the launch visit, the aim was to prepare schools to launch the programme, target children in need, and promote the programme effectively within the school. In the launch phase, the SP organised a launch meeting with the SLT or the Breakfast Provision Lead (BPL) at the school to go through:

- who they felt would benefit the most from the provision (for example, PP children);
- how they would staff the breakfast provision;
- how they would promote the breakfast provision; and
- how they would spend the grant money (for example, on a new fridge or toasters).

The SP also outlined food order options and helped the school calculate their food order based on their chosen model and numbers of pupils in the school. The SP and the school agreed on a launch date and the SP discussed delivery logistics with the school to ensure they were set up and informed. Schools were also given a launch pack with this information to take away with them.

In the breakfast delivery visit, the aim was to help schools find a breakfast model that worked for them and ensure they effectively deliver the breakfast club. The SP supported the schools throughout this phase as well as during a breakfast delivery visit, checking in on how the programme was run and what worked and what could be improved with the selected delivery model. If a school was struggling with a chosen model they could discuss changing the model to something that better suited the school, for example, changing from playground to classroom bagels. The SP also monitored attendance data and discussed barriers and facilitators to targeting children who were most in need with the school.

Finally, in the sustainability visit the aim was to help schools plan for the continued provision of the breakfast club without external funding. Towards the end of the programme, the SP was intended to have a sustainability meeting with the school to discuss its options in order to continue the breakfast provision once the NSBP funding stopped, including the school's budget options. The SP gave details of the costs for continuing the provision if buying equivalent food from a supermarket or if using the MB continuity of food supply offer, and outlined alternative food providers and charities that could enable schools to continue providing free breakfast at a lower cost to them. The SP also explained that a further £500 grant was available for schools that decided to continue their breakfast provision. The schools were then intended to complete a sustainability plan, though due to COVID-19 these were not all completed.

Addressing the concerns identified in the original evaluation

In Table 3 below, the problems identified in the original evaluation (Crawford et al., 2019) and the actions taken by the NSBP are outlined. Some of the solutions to problems identified by Crawford et al. were developed by Magic Breakfast prior to the beginning of the NSBP while others were newly developed as part of the NSBP scale-up.

Table 3: Concerns identified in the original evaluation

Concern	Action
Schools raised funds or charged students to meet funding shortfalls. However, charging students or restricting access was a substantial barrier to students. Relatedly, sustainability was a real concern,	The NSBP included a larger start-up grant for schools as well as free food to attempt to mitigate against some of these concerns. Conditions of support were discussed in a more robust way from the outset, and it was made clear to all schools

<p>especially over staff remuneration and the cost of food without it being provided for free.</p>	<p>that a condition of support was that target children must be able to access breakfast through at least one provision type free of charge and without barrier or stigma.</p> <p>There was also a one-off sustainability grant of £500 provided at the end of the programme, and an extension of food coverage by one term.</p>
<p>Delivery of the programme is taxing on teaching and other staff when they have to work outside of normal hours in the breakfast club model.</p>	<p>Part of the idea behind increased emphasis on the alternative provision models (i.e. provision outside the 'traditional' breakfast club concept) was to reduce the staffing burden.</p>
<p>Breakfast clubs were insufficiently well promoted by schools. Which students were targeted for breakfast provision varied substantially across schools.</p>	<p>NSBP materials focused on promotion, and discussions in visits focused on targeting students in clearly defined categories, including but not limited to FSM.</p>
<p>Schools had difficulty managing supply and demand of food, in part due to changing student tastes over short periods of time.</p>	<p>SPs worked with schools to try and manage these issues, and worked with them on their food orders.</p>
<p>Reliance on school motivation with risks including when there is a lack of engagement from school governing bodies, poor delegation, less proactive School Breakfast coordinators, and over-reliance on the goodwill of staff.</p>	<p>Part of the reason for starting with the idea that schools could choose the provision model they implemented was to address issues with staffing.</p> <p>The NSBP also had a strong impact focus to reinforce why schools should be motivated to be in the programme. School partners also played a key role in using data to follow up with schools on their impact.</p>
<p>Stigma in receiving provision is an obstacle to reaching targeted students.</p>	<p>NSBP materials and discussions with schools both focused on overcoming stigma, especially with secondary school students. The whole school models and grants also were intended to ensure at least one provision type was free and universal which helps to manage stigma. Where a charge was present for some children, schools were very strongly encouraged to ensure it was framed as a charge for childcare, not breakfast.</p>

Did the NSBP meet its targets?

The success of the NSBP scale-up was assessed across six core components. Scaling the intervention was dependent on (1) more ambitious recruitment and reach targets, (2) maintaining programme quality, (3) decreasing cost, (4) delivering on schedule, (5) making the programme sustainable, and (6) achieving regional distribution.

While it is difficult to provide an overall comment on the success of the scale-up, this section uses both quantitative and qualitative data to individually address research questions 2–7:

- Did the NSBP manage to meet its recruitment goals?
- Did the NSBP manage to achieve fidelity to its core tenets?
- To what extent did schools make adaptations that sat outside the prescribed models?
- What were the consequences of choosing different delivery models on attendance at school, attendance at the breakfast provision, and costs?
- How did the scale-up process affect costs?
- How did the scale-up process affect sustainability?

Recruitment and reach

This section evaluates whether the NSBP scale-up met its targets in terms of the number of schools recruited to the programme and the number of pupils who accessed breakfast as a result. It also examines what kinds of schools were likely to enrol in the programme after receiving a recruitment visit and explores the factors behind successful recruitment.

The NSBP exceeded its initial recruitment target of 1,775 schools and equalled its revised target with 1,811 schools being recruited. Most schools contacted ended up being recruited into the programme with a conversion rate of 73.9%. Further, the overwhelming majority (approximately 88.0%) of eligible schools that received a recruitment visit were recruited into the programme. This is likely in part due to the comprehensive training that School Partners received and the quality of external communications, which equipped them to explain and pitch the programme to schools, as described in ‘Did the NSBP meet its targets?’.

In terms of which schools were recruited of eligible schools that received a recruitment visit, regression analysis (details in Technical Appendix A) shows that the following had a statistically significant relationship to chance of enrolling in the NSBP:

1. The percentage of FSM students is a very strong predictor (statistically significant at the 1% level) of whether a school enrolled in the programme: a ten percentage point increase in the proportion of students that receive free school meals was associated with a 2.5 percentage point increase in the probability of enrolment.
2. Contacted schools are also more likely to enrol if they are secondary schools rather than primary by 4.4 percentage points after controlling for the other factors.
3. Community schools are less likely to enrol than academies by 3.4 percentage points.
4. There were clear differences by region: schools in Lancashire and West Yorkshire were the most likely to enrol. Schools in East Midlands and the Humber were less likely to enrol by 4.4 percentage points compared to this region, South-East England and South London by 6 percentage points, and the West Midlands by 9.2 percentage points.

Under the programme, the number of children who were served breakfast increased several-fold from a relatively low baseline. Across the 1,683 schools used in the main quantitative analysis, 38.6% of children were served at breakfast visits compared to 6.5% at recruitment visits. The recruitment visit stage has been used here as data on prior contact is less reliable. If we do not weigh each school by its number of pupils, the figures are 48.9% and 7.2% respectively (an increase of 41.7 percentage points). We observe similar figures at the end of the programme: across the 1,556 schools for which we have information, 38.4% of pupils were served compared to 6.4% at recruitment visits. This suggests that the programme helped to kick-start wider breakfast provision in schools that previously served zero or a very small percentage of pupils.

Regional distribution targets

The NSBP achieved regional distribution targets. The NSBP school recruitment and breakfast delivery support was organised and managed in three main regions: North, Central, and South. Each region was overseen by a Regional Manager and designated geographic areas were assigned to Team Managers and School Partners to ensure wide reach of enrolment into the NSBP.

Quality

This section examines the quality of the provision in the NSBP scale-up along two dimensions:

1. fidelity—the extent to which schools provided free, nutritious, universal, and accessible breakfast; and
2. the extent to which schools made adaptations to delivery models.

Fidelity

It was anticipated that the schools demonstrate the characteristics outlined in Table 4 below. In the NSBP, the core components of fidelity were the provision of free, nutritious, universal, and accessible breakfast to students at school. Schools were expected to provide targeted students with a nutritious breakfast at no cost. It was intended that breakfast was provided early in the day and prior to the start of class (except in special schools) and that additional strategies were implemented to ensure that students, particularly those that arrive late and have been identified as vulnerable, were able to access breakfast without stigma.

An important limitation of this fidelity framework is that it does not explicitly incorporate the need for a social aspect to the provision (through the use of enrichment activities or unstructured social time), which was found to be a contributing factor to the impact in the original evaluation.

Results from the breakfast visit (which was chosen because the programme was less disrupted at the breakfast visit than by some late sustainability visits) are presented below in Table 4 with the caveat that many of these data points were rated by SPs using a one- to four-point fidelity outcome framework collected by FAMB. SPs were briefed on how to score across different categories, however there may have been inconsistencies in scoring. The low number of schools where the ratings are missing (about 4% for most of the categories) were not counted for the purposes of the percentages quoted.

Mechanisms that led to high levels of fidelity are examined in the section on key drivers to reach, adaptability and quality.

Table 4: Summary of the key characteristics of low and high fidelity and results

Elements of fidelity		Key characteristics	Results (from 1,743 schools with data from breakfast visits)
Category	Sub-category	High fidelity	
Accessibility and quality	No barriers to access	No barriers stopping target population from accessing provision (including need to pay, capacity/space limitations).	According to SPs, 93.4% of schools had either no or limited barriers to access by the target population. A majority of schools (60.5%) charged some students for at least one element of the provision but these charges did not stop the target population from accessing breakfast in most cases.

	Stigma	No evident stigma that would make a target child uncomfortable or unwilling to attend, or that would identify them as a target child.	83.0% of schools were identified by SPs as having no evident stigma, and 14.1% were identified as having possible stigma but high enough attendance and good enough staff handling of stigma to not be concerned.
	Food	The school is providing a healthy, nutritious breakfast.	Half of the schools (49.9%) had at least one issue; 33.2% were failing to serve fruit and 23.7% were serving sugary cereals or spreads.
Reaching the right children	Identification	The school regularly evaluates who is attending breakfast, reviews list, and considers which target children that should be attending breakfast.	43.3% of schools were identified as regularly reviewing their accurate identification of need strategies, with another 38.7% rated as having made efforts in identification but either were not regularly updating it or had missed groups of pupils; 17.9% of schools had made inadequate efforts in identifying need.
	Targeting	The school has implemented a strategy of actively encouraging individual/groups of target children and approaches parents to encourage attendance.	41.1% of schools were rated as implementing strategies that actively encourage individual/groups of target children and approach parents to encourage attendance, while 39.9% of schools were rated as being able to demonstrate at least one targeting strategy but were not reaching all groups in need; 19.0% of schools had no or inadequate targeting.
	Promotion	The school promotes the breakfast club through a full range of methods and the promotion is regularly refreshed to ensure high awareness across the whole school community.	24.5% of schools were rated as promoting the provision on a regular basis through a full range of methods (e.g. banners, newsletters, social media) and embedding it in school practice; a further 42.2% of schools were rated as promoting the provision through several means, but more could be done in terms of effort, frequency, or embedding; 33.2% of schools had no or inadequate promotion.
	% of children and target population children attending (as	25% or more children attend breakfast and target population in breakfast is higher than in school overall (or all attending).	62.2% of schools met the target outlined; 9.3% of schools had less than 10% of children on roll attend breakfast and pupil

	proxied by Pupil Premium status)		premium students disproportionately failing to attend breakfast.
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Adapting the Magic Breakfast model at scale—new delivery models

The traditional breakfast club model, which was tested in the original evaluation, consisted of before-school provision of healthy breakfast, ideally free of charge and to all students. This provision was separate to other before-school activities and usually took place outside of the classroom with enrichment activities. However, schools often agreed that a traditional breakfast club alone was not meeting all needs and schools in the original evaluation often went on to add in or change models to broaden accessibility to target children.

In the NSBP, a strategic choice was made to discuss ‘alternative provision’ models more proactively from the outset to make the programme more adaptable to school constraints on budgets and staff as well as more responsive to specific school problems with hunger or behaviour. These included classroom breakfast or a ‘soft start’ where the breakfast was provided over a rolling start period for the day, provision in the playground (usually bagels) as children arrived in the morning, and a ‘grab and go’ option. Provision for late students was also proactively discussed.

To what extent did schools make adaptations?

Based on the interview and observations data, three types of adaptations occurred in the case study schools: (1) switching NSBP models, (2) increased frequency of breakfast provision, and (3) changes in the food and drink options available. These changes were made either in order to address barriers to one or more elements of fidelity, in response to resource constraints, or due to a combination of both of these reasons.

First, some schools switched NSBP models in response to staffing issues while others made this change proactively to address challenges with stigma. In some primary schools, staff reported switching from offering playground bagels to classroom bagels primarily due to issues with staff volunteer attendance to support handing out the bagels, which reflected in the lack of funding available to pay staff for their time. This resulted in concerns around a lack of supervision of students in the playground and the need to switch to classroom bagels where teachers are available to supervise the students. Also, one school chose to switch the model from a bagel bar in the canteen to classroom bagels to address issues with stigma. Staff said that the stigma was caused by students not liking the canteen and few students using it and, as a result, students that chose to attend the breakfast club stood out. Overall, the school staff reported that switching the model (regardless of the reason for doing so) had an overall positive impact by addressing their respective challenges with staffing or stigma.

Second, in SEN and PRU settings, some schools increased the frequency of when breakfast food is available to increase uptake and reach. This included extending the hours during which the traditional breakfast club was available, offering bagels multiple times a day, and extra provision on specific occasions (such as before exams). This was particularly important for one school (a PRU), which reported having students coming and going throughout the day due to the structure of their timetable (for example, going to placements). Overall, staff reported that making adjustments to the timing and frequency of provision had a positive impact on uptake and allowed them to reach more students at different points in the day.

Third, schools extended the food provision outside of the core NSBP options of cereal, porridge, and bagels, as was also encouraged by the NSBP if possible. Generally, the food options available to the students during breakfast varied depending on the breakfast model selected and whether the school had an existing breakfast club. The qualitative evidence indicates that there were a greater variety of food and drink options in schools that chose the traditional breakfast club model or had an existing breakfast club, which in some schools was available at an extra cost. In particular, the case study interview and observations data revealed the following:

- At the schools that had traditional breakfast clubs or bagel bars, the options for students ranged between only having bagels with spreads to having bagels, porridge, and cereal as well as tea and coffee for

secondary schools. In some schools, sausages and bacon were also available for an additional cost (for example, 50p).

- By comparison, in case study schools with the playground bagels or classroom bagels model, the food options primarily included bagels with one or more spreads (for example, butter or jam). Also, it was observed that schools with existing breakfast clubs chose to provide a greater variety of food and drink options, but these items were usually at an extra cost (with two exceptions, which are described below). In addition to the NSBP-funded breakfast, the food options at these schools included bacon, sausages, fruit, scrambled eggs, pancakes, waffles, and crepes, although as not all of these options are allowed under SFS, it must be noted that more options are not always better. Some schools also had various drinks available for purchase in the canteen such as bottled water, juice, and hot chocolate. Two case study schools were exceptions as they had other breakfast clubs with diverse food options available at no cost to all or specific types of students. Specifically, one school had an existing, free 'nurture room', which continued alongside the NSBP-funded breakfast provision, and another school chose to provide their existing traditional breakfast club at no cost to all students.

What were the levels of attendance at school and attendance at breakfast provision among the different delivery models?

As explained in the Methods section, the association of one form of provision relative to another on attendance at school or at breakfast provision is estimated by statistical matching. Specifically, the matching process compares schools that are similar in terms of several factors that influence both the attendance outcome of interest and the model chosen. These estimates should not be interpreted as reflecting causal effects. The matching variables do not capture all factors that influence both the form of provision chosen by a school and the outcomes, so our estimates are likely to suffer from selection bias. For example, more motivated schools (which would serve a higher percentage of pupils under any given model of provision) may be more likely to complement their breakfast club with alternative provision, or to use certain alternative provision models (such as the classroom model) rather than a breakfast club in order to serve as many students as possible. More details about this analysis are available in Technical Appendix A.

We define the level of attendance at a school as the percentage attendance for its pupils aged 5 to 15 (that is, of compulsory school age) across all terms after the provision's launch date, calculated from the government's pupil absence statistics. The level of attendance at breakfast provision is taken to be the percentage of pupils served at the breakfast visit—equal to the number of pupils served as observed at breakfast visits by NSBP staff divided by the number of pupils on the school's roll at the time of breakfast visit.

We perform two main analyses:

- **Analysis I:** having a formal breakfast club (with or without alternative provision) vs. alternative provision only; and
- **Analysis II**, which is split into:
 - II.1: having a formal breakfast club only vs. alternative provision only;
 - II.2: having a formal breakfast club only vs. both types of provision—breakfast club and alternative provision; and
 - II.3: having both types of provision vs. alternative provision only.

There was very little difference between models of provision in terms of school attendance (full results in Technical Appendix B, Table 11). The main differences were:

- When comparing schools that have a breakfast club (with or without some alternative provision) with schools that use alternative provision only, matched schools using only alternative provision had an average attendance rate of 94.13%. This is 0.09 of a percentage point higher than comparable schools that have some sort of formal breakfast club after controlling for the matching variables, which is not statistically significant.
- Matched schools that use only alternative provision had an average attendance rate of 94.29%. After controlling for the matching variables, this is 0.19 of a percentage point higher than the comparator group of schools with only a breakfast club, a difference significant at the 10% level. However, it represents a very small effect (roughly 0.4 days per academic year).

- There are no statistically significant differences when comparing the breakfast club model only with both types of provision or both types of provision with a breakfast club only.

Table 5: Results of matching analysis—percent attendance at school

Analysis: comparator vs. treatment	I: Any breakfast club vs. alternative provision only	II.1: Breakfast club only vs. alternative provision only	II.2: Breakfast club only vs. both types	II.3: Both types vs. alternative provision only
Mean for comparator group, after adjusting for matching variables	94.04%	94.10%	94.83%	94.24%
Mean for treatment group	94.13%	94.29% ⁺	94.84%	94.22%

Notes: ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1 (multiplicity-adjusted p-values)

In terms of attendance at breakfast provision, the results suggest that *schools that concentrate their efforts into a breakfast club serve a lower percentage of pupils than similar schools that use just alternative provision models*. Schools that have both a breakfast club and alternative provision models do not serve a greater percentage of pupils than similar schools with only alternative provision models. In further analysis presented in Technical Appendix A, the classroom model can be observed to be especially effective at serving a high share of pupils. This is unsurprising since this model makes breakfast available to groups of pupils during class time.

Our specific findings on attendance at breakfast provision are (see Technical Appendix B, Table 12 for full details):

- When comparing schools that have a breakfast club (with or without some alternative provision) against schools that have alternative provision only, the latter group only had 1.9 percentage points higher attendance at breakfast provision than comparable schools that have some sort of formal breakfast club (33.5% relative to 31.7%, after adjusting for matching variables), a difference which is not statistically significant.
- Schools with only a breakfast club serve a particularly low share of their pupils. Such schools have a lower percentage of pupils served when compared with alternative provision only (15.1% relative to 27.7%) and schools with both a breakfast club and alternative provision (20.7% relative to 47.6%). Both of these estimated differences are significant at the 1% level.
- Conversely, we do not find a significant difference between schools with both a breakfast club and alternative provision and schools with only alternative provision.

Table 6: Results of matching analysis—percentage of pupils served breakfast

Analysis: comparator vs. treatment	I: Any breakfast club vs. alternative provision only	II.1: Breakfast club only vs. alternative provision only	II.2: Breakfast club only vs. both types	II.3: Both types vs. alternative provision only
Mean for comparator group, after adjusting for matching variables	31.53%	15.15%	20.73%	37.44%
Mean for treatment	33.47%	27.66%**	47.56%**	35.71%

group				
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Notes: ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1 (multiplicity-adjusted p-values)

Cost

This section first summarises the set-up and ongoing costs incurred by schools in the scale-up. Figures are provided per pupil enrolled at the school and per pupil served breakfast. We then compare the costs and staffing levels of the scale-up to those faced by schools in the original (2014/2015) programme. Finally, we compare costs and staffing levels per pupil enrolled and per pupil served between different types of provision observed in the scale-up—with a particular focus on comparing alternative models to the traditional breakfast club.

What were the overall costs to schools?

Based on cost survey data from 184 respondent schools, average set-up costs were £1,060 and average ongoing costs were £2,140 per year (in 2018 prices). In terms of personnel time (paid and unpaid), schools used 586 person-hours per year on average to deliver the intervention. This included 127 teacher hours, 248 teaching assistant hours, 155 support staff hours, and eight volunteer hours.

In line with the original evaluation (Crawford et al., 2019), we present our headline figures in terms of costs *per pupil enrolled*. Average set-up costs per pupil enrolled were £2.50 and average ongoing costs per pupil enrolled per year were £15.60 including market costs of NSBP food (which we assume are constant across schools) and £5.20 without. In terms of personnel time, schools used an average of 1.4 person-hours per pupil enrolled per year.

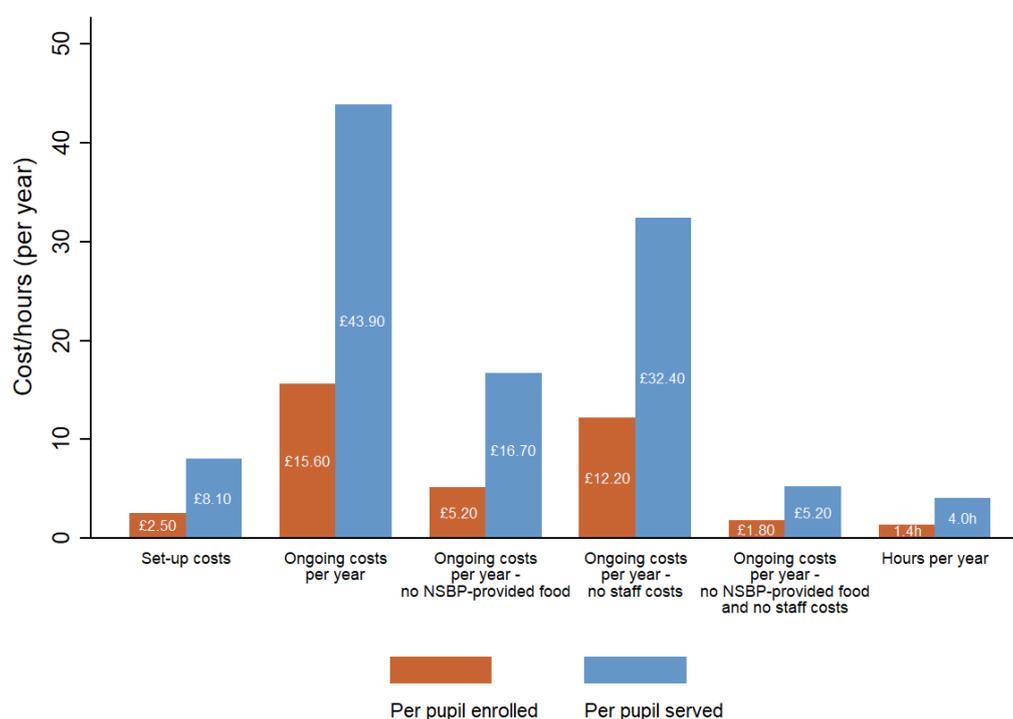
Headline figures include (calculated from Table 1 of Technical Appendix C and including fixed and ongoing costs):

- the cost to schools on the NSBP—assuming approximately two years of provision, the average cost to them per pupil enrolled is £6.40; this does not include the cost of NSBP-provided food; and
- the cost to schools if NSBP-provided food was charged at market rates (this is an approximation of the cost schools would face without the NSBP)—across two years, this would be £16.80 per pupil enrolled; across the three years (which is standard for EEF guidance), it would reduce to £16.40 per pupil enrolled.

In addition to calculating costs per pupil *enrolled*, we calculate costs per pupil *served breakfast*. Average set-up costs per pupil served are £8.10 and average ongoing costs per pupil served per year are £43.90 including the cost of NSBP-provided food charged at market rates and £16.70 not including this cost. In terms of personnel time, 4.0 person-hours were spent per pupil served per year. These are further detailed in Tables 2 and 3 of Technical Appendix C.

Schools may choose to implement a breakfast programme through extra paid staff time, reallocating staff time from other tasks, or recruiting volunteers. If we do not consider staff costs as part of ongoing costs (that is, if all staff time dedicated to the programme is unpaid), the average ongoing costs per pupil enrolled per year are £12.20 with NSBP-provided food and £1.80 without, and average ongoing costs per pupil served per year are £32.40 with NSBP-provided food and £5.20 without.

Figure 2: Costs per pupil enrolled and per pupil served for scale-up



How has this changed compared to the original evaluation?

The 2016 evaluation of the 2014/2015 Magic Breakfast programme found that it was highly cost-effective, with average set-up costs of £3.50 per pupil enrolled and ongoing costs of £11.50 per pupil enrolled per year (in 2018 prices). To compare the costs, the following are worth noting:

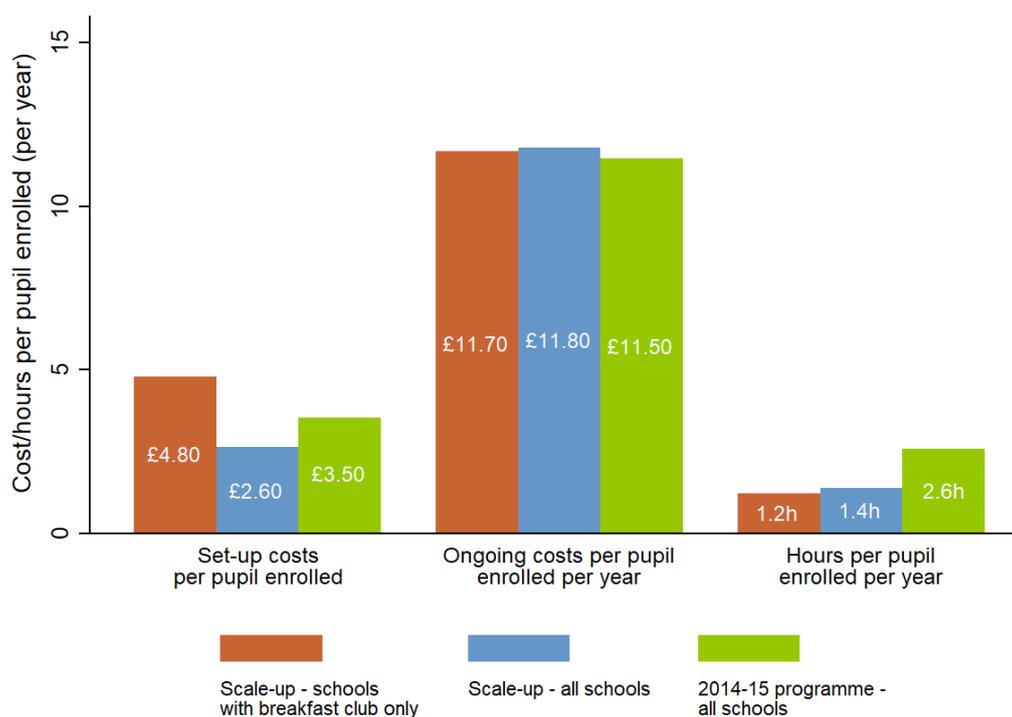
- The 2016 evaluation did not record as wide a range of costs as this evaluation. Specifically, it ignored ongoing costs other than food and drinks, as well as all costs unrelated to food and drinks incurred by FAMB. We therefore ignore the same costs when comparing this scale-up to the 2014/2015 programme.
- Furthermore, the intervention group in the 2016 evaluation contained a disproportionately large number of schools in the London area due to an error in the randomisation code. As a result, 47.6% of the 42 respondents to its cost survey were located in London. Conversely, only 14.7% of schools in our sample of respondents are in London. As unit costs are likely to be higher in London, we reweight our sample (for each category after outliers are excluded) so that it is representative of the previous intervention group.

All treatment-group schools in the 2014/2015 programme were supposed to run a breakfast club model only (though there was limited fidelity to the agreed intervention). If attention is restricted to the 40 respondent schools (out of 184 respondents) in our scale-up that ran a breakfast club model only, it is found that average set-up costs were higher, at £4.80 per pupil enrolled compared to £3.50 (both in 2018 prices). Average ongoing costs (not including ongoing costs other than food and drinks or costs unrelated to food and drinks incurred by FAMB) were very similar, at £11.70 per pupil enrolled per year compared to £11.50.

For all respondent schools in the scale-up, average set-up costs were lower, at £2.60 per pupil enrolled, and average ongoing costs (not including ongoing costs other than food and drinks or costs unrelated to food and drinks incurred by FAMB) were slightly higher at £11.80 per pupil enrolled per year. It is worth noting that differences in average costs per pupil enrolled between the two evaluations could be driven by differences in costs per pupil served or differences in the number of pupils served (that is, take-up). See Table 4 in Technical Appendix C for more information. The amount of personnel time used per year to deliver the intervention was much lower on average in the scale-up than the 2014/2015 programme. In the 2014/2015 programme, schools used 2.6 person hours per pupil enrolled per year. In the scale-up, schools that only ran a breakfast club model used 1.2 person hours per pupil enrolled per year. For all schools, the

figure is 1.4 person hours per pupil enrolled per year. This difference is driven by reduced hours of teaching assistants and volunteers in the scale-up. See Table 5 in Technical Appendix C for a breakdown by personnel type.

Figure 3: Costs per pupil enrolled of scale-up compared to 2014/2015 programme



Unlike the 2016 evaluation, an outlier rule was applied here because we have a larger sample, which allows us to more reliably identify outliers (see Technical Appendix C for further details). If this outlier rule was not applied, average costs per pupil enrolled were higher in the scale-up compared to the 2014/2015 programme. For schools that ran a breakfast club model only, average set-up costs were £7.00 per pupil enrolled and average ongoing costs were £12.80 per pupil enrolled per year. For all schools in our sample, these figures were £5.50 and £14.50 respectively. However, the average amount of personnel time per pupil enrolled per year was still slightly lower in the scale-up compared to the 2014/2015 programme: 1.8 hours for schools that ran a breakfast club model only and 2.1 hours for all schools (compared to 2.6 hours for schools in the 2014/2015 programme).

How did the costs and staffing levels of the different models compare?

Average costs (net of NSBP-provided food) and personnel hours per pupil served are much higher for schools with a breakfast club only compared to schools that use some sort of alternative provision. This is driven by the fact that schools with only a breakfast club typically serve a smaller percentage of their pupils, as found above. The differences are smaller when comparing costs per pupil enrolled at school but are still substantial in relative terms. More details are in Tables 6 and 7 of Technical Appendix C.

Figure 4: Costs per pupil enrolled by model type

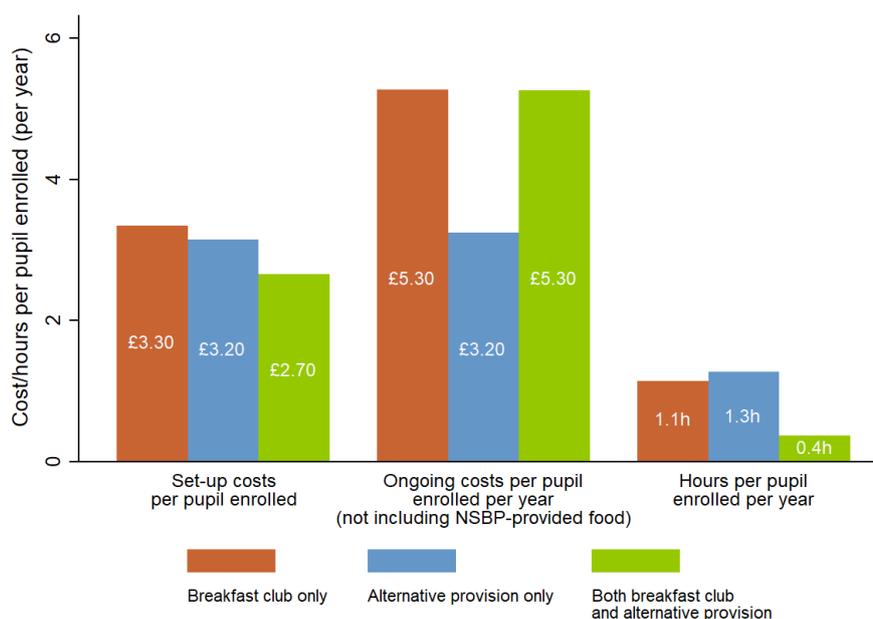
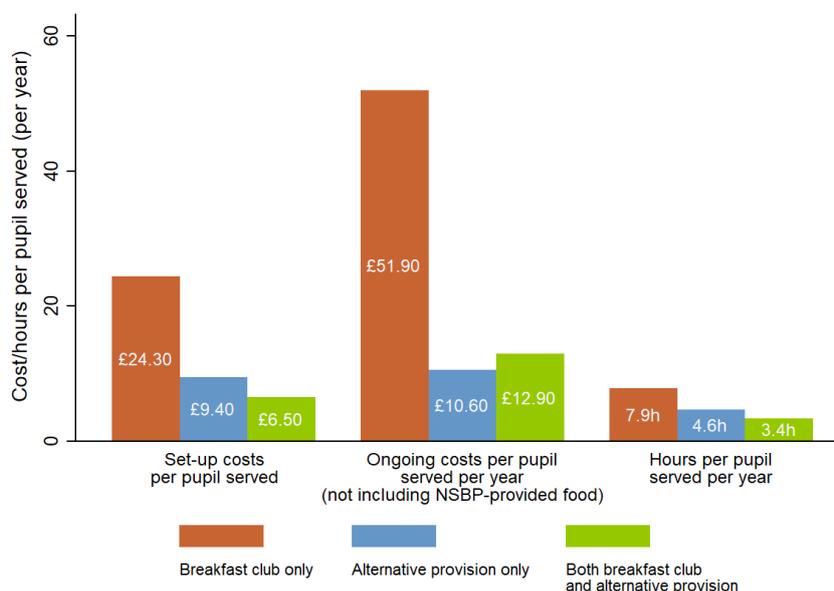


Figure 5: Costs per pupil served by model type



In combination with the attendance at provision figures, these cost figures provide tentative support that alternative provision models were not only a good way for schools to adapt the NSBP to suit their conditions but also reduced costs and improved reach of the programme. The issue with concluding that they are therefore successful adaptations is that—as highlighted elsewhere in the report—there was no impact evaluation of their effectiveness in reducing hunger, improving pupil behaviour, or changing academic outcomes.

Time

Overall, the objectives of the NSBP were achieved within the imparted timeframe. Delays at two key points of programme delivery were highlighted in interviews with NSBP management and delivery staff. Firstly, the anticipated programme start and contractual agreement between the delivery partners and the commissioner was delayed from an anticipated

January start to April the same year. This resulted in a smaller time window for recruiting NSBP delivery staff and schools. This was resolved by redeployment of experienced SPs from MB to start school recruitment into the NSBP while waiting for contractual sign-off and recruitment of new delivery staff into the NSBP. Secondly, delays were described in relation to deciding on the programme's practical approach to sustainability and funding extensions. This resulted in delays to planned sustainability visits in schools as a sustainability approach and corresponding support materials could not be developed and communicated to without clarity on future funding options.

Sustainability

Interviews with case study schools and NSBP staff revealed a strong perceived risk that the improvements to breakfast provision from the NSBP are not sustainable. Sustainability needed to be a clearer focus from the beginning of the NSBP and the fact that decisions on the funding were not made until later in the programme was an issue in crafting a coherent message of sustainability to schools. There was, initially, insecurity around continuation of funding and even when further funding was secured this was not long-term.

That said, it is not clear that even if these points were addressed that the problem of affording the provision out of school budgets could be overcome. As the above section on cost demonstrates, breakfast provision is not expensive in absolute terms and if a similar impact is maintained from the original evaluation, it will be cost-effective. However, in the absence of grant funding and subsidised food, schools are likely to alter arrangements. There were concerns in some schools about their ability to fund future breakfast provision and a number considered changing the type of food on offer, the amount of food offered, or introducing a charge. Overall, it was clear that the schools preferred bagels over possible alternatives, however, there were cases of schools comfortably deciding to switch to cereal or toast. On the other hand, this switch could also be seen as problematic from a sustainability perspective with one HT expressing concern over the nutritional value of alternatives, as well as additional costs associated with alternative food options:

'I worry if, if the food we can get sourced from somewhere else isn't as simple to prepare, then that will have a knock-on effect as well on the sustainability because it's got to be manageable. We chose not to do cereal because we would have to buy the milk to go with them, and we'd need to have somebody to manage it, supervise it.'

Schools may also reduce the number of days breakfast is provided, with another headteacher explaining that due to the cost of sustaining their current breakfast offer, the school considered reducing the provision of free bagels within their breakfast club from every day to three days per week:

'Instead of providing it every day and doing the Playground Bagels twice a week, we might just provide the bagels within the breakfast for three days, and two in the playground—in terms of costing.'

Finally, schools may act by adding in charges to some students and therefore re-introducing stigma into the provision or by restricting access in other ways (for example, by providing breakfast only on some days or restricting access to Pupil Premium students only).

Schools were offered guidance on sourcing food in-kind (mainly useful for sourcing food like bread and fruit) but overall schools were mainly tasked to find the practical solutions to sourcing food in cost effective ways after the programme ends. However, limits to school's capacity to both source and organise food in kind and alternative funding were highlighted by the NSBP management team. For example, limitations in the reliability of food in kind in terms of the types and amount of food that schools can source realistically means the schools would require knowledge of fluctuations of available surplus food and be able to organise a buffer to ensure reliable provision.

Sourcing funding is also very difficult because it requires knowledge, time, and effort from time-poor school staff. As noted in the introduction, breakfast is just one of many basic things schools need to source funding for and they may have exhausted many funding options already. Case study schools were also concerned about the risk of creating reliance in families on provision which may then need to be withdrawn due to budgetary constraints. On a positive note, in case study schools, the benefits were noticed by teachers, especially with the focus on measuring and recording improvements to attendance, behaviour, and hunger that the NSBP introduced in sustainability discussions. Schools were also receptive to the idea of teaming up to explore reducing food waste to increase the available supply of food.

Finally, the qualitative evidence supports the view that schools are accustomed to fluctuating funding and subsequently considered solutions to continue breakfast provision. The prevailing attitude was that if provision in its current form is not sustainable then short-term improvements to provision—as well as creating norms around eating breakfast, educating parents and children on the importance and content of a healthy breakfast, and tackling hunger within schools—were better than discontinuing breakfast beyond the programme.

Key drivers to reach, adaptability, and quality

The successes and limitations of the NSBP scale-up were driven by key barriers and facilitators. Programme recruitment, reach, quality, and sustainability were all strengthened or hindered by issues relating to the following four areas that are discussed in this section:

1. school factors;
2. stakeholder buy-in;
3. leadership and management; and
4. contextual factors.

This section addresses research questions 8–16, primarily through qualitative data from organisational and school interviews and observations:

- Why did schools choose particular delivery models?
- Was the organisational set-up and strategic management coordinated and collaborative?
- Was the delivery of the strategy well supported by effective use of management information?
- Did the strategy adequately address future sustainability?
- Did recruitment of School Partners (SPs) succeed at finding experienced, effective staff who could support schools?
- Did training provide practical lessons which increased SP effectiveness in supporting schools?
- Did the NSBP encourage a learning and feedback culture that supported good practice?
- Were materials provided to schools high-quality and did they help answer school questions?
- What aspects of the school environment were barriers or facilitators to NSBP support?

School factors

School factors drove the decision of which delivery model to implement as well as influenced the support SPs could offer. The key factors identified in the qualitative data that were perceived as influencing which model was chosen by the schools were:

1. whether they had an existing breakfast club;
2. concerns about behavioural issues of students;
3. characteristics of the case study schools; and
4. resources, staffing levels, and funding.

First, in cases where schools had an existing paid breakfast club, the schools generally chose to select a model that complemented their existing breakfast provision. The school staff reported that this was because they were aiming to improve the reach and accessibility of breakfast given their awareness of the barriers (for example, financial, stigma) faced by students in accessing their existing breakfast provision. As a result, the schools with existing breakfast clubs generally chose to opt for playground bagels or the classroom bagels model, which the SPs viewed as providing greater reach and uptake due to their flexibility in timing and location.

The second factor identified that influenced the model chosen by schools was concerns around students' behavioural issues, which influenced the school's view about the setting that would be most appropriate for the breakfast club. The staff that reported this concern felt that classrooms would not be suitable because students would make a mess and this would create additional work for the cleaners. For instance, one school had a rule that students cannot take food outside of the kitchen area and as a result, the only choice was to proceed with the traditional breakfast club. As a result, unless there were other more salient concerns and challenges (such as staffing), these schools chose playground bagels, a bagel bar, or the traditional breakfast club model.

The third factor identified that influenced the school's choice of the model was the characteristics of the school, which included the number of sites as well as the resources and facilities available. In terms of the former, some schools had multiple sites while others had both primary and secondary students. As a result, different models were chosen to accommodate the sites and different age groups respectively. In terms of the latter, school staff also reported taking into account the staff resources needed for delivering the breakfast, as well as the types of kitchen equipment and facilities required.

The school's resources, in particular access to breakfast equipment and adequate facilities, placed some schools in a more advantageous starting position than others, which impacted on their spending of the grant and their choice of breakfast model. Pre-existing access to breakfast equipment determined what the school would spend the grant on and whether they would need additional funding. Where a school had access to equipment, either through a pre-existing collaboration with an external breakfast partner or by having direct access to school-owned equipment, they could choose to focus the spending of the grant on specific additional needs linked to the NSBP provision (such as toasters or trays). When this was not the case, the schools had to spend the grant on more basic equipment such as freezers.

Access to a physical indoor space to deliver the provision was also an important determinant of the success of the breakfast as it allowed schools to cater for all types of students and withstand all weather conditions. A facilitator to this, however, was the wide variety of breakfast options available to schools, meaning that they could pick the model that would best accommodate for their available resources and facilities. For example, schools could switch from playground bagels to classroom bagels as the latter model does not require access to additional indoor facilities and facilitated delivery of the breakfast.

The school's ability to appropriately staff the breakfast provision—by either relying on staff, parents, or student volunteers or having to directly pay staff for their involvement—had significant impacts on the feasibility of the provision. Whether or not a school was able to staff the provision ultimately decided which type of model it chose. For example, some breakfast models, such as playground bagels, required staff to arrive earlier to open doors for students, which particularly heightened the schools' fears around staffing and discouraged some schools from picking this model despite other potential benefits.

More generally, delivering the provision of any breakfast model required help from staff members or volunteers to receive deliveries, prepare the food, and monitor the distribution. Where schools had come to rely on the help of staff, parents, or student volunteers to help deliver the provision of breakfast because they were unable pay their staff to be involved, BPLs explained they could not fully rely on volunteers being present. The reliance on students to monitor the provision was also seen as a double-edged sword: students benefited from the added responsibility and could use it as a way to learn new skills and gain in maturity, however, staff expressed concerns at students not having the time to eat breakfast as they were monitoring it. As a result, the schools' inability to fund staffing of the provision was a key barrier to delivery, leading to inefficiencies in the provision.

School partner support and school factors

Moderating school factors outside of the control of the NSBP also influenced the ability of SPs to support setup and delivery, notably existing awareness of hunger issues and logistical concerns.

1. Existing awareness of hunger issues in schools: this facilitated a quicker set-up process as, during the setup phase, pre-existing engagement of the senior leadership team and the BPL with hunger concerns allowed for the focus of the meeting to be set on making decisions about the provision. In cases where schools were reluctant to discuss existing hunger issues, SPs felt that this was due to a fear of highlighting the problem and being blamed for it. SPs attempted to minimise stigma and to reassure schools, however, this was challenging in the face of external pressure to perform, a key example of this being the School's Ofsted rating. In this scenario, the awareness of hunger issues would lead to a responsibility to intervene, on top of all of the other issues under the spotlight for an Ofsted review.
2. Logistical concerns: as the programme provision relied on a degree of appropriate infrastructure and personnel, schools also expressed concerns with the logistical aspects of setup. Schools worried that they would not be

able to host and run a breakfast provision and this led to them being hesitant to commit or to disengage once in the programme. Their concerns included:

- the suitability of their facilities and whether they belonged to the school (for example, in one case study school, their kitchen space did not belong to them);
- the sustainability of the programme;
- the workload of their staff;
- staffing costs; and
- conflicting with external catering and the loss of revenue from current catering.

SPs stated that despite all of their best efforts, some logistical barriers seemed insurmountable, for example one stated:

‘Some (schools), through no fault of our own, just really have some barriers in place that they are not prepared to overcome: when we go in to talk about the programme it is not the sort of this they are prepared to finance and therefore no matter how many answers you give them on how to overcome those barriers, some schools are just not willing.’

Critically, SPs explained that being able to share relatable evidence with the school’s senior leadership team, such as impact evidence or success stories (usually about improving attendance or test performance) from other local schools, made the potential benefits to the school more salient and generated buy-in. SPs also highlighted the importance of emphasising the ethos of the programme and generating empathy for hungry children among school leadership staff.

Stakeholder buy-in

The quality of the programme was improved by stakeholder buy-in. According to interviews with staff and students, the needs and preferences of parents, staff, and students were seemingly met, increasing the accessibility, and subsequently uptake, of the breakfast club as it became embedded into school routine.

The observed and reported impacts of the programme on students increased the buy-in for parents and staff. The range of perceived benefits reported by staff included an improvement in the punctuality of students that were previously latecomers, improved concentration, and increased engagement in class. In the case of parental buy-in in primary schools, staff reported that parents became aware of the programme through feedback from students and teachers alike. According to staff who had conversations with parents, being aware of the benefits motivated parents and staff to encourage students to attend the breakfast club and to make arrangements to ensure the students can access it (for example, by driving them to school earlier or walking them to get bagels as part of the extended reach provision). This was in contrast to secondary schools where staff reported minimal engagement from parents.

For students, buy-in was more complex, citing positive benefits such as the opportunity to socialise and the availability of food preferences as reasons for their attendance. Students were motivated to attend the breakfast club in part due to noticing positive changes in their wellbeing. Students reported in the interviews that they felt less grumpy, had more energy, and were less hungry the rest of the day.

Other students, who did not necessarily notice an improvement to their wellbeing, were motivated to attend because they enjoyed the social aspect—socialising with peers and staff, playing games, and generally enjoying having a soft start to the day. As a result, students’ enjoyment of the breakfast club improved their motivation to regularly attend it, even in cases where students did not like waking up earlier, and resulted in peer-to-peer promotion of the breakfast clubs. In terms of programme quality, staff felt this had positive benefits on accessibility because increased uptake reduced the visibility and stigma of the target population and gave students another reason to attend (such as to socialise) beyond the need for breakfast.

In secondary schools, food preferences were also a key contributor impacting students’ enjoyment and uptake of the breakfast programme. Student’s views of the food, as reported in student and staff interviews, varied from liking the food in general or only liking the bagels to disliking the bagels and recommending that additional food items were made available (for example, crumpets and toast); therefore, catering to all preferences was challenging for schools staff. Secondary school staff reported finding it difficult to manage the tension between providing quality food (in line with the food standards) and food and drink options that met student food preferences. This tension was particularly evident in secondary schools that were located near stores that provided other food options, which the staff viewed as less healthy

(such as crisps) but preferred by the students for breakfast. For instance, one of the case study schools, which did not have existing breakfast provision, was particularly motivated to participate in the NSBP programme in order to encourage students to eat healthier. However, given that some students did not like the NSBP-funded food options, they continued to purchase unhealthy food options from external vendors. This demonstrates the importance of considering whether the food options meet student preferences and the impact it might have on uptake of the breakfast programme for students who can afford alternatives. This is because low uptake, particularly in schools with a traditional breakfast club, can increase stigma by making the target population more identifiable in canteens that are not routinely used by students.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the NSBP scale-up impacted recruitment, reach, cost, and sustainability targets in both constructive and inhibitory ways. Firstly, the programme was commissioned by the DfE but run by external organisations with differing backgrounds, priorities, and ways of working. These differences led to both efficiencies and inefficiencies, specifically driven by:

1. commissioner decision-making;
2. collecting management information; and
3. the collaboration of resource organisations.

Furthermore, the NSBP was based on key assumptions about schools, specifically that schools understood their role, had adequate facilities and resources, and were able to manage staff time. To this end, the scale-up was facilitated and hindered by:

4. infrastructure and staffing;
5. targeting and promotion; and
6. financial resources.

Commissioner decision-making

The NSBP's timeframe for achieving **recruitment/reach** goals and developing an approach to **sustainability** were influenced by interactions with commissioner decision-making, especially at two crucial stages.

The start of the programme was delayed from an anticipated January 2019 start to April 2019 due to contractual negotiations. The delay meant that the timeframe for recruiting delivery staff and schools into the NSBP was reduced whilst school recruitment targets remained unchanged. In order to balance unchanged school recruitment targets with a shorter timeframe, Magic Breakfast redeployed their existing staff to recruit 178 schools into the NSBP while waiting for contractual sign-off. This was in part described as beneficial to shaping the school recruitment approach for the NSBP as the first schools were recruited by experienced MB staff and thus feedback was used to adapt the recruitment approach for the remaining schools. Redeploying staff from MB to help reach NSBP recruitment targets in a shorter timeframe came at a cost to MB as a separate organisation. A second delay was described in relation to deciding on the practical options for sustainability at the end of the NSBP. The plans for funding past the end of the programme were not agreed until near the end of the programme and the model for providing support was not agreed at the start between FA, MB, and the DfE. This delayed the sustainability work with schools as MB staff were unable to speak to schools and provide clarity. It was not viewed as feasible by NSBP management staff to do sustainability visits before there was clarity on the way ahead from the DfE and what the programme could offer.

Collecting management information

Commissioner decision-making also impacted the collection of management information (MI) as the DfE had a number of ad hoc requests for evidence outside of the initially agreed data collection schedule. The schools enrolled in the NSBP were split into two cohorts providing basic MI (90% of schools) or detailed MI (10% of schools). The basic MI was collected routinely through NSBP's Salesforce platform, a commonly used database system in the charity sector, which was tailored to the needs of the NSBP. The detailed MI was collected and submitted via Excel spreadsheets emailed to the school. The detailed data collection was organised in 'data weeks' where schools were asked to closely monitor and

submit data for one week of breakfast provision up to four times. The number of 'data weeks' depended on the school's time of enrolment into the NSBP.

Qualitative interviews with NSBP management, delivery staff, and schools revealed that the concept and organisation of data collection into 'data weeks' provided a useful framework for focused and detailed data returns. However, the quality and consistency of the data submitted from schools were lower than expected due to misunderstandings in how to collect and report data accurately. Supporting schools in accurately completing their data returns therefore **required more time and resources from the NSBP** than expected.

A number of potential improvements were identified. These included **timing** the 'data weeks' with less busy periods for both the schools and the NSBP delivery team. Having a **designated data person** with relevant experience responsible for completing data returns within each school and for this to be agreed upon and clarified in initial meetings with schools. Finally, suggestions of **anonymity or aggregation of** data returns from schools on **sensitive subjects** or subjects directly related to Ofsted assessments or programme funding were suggested due to concerns that schools may under or over report issues such as hunger if these were tied to either.

High level MI, such as school recruitment progress, was collected to inform decision-making and boost the speed of school recruitment and motivation among staff to reach targets for recruiting and follow up visits. Granular MI in the form of notes completed by SPs after each school visit were used to inform decision-making on school support requirements locally as outlined below.

- Programme-wide school recruitment progress was communicated to all staff routinely to boost motivation and communicate progress and Key Performance Indicators were communicated to the commissioner to evidence progress against contractual milestones.
- Individual dashboards visualising progress against school recruitment targets for SPs individually, Team Managers, and Regional Managers were described as 'motivating' and were a **driver for achieving rapid recruitment** of schools. School Partners found it motivating to have an understanding of both team and individual progress. Managers also found the dashboards useful for targeting support or investigating problems where recruitment was slower than desired.
- Notes on specific school progress and challenges after each visit were made by School Partners directly on the Salesforce platform. This provided useful and **granular monitoring information for SPs to make decisions on support requirements** for schools, either individually or in collaboration with their Team Manager. The detailed and accessible notes were also key sources of information to ensure continuity in support for schools when handovers occurred between SPs.

Organisational collaboration

Successful programme delivery was contingent on the establishment of a unified project team and a unified vision between the resource organisations. When entering the consortium, MB and FA brought distinct sets of expertise required for the large-scale delivery of the NSBP. The organisational and strategic management of the NSBP therefore required rapid integration and collaboration between the back-office operational functions and the front-line delivery functions provided by the two organisations to ensure effective, large-scale delivery of the programme. This did bring benefits, however it also brought challenges in meshing the organisations together, especially when combined with different work cultures and processes.

The organisational collaboration between FA and MB evolved throughout the programme. Initially, the consortium experienced challenges in establishing a collaborative partnership for delivering the NSBP, but gradually adjusted over the course of the programme. The main initial barriers to effective organisational collaboration were:

- **Existing differences in organisational cultures and ways of working.** Early on, operational processes (for example, decision-making) that were not initially aligned with the school year and programme delivery milestones resulted in a sense of division between the delivery (MB) and operational (FA) side of the NSBP. Where MB was accustomed to quick turnaround and flexibility in decision-making and operational processes, FA had developed highly structured processes for staff recruitment, appraisals, probation reviews, and supervision. An important contextual factor for these differences in organisational culture and

ways of working stemmed from the different size and purpose of the two organisations: where MB is a smaller organisation with a specialised focus, FA is a large organisation delivering 200+ services with a variety of models.

- **Changes and limited clarity on role responsibilities and decision-making authority.** The integration of programme delivery decisions and budget implications was initially experienced as a challenge. Schools that required additional support beyond the £500 universal set-up grant could apply to receive up to £2,000 in support from the NSBP sourced from a separately allocated part of the budget. The decisions on whether schools were eligible for additional support grants were handled by the NSBP delivery team (led by the Head of Delivery – Schools who is a Magic Breakfast staff member). Although FA managed the budget, had insights, and ultimately made decisions on spending, the decision to approve grants lay with MB, which did not have full access to this budget information.
- **Programme identity.** There were difficulties in establishing a cohesive programme identity both for SPs to identify with, and in branding to schools. The NSBP was a shared brand but operated by two organisations (rather than being a spin-off, separate organisation) and ownership of the branding was also not clearly defined. Furthermore, the NSBP was based on what was originally MB content and delivery model, however was *not* the normal Magic Breakfast model (which continued to run in other schools at the same time). This contributed to inconsistencies in messaging schools that sometimes referred to the programme as ‘the Magic Breakfast’ or even less helpfully in another as ‘the national bagel people’. Similarly, some SPs referred to themselves as being MB staff despite being employed by FA.
- **The delivery staff line management structure.** The line management structure for delivery staff who were employed by FA but line managed by MB initially contributed to a sense of organisational confusion. It resulted in a lack of clarity for delivery staff on where to reach out for support and a sense of being disconnected from their employer. Halfway through the programme this situation was described as ‘tricky’ (NSBP management) because line managers did not have ‘all the knowledge and connections’ to help, support, and connect delivery staff with their employer.

FA and MB were fundamentally different organisations, with MB specialising in school breakfast provision and FA delivering 200 different community-based services of a variety of models. Despite these differences, the two organisations were able to overcome initial challenges and deliver the NSBP. There was a gradual process of adjustment by management staff at both organisations to each other’s organisational ways of working, organisational mindsets, and individual management staff member’s ways of working. To get to this point, senior managers put in a significant amount of time to communicate on ways of working and to intervene in areas where there was tension or miscommunication. By the end of the programme, the consensus from the organisational interviews was that lines of communication and ways of working as a unified project team had improved and that the two organisations came to recognise each other’s strengths; for instance, drawing on FA’s expertise and experience with contractual and financial management together with MB intimate knowledge of the stories of impact that emerged at the front line of delivering breakfast to children in disadvantaged areas to advocate for further funding.

On the organisational side, a significant improvement was FA hiring operational managers around one year into the programme, who helped to:

- provide support to SPs in managing areas FA was in charge of, notably collecting data from schools;
- connect SPs to their employer (FA) in response to the problem that MB could not support SPs as an employer as FA employed them;
- establish more regular and effective communication at management level—operational board meetings and regular phone calls with HoD; and
- write and implement a joined-up operational plan for the NSBP, which included dealing with Salesforce, HR issues, food logistics, communication and best practice, external communications, and finance discussions (among other issues).

The operational managers worked with all levels within the delivery team from senior management to school support staff to improve communication and facilitate the implementation of collaborative ways of working between the two organisations with a focus on staff welfare and advising on Family Action’s systems and processes such as staff supervision and appraisal processes. For example, to improve communication and decision-making at the management level, operational board meetings were conducted more frequently and regularly (once a month) after the operational

manager roles were created. In these meetings, representatives from both Magic Breakfast and Family Action discussed operational needs and requirements, which were recorded and followed up through an operational action plan. The operational board meetings were purposefully separate from strategic board meetings and items discussed and actioned included the practical requirements of programme delivery at scale such as food delivery logistics, requirements for the MI data collection platform, and financial discussions around grants for schools. Management teams on both sides experienced that the function of the operational manager role improved communication and the (in the words of one NSBP management team member) 'stream of responsiveness' between the two organisations helped to facilitate operational collaboration.

School partners

Interviewees from FAMB were unanimous that recruitment and reach were supported by experienced, knowledgeable, and dedicated SPs. The NSBP engaged in targeted recruitment of delivery staff and provided early clarity on role expectations, which contributed to highly motivated and confident staff with relevant experience. The NSBP used a targeted approach to recruiting delivery staff through websites such as Charity Jobs to attract applicants with experience aligned with the purpose and goals of the NSBP. Examples of backgrounds of interviewed SPs included former school teachers (some with extensive experience of teaching) and people with experience working in school programmes for the charitable sector. This was important as there are no specific qualifications needed for the SP role to serve as a filter so motivation and experience of the school sector were important to target.

Clarity from recruitment stage

Early during the recruitment stage, clear expectations helped SPs to prepare appropriately for the role. SPs explained that Regional Managers (RMs) had taken the time to discuss the role in detail during the interviews allowing them to gain a better understanding of role expectations. One SP left the meeting with a clear understanding of the programme purpose and their part to play in its success, saying:

'This role seemed to really combine those two things. The requirement to really understand the challenges of disadvantaged families and having an impact on schools and overcome barriers that are faced by said disadvantaged families.'

The targeted recruitment approach helped to find and hire staff who had either worked directly in schools in previous roles or had previously held a support role in an education or charity context. SPs confirmed that they knew what to expect from their role and felt adequately informed about their own responsibilities but noted that further clarity could be gained by receiving a letter describing a typical 'day in the life' from an existing SP to clarify what happens in practice.

Clarity and confidence were demonstrated in the SPs' approach to recruitment visits. They did targeted research before meeting with schools, for example, about existing breakfast provision and the catering companies involved to ensure NSBP provision was compatible with them. Such background knowledge of the school's specific context improved the quality of the recruitment visits, helping SPs to anticipate and answer complex questions during the meeting. SPs were also confident in working with schools to solve potential challenges ahead of delivery setup. One SP discussed the staffing concerns of a school and stated that they were able to suggest movement among the staff to ensure delivery was possible:

'So often the things that we suggest is that can they look at people's contracts—can they move people's hours? So one example is a school that has taken one TA's time and she starts one hour earlier on Monday to Thursday and then leaves earlier on Friday afternoon, so she gets a half day back on Fridays essentially.'

After set-up, one SP commented that their experience helped them to anticipate the need to keep up to date with the latest development from the school by ensuring that support is tailored to changing needs, and the need to be empathetic and supportive—as schools are very busy it is necessary to make processes as easy as possible.

In this way, SPs reduced the need for on-the-job learning and used their previous experience of working with schools to address prominent school challenges, in this case staffing, to solve a problem before it affected programme delivery.

Providing flexible support

The flexibility of NSBP support for SPs and for schools was a necessary factor in programme set-up and delivery. Staff training was a successful combination of theory and more practical and flexible shadowing of Regional Managers to give SPs real experience of working with schools. The practical focus of the training allowed SPs to gain hands-on experience in the role before supporting schools independently, contributing to building both the SP's skillset and confidence when subsequently delivering support to schools, as one SP highlighted:

'I think for me, I learn by doing things, so seeing it in action was what really drilled it home for me because although the classroom training was useful, I had sort of the black and white written down, but seeing it in practice was sort of, essential for me really. I do think you need both, but I don't think I would have been confident in doing it myself without shadowing somebody else doing it.'

In conjunction with training, the support materials developed by NSBP allowed SPs to tailor their support and advice to individual school contexts and needs, including recognising when schools felt overloaded by the quantity of information available. According to the sampled interviewees, the materials and support provided a solid base for SPs to build on and they expressed confidence in their ability to use the materials and to successfully communicate with schools in a variety of contexts. This helped SPs tailor their support to each school's unique context. For example, SPs had a range of breakfast models to discuss with schools rather than one unique model, which meant they could pick the appropriate model for the school's specific context. As one SP highlighted, this took a significant amount of pressure off schools:

'[The breakfast provision] models—there's something there that works for all schools, I find. They are all completely different so the process you go through when they tell you about their school and the pack, I mean, it's so well resourced and the schools, they say, "Oh my gosh, I don't really have to do anything—you have provided me with everything."

This also allowed SPs to suggest changes in models halfway through the school's journey if their experience with one model was challenging allowing SPs to iterate the process until the model best fit the school. This flexibility was also important to effective school engagement.

Despite the effectiveness of the NSBP materials, there were also circumstances where schools felt that the amount of information given was excessive and where school staff explained they wanted to have time to think through the options outside of the meeting. Some schools would have appreciated more time to think through the right breakfast model for their circumstances, the delivery logistics, and the sustainability plan for the school, where one school felt that the level of information shared was too complex, contributing to making the process time-consuming and stressful.

Encouraging shared practice

Shared practice was a key component of success for both SPs and schools. NSBP established networks of experience-sharing for SPs, facilitating communication between SPs and their line managers in different areas. This rapid feedback allowed for dynamic programme set-up in schools, able to be adapted for emerging school needs. A similarly open line of communication and feedback was established between SPs and schools and, through networking events, between schools and other schools in the programme.

The delivery side of NSBP created methods of communication and continuous experience sharing between SPs in addition to feedback and best practice sharing from line managers. A crucial aspect of the continuous skills sharing was frequent communication via WhatsApp groups and email. This set-up facilitated rapid feedback loops and targeted experience sharing where SPs could get almost immediate advice from other SP's or Team Managers on specific challenges they were facing with schools throughout programme delivery. This enabled rapid sharing of solutions to challenges such as school engagement, contextual barriers, and practical support and widened delivery staff's ability to provide tailored and effective support through troubleshooting and drawing on the ongoing accumulated knowledge within the whole team. One SP spoke of a regional team WhatsApp group, where best practice could be shared quickly across a range of challenges:

'So we're all doing different things, so we've all experienced different things so it could be as simple as asking a question about "where is the best place to purchase insulated boxes from?" or it could be something like, "I've been to a school today and they said this and this, has anybody experienced that before?"'

This rapid feedback was so particularly important as, stated in the quote, SPs were all doing different things in their schools in order to meet different school needs at different times and so feedback and solution generation needed to be more immediate and responsive to this; delays to feedback would mean delays to solutions and potentially delivery. Ultimately, this approach to ongoing support was highlighted as a key facilitator to building the relationship between the SP and the school, fostering trust and engagement from the school. One SP discussed how they were able to discuss their approach with schools at a team meeting:

'I went and took that to a team meeting and said "has anyone got any advice and this is what I'm finding" and some of the schools partners said they found the same and what they would do is sort of explain it there and then and say, "Look, I'm not here to catch you out, I'm not here to say you should be doing this and this, I'm asking so we can understand what the school's needs are." And since, I've been saying that I think schools have been more open with me.'

An additional collaborative tool at the delivery stage was the NSBP events for schools, which, when they were attended by Breakfast Provision Leads (BPLs), provided an opportunity to share best practices and learn from other schools' experiences, allowing schools to implement changes before they experienced challenges. An example of such a change from one school was the addition of a parents' breakfast, where parents were invited to the breakfast provision once a term. The BPL learned of this idea from an NSBP event and attributed their high uptake levels, in part, to the decision to implement this parent breakfast as part of their provision. However, a key barrier to attendance of these events was the time commitment it required from BPLs and the availability of events closer to the school's local area. For this reason, access to these events was limited and meant that schools did not all gain access to this additional source of information and support.

Targeting and promotion

The use of multiple strategic targeting practices in promoting and delivering the breakfast club affected the schools' ability to reach the right children. Successful strategic practices involved both the overt promotion of the breakfast club to all students as well as covert targeting of specific students that were identified as at-risk of hunger. It was generally observed that the case study schools that were able to successfully implement overt and covert targeting practices were able to reach the right children without stigma by improving overall uptake of breakfast (that is, by all students) and increasing the perceived accessibility of the breakfast.

Overt targeting and promotion

Schools employed a range of overt promotion activities to raise student, parent, and staff awareness of the breakfast club. This ranged from posters in the school, whole-school assembly, word of mouth promotion by staff and students, newsletters, as well as information being posted on social media (for example Twitter), the school website, and TV screens within the school. The purpose of the overt promotion was to raise awareness of when and where the breakfast club takes place, the type of food available, and that it is free. School staff and students generally reported that the most important and memorable element was the emphasis that it is free and available to all.

An example of overt promotion working well was when staff actively encouraged all students to take a bagel when they passed by them on the playground, which increased perceptions of accessibility and contributed to reducing the stigma around attending the traditional breakfast club or taking a bagel in the classroom or in the playground.

Covert targeting and promotion

Case study schools also employed covert targeting practices to ensure that students at risk of hunger were aware of the breakfast provision and felt that it was accessible. The targeted promotion activities ranged from texting, calling and speaking directly to parents of students that are considered to be at risk, and informing teachers and other staff about the extended reach options available for accessing breakfast. However, an exception to this was a Pupil Referral Unit case study school in which all students were considered vulnerable and there was no evidence of specific identification and targeting practices being used beyond the overt promotion to all students.

Also, in primary schools, targeted promotion of the breakfast club to parents was a key factor influencing reach. This included raising awareness that it is free, about the food options available, and about when the breakfast club takes place. In some schools, the staff reported calling parents to explain the food options (for example, what a bagel is) because they were aware that this type of food was not common in some cultures. There was no evidence that targeting

parents played a role in secondary schools, which might be due to older students being more independent and reflected in staff reporting that parents were not generally engaged in school-related matters.

Lastly, the key factor that influenced the extent, continuation, and effectiveness of the overt and covert targeting practices was having actively engaged and passionate staff and BPL. Continuing to employ a wide range of promotion activities required the involvement of the staff, such as teachers and pastoral team, and the BPL. The BPL was the driving force behind those efforts, especially in the first round of promotion activities, while sustaining the practices required the involvement of other staff.

Financial resources

Programme quality was challenged and supported by programme funding. Specifically, the additional funding provided by NSBP positively influenced adoption of the model with fidelity, while challenges in obtaining further funding to provide a greater variety of food options and reimburse staff helping with breakfast club delivery were barriers to fidelity. Ultimately, this had an impact on student uptake of breakfast, as well as on the quality of food provided and accessibility of the breakfast.

- **NSBP funding impacted breakfast delivery and student enjoyment of breakfast.** The additional funding provided by NSBP allowed schools to purchase the resources required (for example, kitchen equipment) to deliver the breakfast as well as games and activities that increased student enjoyment of attending the traditional breakfast clubs. The school's decisions about what to purchase depended on the existing resources they had available and directly impacted the school's ability to provide breakfast. After the necessary items were acquired, any left-over funding was used to purchase activities for students. Student enjoyment of the breakfast club contributed to higher uptake and consequently influenced reach and accessibility through peer-to-peer promotion and reduced stigma for students most in need of the programme.
- **Availability of additional funding impacted food quality.** It was observed and reported that schools were facing multiple competing priorities and challenges (such as dealing with safeguarding issues and issues with student attainment), which made it difficult for some staff to find the time to source additional funding. As a result, in cases where additional funding was required and schools were not able to obtain it, this influenced the range of food options available at no cost to students. In some cases, this resulted in lower fidelity with regards to food quality as the schools were not able to provide additional food options to satisfy the food standards criteria (such as fruit).
- Further, schools with an existing paid breakfast also faced the challenge of making additional food options accessible to students. In these schools, while a wider range of food options was generally available, it was not accessible to all as some students would not be able to afford it. Nevertheless, some schools were able to resolve this issue by working out a deal with their canteen providers who were able to provide some food items at a low cost or no cost, or having the capacity to make their existing breakfast provision alongside the NSBP-funded food free for all students.
- **Availability of additional funding impacted ability to obtain support to deliver breakfast.** In some schools, the availability of additional funding also impacted their ability to obtain staff support to deliver breakfast and an over-reliance on staff that regularly assisted with delivering the breakfast. Some schools resolved this by recruiting volunteer support from one or more of the stakeholders including students, parents, school staff, and kitchen staff. The staff in these schools saw this as a temporary solution due to issues related to volunteer reliability and concerns about staff workload.

Conclusion

Figure 6: Key conclusions

Key conclusions

1. The NSBP successfully recruited 1,811 schools, exceeding the initial target of 1,775 and equalling the revised target. Within these schools the reach of the programme was extensive, with 38.6% of children at NSBP schools served breakfast compared to 6.5% before the intervention started.
2. The high degree of direction and support provided to schools by the NSBP was important to the successful reach of the programme. This included financial support in the form of grants, resource-based support through provision of free food and promotional materials, and support provided by trained NSBP staff members (School Partners).
3. The scale-up strategy did not sufficiently address sustainability at the outset. The programme focused mainly on expanding the number of schools and pupils receiving breakfast due to tight timelines and ambitious school recruitment goals, with a lesser focus on ensuring schools would be able to sustain breakfast provision after the initial period of funded support.
4. The NSBP addressed most concerns highlighted in the original evaluation of Magic Breakfast published in 2019 and adopted a more flexible approach, encouraging schools to consider a range of breakfast options from the outset rather than primarily endorsing a traditional breakfast club model. Whether adopting alternative models changes the impact of the programme on pupils is unknown and beyond the scope of this evaluation. However, the alternative models promoted by the NSBP reached more pupils, required less staffing, and were cheaper.
5. Provision accessibility was rated highly by NSBP staff conducting breakfast visits and most schools had reasonable strategies to identify and target pupils in need with the result that attendance of disadvantaged pupils equalled or exceeded attendance of non-disadvantaged pupils in most schools. However, most schools levied at least some charge for breakfast provision on some students.

Interpretation

To analyse the NSBP as a whole, it is useful to return to the ExpandNet (WHO, 2009) framework and in particular the vertical, horizontal, and functional elements of scaling. As a reminder:

- horizontal scaling means to recruit and support institutions to ensure that the intervention can serve more recipients;
- vertical scaling means to ensure that changes are embedded in existing or new institutions to ensure changes persist after the end of the programme; and
- functional scaling means diversification of the programme where appropriate to accomplish the above goals while also not losing the core elements that made it successful.

The horizontal scaling of the NSBP was a success with 1,811 schools recruited, equal to the revised target. The reach of the programme was extensive, with 38.6% of children at NSBP schools served breakfast by the breakfast visit stage compared to 6.5% of children in prior provision (an increase of 32.1 percentage points). This was enabled (among other ways) through the grant scheme, training given to SPs to improve recruitment, and both charities' experience of recruiting schools for programmes.

The vertical scaling of the NSBP was initially not prioritised in the scale-up strategy, which was also exacerbated by slow decision-making by the DfE on what funding for the sustainability model for the programme would look like. Later in the programme, there were extensions made to the funding and a sustainability grant provided, but these are unlikely to be sufficient to stop schools needing to downgrade their provision to deal with budgetary shortfalls. One success here was the sustained focus of the NSBP on demonstrating impact to schools.

The functional scaling of the NSBP—in particular, the changes made to the narrower original provision model—appears to have been largely successful. Alternative provision models required less staffing, reached far more pupils at lower cost and similar staffing time requirements, and seem to have been crucial to allowing schools to adapt the programme to their own constraints and circumstances. The provision remains at a low cost per pupil, even if the food had been costed at market prices. Fidelity to the core tenets of the model appears to have been largely maintained, although the social aspect of the original model whereby pupils socialised with one another in breakfast settings—which was noted to be a crucial element of fidelity—could not be measured.

It was clear that the NSBP had a comprehensive but adaptable scale-up strategy, at least for the duration of the funding, based on a high degree of direction and support from the NSBP—financial via grants, human via the School Partners, and resource-based via food and promotion materials. This was effectively achieved by the NSBP recruiting experienced and motivated staff to whom they provided effective, practical, and theoretical training. These staff were able to recruit schools and effectively manage school needs.

Lessons for organisations that intend to scale-up existing interventions

The main transferable lessons are as follows:

1. Ensure a comprehensive scale-up strategy exists and that it addresses the key points raised in the ExpandNet framework or a similar scaling framework. In particular, it is crucial that it addresses, early on, embedding the changes made by the programme (what this report has termed 'sustainability').
2. Supporting schools is crucial to ensuring fidelity and that schools remain in the programme. This support requires effective recruitment, training, feedback, and learning processes. Resource organisations should consider how they can do this subject to their own constraints.
3. Flexibility is needed to enable schools to create tailor-made solutions to their unique needs, but does come at the cost of potentially affecting the impact of the intervention.
4. Collaboration between the original delivery organisation and a larger, more established charity can provide liquidity, back-office support, and experience in managing large contracts. However, collaboration also requires defined roles and operational structures, shared understanding of goals, and planning for how to deal with disagreements.
5. There is a need to assess the implications of planned programme adaptations prior to implementation as well as the way intervention will be maintained after the end of the programme.
6. Management information (data collected about the programme) needs to balance how burdensome it is to schools with the value of the data collected to operational needs.

Scale-up strategy

Similar to how scale-up theory is useful to evaluators, it can be helpful for resource organisations to adopt a scaling framework and use it to write a comprehensive scale-up strategy. This is important because there are a significant amount of complex elements when scaling including how to recruit and support schools, how to set up a cohesive scaling team, and how to ensure the changes remain embedded within schools.

As is highlighted in sections on 'Overall scale up strategy' 'Did the NSBP meet its targets' and 'Key drivers to reach, adaptability, and quality', initial lack of clarity and limited attention paid to the sustainability aspect caused challenges for the NSBP. There were multiple factors that played into the lack of early clarity on sustainability such as opportunities for extended funding, additional grants to schools, and not testing the sustainability model on a smaller scale before the large scale roll-out. In sum, although schools were aware of the time limited offer of the NSBP-funded breakfast and the sustainability aim, the practicalities of how schools would achieve this were not clear at the outset and could not be communicated in detail, nor were there relevant examples from previous experiences with the initially proposed sustainability approach. While some of these were unavoidable, understanding and testing the practical aspects of sustainability and communicating a clear message to schools at the start is crucial to get them thinking beyond the life of the programme and to start planning early.

School support

For a scale-up to be successful, it is crucial that schools are well-supported throughout the implementation process, especially for more intensive interventions, to ensure programme fidelity and ongoing engagement as well as prevent drop-out. Part of providing high quality school support is recruiting and training support staff. In the NSBP, the recruitment was effective in terms of ensuring staff had strong experience in the school system and the training was viewed by staff as highly practical. The support staff were responsible for providing a structured series of face to face visits and connecting schools with other forms of support (materials to promote the programme to parents, inter-school events, and ad hoc emails to school partners).

These supporting activities (the structured visits, materials, and ad hoc support) were all viewed, overall, as a very positive part of the NSBP by case study schools and school partners alike and were provided by staff with relevant skills and capacity. Future organisations involved in scale-up efforts should consider the mechanisms of support that they can afford to provide relative to the complexity of their intervention and their budget.

In order to enable this support, targeting the recruitment of experienced staff, as well as ensuring training is both practically and theoretically grounded, is crucial. This works well alongside practices that promote a learning and feedback culture, as well as written materials which together work to support both resource organisation staff and schools themselves.

Flexible delivery

The flexibility of the NSBP in terms of how the programme was delivered was both a benefit (in terms of enabling recruitment and adapting to school conditions) and an unresolved issue (as the impact on effectiveness of these changes could not be measured). However, it is clear from the qualitative work that flexibility was crucial in the ability of the programme to expand into a range of different school contexts, and it is worth noting that even in the original evaluation not all schools fit perfectly into the breakfast club model. Flexibility also allowed the NSBP to be very solutions-focused in their delivery approach and willing to adapt it to school needs and the national context (in the most extreme case recently due to COVID-19).

Cross-organisational collaboration

Small charities may find it challenging to quickly begin implementing a successful programme at scale as scaling efforts require considerable financial and staff resources that may not be readily available. Therefore, it can be highly beneficial for a smaller charity to partner with a larger charity with stronger financial reserves. Similarly, larger charities often have more established back-office functions (for example, HR or finance) and typically have more experience handling larger contracts or other pools of funding. These factors are precisely why Family Action (FA) and Magic Breakfast (MB) worked together on the NSBP.

However, successful collaboration is very difficult due to differences in culture, priorities, and ways of working. For scale-up efforts involving collaborations between organisations, there is a need to consider, early in the process:

1. **Defined roles and decision-making powers.** As an example, on the NSBP, Magic Breakfast was responsible for delivery while Family Action held responsibility for the budget. However, delivery decisions clearly affect the programme budget in many cases, and this left a lack of clarity for sign-off of changes to delivery.
2. **Defined operational structures.** For the NSBP, delivery staff were recruited by Family Action but seconded to Magic Breakfast. However, the operations structure in the two organisations were not aligned and therefore challenges with supervision, line management, and handling staff performance issues emerged.
3. **Shared understanding of goals.** It is important to ensure that both organisations share an understanding of the overall purpose of the programme as well as a common strategy for the sustainability of changes after the end of the scale-up process.
4. **Planning for dealing with disagreements.** Disagreements are inevitable in any collaborative effort, so it is important to have a plan in place to handle them efficiently and fairly as they arise. It can be useful to anticipate ways in which a collaborative effort might fail, and pre-mortems can be a useful exercise to identify potential conflicts in advance (the concept is from Klein, 2007) and has been evaluated in diverse settings in Peabody (2017). In a pre-mortem, participants imagine a project has failed, generate a list of reasons why that would have happened, and then adjust their plans and structures to prevent these reasons for failure.
5. **Branding and programme identity.** As noted in 'Overall scale up strategy,' management staff interviewed commented that were the NSBP to run again, there should have been more efforts for the two organisations and their management to get to know each other as well as agree a common programme identity. Suggestions included hiring consultants to understand culture, personality, and different priorities and having clearer discussions about branding in promotional materials and how to present the NSBP to staff.

Implementing changes to an intervention

Where changes are made to how an intervention is delivered or to how it might be maintained after the end of the formal scale-up programme, these changes should have their weaknesses tested using a pre-mortem (as explained above) and, where applicable, piloted in a small number of schools before scaling.

As mentioned throughout the report, three major changes were made to the operating model:

- the context was changed—from primarily primary schools to all schools;
- the intervention was changed—from primarily breakfast clubs to many forms of breakfast provision; and
- the sustainability options were changed—the original sustainability model developed and offered by MB centred on a membership providing heavily subsidised food for a fixed fee determined by pupils on roll; in the NSBP scale-up, the sustainability model was different, not previously tested, and limited to fixed funding in the form of a one-off grant with the expectation that schools would independently source food and continue breakfast provision with Pupil Premium funds (this was also decided quite late in the programme).

While significant thought was put into explaining the new intervention options, the perception from case study schools and SP interviews was that the other two changes were slower to be addressed.

The NSBP had to very rapidly adapt the materials from the original context to these changes and the adaptation to secondary schools was more time consuming than for primary schools. Where detailed 'tried, tested, and iterated' resources for primary schools were available to be adapted and used in the NSBP, the resources for secondary schools required more development as the programme had only been delivered in a small number of secondary schools previously. Where School Partners were supporting primary schools, they felt that materials were appropriate and tailored from the start, but secondary school materials were slower to be produced. Once created, however, secondary-specific materials and resources were felt to be appropriate.

For sustainability, there was a need to 'begin with the end in mind'. In the NSBP, significant focus was placed on the horizontal expansion of the programme (increasing reach) and sustainability was viewed as having been neglected until later in the programme owing largely to time pressures in the initial start-up period and lack of clarity on the options for a sustainability model in practice. Further, the Department for Education had not decided at the beginning of the contract what funding for provision after the end of the NSBP would look like.

Management information—managing the information-burden trade off

Monitoring scale-up efforts is vital to drive change: our evaluation found that monitoring efforts can provide motivation to staff, insight on how recruitment and delivery are going, and evidence of achieving milestones for the funder.

However, case study schools viewed the data collection as overly burdensome and in organisational interviews, the view was that the data was not used to its full potential to drive continuous improvement. As an example, the NSBP had an outcomes framework that attempted to capture fidelity to the core model but according to participants in the organisational interviews, the results were not feeding directly into 'on the ground' changes to operating models.

Further, apart from volume it is important to consider the timing of data collection. The view from organisational interviews on the NSBP was that data collection was very inflexible and predicated on delivery being on-target to make sense and to meet timelines to the funder, rather than operational usefulness. Each school was also required to contribute to each 'data week' whereas it might have made more sense to have each school contribute to only one or two (assuming schools could be representatively sampled).

Remedies to address these problems in future scale-ups would include:

- providing support to schools on the data collection process, for example, by giving practical tips to schools on best practices for collecting data in initial meetings, helping schools integrate data collection with their class registers, and giving schools long notice of data collection;

- encouraging schools to appoint a dedicated data person (who would have an understanding of the value of the reporting and familiar with data collection tools) rather than having office assistants as the contacts for data collection; this person could also be the target of a support visit, if these are provided;
- ensuring that any funder requests for data were firmly, contractually agreed at the start of the programme (or new requests had to be included in regular data collection);
- guaranteeing that there was a specific need for every data point collected by ensuring there is joined up thinking with the funder and a clearly defined data collection/monitoring strategy and purpose; and
- choosing a representative subsample of schools to provide data at key decision-making points rather than all schools.

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Further Appendices

Appendices A–C are available as a separate document (Technical Notes).

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