

## FFT Education Ltd

Address	Key contacts
The Pavilion 60 Eastgate Cowbridge Vale of Glamorgan CF71 7AB	Thea Needs (Project Co-Ordinator): 9 years' experience supporting schools to interpret their performance data and co-ordinating a diverse portfolio of international projects.  Email: <a href="mailto:thea.needs@fft.org.uk">thea.needs@fft.org.uk</a>  Kate Tinsley (Data Manager): 20 years' experience working with education data across government and international projects.  Email: <a href="mailto:kate.tinsley@fft.org.uk">kate.tinsley@fft.org.uk</a>

### Information about our services

#### Experience in Educational Data Collection

FFT have delivered data collection for a wide range of EEF-funded projects across both primary and secondary phases and has been a member of the EEF Data Collection panel for a number of years. Our experience covers the collection of contextual, demographic, attainment and attendance data for projects in literacy, science, and whole-school SEND interventions.

This includes managing strict timelines and coordinating directly with schools on behalf of evaluators. FFT has a long track record in collecting and processing pupil assessment data and other pupil data (e.g., census data and attendance data) from schools, using a range of tools and systems, and for a number of different projects and customers. Some examples include:

- Collecting data from the 16,000 schools using FFT Aspire (pupil information, census data, attainment and attendance data) to provide analyses to schools.
- Processing and matching the large-scale data collected from schools with national pupil-level datasets from the National Pupil Database (matching school data to national census and attainment datasets).
- Managing the processing and matching of data for the National Pupil Database for DFE for 10 years (from 2006 to 2017).
- FFT has managed the DFE TALIS National Centre (international OECD survey for teachers) which has collected teacher data and survey responses from roughly 8,000 teachers in 400 schools.

- In Wales we manage the annual school checking exercise for schools and colleges which involves collecting and validating pupil-level data from over 200 schools each year on behalf of the Welsh Government.
- Through our work with EEF, we process and match the pupil-level datasets from all EEF evaluations which include assessment data from standardised tests, other data from schools and DFE NPD data.
- Through FFT Aspire Data Exchange, FFT collects data directly from school management information systems (MIS) with the schools' permission. This reduces complexity and workload burden for schools. Aspire Data Exchange is installed in over 8,000 schools.
- FFT's Education Datalab research team has considerable experience in collecting, processing and analysing education data and collaborates with research teams in universities, standardised test providers and other research organisations to evaluate education outcomes and impact.

We have substantial experience working with all major UK standardised assessment providers, including: GL Assessment, Durham / CEM, NFER, Rising Stars, PiXL and other assessment providers as required. We routinely collect and process data from a wide range of standardised assessments (e.g., PIRA, NGRT, NRRT, science assessments, literacy diagnostics), and can adapt to any provider's format or requirements.

Our data collection work spans across Primary (KS1 and KS2), Secondary (KS3 and KS4) and involvement in whole-school interventions covering multiple cohorts simultaneously. We have extensive experience capturing specialist and contextual data for:

- SEND
- FSM and FSM Ever 6
- EAL
- Socio-emotional indicators
- Whole-school and targeted intervention cohorts

We have supported:

- Whole-class assessments
- Whole-school universal assessments
- Centralised collection of standardised test scores
- Remote data submission and processing through secure digital systems

We also lead coordination with assessment providers to ensure complete and accurate data transfer for evaluators.

We have extensive experience managing large-scale data collection. Across the last two years alone, our Projects Team has collected data for over 16,500 pupils across multiple whole-school interventions, each with tight and fixed data collection windows.

## Field Force Capacity and Expertise

FFT works solely within the education sector and specialises in the collection and analysis of education data. We have a large team of 101 staff who can support the delivery of data collection and processing projects for EEF evaluators:

- Team based in Cardiff (62 staff), London (10 staff) and home-based (29 staff)
- 25 staff based in our school operations team who work with schools every day to support schools for Aspire or other education projects being managed by FFT on behalf of customers
- 10 data analysts, statisticians and researchers with considerable experience in collecting, processing, cleaning, matching and analysing large-scale education datasets
- Software and IT team of 18 staff who develop, manage and support the IT systems and platform used by FFT and schools to collect, process and analyse education data
- UK-wide team of 8 education consultants who work with schools every day providing training, support and consultancy to school leaders, governors, data managers and teachers.
- Experienced education project management team which includes project managers, data managers and project coordinators who manage the delivery of work for external customers and internal projects using a well-established project management process. This team has experience of recruiting schools for research projects and supporting schools in collecting and providing education data.

## Communication Systems

FFT's CRM contains comprehensive information on education organisations across the UK and is used to manage daily interactions with schools via telephone, live chat, and email.

Email is our primary communication channel with schools, supported by large-scale email systems such as Mailchimp, enabling us to reach over 50,000 school leaders and teachers across 16,000 schools, local authorities, and multi-academy trusts.

FFT collects data directly from school management information systems—currently from more than 8,000 schools—helping to reduce complexity and minimise workload for schools. For EEF data-collection projects, we provide pre-filled templates containing each school's extracted information and complete pupil contextual data. For schools not connected to our systems, we supply a simple, easy-to-use blank template. Every participating school receives access to our secure electronic file-transfer system, enabling safe and efficient sharing and uploading of data between FFT and the schools.

Our experienced project leaders and coordinators attend regular delivery meetings with evaluators and partners, providing clear updates on progress and highlighting any risks or blockers.

Our data analysts bring extensive expertise in collecting, processing, cleaning, matching, and analysing large-scale education datasets, promptly flagging any issues to the project lead for discussion with evaluators.

## Quality Assurance Strategies

We collaborate effectively with the project delivery team to act on the data collection activities as soon as possible following the MoU and the window for parental consent or any other agreed boundaries. We instigate communications quickly and we provide clear guidance and personal support on the processes and requirements for submitting data. We monitor elapsed time between communications and follow up frequently via email and phone to check on progress.

We know from experience that timely communication is the most effective approach for raising and resolving issues in data collection. We validate a data submission as soon as possible following receipt, so that any quality or coverage issues can be fed back quickly. While resubmission is normally preferable in resolving complications, we appreciate that flexibility is sometimes needed and we are able to make adjustments or corrections on our side when appropriate.

Our quality assurance approach combines clerical sense checking with detailed field distribution analysis.

Upon receipt of a data submission, a project coordinator or data analyst will open the file(s) and manually review a sample of supplied values for every data item. This step is sufficient to identify a majority of common issues within lower data volumes such as presence and population of mandatory data items, formatting of fields with expected types such as dates and identifiers, and expected coverage within the project parameters (for example, number of classes).

Once data files have been loaded into our database, our data analysts will perform more detailed quality assurance including checks against defined allowed values and notation for non-substantive values, checks for duplication and field-level distribution comparisons at both individual file level and against all data received to date for the project.

We work closely with the project delivery team to plan for expected windows of activity and to prepare for adequate resourcing during peak times. Our technical staff are pooled across projects with rolling knowledge transfer, ensuring that we are able to cover unforeseen fluctuations in required capacity.

## Project Leadership

- Thea Needs (Project Co-Ordinator): 9 years' experience supporting schools to interpret their performance data and co-ordinating a diverse portfolio of international projects.
- Kate Tinsley (Data Manager): 20 years' experience working with education data across government and international projects.
- Gareth Moore (Senior Education Advisor):
- Dave Thomson (Chief Statistician): 15 years' experience in analysing education data for school, LAs and government bodies.
- This team will be supported by a team of FFT data analysts.

## **Additional Data Services Offered**

We are experienced in all aspects of data processing including data cleaning and dataset linking and combination. We do collect and work with data from the NPD. Many of our team have ONS Safe Researcher accreditation and are familiar with the process of setting up and working within a secure project space within the Secure Research Service.

We administer a secure server for data collection and primarily perform in-house data processing for evaluation projects using Microsoft SQL Server. We frequently use Tableau for analysis, reporting and dissemination. We are familiar with a wide range of other commonly used data processing, statistical and BI software packages and can accept and process all common file types and formats.

## **Cost Model and Pricing Structure**

Each data collection exercise will be priced individually as costs will depend on the individual project requirements such as the number of schools and pupils' data is collected for, the type of data collected (context/attainment etc) and timescales. For any requests we receive we would work closely with the evaluator to ensure the objectives are understood and will provide the most cost-effective solution for the project. FFT charges VAT at the usual 20%, costs can be provided excluding VAT or inclusive of VAT.

## **Data Protection**

FFT has externally accredited processes in place for securely managing sensitive pupil data:

- All staff undergo baseline criminal record checks
- FFT is certified to ISO27001, the international standard for information security
- FFT Policies reviewed in line with ISO27001
- FFT is accredited for Cyber Essentials Plus (UK government accreditation) which covers all of our data processing systems
- Our data systems undergo an annual IT Health Check (ITHC) by an external Crest approved assessor
- All staff receive regular information security training including Safeguarding
- Our researchers have completed ONS Secure Research Service training
- All our processes and systems are compliant with GDPR regulations

## **Safeguarding**

- All staff receive regular information security training including Safeguarding training
- FFT Assigned DSL and DDSL

## Project Examples

<b>Project</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Phase/Year Group</b>	<b>Data Collection (test name/s and type/s)</b>	<b>Description (including number of learners tested)</b>
The Power of Reading – trial	CLPE, Manchester Metropolitan University, Alpha Plus	Key Stage 2: Year 5 pupil contextual data	Trial Design: Two-arm cluster randomised controlled trial with random allocation at the school level  Trial Type: Efficacy	Trial – After signing up, participating settings, teachers, or pupils are randomly assigned to either receive the intervention or be placed in the control group. Data collected for 1,906 pupils to date (split cohort design)
Primary Science Quality Mark – second trial	University of Hertfordshire, Manchester Metropolitan University	Key Stage 2: Year 3 pupil contextual and KS1 assessment data	Trial Design: Two-arm parallel cluster randomised controlled trial with allocation at the school level  Trial Type: Effectiveness	The effectiveness trial is aimed at testing PSQM under everyday conditions in a larger number of schools. Data collected for 9,422 pupils
Reading Plus - trial	Reading Solutions, Manchester Metropolitan University	Key Stage 2: Year 5 pupil contextual and KS1 assessment data	Trial Design: Two-arm cluster randomised controlled trial with random allocation at the school level  Trial Type: Efficacy	Whole class intervention trial. Reading Plus aims to improve pupils' reading comprehension, silent reading fluency and overall reading attainment. Data collected for 5,403 pupils
PALS-UK – second trial	Nottingham Trent University, University of Birmingham, Manchester Metropolitan	Key Stage 2: Year 4 pupil contextual data	Two-arm cluster randomised controlled trial with random allocation at school level	Whole-class, structured peer tutoring intervention aiming to improve reading comprehension, oral reading fluency and overall reading attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2.

	University, Alpha Plus		Trial Type: Efficacy	
SEND Review - trial	NASEN, Manchester Metropolitan University	Key Stage 3/4: Year 8 & Year 9 and then Year 11 (Covid delay) pupil contextual data, GCSE assessment data and attendance data	Trial Design: Two-arm parallel cluster randomised controlled trial with allocation at the school level  Trial Type: Efficacy	The SEND Review Programme is designed to help secondary schools reflect on, develop, and improve their whole-school SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) provision. Delivered by the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN), the programme supports SENCOs through training and coaching, enabling them to work collaboratively with colleagues to lead inclusive, school-wide change.  Data collected for 29,699 pupils in total including 4,178 pupils with SEND.
PALS-UK – third trial	Nottingham Trent University, University of Birmingham, Manchester Metropolitan University, Alpha Plus	Key Stage 2:  Year 4	Trial Design: Two-arm parallel cluster randomised controlled trial with allocation at the school level  Trial Type: Effectiveness	Recruitment phase. Trial to test the impact of Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS-UK), a 20-week, whole class structured paired reading intervention to improve reading fluency and reading comprehension.