

Navigator Insight

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INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SERVICES

Navigator Insight (Navigator), formerly **Qa Research**, is delighted to be part of the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) Data Collection Panel, providing high-quality operational support to organisations conducting evaluations on behalf of EEF.

Navigator has the capacity and expertise to deliver large-scale data collection across diverse educational settings. Our model enables the efficient organisation and administration of one-to-one, whole-class and small-group pupil assessments, during compressed fieldwork periods, and ensuring consistency of delivery and robust data quality.

Alongside assessment delivery, Navigator provides a broad range of fieldwork and data-collection services, including **school recruitment, CATI interviews, online surveys, focus group moderation, depth interviews, assessment marking and moderation, invigilation, data inputting, and coding of open responses** for large-scale datasets.

EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION EVALUATION AND DATA COLLECTION

Navigator is a UK research organisation with strong national networks and extensive experience delivering large-scale assessments across all age groups. Our flexible, cost-effective model ensures reliable delivery, high response rates, and timely support for EEF evaluations.

We have expertise running national data-collection projects and proven approaches for overcoming challenges across diverse settings, from early years to post-16, while maximising participant response rates.

We have a national network of contacts who provide access to Assessors with experience working with specific age groups and a vested interest in the subject they are evaluating.

Previous organisations we have worked with on data collection for education evaluations include:

- Behavioural Insights Team
- Institute for Employment Studies
- National Institute of Economic and Social Research
- King's College London
- Durham University
- Sheffield Hallam University, Institute of Education

In recent years, these tools have included maths, reading, writing, speech and language, and socio-emotional measures. Specific assessment tools include:

- York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC)
- LanguageScreen
- Action Picture Test (APT)
- Expressive Vocabulary Test
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT)
- Sandwell Early Numeracy Test (SENT)
- WellComm
- Corsi Block
- Head-Toes-Knees-Shoulders Revised (HTKS-R)
- Early Years Toolbox (EYT) Numeracy

Navigator has a strong track record in consulting with a range of audiences across all education stages and we have summarised our experience and provided examples for each stage:

Early Years:

We have been involved in a growing number of projects working with early years settings in recent years. Our experience includes conducting one-to-one education assessments with 3–4-year-olds for EEF funded evaluations, working with clients including the Institute for Employment Studies, RAND, and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. All recent projects involved administered 1,000 - 3,000 baseline and endline assessments during a 2-month window at each testing phase, in early years settings spread nationally.

Our portfolio of early years projects has given us a clear understanding of the practical challenges inherent in working in early years settings and the strategies required to overcome them, including sensitivity to developmental variability, careful pacing and age-appropriate engagement.

Early years settings often have limited space and tight staffing ratios, so our Assessors coordinate closely with setting leads to plan around daily routines and minimise disruption.

We have also conducted large-scale quantitative surveys of early years teachers (including members of the SLT) for national studies for the Government (DFE) and other public bodies through to smaller-scale qualitative studies with teachers for third sector clients including Teach First and Book Trust.

Primary & Secondary Schools:

Navigator has over 20 years' experience conducting research with schools and has developed effective strategies for engagement and retention. We have delivered numerous primary and secondary school projects involving tight timelines and high-volume data collection, often completing around 3,000 baseline and endline assessments.

In addition to assessments with pupils, our fieldwork includes national CATI surveys with teachers for clients such as DfE, University College London, Wellcome Trust and the Welsh Government, alongside longitudinal programmes. For example, a four-year study with primary science teachers for Wellcome Trust. We have also carried out baseline and follow-up pupil surveys for clients including the Welsh Government and the Careers and Enterprise Council.

Navigator routinely uses telephone recruitment to engage schools in disseminating online surveys and conducts interviews with head teachers and teachers to explore topics such as training, mentoring, routes into teaching and non-teaching roles.

Post-16:

We have carried out numerous studies with FE and HE providers and their students. Subject matter has been varied, from consulting international students on the provision of catering within UK universities (for The University Caterers Organisation) through to consulting with college providers of English to Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) and more general learner surveys for the DfE.

Navigator is adept at making the necessary links to access students, often making cold contact with education providers, making it as straightforward as possible for them to engage with us (providing clear background information; Q/A's; incentives when appropriate; 'what's in it for them' information, etc.).

FIELD FORCE CAPACITY AND EXPERTISE

Navigator's core Education Research Team oversees all data collection, supported by a national network of Education Assessors. The team is further supported by Assessment Moderators, who quality-check, score and input completed assessments.

Diversity & Social Value:

Navigator champions diversity and inclusion by bringing together Assessors with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, strengthening our cultural awareness and the quality of our research.

We've employed over 300 Assessors in recent years to support large-scale education evaluations, many of whom have contributed across multiple projects. The role offers valuable experience that supports their academic development and future opportunities.

We have shared some feedback from our previous Assessors:

- *"I found the Education Assessor role to be incredibly rewarding and enriching. The experience offered a unique opportunity to apply my academic knowledge in a practical setting."*

- *“The support from the team was outstanding, and I appreciated the collaborative environment that made the role even more enjoyable. It was a highly fulfilling experience that has further inspired my passion for education.”*
- *“My favourite experience as an Education Assessor was the opportunity to visit different schools and interact with a diverse range of pupils and staff. This allowed me to gain valuable insights into various educational environments, understand different teaching approaches, and directly contribute to improving educational outcomes.”*

Assessor Recruitment:

Navigator delivers data collection across diverse settings and age groups by using Assessors with relevant experience and subject knowledge. Using our national network of recruitment channels, our targeted recruitment ensures coverage for all project settings, providing a cost-effective, reliable and flexible model that meets demanding timelines.

Assessors complete a rigorous recruitment process, including application, interview, vetting, enhanced DBS checks and training, and only those who meet requirements at every stage progress to data collection.

Training:

Assessors must complete Navigator training for each project they work on, which covers: the evaluation, data collection, assessment procedures, available support, and key assessment tool considerations.

Mandatory safeguarding training covers key contacts, the Education Assessor Code of Conduct, safeguarding duties, responding to concerns, professional boundaries, e-safety, confidentiality, data protection and health & safety.

A client webinar is recommended for FAQs before data collection.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

The Education Research Team at Navigator has key staff members dedicated to liaising with settings and Assessors throughout fieldwork periods.

Each setting will also be provided with a ‘main contact’ at Navigator, so they can ask any questions or discuss any concerns they may have prior to assessment visits.

Data Collection Scheduling:

All scheduling and communication is done in house at Navigator, to minimise burden on settings, and to streamline the process for our clients.

Once the participating settings have been identified and a list provided to Navigator, we will contact them to gather information to schedule the data collection visit:

- Setting opening hours
- Break times
- Suitable dates
- Safeguarding guidance/policies

Once we have collated the setting and Assessor availability, we work to match each setting with the most appropriate Assessor.

We will provide details to the settings on what to expect during testing, any assistance we will need from them and confirm the details of the Assessor that will be attending at each setting.

Progress Reporting:

Navigator would set weekly data-collection targets with the evaluation team during project setup and hold weekly check-ins before and during testing to report on:

- Settings scheduled
- Settings attended
- Pupils assessed
- Absences and withdrawals
- Mop ups required
- Mop ups completed
- Progress against targets
- Issues or risks

We also provide access to a secure shared running totals document, updated throughout the project with key metrics such as pupils tested per setting, completion percentages, mop-up requirements and overall progress at baseline and endline.

QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIES

We have several quality assurance mechanisms in place, including:

- **Rigorous recruitment and training:** All Assessors complete a thorough recruitment, vetting and training process, including practical tasks to demonstrate accurate assessment administration.
- **Ongoing communication:** We maintain regular contact with Assessors throughout each project, providing reminders before assessment days and check-ins during testing periods.
- **Dedicated project phone:** A project-specific mobile number is issued to all Assessors, ensuring rapid support both during and outside office hours.
- **Continuous feedback process:** Assessment feedback is shared promptly with Assessors, and end-of-project debrief sessions capture learning and improvements.
- **In-house verification and scoring:** All assessment forms are returned, verified, quality checked and inputted internally, with specialist scoring available where required.
- **Data quality checks:** Systematic checks ensure assessments are completed correctly and results are recorded accurately.
- **Data delivery:** Raw data files can be provided throughout the assessment period, with a final dataset supplied after baseline and endline testing.

Capacity:

We take a flexible approach to recruitment to ensure sufficient capacity for data collection, and to allow for some Assessor attrition throughout the course of a project.

We also have several mitigation strategies to increase capacity, if necessary:

- An in-house team of experience quant and qual researchers who can mobilise quickly to pick up any necessary shifts
- A national network of contacts to support Assessor recruitment
- Access to a national network of teaching staff, should additional support be needed

Quality checking:

At Navigator, we understand the importance of robust data collection and have several quality assurance steps in place:

- Assessment moderation, scoring and quality checking is conducted by a team of specialist in-house Assessment Moderators on all assessment forms before inputting
- An agreed percentage of assessment forms are double marked to ensure understanding of scoring requirements
- All assessment inputting is done through our Askia entry system, with checks in place to ensure accuracy
- Quality checking of the inputting is also conducted by our Contact Centre Manager throughout each testing phase
- Additional quality checks are conducted by our Data Analyst during production of the final data files

MAXIMISING RESPONSE RATES

At Navigator, we understand the importance of giving all children equal opportunity to take part in education evaluations, and as such, strive to maximise completion rates.

Navigator maximises pupil participation while minimising burden on schools by training Assessors in engagement techniques and real-world scenarios, providing named school contacts and same-day support, ensuring all Assessors are DBS-checked (enhanced) and able to work independently with pupils.

We manage all scheduling directly with settings, offering flexible start and finish times, coordinating mop-up visits based on attendance patterns (including half-day sessions), and completing confirmation calls before each visit to ensure staff readiness and pupil attendance.

For our most recent EEF funded evaluation, Talking Time, we have achieved a completion rate of 97%.

In our most recent national evaluation, Reciprocal Reading, we completed testing in 291 schools and with over 4,000 pupils, achieved an overall completion rate of 98% (excluding control school withdrawals).

PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Katie Morris, Head of Education Assessments

Katie leads Navigator's Education Research Team, bringing experience from higher-education partnership roles where she managed large-scale academic projects in the UK and overseas. Since joining Navigator, she has overseen major evaluations for organisations including NIESR, IES, King's

College London, the Department for Education, the Behavioural Insights Team, the University of Oxford and the Nuffield Foundation.

Katie has managed data collection for large-scale studies such as the Orchestrating Numeracy and Executive (ONE) evaluation with Oxford University and RAND, coordinating over 2,000 one-to-one assessments with 3- and 4-year-olds. She also led classroom-based assessment delivery for the Opportunity Northeast Transitions Project, administering NGRT and JMAI tools across secondary schools.

Katie has completed NSPCC safeguarding training and ensures Navigator's safeguarding procedures are embedded throughout all stages of project delivery.

Rosie Walker-Lyne, Education Assessment Manager

Rosie joined Navigator in 2023, initially supporting quantitative fieldwork before moving into the Education Research Team. She brings strong pedagogical expertise from her years teaching English across Early Years to adult learners, alongside a First-Class BA (Hons) in English Language and Linguistics with experience in both qualitative and quantitative research.

Rosie supports recruitment, training and coordination of Assessors and has contributed to multiple large-scale digital assessment projects, ensuring smooth administration and high-quality data delivery.

Michael Fountain, Director

Michael has nearly 30 years' experience in market and social research, beginning at TNS and Quaestor before joining Navigator in 2008 and becoming Director in 2016. A specialist in quantitative research, he has delivered large-scale surveys for clients across government, finance, utilities, education, manufacturing and the charity sector.

Michael leads Navigator's quality accreditation and oversees all aspects of data collection, data management and assurance. His experience spans face-to-face, telephone, online and postal methodologies, working with diverse respondent groups including children, young people, vulnerable adults, business leaders and consumers.

Kay Silversides, Research Manager & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Kay has 25 years' experience in social research and evaluation, with extensive work in education, early intervention and projects supporting the wellbeing of children and young people. She has delivered multi-method studies for clients including YoungMinds, Magic Breakfast, STEM Learning and several local authorities.

Kay's work includes strengths and needs analyses for young people aged 11–16, research on youth provision and mental health support, and evaluations of curriculum enrichment programmes. Recent projects include large-scale school surveys on breakfast provision, qualitative research on anxiety support pilots, and studies exploring STEM awareness and pathways among secondary pupils.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES OFFERED

In addition to education assessments, we currently support with the following services:

- Telephone (CATI) interviews with Head Teachers/Senior Leaders/Teachers
- On-line surveys with teaching staff, pupils & parents
- School recruitment
- Recruitment of teaching staff to take part in focus groups/depth interviews
- Moderation of focus groups in schools with teaching staff/pupils/parents
- Conducting depth interviews with Head Teachers/Senior Leaders/Teachers and Teaching Assistants
- One-to-one, whole class and small group assessments
- Assessment marking and inputting
- Invigilation
- Coding of open and other responses for large-scale data sets

We're happy to discuss any evaluation individually. We can support a single element or deliver full primary data collection, providing exactly what you need within your budget.

COST MODEL AND PRICING STRUCTURE

Each data collection exercise is costed on an individual basis as the costs are highly dependent on key aspects within your requirement such as the length of survey/assessment, total sample size, the scale and variety of quotas within the sample, geographical locations being covered and timescales.

For any requirement you have, we would review your brief and then come back to you with any questions that help us to provide a bespoke costing to meet the objectives. We would provide this cost and then look to discuss it with you.

We offer flexibility and, if required, will refine our costs to help meet your budget. To aid this, we would also provide suggestions on how your brief could be adapted in order to meet your objectives and budget.

DATA PROTECTION

Navigator complies with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Any research will be carried out in compliance with this legislation.

Data provided by participants, and their identity, shall be treated in the strictest confidence and all assurances given to participants shall be fulfilled. All reasonable precautions shall be taken to ensure that participants are not harmed or adversely affected because of participating in research.

Our Information Security Policy is supported by Cyber Essentials Assurance. All data is held on Microsoft's SharePoint platform using UK data centres.

Annual data protection training is completed by all staff members at Navigator.

SAFEGUARDING

Navigator's Education Research Team is committed to safeguarding staff, children and young people. We take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice, prevent harm, and ensure our work is carried out responsibly and respectfully.

We foster an ethos that values diversity, protects children's rights, and supports staff in delivering safe, high-quality research. Safeguarding is embedded throughout project planning and delivery to ensure:

- Protection from harm for all children and young people involved
- Clear prioritisation of welfare in every assessment activity
- Safer recruitment to ensure we appoint suitable staff
- Strong support for Assessors working directly with children and young people
- Continuous monitoring and updating of safeguarding practices

For each project involving children or young people, Navigator completes a safeguarding risk assessment to identify risks and plan actions to minimise them. This informs data-collection design and produces clear steps to reduce risk.

Additional safeguarding measures include:

- A Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Enhanced DBS checks for all Assessors
- Right to Work checks (UKVI) and NI Verification (HMRC, where relevant)
- Full training on assessment tools, working with pupils, and handling secure data
- A mandatory Safeguarding Briefing for all Assessors
- A requirement for settings to provide an on-site staff member during assessment visits
- Accurate recording and appropriate handling of any incidents
- Ongoing review of procedures throughout each project

Assessors must bring photo ID, their authorisation letter and enhanced DBS certificate to every setting and present them on arrival. A dedicated mobile phone is monitored throughout data collection so Assessors can contact Navigator for immediate support.

Project	Partners	Phase/Year Group	Data Collection (test name/s and type/s)	Description (including number of learners tested)
Talking Time	National Institute of Economic and Social Research	Early years	• Action Picture Test (APT): developed by GL assessment, used to evaluate speech and language development, which involves showing a child a series of pictures and asking questions about them • The Grammar and Phonology Screen Test (GAPS): Used as the primary outcome measure, GAPS is a standardised, quick screening tool for language impairment • Expressive Vocabulary Test: a quick tool used to assess children's expressive vocabulary and the extent to which pictures of words can be named correctly, arranged in increasing order of difficulty	Talking Time is an early year's oral language intervention, for children aged 3 to 5. The delivery ran from September 2024 to July 2025 at 123 settings across North West England, Yorkshire, the Midlands, East and South East England. The baseline data collection took place at all 123 schools in September and October 2024, with endline in June and July 2025. The assessments were conducted on a 1-1 basis with Early Years children. Navigator Assessors used a digital voice recorder to record each child's assessment as well as making a written record of responses. Completed assessments and audio recordings were then quality checked and scored by our in-house team of Assessment Moderators. In total, Navigator Assessors conducted assessments with 1,688 pupils at baseline and 1,544 at endline using all three outcome measures (APT, GAPS & EVT) at each testing phase with all pupils.
Tips by Text (Round 2)	National Institute of Economic and Social Research	Reception	• LanguageScreen: a digital oral language screener, delivered using a tablet • Head-Toes-Knees-Shoulders Revised (HTKS-R): a measure of self-regulation, which can be recorded on paper or digitally, our team devised a tablet-based approach to record the assessment • Note: Both outcome measures are delivered one-to-one	The Tips by Text intervention involves the delivery of text nudge messages to the parents of reception-age children. Navigator was commissioned by NIESR to carry out baseline and endline data collection for the evaluation, throughout September to November 2024 and June to July 2025 respectively. The 130 schools in the project were located across North West England, Yorkshire, London, and South East England. The assessments were conducted on a 1-1 basis with Reception children. Each assessment was recorded on an iPad, using an Askiaface survey designed by our data team. Completed assessments were then synced through to Navigator to be quality checked. Our Assessors carried out 2,967 assessments at baseline and 2,796 at endline using the two outcome measures.
Counting Collections	Sheffield Hallam University	Reception	• Sandwell Early Numeracy Test (SENT): a paper-based assessment designed to identify any gaps in pupils' understanding of core mathematical skills that may be leading to difficulty as the curriculum progresses, from GL Assessment. • Note: Outcome measure was delivered one-to-one	Counting Collections is an early years intervention designed to improve children's number sense. Navigator conducted the baseline and endline assessments with Reception children at 176 schools across the North East, East Midlands, South Yorkshire and the South West. The baseline assessments took place in September and October 2023, while the endline assessments took place in June and July 2024. Each assessment was conducted on a 1-1 basis and recorded in a record booklet, prepopulated with each pupil's demographic

				information. The completed booklets were then returned to Navigator for quality checking. A total of 3,300 pupils were assessed.
Reciprocal Reading	Behavioural Insights Team	Y4, Y5 & Y6	• New Group Reading Test (NGRT): a digital adaptive assessment, it is delivered on a whole-class basis and responds to pupils' ability so more able readers are challenged and weaker ones remain engaged	Reciprocal Reading is a reading comprehension skills intervention targeted at KS2 & KS3 pupils. The evaluation project was spread across 15 'clusters' nationally. The assessments were conducted on a whole-class basis. The Navigator assessors explained the assessment to the pupils, after which pupils independently completed the assessment on a desktop computer. 80% of baseline assessments were conducted in June and July 2023, and the remaining 20% in September-October. The endline assessments took place between March and July 2024. Navigator conducted assessments in all 224 schools involved, a total of 3,937 pupils were assessed, with an overall completion rate of 98%.
Catch Up Literacy	Institute for Employment Studies	Y6	• York Assessment for Reading Comprehension (YARC): a one-to-one, diagnostic reading assessment which enables teachers to assess pupils' reading and comprehension skills	Navigator was commissioned to carry out 45 virtual reading assessments, using the YARC assessment tool on a one-to-one basis, with children in their own homes. The main intention of the reading assessments was to provide greater insight into the effectiveness of a book-based approach to supporting Looked After Children's learning.
Opportunity North East	King's College London	Y7	• NGRT (see above) • Junior Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (JMAI): is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure metacognitive awareness in children and adolescents, helping educators and researchers understand how young learners think about and regulate their own learning processes • Note: both outcome measures are whole class assessment tools	Navigator were asked to assess the effectiveness of the following approaches to supporting primary pupils during their transition to secondary school: Curricular Continuity, Transition through Talk, Reciprocal Reading, Together to Succeed. The total number of pupils assessed was 1,086.
Tips by Text (Round 1)	National Institute of Economic and Social Research & Institute for Employment Studies	Reception	• YARC (see above)	The TBT intervention involves the delivery of text nudge messages to the parents of reception-age children over a nine month period. Navigator was commissioned by NIESR to carry out baseline and endline data collection for the evaluation. During the baseline assessments, 2,479 pupils were assessed across the 117 schools in the project. The project was heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, meaning the endline assessments were delayed. Ultimately, 771 endline assessments were conducted online across 42 schools, as data collection was cancelled due to the third lockdown.

Flexible Phonics	Institute for Employment Studies	Reception	• YARC (see above) • Mispronunciation Correction Test (MCT) • Note: <i>assessments were delivered on a one-to-one basis</i>	The Flexible Phonics evaluation assessed the impact of Direct Mapping and Set-for-Variability, two classroom-based phonics interventions. Baseline assessments comprised two subscales of the YARC tool, Letter Sound Knowledge and Early Word Recognition. Endline assessments involved all 4 YARC subscales as well as the MCT. At baseline, Navigator's assessment team conducted 2,949 YARC assessments across 123 London schools. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Navigator arranged to conduct some of these assessments remotely via Zoom, to ensure all schools in the project had the opportunity to take part. The 2,700 endline assessments were conducted in person, once lockdown restrictions had lifted.
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Academic year	Project	Evaluation Lead	Data collected
2020-21	Tips by Text (Round 1)	National Institute of Economic and Social Research & Institute for Employment Studies	Assessment data using YARC
2021-22	Flexible Phones	Institute for Employment Studies	Assessment data using YARC and MCT
2023-34	Reciprocal Reading	Behavioural Insights Team	Assessment data using NGRT
2023-24	Counting Collections	Sheffield Hallam University	Assessment data using SENT
2023-24	Orchestrating Numeracy and the Executive (ONE)	RAND Europe	Assessment data using Corsi Block, Early Years Toolbox Numeracy & HTKS-R
2024-25	Talking Time	National Institute of Economic and Social Research	Assessment data using APT, EVT and GAPS
2024-25	Tips by Text (Round 2)	National Institute of Economic and Social Research	Assessment data using HTKS-R and LanguageScreen
2026-27	Teacher Choices (Writing Trial)	Oxford MeasurEd	School and pupil recruitment & assessment data collection (Writing Assessment Measure & Self Efficacy for Writing Scale)
2026-27	Talk With Tales for Children (TWiTCH)	Durham University	Assessment data using LanguageScreen and Renfrew Bus Story
2026-27	Maths Through Picture Books	IFF Research	Assessment data using the Early Years Toolbox (Numeracy)

Conflicts of interest

No conflict of interest to declare.