

# Invitation to tender for an evaluation of the Regional Partnerships approach to evidence mobilisation

## Introduction

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) would like to commission a team to conduct an independent, evaluation of the EEF's [regional partnership](#) approach to evidence mobilisation that aims to build local system capacity for evidence use and bring about evidence-informed changes to teaching practice.

We require the appointed evaluator to further refine our theory of change and research questions and propose an appropriate evaluation design before undertaking a robust, well-designed, independent, external evaluation.

Teams wishing to bid to carry out this work should **submit an Expression of Interest (EOI; maximum 1,000 words** detailing why you are interested in evaluating the project, your proposed team and relevant expertise **by Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> August 10am**. If successful, teams need to complete a full proposal with budget by **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September 10am**.

## 1. Background to the Project

EEF's Regional Strategy for 2023-2027 focuses on three key areas<sup>1</sup>:

- Providing more exemplification of evidence in practice and communicating this through local networks.
- Enabling change at scale by working with middle tier organisations and building capacity of others in the system to use evidence.
- Developing direct support for schools through sustained partnerships working with local authorities and multi academy trusts.

The third area represents our new regional partnerships, which are a core part of the work that EEF does with the Research School Network (RSN). Regional partnerships are being developed with the aim of helping educators to implement evidence-informed approaches using school and system leaders' professional expertise and increasing system capacity for using evidence along the way. By using better evidence-based approaches and supporting with implementation, we aim to change educator and leader behaviour which, in turn, will help close the attainment gap that exists between children from lower socio-economic groups and their peers.

The partnerships aim to improve outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the long-term, by:

- Supporting evidence-informed improvement in classroom practice through meaningful and sustained behaviour change;
- Building the capacity of schools, settings and systems to be self-sustaining in their engagement with research evidence;
- Developing coherence and co-ordination in the use of evidence, to support and complement local and regional school improvement approaches; and,

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<sup>1</sup> EEF Press release, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023, <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/whats-next-for-the-research-schools-network>

- Exemplifying evidence in action through deep, embedded partnerships that enable us to increase our understanding of evidence mobilisation, and share this learning.

From previous experience of supporting schools and research evidence, the EEF has identified six 'Partnership Foundations', which underpin the approach and support ways of working:

- Collaborative: Work within and across the local education system to co-construct and co-deliver change for children.
- Aligned: Understand, use and complement existing expertise within local infrastructures.
- Co-ordinated: Organise and align people and activities around a high-leverage priority amenable to change.
- Evidence-led: Take an evidence-informed approach to processes and practices at school and system level.
- Supportive: Build strong supporting structures, providing project leadership and keeping the 'main thing' the 'main thing'.
- Sustainable: Commit to a long-term structured implementation process taking time to prepare, while building lasting system capacity beyond the life of the partnership.

In line with our mission to break the link between family income and educational achievement, we are focusing our partnership efforts to support groups of schools where there are high numbers or proportions of FSM eligible pupils and lower than average attainment, and/ or there is a stubborn or widening attainment gap.

The partnerships have been broken down into two distinct phases:

#### **a. Evidence Exploration Partnerships (EEP)**

This scoping phase involves Research Schools and the EEF working with education settings and local system leaders (local authorities and multi-academy-trusts) to identify and agree on priorities from data and co-construct solutions from research evidence over the course of a minimum of four workshops, which cover:

- i. Evidence use at system level and partnership working;
- ii. Data interpretation and priority identification;
- iii. Defining the desired behaviours; and,
- iv. Identifying the solution and finalising the theory of change.

There are also a series of gap tasks and optional pre-briefing sessions and introductory meetings to ensure that the workshops can be as effective as possible. The workshops are facilitated by EEF's Regional Delivery Leads (RDLs) and Research Schools from the local area and require a commitment from strategic partners to work together over a period of six to nine months.

The first set of EEPs ran from Autumn 2023 to Spring/ Summer 2024 (Phase 1); the second set of EEPs (Phase 2) ran from Autumn 2024 until Spring/ Summer 2025. 36 EEPs have been completed.

The EEP for each partnership concludes with a discussion of how best to take forward their plan: make a proposal for EEF support and funding into an Evidence into Action (EiA) partnership, or develop their own plans and/ or explore other available support through other relevant organisations (which may include Research Schools in a different way). If they would like to take their proposal forward with support from the EEF, the proposal, along with their theory of change, goes through EEF's Evidence Mobilisation Board (EMB) for an approval decision. Approximately half have been successful at initial sign off.

Figure 1: Partnership development process



## b. Evidence into Action (EiA) partnerships

If approved by the EMB in principle, there is a period of development for the partnerships to develop their delivery plans, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans and budget. These plans are then sent to the EMB again for final approval.

EiA partnerships involve a range of potential supports, including tailored professional development, access to evidence-based interventions, implementation planning and support from the EEF and RSN. They are expected to run over the course of two academic years from the point of approval, however, some EiA partnerships are approved slightly later in the year and have slightly condensed delivery times.

Our Evidence into Action framework underpins the collaborative development of training for school and system leaders. The framework enhances the content of the training to ensure the specific priorities identified within the partnership cover the key areas of:

- Evidence literacy
- Understanding disadvantage
- Effective implementation
- Effective professional development

The EiA partnerships have a commitment to working together to support schools and build capacity over a period of ~two years. Together, the EEPs and the EiA partnerships present a significant demand on EEF and RSN resources and time. They are more time intensive and lengthy than other types of Partnership working with schools and settings done that EEF has done before.

A large focus of the evaluation therefore is understanding whether the efforts involved in the delivery of the two phases of partnerships are effective for making sustained behavioural and system-wide changes. However, please note that while we are interested in understanding perceptions of the timescales involved, we aren't able to make changes during delivery that might allow us to better understand necessity/ optimisation.

There are 11 EiA partnerships from Phase 1. These partnerships have begun delivery (in progress until Summer 2026). These include partnerships focused on communication and language, reading, and writing, with focuses ranging from EYFS to KS3.

For phase two we expect 7-8 EiAs to be approved with detailed plans due to be signed off in Sept and October 2025. We expect these partnerships to begin delivery in late Autumn 2025. These include Maths, reading and writing (at specific phases) as a focus area of teaching practice.

**Our intention is to align this evaluation to this second phase of partnership delivery** to understand more about this overall approach to changing educator behaviour, as an initial step towards understanding our efforts to improving outcomes. However, we are open to sharing data from the Phase 1 EiA partnerships as well which may provide useful information about a wider cohort of partnerships.

The timelines for the different phases and cohorts of partnerships can be found in Appendix A.

## **Internal Monitoring and Evaluation**

During the EEPs there were a number of tools developed for monitoring and evaluation. There now exists:

- A baseline survey for the Partnership Development Team (PDT) in Phase 2 EEPs to capture some baseline measures of the Foundations;
- A baseline survey for school leaders in the area or MAT the EEP is covering; and,
- An end of EEP survey for the PDT to track some of the Foundations measures, as well as experiences of the EEP.

In addition to the EEF commissioning an independent evaluation of the whole portfolio of partnerships, each EiA partnership will be conducting their own self-evaluation (or with the support of another Research School), with some centralised assets for consistency across similar activities to gain some learning across them.

All EiA partnerships develop their own **bespoke monitoring and evaluation plans** based on co-developed research questions and evaluation frameworks. These aim to support EiA partnerships in their learning about their activities and outcomes, as well as helping to build their capacity and skills to monitor and evaluate their work going forwards. There has been a slightly updated process for the incoming Phase 2 EiA partnerships, where research questions have been pre-drafted and so partnerships will choose from a menu of selected questions.

Each EiA partnership administers a **stakeholder survey** to capture the learnings about how the partnership is working against the Partnership Foundations. This was centrally constructed at the EEF for consistency, but there are opportunities for them to add questions to the survey, if appropriate. The survey is designed for stakeholders in the EiA partnerships that are involved in the design and delivery of the activities, including senior leaders in settings, the lead partner(s) and other representatives from organisations in the area depending on the scope of the partnership. The survey is distributed by each EiA partnership separately at the beginning, at a mid-point and towards the end of the partnership.

There are also survey questions developed to support EiA Partnerships, or their corresponding Research School involved in M&E, to develop surveys to measure components of the core content framework.

All EiA partnerships are also required to submit their event and training attendance data each term so that we can monitor this, and is something that Research Schools are required to do across all their RS related activity already.

They are required to submit a report at the end of their first year of delivery which will focus on their progress so far and any baseline data they might have collected. Then at the end of their second and final year of delivery they are required to submit an M&E report which aims to answer the research questions, as set out in their M&E plans.

## **2. Fit with wider EEF work**

The EEF funds significant amounts of research to be generated and synthesised so that we can understand better what works to improve teaching and learning and tackle the attainment gap. However, we know that research evidence, even when we know that people are accessing it, is

insufficient to implement something new and well. We have worked with the [Research Schools Network](#) for several years now to try and help the sector to put this evidence to use

Underpinning much of EEF's activity is the assumption that if we could support leader and educator behaviour to be more aligned to the evidence, this would be more effective. This more effective practice would in turn improve outcomes for all pupils, especially the most disadvantaged.

Changing teacher and leader behaviour is difficult, and we know from the evidence that leaders need support in planning and undertaking activity to change teacher behaviour (e.g. how to design good professional development and implement change).

Over the last 12 years EEF has been trying out different approaches to supporting evidence use. This has included building our understanding of:

- the types of support provided (e.g. training, coaching, practical case studies, audit tools);
- the level at which support is aimed (e.g. to individual schools, groups of schools or those that support schools [local authorities or multi-academy trusts]); and,
- how support is provided (e.g. is it about drawing attention to a particular issue (push), is it about responding to an identified local need (pull)).

We have conducted evaluations of several pilots of some of our approaches, which have informed our thinking about how we can best support schools and settings to use research evidence, including:

- [EEFective Kent Project](#)
- [Regional Implementation Leads in Bristol](#)
- [Making best use of teaching assistants' campaigns](#)

Our previous regional strategy also had a partnership model of working with schools it prioritised large numbers of schools over depth of work and so didn't include many of the features we hope to support greater buy-in and stronger implementation such as an extended scoping phase and ongoing implementation support.

There is relatively little wider evidence about complex and intensive models to support evidence use. EEF has taken some steps to contribute to developing this evidence base and we think it is important to continue to do so. This, alongside informing our learning and future mobilisation efforts, is why we are looking to commission an external, independent evaluation.

### 3. Scope of work

We are looking for a team to undertake an independent evaluation of the EEF's regional partnership model of evidence mobilisation. Following this EOI, we will request selected teams to submit a full proposal, including budget by Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September, with the data collection activities to start by January 2026 by the latest.

With our existing timelines, we think the evaluation should be focused on primary data collection for Phase 2 partnerships, but we are open to the evaluation using data available from Phase 1 partnerships' internal monitoring and evaluation activities to supplement their understanding and ability to answer the research questions.

We have created a theory of change for the model based on previous experiences, and evidence from external evaluations that sought to define the specific mechanisms for who and how we think change will happen through this model for regional partnerships (please see Appendices B and C). We have used this theory of change to identify some preliminary research questions that we are particularly interested to start with, but we expect that work with the evaluator will refine these and help stress testing the theory of change developed. In particular, we wish to test the following assumptions:

- The partnerships are developed with the local system, through an extended scoping phase, that aims to create buy-in and improve the design of the support through better understanding of the local system needs. We think this will increase the likelihood of creating sustainable change in the system by aligning wider system support.
- The partnerships scaffold and model for leaders how to use evidence-informed processes and engage with research evidence around a specific teaching practice to seek to improve that practice. This helps to build system capacity to use evidence and create change. By working with the Research Schools as trusted intermediaries, this is more likely to create sustained change in the system as leaders know and can return to the process for using evidence in their decision-making processes in the future.

Due to some internal deadlines for making decisions around the next iteration of the regional strategy, alongside the self-evaluations that Research Schools are undertaking of their own or a neighbouring partnership, we will also shortly be commissioning a shorter-term project to independently generate feedback from and about Research Schools. To supplement these sources of insights, we wish to commission a more robust and wide-ranging evaluation that would seek to establish:

- whether and how partnerships were able to create appropriate and evidence-based plans for implementation at a partnership and school/setting level;
- how schools/settings have understood and used evidence-based processes and practices to implement changes, and whether this has created, or has the potential to create, greater local system capacity for evidence-informed change in the future;
- the levels of buy-in required at a school/setting and system level to establish changes in teaching practice focused around a main priority; and
- whether there are any preliminary signs that pupils benefit from improved teaching practice.

Based on the current theory of change diagram, this would mean focusing largely on the medium to longer-term outcomes, with the shorter-term outcomes assumed to have occurred mostly during the EEP process. This includes:

- Schools understanding process behind effective implementation;
- Schools starting to use evidence-based approaches for school improvement (including knowledge and understanding of these approaches, as well as application in the classroom);
- School activities aligning with the plans; and,
- In-school activities are sustained and seem sustainable.

We would like to measure interim indicators that:

- Schools and partners continue to use process to implement change;
- Researched evidence is used as a decision-making tool;
- There is local system capacity for evidence-informed change;
- Teaching practice improves; and,
- Children's attainment outcomes improve.

While the aims of the partnerships are to change children's attainment outcomes, we do not expect this evaluation to be able to reliably measure or attribute these to the partnership within the evaluation timeframe.

## Research Questions

We have identified some preliminary research questions that we are particularly keen to start with, but we would like to work with the appointed evaluator to further refine these.

Our overarching research question is: **do the regional partnerships create and embed evidence-based practice changes in schools/settings, and do they improve leadership capacity for using evidence-informed processes?**

By **evidence-based practice changes** we mean using specific teaching approaches that are based on research evidence, supported by evidence-based process, for example, on implementation and professional development.

Some potential specific research questions we would like to explore include:

- What have school/settings implemented, and to what extent have they used evidence-based processes and practices and specific evidence-based practices in the chosen priority area as a result of this initiative?
- To what extent has teaching practice improved, and how embedded are the practice changes to ensure sustained behaviour change?
- Are there any preliminary signs that pupils are experiencing any benefits as a result of improved teaching practice?
- What level of support is needed at the different stages of the partnership (scoping, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating) from the Research School and EEF to ensure that there are appropriate levels of buy-in from school/ setting and system leaders, and how does this buy-in support changes in schools/ settings?
- What level of co-production was done with stakeholders to create the partnership, and how has this helped with buy-in for, and feasibility of, the partnership?
- Is this a feasible and sustainable model for the EEF to implement going forward? How might the EEF adapt the model to ensure that sustained changes are being implemented while ensuring resources are being used most effectively?

## Evaluation Design

We expect that we will require a mixed-methods, theory-based approach to the evaluation, based on the research questions and the partnership model. This will allow us to focus on how and why the changes at the system and practitioner (leader and staff) level have happened and under what circumstances. We would like the evaluation to ensure that it has captured the wide range of two-year partnerships in Phase 2 and ensuring that key stakeholders are adequately consulted with. We are particularly interested in approaches that use methodologies that don't just rely on self-reported knowledge or behaviours for the intended outcomes and can provide rich data about the types of changes that educators are making.

For the proposals we would like the evaluator to consider whether using a specified approach e.g. realist evaluation, process tracing or other suitable approaches would be of benefit for the evaluation, to give it better clarity of focus and more consistency and rigour and improve our insights into a complicated system for behaviour change. This could also run alongside other methodologies to answer some of the questions more focused on the processes and implementation of the partnerships.

Partnerships themselves will also be collecting valuable information, including a stakeholder survey, questions to measure the core content and a range of other bespoke monitoring and evaluation activities. Data protection regulations and sharing agreements permitting, we would like to share this information with the successful evaluator to inform the overall evaluation for both phases of partnership.

The EEF will also support the appointed evaluation team to identify the appropriate key informants involved in each of the strands of work. We anticipate that relevant key informants might include:

- EEF staff including Regional Delivery Leads, National Delivery Leads, Senior Content and Engagement Leads and the Head of Evidence Mobilisation
- Research School Network staff involved in the partnerships

- Lead partners from the EiA partnerships
- Other organisations involved in the EiA partnerships
- School/setting leaders from participating schools/settings
- Classroom based staff from participating schools/ settings
- Organisations involved in unsuccessful proposals to become EiA partnerships

## 4. Timeline

We envisage the timeline for the evaluation outlined below but are open to discussing the time required to complete the project. **Due to the ambitious timeline for this project, we are proposing to hold the first two-hour set up meeting shortly after the evaluator has been appointed (w/c 6<sup>th</sup> October), with another potentially needed early the following week. Please indicate your availabilities for these dates in the EOI.**

Activity	Proposed timeframe
Appointment of team	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> October
Set up meetings for theory of change and evaluation design confirmation	w/c 6 <sup>th</sup> October and w/c 13 <sup>th</sup> October
Budget and evaluation design taken to Grants Committee for approval	Early November 2025
Evaluation set-up	November- December 2025
Data collection	Latest start January 2026
Interim report	January 2027
Final report	April 2028

## 5. Deliverables

We expect the following deliverables:

- A fit for purpose evaluation design detailed in a peer reviewed, published study plan.
- An interim report based on the first year of the partnership to inform the revised approach to EEF's mobilisation work from September 2027.
- A presentation to the EEF with the findings of the evaluation and lessons learned; and,
- A final, peer reviewed, published report including the findings and lessons learned for the EEF by April 2028.

## 6. Commissioning process

Interested teams should submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) including a maximum of **1,000 words** outlining why you are interested in evaluating the project, your proposed team and relevant expertise to [rachael.emmett@eefoundation.org.uk](mailto:rachael.emmett@eefoundation.org.uk) by **10am on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> August**.

We will then make a selection of teams we would like to receive a full proposal from by the end of the week. We are interested in proposals from single teams or consortia with complementary expertise and where the consortium can demonstrate that they will work well together to ensure the quality and efficiency of the project.

All proposals will be assessed in line with the criteria presented below. Proposals do not have to follow a specific format. However, we welcome proposals that cover how the applicants will approach the sets out their staffing and project management approach. The word count for the full proposals is up to **4,000**



**words** (including all appendices but excluding references and CVs). If you have any questions, please contact Rachael via email by Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September.

## Expression of interest scoring criteria

Expression of Interests (EOIs) will be assessed against the following criteria, which will have equal weighting:

- The proposed team has an excellent track record of delivering evaluations with theory-based, mixed-methods design, particularly within the sector, and experience of designing approaches to effectively measure outcomes.
- Evidence of the proposed research team collectively having knowledge of and experience in the sector and settings with direct relevance to the proposed research, particularly an understanding of pedagogy and teaching practice.
- Evidence that the proposed team collectively has knowledge of different approaches to mobilisation strategies used within the sector.
- The proposed team has experience in involving a range of different stakeholders and getting their buy-in to evaluation.

Scoring criteria	
<b>0</b>	Totally fails to meet the requirement - information not available
<b>1</b>	Meets some of the requirements with limited supporting information
<b>2</b>	Meets some of the requirements with reasonable explanation
<b>3</b>	Fully meets the requirements with detailed explanation and evidence
<b>4</b>	Exceeds the requirements with extensive explanation and evidence

## Proposal scoring criteria

### Capability and relevant experience of project team (35%)

including how well the team demonstrates:

- The extent to which the proposed team demonstrates a track record of designing and delivering comparable evaluations, including in using theory-based approaches, in complex systems and conducting qualitative and quantitative research in comparable settings.
- The extent to which the proposed team demonstrates understanding of the context and key topics relevant for the project, including the education system and approaches to evidence mobilisation.

### Proposed approach (50%)

including how the approach:

- The extent to which the proposed evaluation design meets the research objectives (including suitability and quality of the proposed methods for data collection and sampling)
- The suitability of the proposed approach to analyse data and report against the research questions (including coding qualitative data, quantitative analysis, triangulation across sources and outputs)

- c. The extent to which key risks to the project delivery are identified and appropriate strategies to mitigate these risks are proposed (e.g., timeline, burden on participants, response bias)
- d. The extent to which the proposed approach plans to involve key stakeholders in the development of the tools and their implementation to ensure buy-in and feasibility
- e. The extent to which appropriate data governance has been demonstrated (including legal bases for processing personal and any special data, data protection safeguards and GDPR compliance relevant to the project)

### Value for money (15%)

- a. Detailed cost of your proposal and how this demonstrates value for money.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following scoring criteria:

Scoring criteria	
<b>0</b>	Totally fails to meet the requirement - information not available
<b>1</b>	Meets some of the requirements with limited supporting information
<b>2</b>	Meets some of the requirements with reasonable explanation
<b>3</b>	Fully meets the requirements with detailed explanation and evidence
<b>4</b>	Exceeds the requirements with extensive explanation and evidence

### Commissioning timeline

Activity	Proposed timeframe
<b>ITT published</b>	Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> July
<b>Deadline to submit EOIs</b>	Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> August 10am
<b>Selection for ITT</b>	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> August
<b>Questions deadline</b>	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> September
<b>Deadline to submit full proposal and budget</b>	Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> September 10am

## Appendix A: Timing of the partnership phases

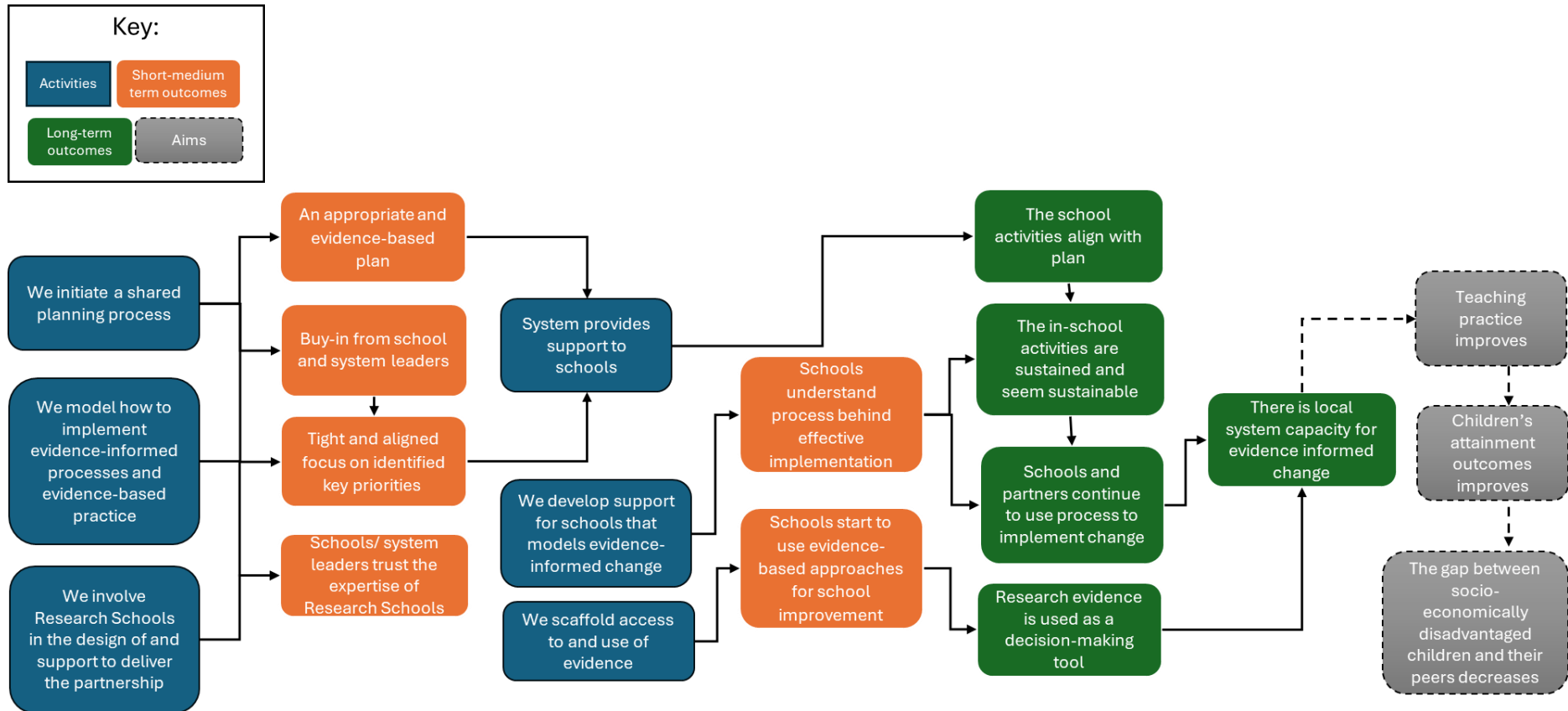
	23-24			24-25			25-26			26-27		
	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Phase 1a	Scoping											
	Evidence Exploration											
			Develop									
				Evidence into Action Partnerships								
Phase 1b	Scoping											
		Evidence exploration										
				Develop								
					Evidence into Action Partnerships							
Phase 2a		Scoping										
				Evidence Exploration								
						Develop						
							Evidence into Action Partnerships					
Phase 2b		Scoping										
					Evidence Exploration							
							Develop					
								Evidence into Action Partnerships				

We have taken a standard approach to the length of time to help planning and delivery. The evidence exploration process (6-9 months), the delivery planning (3 months) and the time for the delivery of the supports in the programmes (5 terms). This is to give time for effective implementation so there is better chance of changing practice at leader and educator level because it takes time and sustained support for change to happen <sup>23</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> [Effective Professional Development](#) guidance report, EEF, October 2021.

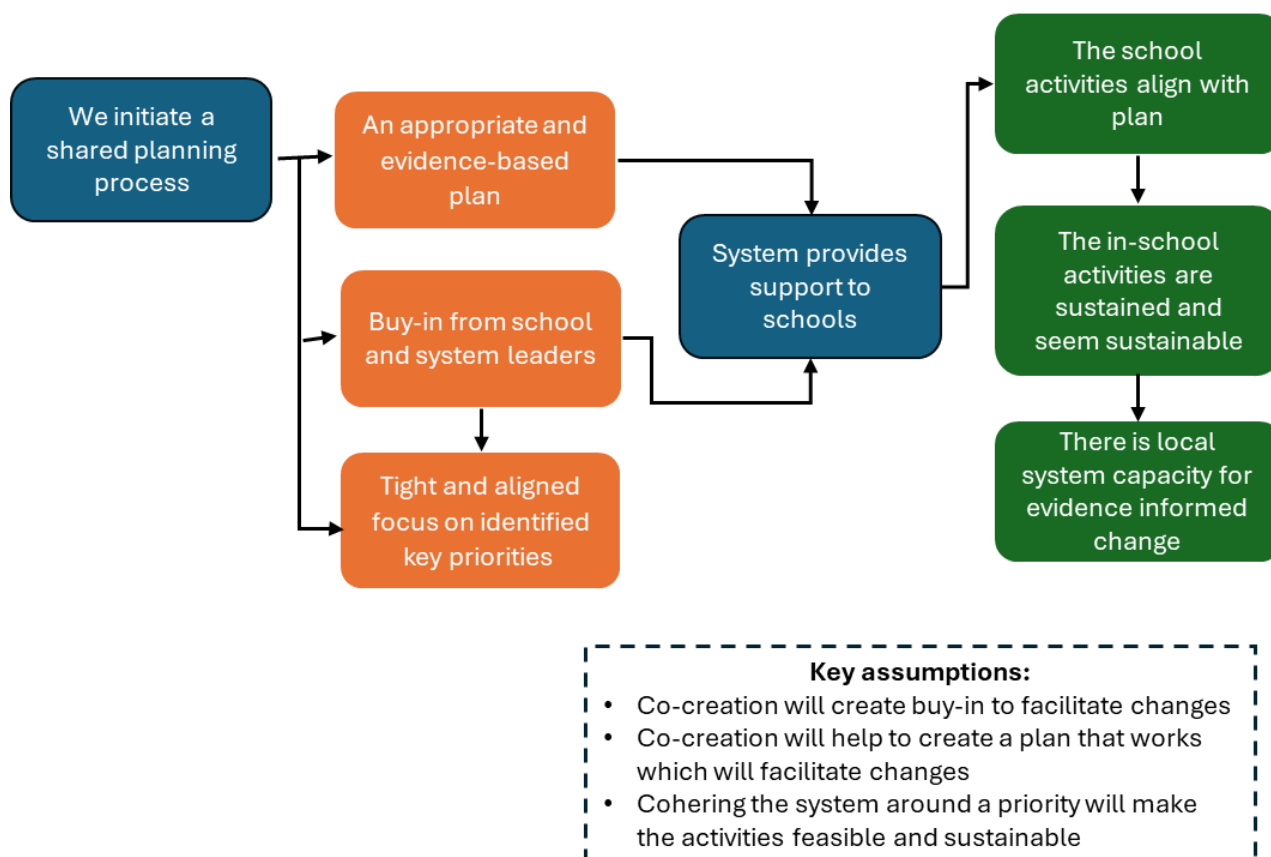
<sup>3</sup> [A School's Guide to Implementation](#) guidance report, EEF, April 2024.

## Appendix B: Theory of Change diagram



## Appendix C: Identified mechanisms in theory of change

- i) **Co-creation and system cohesion.** We work with the local system to identify a priority, develop a plan and provide support. This process of co-creation both helps create buy-in and better aligns the work with the local system. This increases the likelihood of sustainable change as it meets a need, people value what they have created and the wider system support is aligned (and as a result there are fewer competing demands).



### (1) Evidence exploration activities:

- Initial **brokerage** to identify appetite in an area. *i.e. EEF regional leads do desk research, have initial conversations with school leaders and likely influential people within an area to form initial impression of need, likely engagement, and current system functioning*
- Active **curation** of a partnership development team including influential system people (e.g. LA, MAT leaders) and school leaders- *i.e. people involved in developing partnership initially bridge across and between different tribes/structures/identities with the locale.*
- Extended **structured process** to explore local data and insights and build consensus/understanding based around **4 workshops**. *i.e. there is time and opportunity for the partnership development team to bring their existing knowledge and beliefs, and explore and share these with a range of different inputs through a structured process.*

- The process explicitly seeks to **identify current activity** and priorities/aims at a system and school level, and then **identify a priority** that “fits”, coheres or aligns with that as well as ensuring that it is a causal determinant of the issue and amenable to change. *i.e. the partnerships development team are supported to map, understand and share the current and planned activity that might shape the pressures, support and other drivers on schools/ settings- especially on leaders*

As evidenced by:

- Initial scoping is carried out (e.g. prioritisation shared with EMB)
- Initial assessment of system capacity (e.g. Partnership foundation survey undertaken)
- Workshops delivered (QA and internal EEF tracking)
- The right people are involved? (have the capacity to plan, match informal/formal understanding of influencers in the areas, judgement of RLs and NDMs)
- Key stakeholders are actively inputting into the process by providing data and sharing surveys
- Key stakeholders attend the 4 workshops to plan for the partnership

If we do (1), we hypothesise that it leads to:

## **(2) Development of an appropriate and evidence-informed plan**

As evidenced by:

- [Delivery is planned, sequenced and projects managed with a monitoring of activity and engagement]
- The EMB judge that the priority identified is both a causal determinant of important outcomes (eg, not just a symptom) and is something that can be changed.
- The plan references research evidence which suggests that the priority is one that schools/ settings can change and this change is as a resultant of teaching practice
- The plan references research evidence which suggests that the priority can affect the outcomes identified in the theory of change process
- Expert judgements that the plan
  - o Addresses that priority appropriately
  - o Is likely to be manageable, given constraints on capacity and time
  - o Contains the kinds of mechanisms that make any intended behaviour changes (for participants, non-participants, classroom teachers, other staff, pupils, etc) likely. For example, which determinants of behaviour (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation) need to change, and what kinds of interventions (education, persuasion, incentivisation, coercion, training, restriction, environmental restructuring, enablement) are invoked?
  - o identifies what system supports and changes are required to enable and sustain change.
- Key stakeholders feedback on feasibility of supports and further iterations of the plan

## **(3) Buy-in from system and school leaders**

As evidenced by:

- System leaders communicate and promote the vision to schools/ settings
- System leaders demonstrate understanding of the plan by correctly describing or identifying key features of the plan.
- System leaders are actively overcoming barriers to implementation with schools/ settings
- Schools/ settings and local system actors report that they are committed to the priority that is identified through the EEP process.
- School leaders and system leaders report that they are motivated by the plan.
- School leaders understand the vision well and can demonstrate their understanding of it by describing its aims.
- Schools/ settings within a locality are attending EEP workshops.
- Local system actors are attending EEP workshops.
- Schools/ settings and local system actors are positive about the process of the EEP (from self-report surveys).
- Schools/ settings are recruited to the EiA partnership.
- Schools/ settings report that they are positive about the plans.

AND:

#### **(4) Tight focus on identified key priorities**

As evidenced by:

- School and System leaders report that the priority reflects the challenges they experience
- School and system leaders agree that the priority identified is the right one
- Schools/ settings and local system actors report that they understand how the priority fits with other local priorities (including their own SDP).
- Schools/ settings report “priorities” from the local system are cohesive and manageable.
- Schools/ settings do not identify barriers to change that are a result of local system.

If we do (2), (3) & (4), we hypothesise that it leads to:

#### **5) Well structured, sequenced support being provided to schools/ settings**

- Training, workshops, coaching and network supports are organised and delivered
- There is monitoring of implementation and this is used to make expert judgements about any adaptation of the support

As evidenced by

- Schools/ settings engage with the partnership activities. (recruitment/ training attendance logs)
- Feedback from participants is positive
- This support is a significant focus of the local system activity/professional development (e.g. it is at least a quarter)
- Schools/ settings report “priorities” from the local system are cohesive and manageable.
- Schools/ settings do not identify barriers to change that are a result of local system.

And this leads to:

#### **(6) In-school activity that is aligned with the plan**

As evidenced by:

- Leaders have prioritised in school development planning
- Leaders has provided the in-school support for educators to make the changes (e.g. prepared infrastructure, ensured access to resources, prioritised time in curriculum)
- Leaders understand the intended practice changes (as well as the supports to change educator behaviour)
- Leaders can articulate the link between their in-school activity and the overall (local-system) plan
- Practitioners understand importance of using approach
- Practitioners understand how to use approach in their context
- Practitioners feel confident to use approach
- Practitioners incorporate approach when planning lessons
- Practitioners understand which elements of the approach need to be retained (high fidelity) and which elements can be adapted for their contexts based on the research evidence.
- Practitioners are using approach (increasingly?)
- Schools/ settings report that they have implemented some intended practice change in classroom.
- Observations demonstrate that the approaches are being used in the classroom with high fidelity to the research evidence.

AND

#### **(7) In-school activity that is sustained & seems sustainable**

As evidenced by:

- Schools/ settings continue to access training and supports for practice change.
- Schools/ settings report that they intend to keep approaches in place and feel they know how support this.
- There are support functions in place to help schools/ settings with future delivery of approach e.g. onboarding new staff, refreshers, sharing exemplification.
- Schools/ settings and local system actors report a focus on this priority has been maintained (i.e. it's still visible, there are not lots of new/competing ones, etc).
- Approaches identified in the partnership are still being reportedly used by educators/ leaders after the two-year partnership ends.

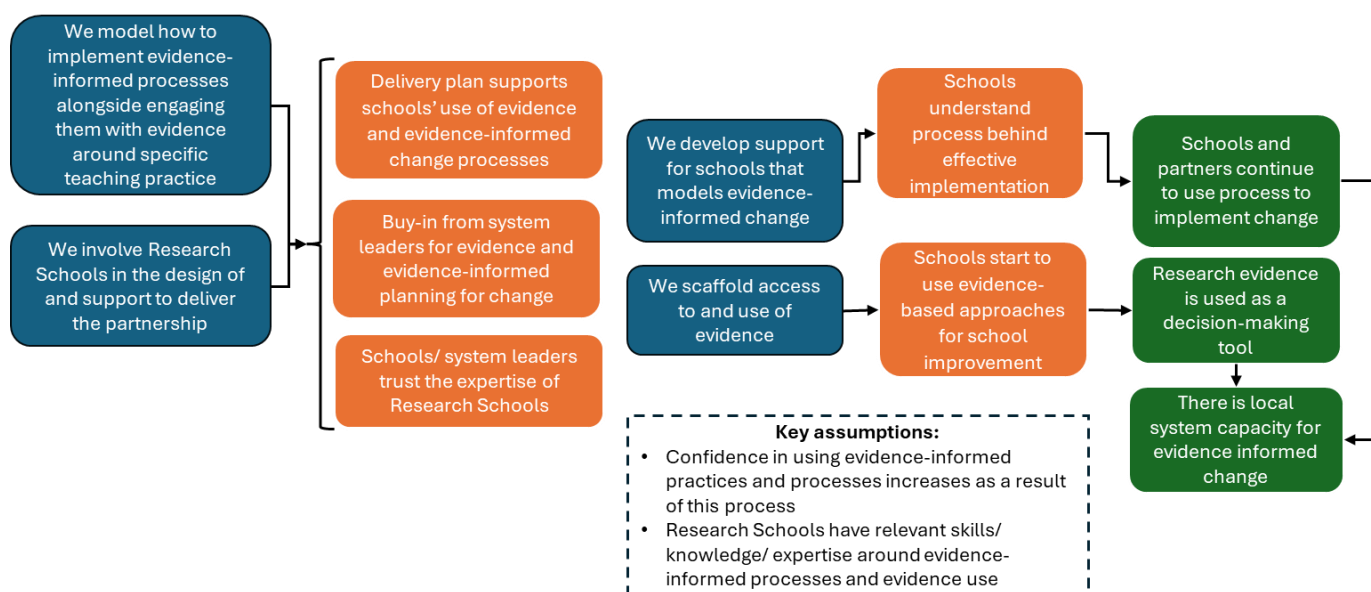
AND

#### **8) Local system capacity for evidence-informed change**



- Schools/ settings across the locality continue to collaborate on work they are doing to address the priority.
- The structures established/ used to support the delivery are being appropriately continued (e.g. practice sharing networks are well structured and routinely use evidence and are focused on a common, shared set of priorities).
- Clear processes are in place for identification of a small number of common challenges, and shared planning to collectively meet them.

- ii) **Modelling making and acting on evidence-informed decisions.** We and Research Schools work in a way that models using evidence-informed change processes and through these engaging with evidence around specific teaching practice. This helps build system capacity to use evidence and create change. Using trusted intermediaries that bridge the gap between research evidence and practice makes this more likely to be successful <sup>4</sup>. This is more likely to create sustained change as resultant teaching approaches are evidence-informed and leaders and educators have a blueprint for evidence-use processes they can reuse. <sup>56</sup>



### Activities

- RLs/RS **model evidence-informed processes** for understanding content and identifying priority to system leaders
- RLs/RS **provide information** on evidence through this process, including key sources of evidence/information (e.g. EEF guidance reports) and key tools to scaffold evidence use (e.g. implementation cycle, explore tools etc)
- RLs/RS **undertake evidence-informed implementation planning** with partnership development teams to create implementation plan.
- RLs/ RS work together on preparation and delivery of workshops to establish relationships and RS credibility.
- RLs/ RS work together on preparation of the delivery plan.

### This leads to:

#### 1) **Development of an appropriate and evidence-based delivery plan**

As evidenced by:

- a. Expert judgment that delivery plan includes:

<sup>4</sup> [Enabling knowledge brokerage intermediaries to be evidence-informed](#), Evidence & Policy, Bristol University Press, Gough, D. et al, November 2021.

<sup>5</sup> [Effective Professional Development](#) guidance report, EEF, October 2021.

<sup>6</sup> [A School's Guide to Implementation](#) guidance report, EEF, April 2024.

- i. content to build knowledge of, opportunity to model and provide feedback on school level planning for change (e.g. schools/ settings leader training, supported audit process etc) (how/process)
- ii. content that is evidence-informed helping model use of evidence to inform educator practice (what)

## 2) **Buy-in** at system level

As evidenced by:

- Expert judgement that evidence underpins priority
- “commitment” to evidence use from system actors
- Commitment to evidence use from school leaders
- School leaders and system leaders attend the workshops in the EEP around implementation
- Leaders attend specific training on implementation during the EiA partnerships

**AND**

### **Schools/ settings and system leaders trust the expertise of Research Schools**

As evidenced by:

- System and school leaders respect and report positive view of Research Schools/ settings
- System and school leaders understand role and capacity of Research Schools/ settings

We will then:

**Delivery of support** for schools/ settings that models evidence-informed change and scaffolds access to evidence. This includes

- Research Schools/ settings give support to help schools/ settings develop an implementation plan and add upskills leaders in understanding effective PD.
- PD provided for leaders and educators about the research evidence behind specific approaches, and instruction and exemplification on how to use them in their settings
- Support to ensure that adaptations made to the approaches ensure fidelity to the evidence base
- feedback loop via monitoring and evaluation to ensure that positive changes observed can be fed back to school and system leaders
- Research Schools/ settings help schools/ settings to overcome barriers to implementation

This would be evidenced by:

- Expert judgment that training and support provided through delivery provides opportunity to build knowledge of evidence (explicit signposting/references, opportunity to engage with evidence sources)
- Training includes references to evidence sources, explained components of approach
- Attendance at training sessions by leaders and practitioners

This leads to:

### **Schools/ settings understand the process behind effective implementation (gain knowledge)**

As evidenced by:

- Training attendees report and demonstrate increased knowledge in the behaviours and process required to implement things well in schools/ settings
- Schools can explain elements of the approach that were important to retain for fidelity, and elements that they could adapt.
- Schools/ settings develop their own implementation plans
- Implementation plans are QA'd by Research Schools/ settings that demonstrate how they plan to use the behaviours (engage, unite, reflect) within the implementation process
- Schools/ settings report that they feel ready to implement the changes in their settings
- Schools/ settings report that they understand the activities that are involved in the implementation plan
- There is evidence that schools/ settings are starting to implement the plans e.g. teachers attending training, creating lessons plans to use approach in classrooms, using approach in classrooms

**AND**

### **Schools/ settings start to use evidence-based approaches (do)**

As evidenced by:

- Training attendees report and demonstrate increased knowledge of and attitudes towards using evidence-based approaches
- Practitioners demonstrate knowledge of how to use the approach with fidelity
- Practitioners make adaptations to the approach for the context of their setting
- Practitioners put plans to use approaches in their settings
- Practitioners consistently use approaches when appropriate

These lead to:

### **Schools/ settings and partners continue to use the process to implement change**

As evidenced by:

- School leaders report that they found the process useful
- School leaders report that they plan to use the process again for implementing change in their settings
- New priorities for creating change in schools/ settings use the same implementation planning process
- Fewer new initiatives are done in schools/ settings over the same time period

**AND**

### **Research evidence is used as a decision making tool**

As evidenced by:

- School and system leaders report that they value research evidence

- School leaders list research evidence as something that they would consult before making a practice change in their settings
- School leaders can explain how they would factor in research evidence to make decisions in their settings
- School leaders report that they have used research evidence in their decision making
- School leaders can identify how they have considered research evidence in their decision

**AND:**

**Local system capacity for evidence-informed change**

As evidenced by:

- Knowledge of system leaders around evidence use (e.g. knowing where to access evidence, understanding how to identify priorities)
- The structures established/used to support the planning are continued
- Clear processes are in place for identification of a small number of common challenges, and shared planning to collectively meet them.