Assess for Success

Pilot Report

December 2019

Patrick Taylor, Jessica Heal, Pantelis Solomon (replaced by Matthew Barnard), Alice Farrell, and Bridie Murphy

THE
BEHAVIOURAL
INSIGHTS
TEAM

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent grant-making charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, ensuring that children from all backgrounds can fulfil their potential and make the most of their talents.

The EEF aims to raise the attainment of children facing disadvantage by:

- identifying promising educational innovations that address the needs of disadvantaged children in primary and secondary schools in England;

- evaluating these innovations to extend and secure the evidence on what works and can be made to work at scale; and

- encouraging schools, government, charities, and others to apply evidence and adopt innovations found to be effective.

The EEF was established in 2011 by the Sutton Trust as lead charity in partnership with Impetus Trust (now part of Impetus - Private Equity Foundation) and received a founding £125m grant from the Department for Education. Together, the EEF and Sutton Trust are the government-designated What Works Centre for improving education outcomes for school-aged children.

For more information about the EEF or this report please contact:

Jonathan Kay
Education Endowment Foundation
5th Floor, Millbank Tower
21–24 Millbank
SW1P 4QP

0207 802 1653

jonathan.kay@eefoundation.org.uk

www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk

Contents

About the evaluator

The project was independently evaluated by a team from the Behavioural Insights Team: Patrick Taylor, Jessica Heal, Pantelis Solomon (replaced by Matthew Barnard), Alice Farrell, and Bridie Murphy.

The lead evaluator was Patrick Taylor.

Contact details:

Patrick Taylor
The Behavioural Insights Team
4 Matthew Parker Street
London SW1H 9NP
Email: **patrick.taylor@bi.team**

Executive summary

The project

Assess for Success (AfS) aimed to improve outcomes for learners on GCSE English resits through improved use of diagnostic and formative assessment to drive teaching and learning. The Manchester College (TMC, which is part of the LTE Group), a large, multi-campus Further Education (FE) college, developed this new approach to formative assessment for GCSE English resit students. The programme comprises a diagnostic assessment, three progress assessments, a skills profile, and two learning tracking tools. These resources are supported by a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Six FE colleges took part in the pilot, one of which was TMC; the latter played the roles of both developer and participant. Due to this dual role, staff and students from TMC were not considered recipients of the intervention for the purposes of the evaluation. In total, 58 members of staff and 4,229 students took part in the pilot. Intervention delivery took place between June 2018 and June 2019, and the main data collection activities for the evaluation were conducted between October 2018 and April 2019.

This pilot was funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) as part of a joint initiative with J.P. Morgan to explore how to improve outcomes for disadvantaged 16- to 18-year-old students who achieve below a grade 4 in GCSE English or maths.

How was the pilot conducted?

A mixed-methods approach was taken to data collection, combining evidence from interviews, observations, surveys, and administrative data. The approach was sequential, so that findings from each stage were used to inform the approach to subsequent stages. The majority of the qualitative data-collection centred around three case study colleges.

Table 1: Summary of pilot findings

Question	Finding	Comment
Evidence of promise: *Does it appear that this intervention could improve the English GCSE attainment of learners in FE colleges?*	Partly	There were reports from teachers and students that AfS had a positive effect on students' sense of achievement, and that this led to an increase in self-confidence (although this was partly attributed to the ease of the AfS assessments). Some teachers felt more able to describe their individual students development priorities, however both teachers and students had concerns that the lack of alignment between the two assessments led to false expectations about the difficulty of the GCSE exam.
Feasibility: *Can the intervention be delivered in a way that is effective for FE Colleges and FE English Teachers?*	Partly	The core AfS assessments were used in the majority of settings, but barriers were experienced in engaging with other resources like the Moodle platform.* Resources for teachers require improvements and additions, and the training and CPD was perceived as useful in parts but requires substantial design work.
Readiness for Trial: *Is the intervention ready to be evaluated in a trial?*	No	Substantial improvements to the intervention and its management are required. The inconsistencies in evidence of promise and the issues raised in relation to feasibility suggest that significant development and piloting is advisable before the intervention is reassessed for readiness for trial.

* An online platform. See page 8.

Overview of findings

There was some evidence of promise for the intervention. The AfS Diagnostic Assessment (DA) was considered by both coordinators and teachers to be an improvement on the alternative they had previously been using. Being a paper-based, skills-based assessment, delivered in controlled classroom conditions, the DA was seen to address some of the

issues of the 'Basic and Key Skill Builder' assessment (BKSB). Teachers particularly liked the common structure between assessments (based around eight key skills) and the graphic representation of results.

Some students have shown an improved understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, and some have also shown evidence of targeted independent learning, though there is a question-mark over whether the latter can be attributed to the intervention. There were also reports from teachers and students that AfS had a positive effect on students' sense of achievement. This seemed to be a result of the ease of the assessments and improvements in self-knowledge. As a result of this increased sense of achievement, some students also seemed to develop an increased sense of self-confidence. This may have in turn improved their attitude towards the final GCSE exam. However, both students and teachers suggested that this increase in confidence was not (always) positive because of the lack of alignment between the AfS assessments and the GCSE exams. Some feared that the intervention might develop an unjustified confidence that could give students false expectations about the difficulty of the GCSE exam. In addition, it was reported by some teachers that students with higher GCSE grades were doing worse on AfS assessments than those with lower GCSE grades, further calling into question the validity of the assessments.

Teachers reported feeling more able to describe their students' individual development priorities, and interviews with teachers and coordinators revealed evidence of teachers effectively adapting their teaching as a result. The areas of English where there was perceived to be a positive link to attainment were spelling, punctuation, and grammar. However, managers, teachers, and students found it hard to tell whether AfS had an effect on students' English attainment. This was mostly due to the timing of the case study fieldwork (which took place before GCSE exams), but some teachers argued that any improvements in attainment were due to factors other than the intervention (such as prior attainment and the student's attitude towards education).

The intervention was described as feasible to deliver by the coordinators and teachers who responded to the evaluation surveys. However, deeper analysis of survey, administrative, and qualitative data has revealed issues with certain activities and resources. The core AfS assessments were used in the majority of cases, but barriers were experienced in the Moodle and some of the CPD. The training and CPD were perceived as useful in parts but require substantial design work. Resources for teachers also require improvements and some additions. While staff in pilot colleges found the assessments helpful in identifying students' weaknesses, they felt that they had little support in addressing those weaknesses through teaching and learning resources.

Interviews with teaching and management staff in colleges that did not take part in the pilot revealed potentially low demand for the intervention outside of the pilot cohort due to issues of feasibility and perceived value. The most substantial issue identified was that the skills-based approach clashed with the colleges' approach to formative assessment, which was often more directly linked to the GCSE exams.

Overall, the inconsistencies in evidence of promise and the issues raised in relation to feasibility suggest that significant development and further piloting is advisable before the intervention is reassessed for readiness for trial.

Introduction

Intervention

The Manchester College (TMC) has developed a new approach to initial and ongoing assessment for GCSE English resit students called Assess for Success (AfS). A formal logic model or Theory of Change has not yet been developed for the intervention, so the following description has been constructed from early planning documents and the pilot fieldwork. During the pilot year, some of the intervention deviated from the original design (after some pre-pilot development work based partly on feedback from a group of experts in Assessment for Learning), some was developed during the year, and some was not delivered. The description below is of the design of the intervention at the beginning of the academic year.

The intervention aims to ultimately improve student attainment in GCSE English. The intention is that, as result of the intervention, the following intermediate outcomes will be achieved:

- students are clearer on what they need to learn;
- students take more responsibility for their learning;
- teachers assess more accurately;
- teachers more effectively plan learning from known starting points to accelerate progress;
- teachers more effectively monitor and track progress and adjust the curriculum to meet identified skills gaps, providing timely intervention for individuals; and
- managers more effectively monitor progress in-year and identify where intervention is needed to support students and their teachers in the delivery of quality teaching, learning, and assessment.

The intervention has four core resources for teachers.

1. A paper-based diagnostic assessment (the 'DA') and mark scheme that aims to establish students' strengths and weaknesses in eight key English skills—'reading', 'language and structure', 'evaluation', 'grammar', 'spelling', 'punctuation', 'writing ideas', and 'writing accuracy'—at the start of the academic year.
2. Three paper-based progress assessments (PA1, PA2, and PA3) and mark schemes that aim to establish students' development over the course of the year, covering the same skills as the DA.
3. A 'skills profile' sheet that gives a description of the eight English skills, to be used as a poster and/or hand-out.
4. Two 'learner tracking tools'—blank grids upon which students can plot their A4S assessment results. The first grid allows students to plot the total marks achieved for each of the four A4S assessments, giving a graphic representation of the change in marks over the year. The second 'tool' is a set of four grids—one for each A4S assessment—that allows students to plot their marks for each assessment, broken down by the eight skill categories. This produces a bar chart for each assessment with eight bars aiming to show the student their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the eight skills.

A student exercise book was created for students at TMC, which includes the skills profile and the learner tracking tools. It also contains space for students to set—and record progress on—personal development goals. A structure for teachers to record the assessment results in 'Markbook' (the software used by colleges for student data management) was also created for use at TMC during the pilot year. These two resources were shared with pilot colleges as examples of how the intervention could be used but were not compulsory formats.

The assessments and accompanying resources have four key characteristics. First, they are designed to be formative, rather than summative. This means that they aim to give teachers information they can use throughout the year to provide more targeted and personalised support to each student, and they aim to give students information that they can use to better focus their independent learning. Second, they are structured by English skills, rather than by GCSE assessment objectives, as these skill-based categories are thought to be more useful for teachers and students in setting development goals. Third, they are 'student-centred' in the sense that students are asked to actively engage in the analysis of their own results as well as the resultant personal development objectives. Students are given the full breakdown of marks for all assessments, record these marks in charts, and work with their teachers to set development objectives based on the assessment results. Fourth, they are paper-based, rather than online, so that teachers can

more easily use them in normal lesson time, and so that students take them more seriously. This last feature, along with the level of detail that the assessments provide on students' level of English skills and progress throughout the year, are thought to differentiate the intervention from alternatives in the FE sector such as the 'Basic and Key Skill Builder' assessment (known as the 'BKSB').

A programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) aims to support teachers to effectively implement the intervention. This comprises the following elements.

1. Four days of training and practice sharing in the implementation of the intervention and Assessment for Learning.
2. Peer mentoring from teaching staff at TMC (the 'TMC Champions').
3. A 'community of practice' within each participating college, facilitated by a member of the college's English department who has been selected as the AfS 'coordinator' for the college. This entails meetings of English teachers to share and reflect on their practice and to review progress in implementing the intervention.

The intervention is supported by a 'Moodle'. This is an online platform that allows teachers to access the four core resources listed above, the student exercise book, Markbook structure, and slides and handouts from CPD events. It also allows teachers to upload resources of their own that they think other teachers might find useful, and interact with other teachers via discussion forums and blogs.

Background evidence

The intervention has been developed to address issues faced by colleges in supporting students who are resitting their GCSE English qualification. In 2013, a government policy was introduced that made it compulsory for all students who achieve a 'D' (grade 3 under the new system) or below in GCSE maths or English to continue studying towards these qualifications until they achieve a 'C' (grade 4 under the new system) or above.[1] This substantially increased the number of students resitting these exams in post-16 settings. Of those students who are re-entered for their English GCSE at the age of 17, approximately 27% achieve grade 4 or above (Allen, 2016).

As part of their support for these students, post-16 settings use diagnostic assessments to better understand individual strengths and weaknesses and, in principle, to tailor their support for learners accordingly. One of the more common diagnostic assessments in the FE sector—the 'Basic and Key Skill Builder' assessment (known as the 'BKSB')—is seen as flawed by some teachers for two main reasons. Firstly, it is administered online and often done independently by students before starting college. As a result, it is thought that students often do not to take it seriously or, alternatively, take the test repeatedly to artificially improve their scores. Secondly, the results of the BKSB are thought to be insufficiently detailed to provide a useful basis for planning. These shortcomings mean that some teachers run their own informal assessments in an attempt to improve their understanding of their students' strengths and weaknesses. These 'teacher-led' assessments increase the likelihood of inconsistency and subjectivity in practice. AfS aims to address these issues by providing staff and students with information and resources that will help them to address the gaps in students' knowledge and skills that have so far prevented them from passing their English GCSE.

Feedback on student attainment has been shown have to have positive effects when implemented well. One study of Assessment for Learning (AfL) estimated a large positive effect (up to half of a GCSE grade per student), and a meta-analysis of studies on this approach suggests, 'that an improvement of about three months' additional progress is achievable in schools or nearer four months' when the approach is supported with professional development' (EEF, 2015). However, some studies have also estimated negative effects (EEF, 2015) and recent research funded by the EEF has shown that effective formative assessment practices can be difficult to implement (Gorard, See and Siddiqui, 2014). The quality of the evidence on written marking in particular (relating to both formative and summative

---

[1] Students achieving grade 2 or below are allowed to do a functional skills qualification in the first instance, but are then required to progress on to GCSE if they pass functional skills before they are 19 years old. This policy is due to change from the academic year 2019/2020 when, 'students with a grade 2 or below in maths or English can study towards a pass in functional skills level 2 (legacy or reformed) or they can still study towards a GCSE grade 9 to 4. Once they have achieved this, there is no requirement to undertake further maths or English qualifications to meet the condition of funding' (Department for Education, 2019).

assessment) is lower and, while some 'best practices' are suggested, more studies are required to improve our understanding of this field (Elliot, et al., 2016).

At the beginning of the evaluation, the intervention was at an early stage of development. Prior to this pilot, earlier versions of the diagnostic and progress assessments were developed over a period of six years to support the delivery of Functional Skills English and maths with adults on programmes of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Some parts of the pilot approach had also been tested on TMC's main campus in the 2017/2018 academic year, but substantial changes were made before the pilot was launched in September 2018. The most significant of these changes was to alter the structure of the resources from one that was aligned to exam board assessment objectives to one that was aligned with eight key English skills: 'reading', 'language and structure', 'evaluation', 'grammar', 'spelling', 'punctuation', 'writing ideas', and 'writing accuracy'. These changes to the intervention were supported by feedback from a team of academics and expert practitioners in Assessment for Learning. The framework for this feedback process was created by the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). Further changes were made to the teaching resources over the course of the pilot, to correct errors in the assessments and mark schemes, and the details of the programme of CPD were developed over the course of the pilot year.

This research aims to contribute to the wider literature on Assessment for Learning by supporting the development of an intervention and assessing its promise with a view to conducting an efficacy study in the future.

Research questions

The evaluation aimed to answer the following three questions.

1. **Evidence of promise:** Does it appear that this intervention could improve the GCSE attainment of learners in Further Education (FE) colleges?

2. **Feasibility:** Can the intervention be delivered in a way that is effective for FE Colleges and FE English teachers?

3. **Readiness for trial:** Is the intervention ready to be evaluated in a trial?

Ethical review

An internal ethical review was conducted by the Senior Research Team at the Behavioural Insights Team where it was concluded that additional review by an external committee was not required as the project was not considered to be high risk. In particular, research participants were not expected to be particularly vulnerable. The young people that were interviewed and observed were all over 16 years old and all research activities with young people took place on college premises in accordance with each institution's safeguarding policy. Further to this, the study required only small amounts of personal data to be collected and no special category data was collected. Informed consent was sought from all interview and survey participants prior to data collection. Students selected for interview were issued with an information sheet and provided written consent prior to interview. In order to collect contact information for all teaching staff participating in the pilot, we issued a written information sheet and consent form. College staff selected for interview were given verbal information and provided verbal consent prior to interview. College staff selected for surveying were given written information in the form of a privacy notice at the beginning of the survey. They then ticked a box to indicate consent before completing the relevant survey. It was made clear to all parties that participation in research activities was voluntary and that no cost would be incurred by non-participation. Copies of all information sheets and consent forms are provided in Appendices I–III.

Project team

The delivery of the intervention involved six core groups, as summarised in the organogram (Figure 1) and table (Table 2) below.

Figure 1: AfS Organogram. *Roles in orange are part of TMC's central team; roles in blue are in pilot colleges. Unbroken lines indicate line management responsibility, dotted line indicates support role.*
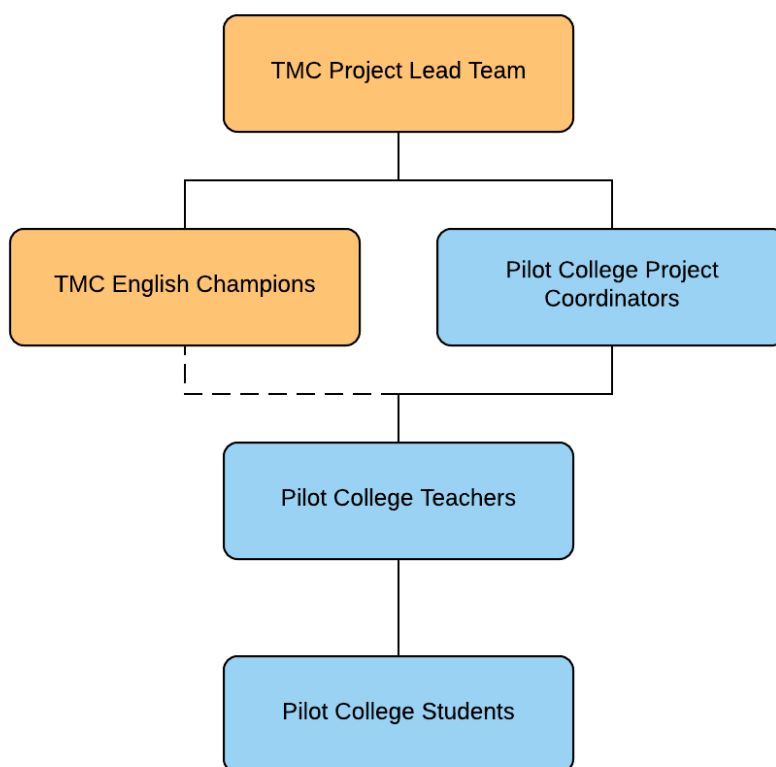

Table 2: Intervention delivery team and participants

Role	Role Description
TMC Project Lead Team	Designing and managing the AfS programme
TMC Champions	Mentoring two pilot colleges each, supporting them to implement AfS and develop communities of practice
Pilot College (PC) coordinators	The lead staff member for AfS in each pilot college. Supporting all English teachers in their college to deliver AfS, whilst also delivering it with their own classes
PC teachers	Delivering the AfS programme as part of GCSE English resits
PC students	GCSE English resit students participating in the AfS programme
PC Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	The member of SLT per pilot college with overall responsibility for the project

The evaluation was delivered by the following staff at the Behavioural Insights Team:

- Patrick Taylor, Research Fellow;
- Jessica Heal, Senior Research Advisor;
- Pantelis Solomon, Principle Research Advisor (replaced by Matthew Barnard, Principle Research Advisor);
- Alice Farrell, Associate Advisor; and
- Bridie Murphy, Research Assistant.

Methods

Recruitment

Colleges were recruited to the intervention by TMC on the basis of two criteria: (1) having over 200 students or being multi-site; and (2) having at least two teachers willing to participate. These criteria were met in all but one case, where a college was admitted to the pilot with only one participating teacher. This college decided to restrict delivery of the intervention to one class because of the pilot nature of the project, but they were admitted to the intervention based on the expectation that they could still benefit from participation.

Students were considered eligible for the intervention if they were resitting their English GCSE. College SLTs were given control over student selection within this constraint. Some chose to deliver the intervention with a specific cohort (such as very low attainers) and some chose to deliver it to their entire cohort of GCSE resit students.

In total, six FE colleges took part in the intervention, one of which was TMC, which played the roles of both developer and participant; due to this dual role, staff and students from TMC were not considered part of the pilot for the purposes of data collection.[2] Of the five non-TMC colleges (the 'pilot colleges'), all took part in the evaluation surveys and a census approach was taken within these settings with all pilot teachers and coordinators invited to respond to the relevant survey. One additional college began the intervention by using the diagnostic assessment but decided not to continue with the other three assessments. For the purposes of the evaluation, this setting was considered a 'non-pilot college' (see below).

For the qualitative elements of the study, sampling was purposive, with units selected for variation on characteristics that were thought to be particularly relevant to the research questions. Three colleges were selected for case studying on this basis. Sampling of these colleges was carried out by the researchers, aiming for variation in the following two characteristics:

- number of participating teachers and students; and
- student demographics (level of deprivation, geographic location).

Within those colleges, the PC coordinator selected students and teachers for interview with the aim of getting variation in levels of engagement with the intervention. The specific lesson and internal CPD session that was observed in each case study college was convenience sampled by the PC coordinator, based on what was logistically possible to fit around student and staff interviews on a single visit to each setting. The member of the SLT interviewed in each case was the person responsible for approving the college's participation in the intervention.

Four colleges that did not take part in the intervention (the 'non-pilot colleges') were also selected to participate in the evaluation to help assess demand for the intervention outside of the pilot settings. These colleges were selected based on the following characteristics:

- two colleges that declined an offer to participate in the intervention; and
- two colleges that met the general eligibility criteria described above.

For convenience, the plan was to select the latter two non-pilot colleges from the sample of colleges participating in the Project Success evaluation (another EEF project).[3] In practice, these two colleges were selected from the sample of settings participating in a different EEF evaluation, the Maths-for-Life evaluation.[4] The reason for this deviation from the protocol was to attempt to identify English departments that were not already particularly engaged in interventions with

---

[2] Where TMC staff were interviewed, this was in their role as TMC Champions. This distinction between TMC and the other colleges was not considered in the protocol. Consequently, there are three targets in the protocol (pp. 5–6) that have a denominator of six (to indicate the total number of pilot colleges) when this should have been five. To account for this, these targets have been converted into percentages for the analysis. For example, the target '4/6 SLT perceive that there is value in this intervention (compared to traditional methods of assessment)', has been converted into '67% SLT perceive…'.

[3] https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/texting-students-and-study-supporters

[4] https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/maths-for-life/

similar external partners. (Project Success is available to both English and maths departments, whereas Maths-for-Life is a maths-only intervention.)

As discussed above, a purposive approach to sampling was used for the qualitative elements of the study, which has important implications for the analysis and findings. The aim of this sampling method is to capture the range and diversity of experiences in relation to the research questions. Importantly, this approach is not intended to generate a sample that is statistically representative of either the study population or the wider population from which the total study sample was drawn. As such, reporting the prevalence of a reported experience in the qualitative findings 'tells us nothing about the prevalence within [either] population' (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 329). Furthermore, qualitative methods, by their nature, do not collect data in the structured way that is necessary for quantitative aggregation. This is in contrast, for example, to structured survey questionnaires, which collect responses in fixed categories that can be aggregated. The reporting of frequency counts in relation to qualitative findings is therefore carefully avoided as such counts are at best uninformative and at worst misleading.

Data collection

A mixed-methods approach was taken to data collection, combining evidence from interviews, observations, surveys, and administrative data. The approach was sequential—findings from each stage were used to inform the approach to subsequent stages (Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.120). For example, themes that emerged from training observations were used to inform the design of interview guides in case study colleges.

A case study approach was taken to the majority of the qualitative data collection. A lesson observation in each college focused on student engagement with, and teacher use of, the intervention. This method provided us with behavioural information to complement interview data. It also helped us to explore elements of the intervention and its effects that participants may not have been fully aware of and/or able to articulate in interview. Lesson observations were complemented by observations of internal CPD sessions and interviews with students, the PC coordinator, PC teachers, and a member of the college SLT. For each case study college, we also interviewed the TMC Champion (the member of staff at TMC assigned to support that college with implementation of the intervention). These interviews allowed us to probe observed experiences and explore those factors that cannot be observed. Semi-structured observation frameworks and interview guides were used in all cases.

We also observed two CPD days that brought all pilot colleges together at TMC. To provide a quantitative overview of the impressions of pilot participants in relation to the three research questions, two online surveys were conducted towards the end of the academic year; one with PC teachers and one with PC coordinators (referred to as 'teachers and delivery staff' in the protocol). Quantitative administrative data was also collected on attendance at key intervention sessions and usage of key resources.[5] This administrative data is the only data that was collected by the developers and pilot colleges. All other data was collected by the BIT researchers.

Finally, to help assess the readiness of the intervention for trial, we interviewed management and teaching staff from four colleges that were not taking part in the pilot ('non-pilot colleges') to get their views on the value and feasibility of the intervention in their settings. These interviews were semi-structured and conducted on the telephone. In all cases, we interviewed the senior manager responsible for English (usually called the 'Head of English'), who had management responsibility for the GCSE programme and also taught some GCSE classes. In one case, an additional English GCSE teacher was invited by the Head of English to join the interview. In total, these interviews comprised five staff from four colleges. The protocol specified that this sample would include one senior manager and one English teacher per college. This was the case in the actual sample, but in all cases the senior manager interviewed was also a teacher so it was not necessary to interview additional teaching staff.

The table below summarises the measures and methods that were used to answer the three evaluation questions. See Appendix IV for copies of all data collection instruments.

---

[5] 'Student attendance' was mentioned in the protocol as a potential administrative data point to collect. However, after discussions with the developers it was decided that this would not be a valuable metric to collect as the majority of English GCSE lessons would not be based on the intervention. Instead, for student-level data, we focused on usage of the key intervention resources.

Table 3: Summary of methods

Research question	Measure	Method
Evidence of promise: Does it appear that this intervention could improve the GCSE attainment of learners in Further Education (FE) colleges?	Ability of students to articulate personal development priorities and strategies in English	Student interviews Lesson observations
	Student perceptions of the effects of the intervention	Student interviews
	Teaching and management staff perceptions of the effects of the intervention	Teacher and SLT interviews Teacher survey
Feasibility: Is the intervention feasible to deliver for FE colleges and FE English teachers?	Staff attendance at training and CPD sessions	Admin data
	Use of key resources by teachers and students	Admin data
	Teaching and management staff perceptions of value and feasibility	Teacher and SLT interviews
Readiness for trial: Is the intervention ready to be evaluated in a trial?	PC Coordinators perceptions of the readiness of the staff structure and training	PC coordinator interviews and survey
	Willingness and ability of PC Coordinators to deliver the intervention in future years	PC coordinator interviews and survey
	Teacher perceptions of the readiness of teaching resources	PC teacher interviews and survey
	Non-pilot college perceptions of the value and feasibility of the intervention (demand)	Non-pilot staff interviews

A thematic analysis across cases was carried out on the qualitative data. This analysis included a three-stage process of organising and analysing the data from interview transcripts. In the first stage, transcripts were coded by research question for the purpose of 'topic coding' (Saldana, 2009). In the second stage, they were coded by theme in response to the relevant research question. These themes were identified inductively from the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 83). In the third stage, these themes were refined by reviewing their relation to each other and to the data collected from observations and surveys, and to ensure that they comprehensively covered the data—including all perspectives on the research questions (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 280).

To support decision-making on the development and scaling of the intervention after the pilot, some quantitative targets were set by the developers in relation to the survey and administrative data collected. In the absence of prior data or other sources of benchmarking, the targets set were based on the developer's view of what would be satisfactory. These targets, and their associated actuals, are reported at the beginning of each relevant section of the findings below. The results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis were triangulated to produce an answer to each research question. In some cases, the quantitative targets were met or exceeded, but qualitative data revealed issues. Conversely, in some cases quantitative targets were not met, but qualitative data suggested that this was not necessarily cause for concern. Finally, findings from across all three research questions were assessed together to produce an overall recommendation as to whether the project is ready to progress, along with more detailed recommendations on potential improvements to the intervention.

Table 4, below, summarises the number of participants from whom we collected data, by research method.

Table 4: Sample summary by method

Method	# Participants providing data	# Participants in pilot population
Lesson observations (teachers and students)	44[6]	4282
PC Teacher interviews	8	48
PC Coordinator interviews	3	5
PC SLT interviews	3	5
Student interviews	13	4229
TMC Champion interviews	3	5
Non-pilot college staff interviews	5	5
PC Coordinator survey	5	5
PC Teacher survey	41	48

Timeline

Table 5: Timeline

Date	Activity
November 2017–March 2018	Recruitment of pilot colleges
May–July 2018	Briefing and training of pilot colleges
June 2018–June 2019	Delivery of intervention
October 2018	Observation of first CPD day at TMC
January 2019	Observation of second CPD day at TMC
March–April 2019	Case study observations and interviews
March–April 2019	Interviews with non-pilot colleges
March 2019	Interim report meeting with developers[7]
April 2019	Survey data collection
April 2019	Administrative data collection
May–September 2019	Analysis and reporting

---

[6] This was total number of individuals present in the three observed lessons.
[7] This was a meeting where the researcher provided some early findings for the developers at a point in the year when they were beginning re-design work on the intervention.

Findings

Participants

Table 6, below, summarises the characteristics of the five pilot colleges. They were all large, multi-campus settings.

Table 6: Summary of pilot setting characteristics

Setting	Urban/rural*	Approx. student population	# Campuses**	Latest Ofsted rating***	IMD decile****
College 1	Urban major conurbation	Not recorded	4	Good	9
College 2	Urban city and town	Not recorded	3	Good	3
College 3	Urban city and town	Not recorded	4	Good	2
College 4	Urban and rural	Not recorded	3	Good	2
College 5	Urban minor conurbation	Not recorded	4	Requires Improvement	2

*Source: Department for Education, 2019b. ** Source: Institutional websites. *** Source: Ofsted, 2019. **** Source: Department for Education, 2019b and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2015 (1 is most deprived 10% of Lower Super Output Areas).*

Table 7, below, gives a summary of the number of classes, teachers, and students that participated in the intervention by college.

Table 7: Summary of intervention participation figures

Setting	# Classes participating	# Teachers participating*	# Students participating
College 1	2	1	35
College 2	35	12	743
College 3	66	21	1348
College 4	20	5	353
College 5	74	14	1750
Total:	197	53	4229

This includes the five PC Coordinators, who all also delivered the intervention with their classes.

Evidence to support theory of change

Summary of findings

The intervention was at an early stage of development at the beginning of the pilot and the developers are yet to create a formal logic model or theory of change. Nonetheless, the primary outcome (English GCSE attainment) is clear, as are the intermediate outcomes that are thought to support an improvement in attainment. These intermediate outcomes can be grouped into three categories: outcomes for students, outcomes for teachers, and outcomes for the SLT. Survey data (Table 8) suggests that teachers believed that, as a result of the intervention, they could identify individual development priorities for their students and did have plans in place to support these priorities. However, the data also suggests that teachers found it more difficult to monitor student progress throughout the year and adjust their plans accordingly. In pilot colleges, the intervention does not seem to have substantially improved the ability of SLTs to monitor student progress. Some students have shown an improved understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, and some have also shown evidence of targeted independent learning, though teachers interviewed questioned whether the latter can be attributed to the intervention. The evaluation found little evidence that these intermediate outcomes will lead to improved attainment, however. Two potential unintended outcomes for students were also identified: an increase in students' sense of achievement and in students' self-confidence. The qualitative evidence relating to each category of outcomes is discussed in turn below, along with the two potential unintended outcomes. Following on from this, four key factors that seem to moderate the effects of the intervention are presented.

Table 8: Indicators of evidence of promise[8]

Metric	Target %	Actual %
% teachers who believe they can describe the individual development priorities in English for their students	70	73
% teachers who believe they can describe the strategies being used to support each of their students' priorities	70	71
% teachers who believe they can better monitor the progress of their students	70	41
% teachers who believe they have adjusted the curriculum to meet the needs of their students this year	70	59
% teachers who believe they have been able to provide timely intervention for their students	70	44
% SLT who believe that they can better monitor student progress during the year	67	33

N(teachers) = 41. N(SLT) = 3.

Outcomes for students

The intervention aimed to improve students' GCSE English attainment via two pathways: (1) students being clearer on what they need to learn; and (2) students taking more responsibility for their learning. There was some evidence in support of both of these outcomes, and two potential unintended outcomes were also identified.

There was evidence from interviews with both teachers and students that the intervention gave some students a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in English.

"You track your diagnostics, your progress assessments and you can see how many marks you get in each section for each of it so you can see where you're weaker, where you're stronger, what you need to be doing. Then you've got the targets you can set for yourself" (Student, S1).

For other students, self-knowledge seemed not to be influenced by AfS, and when asked about their strengths and weaknesses they would refer to personal failings rather than specific, subject-related skills.

Four broad levels of personal responsibility for learning were identified amongst students in case study settings. At the first level, there were students who did not engage in independent learning at all, even when simple structured activities were set by the teacher during a lesson. Some students in this group were described by teachers as completely disengaged from English lessons. Others were more engaged in general, but perceived the purpose of the AfS assessments to be to support their teachers to make more informed decisions about how to plan lessons, rather than feeding into their own reflection and ownership over their learning.

"It gives the teacher an idea of [what] everyone is going to struggle on or not struggle on" (Student, S1).

In these cases, students felt the onus to be on their teachers, rather than themselves, to adjust their learning in response to the AfS assessment results. At the second level, there were students who would at least be aware of their AfS results and used them to set personal targets, which they sometimes reflected upon.

"After every exam I use it [an exercise book] and write targets down. Also, after I've used it, I check if I remember old targets and if I haven't I try to think what's happened" (Student, S4).

This group seemed to appreciate the clarity and ownership given to them by having a personal, graphic record of their progress. At the third level, students sometimes engaged in independent learning during lessons based on personal AfS development goals. At the fourth and most 'advanced' level, there were examples of students engaging in self-directed homework.

---

[8] The protocol included one additional quantitative indicator for this research question: '70% of interviewed students can articulate their personal development priorities and strategies in English'. However, the interview data collected on this topic was not clear cut enough to provide a useful quantitative result here, so this metric was dropped.

"I have been taking some targets down and writing them down in the book and taking them home and I do each target. Every night I do a target for a different thing I need to do" (Student, S4).

The potential moderators that might determine a student's level in this regard are discussed below, with English ability and attitudinal factors seeming to be particularly important. While there is then some evidence from student and teacher interviews of students taking personal responsibility (to varying degrees), it is not clear that the level of responsibility taken was influenced by the intervention. Some teachers suggested that those who took responsibility would have done so anyway, but it does seem to be the case that AfS did sometimes influence the quality of independent learning, if not the quantity, by identifying more specific areas of English for students to focus on.

"The students will be able to look at their PA3 and go, 'Right, I'm really struggling with my evaluation here', and they are setting a target and doing a Doddle quiz on evaluation" (PC coordinator, C1).

Two potential unintended outcomes for students were also identified. First, there were reports from teachers and students that AfS had a positive effect on students' sense of achievement. This seemed to be a result of the ease of the assessments, the graphic presentation of progress in student exercise books, and improvements in self-knowledge (as described above). Second, as a result of this increased sense of achievement, some students also seemed to develop an increased sense of self-confidence. This may have, in turn, improved their attitude towards the final GCSE exam, helping them to feel more prepared. However, both students and teachers suggested that this increase in confidence was not (always) positive because of the substantial difference in standards between the AfS assessments and the GCSE exams.

"I think the students are getting a bit of a false understanding of what the skills are, because they can come out with 50 out of 60 from the AfS, thinking they know their stuff. Then when they do … the actual GCSE assessment, trying to write and evaluate, they are not getting anywhere near that kind of percentage" (PC coordinator, C1).

For a separate group of students, AfS seemed to have a negative effect on their confidence by providing another source of information (on top of other assessments) to suggest that they were of low ability.

"I always think I'm rubbish especially when it comes to English ... So when [AfS shows that] I've done rubbish it puts me down" (Student, S8).

Managers, teachers, and students found it hard to tell whether AfS had an effect on students' English attainment (the primary outcome). This was mostly due to the timing of the case study fieldwork, which took place towards the end of intervention delivery but before pupils had sat their GCSE resits. Some students suggested that they were making better progress in English at college than they had done at school but did not ascribe this to AfS. Some teachers argued that any progress in English attainment at the end of the year would more likely be down to student characteristics (such as prior attainment and attitude towards education) than any intervention.

"I think the ones that generally do quite well in it and do improve and do care are the ones who are going to get a grade four anyway" (PC teacher, T1).

The areas of English where there was perceived to be a positive link were spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Some students seemed to respond positively to AfS's focus on this area, and there were indications that some teachers would not be focusing so much on it, were it not for AfS.

"I think they have [improved due to AfS] when it comes to things like punctuation and grammar. Those sections were quite interesting. Some of the feedback I had from students from those particular sections was that they were really glad that they were doing this because they never learn this at school properly" (PC coordinator, C3).

Outcomes for teachers

The AfS Diagnostic Assessment (DA) was considered by both coordinators and teachers to be an improvement on the alternatives that they had been previously using. The most common diagnostic in the FE sector—the 'Basic and Key Skill Builder' assessment (known as the 'BKSB')—was seen as flawed as it was thought that students often do not take it seriously or, alternatively, take the test repeatedly to artificially improve their scores.

"You can see that they've attempted it like 14 times, the BKSB initial assessment … purely so they could learn what the answer would be through elimination and get a higher grade" (PC SLT, SLT2).

The results of the BKSB were also described by some as insufficiently detailed and often arriving too late to provide a useful basis for planning. Being a paper-based, skills-focused assessment, delivered in controlled classroom conditions, the AfS DA was seen to address these shortcomings in part by providing useful, reliable, and timely information for teachers and students. Despite these strengths, some teachers nevertheless questioned the completeness of the DA, saying that they had had to supplement its results with information from other sources (such as educational health plans) in order to get the information required to effectively plan for their students.

Two characteristics of the AfS assessments were identified as promising in terms of teachers' ability to monitor and track student progress: the common structure between assessments (based around eight key skills) and the graphic representation of results.

"I like the way the assessments mirror each other, so there is always a grammar question and there's a writing skills question that we've been doing. So we can easily map progress … [and] you've got the bar charts" (PC coordinator, C2).

On the other hand, there was some concern that, while the results were easy to monitor, they were difficult to interpret in terms of progress towards a grade 4 at GCSE. This point is picked up in more detail in the discussion of moderators below. Some teachers also expressed concern that the AfS categories of progress, and the individual target setting that was required, made it harder to keep on top of student progress. Having eight detailed skill categories—as opposed to sections of the GCSE exam—and individualised development goals—as opposed to goals for groups of students within a class—was too much detail for some teachers to manage.

"It was perhaps a bit difficult to track where each and every person was. You know, you have got those people over there that need to work on this, and you've got those people there that need to work on that. Whereas, when you break it down to the mock exam, you have got people that need to work on language, you have got people that need to work on structure and so on. They are broader categories rather than, they need to work on commas or they need to work on their planning skills or something like that … [The broader categories are] a lot easier to track … and a lot easier to then inform my planning based on that" (PC teacher, T3).

There were three types of effect of the intervention on teachers' ability to plan and adjust the curriculum to better meet the needs of their students; some teachers took a very individualised approach to their teaching based on the assessments, others adapted whole class activities based on themes that they saw in the assessment results, and a final group made little or no connection between the results of AfS assessments and their teaching. In the most advanced cases, teachers were using the results of the AfS assessments to help students set individual development goals and were offering tailored support to achieve these goals. In one example, a teacher had chosen to conduct the AfS assessments in advance of mock GCSE exams, using the results of the former to inform individual student preparation for the latter.

"The way that I try to run it is, last mock exam in January, two weeks before that I gave them the PA1. So when they've done the PA1 we went through that and based targets on what they needed to improve on, but we could pinpoint and say look, this is really going to affect your grade in the mock. So, say for the writing task, if they haven't structured the writing correctly … then obviously that's going to affect the mark. So, it is a really good way to set targets that are focused on improving the grade when they do the mock exam" (PC coordinator, C2).

In another example, a teacher chose to timetable in regular lessons dedicated to AfS-related learning.

"All of my third lessons are a skills lesson, where they have all got an action plan and they all know what they have to do based on the assessment and based on the mocks they've just done. They have computers and resources in the class and they are able to then work on their own skills as needed" (PC coordinator, C1).

A less individualised approach was taken by some teachers who used the AfS assessments to identify common difficulties among students and then plan lessons around these, rather than supporting each student to work independently on their personal development goals.

"There were certain groups that were tending to be struggling with certain skills. If the majority are struggling then I would emphasise those skills more. Ideally, I wanted to get to the point of where it was really individualised, but in reality it wasn't" (PC coordinator, C3).

In a third category, some teachers spoke of 'struggling to make the connections' (PC teacher, T1) between the results of the assessments and the teaching and support that they offered their students. Others considered individualised learner support to be entirely unfeasible, making no link at all between the assessments and their lesson planning.

"What we were doing was assessing without teaching, without worrying about learning" (PC teacher, T6).

In all three categories—the teachers who planned for individuals, those who made changes based on common difficulties, and those who made no changes at all—a common barrier that they faced was a lack of resources to support differentiated teaching and learning. This issue is discussed as a barrier to implementation in the 'Feasibility' section below.

Outcomes for SLT

There was some evidence from interviews with SLT members of SLTs using AfS in their monitoring and planning, with one case study college going as far as aggregating AfS data for use by the SLT. In this case, AfS results were used alongside the results of mock GCSEs to support monitoring and planning. Here, the results fed into mid-year appraisals for teachers and were used to inform predicted grades for students. This member of the SLT shared the view of some teachers, that AfS was preferable to the BKSB for these purposes. In another case, the implementation of AfS allowed a college to streamline formative assessment across classes and sites, where teachers had previously been taking a variety of different approaches. Where colleges were not using aggregated AfS data for management decisions, SLTs engaged with the assessments in other ways. For example, one member of SLT reported that some teachers presented individual student AfS charts during lesson observations to demonstrate progress. The leadership team at one case study college was cautious about the implementation of AfS, restricting its use to one class and not monitoring the results at all at SLT level. In this case, the college's existing assessment framework was considered preferable by the SLT as it was more efficient and provided more useful data; converting pupil scores into GCSE marks, and providing RAG ratings and group-level summaries.

"I think it's because we have our own existing test and we would use a mock paper … If we use Edexcel mark papers as well you can download a spreadsheet from there and input the marks for it for every question on that paper, upload it back and it will tell you how the learners have done. It will tell you what the pass mark is for that paper, it will tell you how that learner has done, it will RAG rate it, and it will do the whole cohort as a profile as well" (PC SLT, SLT2).

As well as these two assessments, this college also used the BKSB and was more positive about it than others in the pilot based on the fact that it did not require marking by teachers.

Moderating factors

Four factors were identified as potential moderators of the effects of the intervention: (1) alignment between the AfS assessments and the GCSE exam, (2) teacher characteristics, (3) student characteristics, and (4) access to IT. These are discussed in turn below.

Alignment between AfS assessments and the GCSE exam

The level of alignment between the AfS assessments and the GCSE exams was the most complex moderator identified. The assessments were deliberately designed to look different to the GCSE in two main respects: (1) they are structured by English skills, rather than GCSE questions and assessment objectives, and (2) the questions are easier than GCSE questions. PC teachers identified benefits to these design choices; the fact that the diagnostic assessment did not look like a GCSE exam was thought to increase student engagement. Structuring the test by skills made it easier to set concrete development goals, and the focus on basics like spelling, punctuation, and grammar was seen as valuable for this cohort of students. Students also described benefits to the lack of alignment with the GCSE exam, with AfS assessment feedback being perceived as more specific and more manageable than that provided by mock GCSE results.

"If you get told you are weak at paper two, you have to do it all and you can't just focus on one bit. Whereas if you get it split down and noticed one bit that you are weak on, you focus on it and do it and it doesn't seem that big of a task" (Student, S1).

However, three issues were identified in relation to the differences between the AfS assessments and the GCSE exams. First, the level of difficulty of some of the questions in the AfS assessments was considered too low by some teachers and coordinators. As a result, for these teachers and coordinators, the AfS assessments did not give the depth of insight that they wanted; this was particularly the case with regards to students' evaluative and analytical skills. Further, the level of the assessments remained the same from the diagnostic through to last progress assessment, creating the possibility of a 'ceiling effect', where the full range of student abilities are not reflected in the range of available scores. As noted above, there was a concern among some teachers that this could give students a false sense of confidence. For example, one PC coordinator reflected that some students would get full marks on AfS assessments but very low marks in mock GCSE tests. Second, there was no way for staff or students to translate the results of the AfS assessments into equivalent GCSE scores or grades. This caused confusion for some students who wanted to know what their AfS score meant in terms of the GCSE. One teacher was observed potentially contributing to this confusion by inventing an arbitrary conversion factor, saying that, 'about half marks on AfS will get you a pass at GCSE'.

PC coordinators raised this issue in both interviews and observed meetings at TMC, but the developers were unable to provide guidance on the issue. Third, it was reported by some PC teachers that students with higher GCSE grades were doing worse on AfS assessments than those with lower GCSE grades, calling into question the validity of the AfS assessments.[9] The ways in which this broad issue of alignment moderated outcomes for students seemed to be dependent on the second moderating factor identified: teacher characteristics.

Teacher characteristics

The attitudes, skill, and experience of teachers seemed to play a strong role in moderating the effects of the intervention. To varying degrees, AfS required teachers to adopt new practices in their teaching. Some teachers were convinced by the potential benefits of the new approach and therefore made an effort to make the necessary connections between the AfS assessments and the GCSE.

"I quite like it and that's why I probably invested in it so much at the beginning" (PC teacher, T2).

Those teachers who were less convinced about the benefits of the approach did not think it justified the additional work or felt it was better to structure all teaching and learning around the GCSE exam papers. As one PC coordinator put it, for these teachers, 'the whole focus [is] working towards this exam … It is a mindset that we are having to change because it has been like that for so many years' (PC coordinator, C1). This latter group wanted very close alignment between any formative assessments and the GCSE exam. For example, one teacher objected to a question in an AfS assessment that asked students to do some descriptive writing in the form of a letter because this type of writing is not assessed in this form in the GCSE exam: 'Letter writing is paper two, descriptive writing is paper one' (PC coordinator, C1, describing a colleague). In some cases, teachers also had low expectations of students in terms of their ability to work independently and complete homework.

"I don't set homework … We've got Doddle and things like that, where they have the opportunity to do stuff outside, but if I set it and only two or three do it then there is no real consequences. Then it becomes this big huge thing that we've got to deal with" (PC teacher, T1).

As well as this variation in attitudes, there were issues related to the need to rely on teachers with limited teaching qualifications and subject knowledge to deliver the intervention. This was linked to difficulties with recruitment, with some departments being seriously understaffed. These reports were borne out by the lesson observations, which indicated that there were some teachers who struggled to explain core concepts and showed no evidence of formative assessment. This also seemed to be reflected in the fact that some students felt like they did not know what to do with the results of the AfS assessments.

---

[9] A potential issue associated with this theme was the sheer number of assessments carried out by some departments and teachers. Whilst some colleges replaced some assessments with AfS, others added it in, meaning that, in the most extreme case, students were being asked to complete the BKSB, AfS, mock GCSEs, and teacher-created assessments. Whilst this was not raised as a problem in interviews, this large number of assessments could plausibly negatively influence the effectiveness of the intervention.

"You know what to improve, like punctuation [but] you don't know what punctuation you need to add. It only says what you need to improve and it doesn't go into detail about it" (Student, S11).

Student characteristics

Four student characteristics emerged as potentially important moderating factors: attendance, motivation, prior attainment, and focus/perseverance.

Attendance

Student attendance was raised as an issue by managers, teachers, and students. In particular, the effectiveness of the AfS diagnostic assessment was limited when students missed the class in which it was first administered. The later these students ended up taking the test, the later useful information could be generated to support their learning. At some point, for students who were persistently absent or joined their class later in the year, teachers made the judgement that the DA would be of such limited value that they did not ask those students to complete it.

Motivation and attainment

Student motivation was also thought by some students and teachers to influence the effectiveness of the intervention. Students were described as generally low in motivation in English lessons, often due to low prior attainment, and this affected the extent to which they engaged with AfS assessments. There was, however, substantial disagreement amongst teaching staff on this point. Some thought that low attainers engaged less because of a general aversion to tests.

"I think my lower-achieving sets don't interact with it particularly well because it's just another test to them, and they've failed tests before and another test means nothing other than another test. The higher-achieving sets are happy to have a go at it, they like to see the progress and we see their marks go up" (PC teacher, T5).

Others thought that higher attainers engaged less because AfS did not use GCSE questions, with teachers reporting some students expressing anger that they were not doing GCSE mocks.

"I think they are so conditioned to think that, 'well if it's not a GCSE paper there's no point in doing it'" (PC coordinator, C3).

Some students echoed this thought, describing the AfS assessments as too easy and therefore patronising. This meant they were less likely to take the assessments seriously and try their best.

"I don't put much concentration in because it's just straightforward. Like the real GCSE is not going to be like that" (Student, S2).

Other staff believed that students were more motivated to engage with AfS assessments precisely because they did not look like the GCSE exam. Student motivation was also thought to be affected by the fact that English GCSE lessons were compulsory.

"They have to stay in education and it's that kind of 'have to', and I suppose four or five years ago it was maybe you don't need to do that. But since the government has changed the policies in terms of being in education and employment or training, apprenticeships, there is that kind of forced 'oh it's still school', rather than it being a more adult environment" (PC SLT, SLT1).

This lack of motivation amongst some students was also thought to have moderating effects for the intervention beyond the assessments. AfS is dependent, in part, on independent student learning; something that students with lower motivation did not engage with. One teacher suggested that approximately 50% of her students completed any independent learning in relation to AfS and—as noted above—the expectations of some teachers was so low that no homework was set at all.

Focus and perseverance

The final characteristic of students thought to moderate the effects of the intervention was the level of focus and perseverance required by students to engage effectively in independent learning. Of those students who did try to do additional, targeted work, some still struggled to do so effectively. Students who were thought to be learning

independently were described as 'focused on improving', 'more mature' (PC coordinator, C2), and showing more 'effort' (PC teacher, T1). Students echoed the view that an inability to focus was a barrier to learning. However, interviews with students also revealed a group who may have engaged in more independent learning relating to AfS if the purpose of the assessments was made clearer to them. Some students thought that the AfS assessments were a kind of mock GCSE and were not aware that the purpose of the exercise was to identify specific areas for improvement.

Access to IT

The final potential moderating factor noted in interviews was teacher and student access to IT. The core AfS resources were deliberately designed to be paper-based to aid accessibility. However, it was noted by some PC teachers and coordinators that their ability to support the independent learning that should follow the assessments was strongly dependent upon access to IT. Teachers who were attempting to support a substantial amount of independent learning were doing so with the help of online platforms such as Doddle. This required booking IT rooms or laptops for the whole class, which was not an option for some. Some students also lacked easy access to IT outside of college. As well as being a moderator, this is partly an issue of feasibility of implementation and is picked up again below.

Feasibility

Summary of findings

The survey data (Table 9) suggests that the majority of teachers and coordinators in the pilot found the intervention feasible to deliver overall, and most SLTs saw it as a valuable approach to assessment. At a more granular level, some resources for teachers look promising from a feasibility perspective, with the core assessments being used in the majority of cases. The usage figures for all resources are below target, however, with a very low number of students using the complete student exercise book. The latter resource was not compulsory for teachers to use in its entirety, however, and the qualitative findings below show that teachers did extract and use key sections. Survey data also reveals that only 60% of coordinators and 47% of teachers reported the intervention to be 'easy' to implement, and a substantial number of teachers (20%) reported finding it 'difficult' overall. Interaction with the intervention's Moodle was low, and mostly restricted to downloading updated versions of the assessments and mark schemes. Some of the training and CPD activities were popular and well-attended—especially those that allowed teachers to share practice—whereas other activities were seen as less feasible and valuable to attend. Six themes emerged in the analysis of enablers and barriers to implementation: (1) alignment with existing practice, (2) resource, (3) design of intervention materials, (4) communities of practice, (5) central management of the intervention, and (6) timing of student enrolment.

Table 9: Indicators of feasibility

Metric	Target %	Actual %
% relevant staff who attended training and CPD sessions	80	19–100[*]
% students completing the diagnostic assessment	100	88
% teachers who used all of the progress assessments	85	71
% students who used the complete student exercise book[10]	85	5
% teachers who found the intervention feasible to deliver overall	67	78
% SLT who believe that there is value in the intervention (compared to traditional methods of assessment)	67	67

N(teachers) = 41. N(SLT) = 3. N(students) = 4,241. N(coordinators) = 4. *These are the lower and upper bounds of the attendance at all training and CPD sessions run by TMC for pilot colleges.

Alignment with existing practices

A close alignment with existing practices—in terms of curriculum structure, assessment plans, administrative systems, and pedagogical approach—clearly made it easier to implement the intervention. In particular, departments that took the time to integrate AfS into their scheme of work for the year seemed to find it easier to implement as the year

---

[10] In the protocol, this metric was expressed as the percentage of 'participating students [that] are fully integrated into the LPR tool'. The 'LPR tool' that was referred to in the protocol was not used during the pilot, so the student exercise book was used as a proxy for this as it contained the skills profile and the two learner tracking tools.

progressed. This planning involved deciding where each AfS assessment, and associated lessons, would sit in relation to other lessons and assessments. Those colleges that were already taking a skills-based approach to teaching GCSE English found it easier to integrate AfS and were able to more easily link the results of the AfS assessments to their wider lessons and support for students. Those colleges that structured their curriculum differently—for example, by GCSE exam paper—had to be willing to make structural changes and/or substitute out items from their existing schemes of work, especially other assessments, to accommodate AfS.

In this latter group, some were unwilling to drop existing assessment practices, even if they clashed with AfS. One college had a clear preference for the BKSB, and had a data management system that was very difficult to amend to allow AfS results to be entered; they even had an auto-enrolment system for students that was dependent on their existing assessment framework. As a result, full implementation of AfS across all English GCSE classes was very difficult for this college. In less extreme cases, even if time was found to run the AfS assessments, existing systems for recording and aggregating assessment results were often challenging to adapt, and PC teachers sometimes described finding it difficult in terms of time and planning to use the results of the assessments to inform teaching and learning. Conversely, alignment between PC teachers' normal pedagogical approach and that of AfS was also seen as an enabler of implementation. Where teachers were using Assessment for Learning as part of their normal practice, AfS was easier to weave in. In other cases, PC teachers did not believe that their students were able to engage in independent learning, so did not follow-up assessments in the ways intended by the intervention.

Resource

Ease of implementation was dependent on both teaching and management resources. Some pilot colleges had high levels of teaching support, whereas others struggled in this regard. In one lesson observation, a class of eight students was supported by the class teacher and three support staff due to the high number of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This level of support was essential for implementation of the intervention in this context, with some students requiring almost constant one-to-one support in order to engage in any independent activities.

At the other end of the spectrum was a department that was chronically understaffed for most of the academic year. This meant that the PC coordinator did not have enough time to effectively plan the implementation of AfS at the departmental level or to support teachers to do the same at the class level. Even in settings that did not face such serious staffing issues, it was suggested that the intervention provided insufficient resources to support coordination at the departmental level. PC coordinators wanted more time for management and additional resources to support implementation.

"We don't have [a resource that helps us coordinate and manage] at the moment, but we'd like to have something like that" (PC coordinator, C1).

At the teacher level, time was described as a major barrier to implementation. Some PC teachers reported lacking the time to mark the AfS assessments, provide one-to-one feedback for students, and plan teaching and learning based on AfS. The low attendance rates by PC teachers at the training/CPD days at TMC was also attributed to a lack of time.

Design of intervention materials

Both PC teachers and PC coordinators valued the fact that the teaching resources were flexible and paper-based. On flexibility, it was important that assessments could be scheduled at the discretion of the English department, and that the student exercise book could be adapted. On the latter point, as we see in Table 9, PC teachers only used the student exercise book in its entirety with 5% of students. Instead, PC coordinators took sections of these books (particularly the charts, and sometimes the target-setting parts) and either used them as standalone resources or integrated them into their own exercise books for students. The fact that the assessments were paper-based was also seen as an enabler as it did not require computers or the internet (which were not available as standard in the case study settings). Some PC coordinators had plans to make further adaptations to the resources in the following academic year.

While these design features were appreciated, other characteristics of the teaching resources presented barriers to implementation. In the first instance, some staff found it difficult to access resources on the Moodle, reporting issues

with both logging in (account details not working) and being able to access some resources but not others. These early administrative difficulties with the Moodle may go some way to explaining the low levels of engagement with it, mostly restricted to downloading updated versions of the assessments and mark schemes. One blog was submitted by a PC coordinator over the year (with the expectation being that all five PC coordinators would submit at least one), and no other resources were uploaded by pilot college staff. There were two forums on the Moodle—one for general discussion and one for news and updates. One post was made on the general forum by a pilot college user over the course of the year—asking for a mark scheme that could not be located—but no response was made in the forum. No posts were made by pilot college users in the news forum.

When teachers did get access to the resources, a number of errors were identified in the assessments (such as spelling and grammar mistakes) and mark schemes (such as marks not adding up to the reported total) that meant that the assessment process was delayed to allow for basic corrections to be made. The final barrier identified in relation to the teaching resources was that there was a lack of resources to support teachers and students to act upon the results of the AfS assessments. While staff in pilot colleges found the assessments helpful in identifying students' weaknesses, they felt that they had little support in addressing these weaknesses through teaching and learning resources. For some, this was contrary to their initial expectations as to what would be provided.

"At the beginning, I tried to create my own content to support the individual needs identified in the assessments, but this was just too much of a burden. If these resources had also been provided by the Assess for Success team, the whole trial could have been far more successful" (PC teacher, T8).

"It's an excellent idea but we have had to create the majority of the resources in a limited time frame compared to what we were told was already available" (PC teacher, T9).

Communities of practice

Attendance at the meetings organised for PC coordinators was generally high (ranging from 80% to 100%), as was attendance by PC teachers at the training sessions that TMC ran on-site in each pilot college. For the two training days that the TMC held in Manchester, only 19% and 21% of PC teachers attended respectively. Attendance at the internal 'community of practice' sessions run by PC coordinators in their colleges ranged from 53% to 100%. Despite this variable engagement in the programme of training and CPD, the communities of practice that were facilitated at both the department level and between colleges were seen to support implementation. Departmental meetings were crucial to effectively preparing for AfS activities.

"When we have had an assessment due, we've had a full session then and looked at what we want our students to answer, what kind of skills we are looking for and what answers we are looking for. Then in that it would be, 'How are we going to include that in our lessons?'" (PC coordinator, C1).

Equally, the ability to share implementation ideas and to troubleshoot with peers from other colleges at the training/CPD days hosted by TMC was appreciated by PC coordinators.

"In addition to engaging in professional discussions with colleagues from other colleges in relation to the materials, we've enjoyed having the opportunity to share resources and ideas with fellow English teachers" (PC coordinator, C4).

Central management

Issues relating to the central management of the intervention were raised in interviews with staff in pilot colleges and by the development team themselves, and these issues posed barriers to implementation. Three issues emerged within this category: staff capacity and roles, communication, and lines of accountability. TMC Champions described a shortfall in capacity at TMC to support the development and management of the intervention. Prior to the pilot year, teaching staff at TMC were given a reduced timetable to allow them to work on the project. During the pilot year, this time was not ringfenced and, as a result, staff reported being unable to fulfil their duties properly. For example, TMC Champions spoke of being unable to respond to enquiries from pilot colleges and edit resources quickly enough to be helpful. Additionally, there was a lack of clarity over roles on the project.

"I think it's been difficult this year academic year … with a lot of miscommunication and a lot of uncertainty about specific roles that certain staff members have got" (TMC Champion, TMC3).

"People are unsure of what they're doing, things have changed … [and the changes have] not [been] communicated to staff members" (TMC Champion, TMC3).

There was also disagreement among the delivery team as to the types of roles required to effectively run the intervention as well as the kind of personnel who should fill them. For example, some thought that external expertise was required to lead on the development of assessment and teaching and learning resources, while others thought that this should be led by TMC teaching staff. Linked to these issues surrounding staff roles seemed to be some general difficulties with communication, both internally at TMC and externally between TMC and the pilot colleges.

"The colleges would be thinking, 'Who am I talking to again, who do I get in touch with?', and the same with the team [at TMC] thinking, 'Who is it that we are speaking to now?'" (TMC Champion, TMC1).

These issues seemed to be compounded by a lack of clear lines of accountability as the project was managed by a central college department responsible for quality and innovation but involved personnel from other teams who reported to a different senior manager. These management difficulties appeared to contribute to the fact that some work was not as well planned and executed as it could have been. For example, some participants identified a missed opportunity during the summer to further develop resources before launching the pilot, and others described last minute alterations to the assessments during the pilot period which, as described above, had negative knock-on effects for staff in pilot colleges. For some PC teachers, the issues with access to the Moodle and quality control of resources negatively affected their attitude towards the developers.

"There's a lack of credibility … [We've seen] weaknesses in terms of management and implementation" (PC teacher, T7).

These issues were also, for some TMC staff, the main reason why a bank of teaching and learning resources have not yet been not created to complement the AfS assessment materials, which some staff had hoped to have happened. The delivery of the training days at TMC also seemed to suffer from management difficulties. On the October training day, for example, the first planned session of the day did not take place due to issues with time management.

Timing of student enrolment

One very specific but important final barrier to smooth integration was the fact that students were joining classes over the course of at least the whole first term. This made it very difficult to use the DA for all students and, at some point, PC teachers made the decision not to keep administering it with new arrivals because they were joining too late in the year for it to be useful.

Readiness for trial

Summary of findings

All PC coordinators have reported being willing and able to participate in the project next year, but the other quantitative indicators of readiness (Table 10) suggest that there is substantial work to be done on both the intervention materials and the programme of training and CPD. A minority of teachers surveyed rated the programme resources as 'excellent' or 'good', with 51% rating them as 'average', and 24% rating them as 'poor' or 'very poor'. The assessments require a combination of quality control and some potential adjustments in form and content to better align them with the GCSE. The Moodle also needs development work, with ease of access emerging as the main problem and, beyond this, there is demand for new resources that support teaching and learning post-assessment. Finally, the demand expressed by non-pilot colleges for the intervention was lower than hoped for, which could hinder scaling plans.

Table 10: Indicators of readiness for trial[11]

Metric	Target %	Actual
% coordinators who believe that the training improved their understanding of 'assessment for learning' as a teaching practice	100	80
% coordinators who believe that the training gave them the knowledge and skills they needed to implement AfS in their English department	100	60
% coordinators who are willing and able to continue coordinating AfS in my college, in the 2019/2020 academic year	80	100
% teachers who rated the overall quality of the programme resources as 'excellent' or 'good'	70	17
% teachers who feel the programme resources are easy to access on-line	70	10
% teachers who feel the programme resources are easy to use	70	39
% non-intervention colleges that perceive that AfS is a valuable and feasible intervention to support their GCSE re-sit students	60[12]	25

N(teachers) = 41. N(students) = 4,241. N(coordinators) = 4. N(non-intervention colleges) = 4.

Readiness of programme resources

Survey data from teachers suggests that the assessments require substantial development before the intervention is scaled up. A large proportion of teachers (41%) rated the DA as requiring 'a lot' of work, and 44% suggested it needed 'a bit' of work, and there was a similar picture for the PAs (39% 'a lot' and 56% 'a bit'). Two main areas for development were identified for the assessments. Both areas are discussed above in 'Evidence of feasibility', so are only summarised here. First, it was suggested that all assessments and mark schemes are reviewed to make sure that all basic errors have been corrected and that the mark schemes are coherent. Second, even those staff who like the fact that the assessments are skills-focused wish to see a better alignment with the GCSE exam, particularly by having an increased focus on more difficult writing tasks that test 'evaluative … and deeper analytical skills' (PC coordinator, C3).

"I would like to see the assessments developed, so that as they progress, each one gets closer to an exam style question. I am feeling now very panicked that we haven't spent as much time on exam questions because our focus has been on skills" (TMC Champion, TMC1).

Ease of access to the Moodle also emerged as a problem in the teacher survey, with only 10% finding it 'easy', 27% finding it 'difficult' or 'very difficult', and a further 27% who did not know what the Moodle was. The student exercise book seems to require less development, with only 10% of surveyed teachers believing that 'a lot' of work is needed. However, 46% of teachers reported not knowing what this resource was and, as noted above in the discussion on feasibility, only 5% of students used this resource in its entirety, with most teachers choosing instead to integrate parts of it into the colleges' own workbooks. Development of the student exercise book may therefore need to focus on turning it into a set of sheets and/or images that make it as easy as possible for colleges to integrate sections into their existing resources.

Finally, beyond improving the existing resources, there is demand for new resources that support the differentiated and independent learning that is supposed to result from the AfS assessments. This need was expressed by coordinators at both of the TMC CPD days that were observed, as well as in the PC coordinator interviews and surveys.

"It is actually the [lack of additional teaching] resources that … [is] … really limiting … how we are doing" (PC coordinator, C1).

Readiness of training and CPD

Case study interviews and those with TMC staff both reveal substantial development needs for the AfS programme of training and CPD before it is ready to scale. There were elements of the central training and CPD days, run by TMC,

---

[11] The protocol specified one additional indicator that is not included in this table: the percentage of TMC Champions who felt that the training 'equipped and empowered them to roll out the intervention'. This metric was dropped because no training of this type was given to TMC Champions in the end.
[12] The protocol specified '3/5' for this target, which was an error as only four non-intervention colleges were sampled. The target has therefore been converted into a percentage here.

that were described as very valuable by PC coordinators. These were the opportunity to share ideas with peers on Assessment for Learning, and the ability to do collaborative developmental work on the intervention, such as teaching resource development, although not much of the latter happened in practice. The central training and CPD programme was described by TMC staff as 'experimental', 'loose in structure' (TMC Champion, TMC2), and 'not … planned as well as it could have been' (TMC Champion, TMC1). This was evident from observations of training days, which sometimes seemed to lack clear objectives, had broad outlines that were written and circulated shortly before the day, and included sessions that did not run to time. These issues were also reflected in comments from pilot college staff who described parts of these days as confusing. The other resource that was designed to support practice-sharing amongst PC teachers and coordinators was the Moodle but, as indicated above, no resources were shared by pilot colleges on this site and no discussions took place in the forums. This seemed to be due to the access issues described above, a lack of time on the part of teachers, and a lack of perceived value.

"In all honesty I didn't see what I would discuss and with whom" (PC coordinator, C3, referring to the Moodle discussion forums).

At the college level, PC coordinators did hold regular meetings with teaching staff involved in the intervention. In some cases, these sessions were used to discuss effective approaches to Assessment for Learning. In other cases, the meetings focused on practical issues of implementation, such as proof-reading assessments and discussing how long they would take to administer, rather than in-depth discussions on teaching practice and how to maximise the value of the intervention. PC teachers and coordinators in the latter group found these discussions helpful (as noted above in the discussion of enablers of implementation) but they were described, when it came to implementing an effective community of practice within the college, as still needing further development. Where more advanced activities were taking place, it seemed to be at the initiative of the PC coordinator rather than based on content or advice provided by TMC. PC coordinators did not feel that they were given any particular structure or content to use to run their internal community of practice, nor did they feel they were assisted substantively by their TMC Champions in this regard (although they did not express demand for the latter).

While there was perceived value in both the college-based and central training and CPD activities, particularly the face-to-face practice-sharing elements, there seem to be issues of design and execution that need to be addressed before this element of the intervention is ready to scale.

Demand for the intervention

While no formal agreements have been made between the developers and the pilot colleges for the next academic year (2019/2020), all PC coordinators reported in the survey that they were willing to continue participating in the intervention. However, it seems to be the view of both the developers and pilot college staff that the next phase of the project should be further piloting and development, rather than scaling up.

"I don't think it's ready. I would love to say yes, but … I don't think we are there yet … I still think there are a lot of underlying issues" (PC coordinator, C3).

Interviews with teaching and management staff in colleges that have not taken part in the pilot ('non-pilot' staff) revealed potentially low demand for the intervention outside of the pilot cohort due to issues of feasibility and perceived value. One out of the four colleges interviewed expressed an interest in using the intervention in the future. On feasibility, the broad idea of four assessments was seen as practical to implement and was similar to existing practices in terms of the time allocated to formative assessment. There was disagreement over the feasibility of the student exercise book, with some believing that it was helpful and others arguing that the charts for recording marks were too detailed for some students and therefore not practical. However, the most substantial issue identified by non-pilot staff in terms of feasibility was that the skills-based approach clashed with the colleges' approach to formative assessment, which was often more directly linked to the GCSE exams.

"I think just unfortunately, because it is a skill-based approach … it doesn't really suit our needs and our model because we run a question-based model in our lessons and the way we track student's progress" (Non-pilot college, NP1).

The fact that colleges had invested time in creating resources and systems based around exam questions and had trained staff to deliver the GCSE in this way made them reluctant to overhaul their approach with AfS. This was not just an issue of feasibility for some, but also a question of preference or value, as discussed below.

Two features of the intervention were identified as attractive by non-pilot staff. First was the fact that the intervention is led by an FE college that understands the challenges associated with GCSE resit students, echoing some of the views expressed by pilot college staff. Second, the DA was identified as an especially useful resource. In particular, staff liked that it was paper-based (again echoing those in the pilot) and thought that the content was well-tailored for a diagnostic assessment.

"It's hitting all your points … I understand the theory behind it and I think it's the best way to go" (Non-pilot college, NP3).

There were also issues that made the intervention less attractive to non-pilot colleges, however. First, some non-pilot colleges did not consider themselves in need of any CPD on assessment for learning, describing their teachers as 100% confident in it as a teaching practice. One college suggested that their expertise made them better suited to being trainers themselves, rather than recipients of support from a peer such as TMC. Second, non-pilot colleges had similar interventions already in place and did not see the need to replace them. Structured formative assessment, supported by resources and initiatives such as 'independent learning plans' and 'independent learning workshops' (Non-pilot college, NP3) were, in the view of these colleges, already being effectively implemented. Where colleges had chosen to structure their curriculum around the GCSE exam questions, management staff believed that this approach was yielding 'really good results' (Non-pilot college, NP1) and saw it as preferable to the AfS skills-focused approach. This preference was based on a desire to monitor student progress in terms of GCSE grades so that teachers and managers could better predict pass rates, but non-pilot staff also believed that it was often better for students as it allowed them to identify and focus on specific types of exam question with which they were struggling. Finally, for one non-pilot college, which was a sixth form rather than an FE college, the nature of their setting and their students made them inappropriate recipients of AfS.

"Sixth form colleges are a kind of a strange beast that is neither fish nor fowl. So, it's very hard for us to fruitfully gain anything from sessions which are just [for] FE colleges or which are just [for] schools. Because if you take schools, they have a broad spread of ability. We only have what would be for a school … the lower end. So, our brightest students are the ones who have already failed at schools. For FE, because we teach in such a different way with so many more hours and so much regular contact time, again we are kind of straddling the two worlds in a slightly uncomfortable way" (Non-pilot college, NP4).

So, while the intervention was seen as broadly feasible with some valuable features, a number of issues were identified that suggest that demand for AfS in its current form may not be high.

Conclusion

Formative findings

The research findings suggest eight key improvements that could be made to the Assess for Success (AfS) intervention.

1. Develop a **formal logic model** for the intervention that describes the core activities and resources, the intermediate outcomes, the primary outcomes, the causal pathways, and the key moderating factors. The 'Evidence to support theory of change' section above should support this. Clarifying the model in this way will also support all other developments.

2. Create **better alignment between the AfS and GCSE assessments**. This is a complex job that should be carried out after careful review, particularly as there were substantial differences of opinion on this point. It should also be done with considerations of scale and demand in mind. If the intervention remains skills-focused and the developers maintain an ambition for scale, they should be sure that there is sufficient demand for this approach. 'Alignment' does not necessarily mean using GCSE questions or mirroring GCSE exam structures in the AfS assessments, but if the existing basic format is maintained, at least two amendments should probably be made: (1) add some harder questions that test students' analytic and evaluative writing skills, and (2) establish a way of making it easier for students, teachers, and managers to understand AfS results in terms of GCSE standards (for example, through a revised mark scheme that is mapped onto the GCSE grades).

3. Develop **more guidance and resources** for teachers and managers on how to use the results of the AfS assessments to set useful development goals and to support individualised learning based on these goals. These guidelines and resources need to take into account the fact that many students struggle with the motivation, focus, and perseverance to engage effectively in independent learning. Whilst the resources should aim to capitalise on existing online tools, such as Doddle, they should not be dependent on IT and a substantial amount should be paper-based.

4. **Review the purpose and execution of the Moodle**. In particular, improvements need to be made on ease of access and its overall purpose, as some features—such as the function to upload resources, blogging, and the discussion forums—were not used as intended.

5. **Design a formal programme of training and CPD**. This programme should start with a clear set of objectives for this element of the intervention, followed by a set of activities and resources that are likely to meet these objectives. The programme should be accompanied by clear documentation, including a programme overview, session guides for trainers/facilitators, and resources for participants. Content should cover the logistics of implementation (including the likely barriers and enablers to effectively integrating the intervention into existing systems within colleges), as well methods for effective implementation (including how to use assessment for learning). There should be separate content for the two main audiences, teachers and coordinators (although the latter will probably benefit from the majority of the content that is designed for the former). Whatever approach is developed, it is important that personnel with the appropriate knowledge, skill, and experience are given the roles of trainers and facilitators. It should also consider the full range of attitudes, knowledge, skill, and experience among the teaching body that is described in the moderating factors section above.

6. **Develop a management approach that supports and encourages colleges to use AfS data beyond the class level**. For AfS results to be used for better monitoring and support at the management level, they need to be entered into a college's data management system. For this to be possible, systems will often need to be adapted. In future years, it might be helpful to seek buy-in for these changes from the relevant SLT, teaching, and administrative staff well before the start of the academic year.

7. After the next phase of development, **proof-read and check all resources** for errors and clarity of presentation. Failure to do this prior to scaling risks a negative effect on managers' and teachers' attitudes towards the intervention and, consequently, their engagement with it.

8. **Review the staff structure of the central team** that manages and delivers the intervention. In doing so, the developers may consider sourcing external expertise or partnerships (for example, with a university department that has expertise in designing, delivering, and scaling similar interventions). If external expertise is drawn upon, however, it should be used cautiously as managers and teachers in the pilot valued the peer-led approach of the intervention. At least five core functions are required by the intervention, as summarised below. (Note that some functions may require more than one person, and some functions could be taken on by the same individual, depending on capacity and experience.)

   a. Project leadership—responsible for the development and oversight of the intervention model, implementation plan, and line management of the delivery team.

   b. Project administration/coordination—providing administrative and coordination support to all other project functions, including leading the communication with colleges and coordination of training and CPD events.

   c. Resource development—responsible for the development and quality assurance of assessment and teaching resources; this function requires subject expertise in English and formative assessment, and the ability to facilitate a collaborative development process with teachers (if such an approach is continued).

   d. Training and CPD development and delivery—responsible for developing and leading the delivery of the training and CPD programme; this function requires subject expertise in English and formative assessment, with additional expertise in training and CPD. If a lesson study approach is taken, where intervention recipients are involved in the development of resources, then this function must be closely aligned with the resource development function.

   e. Moodle development and delivery—responsible for reviewing and administering the Moodle.

Interpretation

This evaluation aimed to answer three questions:

1. **Evidence of promise:** Does it appear that this intervention could improve the GCSE attainment of learners in Further Education (FE) colleges?

2. **Feasibility:** Can the intervention be delivered in a way that is effective for FE Colleges and FE English teachers?

3. **Readiness for trial:** Is the intervention ready to be evaluated in a trial?

The findings suggested that there is some evidence of promise for the intervention. Positive outcomes seem to have been experienced, especially by teachers and students, in line with the intervention's loosely defined theory. Teachers feel more able to describe their students' individual development priorities, and interviews with teachers and coordinators revealed evidence of teachers effectively adapting their teaching as a result. Some students have shown an improved understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, and some have also shown evidence of targeted independent learning, though there is question-mark over whether the latter can be attributed to the intervention. The evaluation found little evidence that these intermediate outcomes will lead to improved attainment, however. Students and teachers who did see improvements in attainment ascribed this to factors other than the intervention (such as prior attainment and the student's attitude towards education). Two potential unintended outcomes for students were also identified. First, there were reports from teachers and students that AfS had a positive effect on students' sense of achievement. This seemed to be a result of the ease of the assessments, the graphic presentation of progress in student exercise books, and improvements in self-knowledge. Second, as a result of this increased sense of achievement, some students also seemed to develop an increased sense of self-confidence. This may have in turn improved their attitude towards the final GCSE exam. However, both students and teachers suggested that this increase in confidence was not (always) positive because of the substantial difference in standards between the AfS assessments and the GCSE exams. Some feared that the intervention might develop a false confidence that could give students false expectations about the difficulty of the GCSE exam. There was some evidence of senior leadership teams (SLTs) using

AfS in their monitoring and planning, but to a lesser extent than teachers, with only one case study college going as far as aggregating AfS data for use by the SLT.

The evaluation also identified substantial differences in response—in terms of engagement and perceived outcomes—among teachers, managers, and students. These differences may, in part, be explained by four key moderating factors: (1) alignment between the AfS assessments and the GCSE exam, (2) teacher characteristics, (3) student characteristics (attendance, motivation, prior attainment, and focus/perseverance), and (4) access to IT. All this suggests that the model requires further development. One important theoretical point that should guide this development is that, even if the AfS model can be developed to more reliably create the intermediate outcomes that are aimed for, it will only improve attainment if the areas for development that the assessments identify are genuinely relevant to, and of the right level, for GCSE English. The findings suggest that this assumption may not hold.

Overall, the intervention was described as feasible to deliver. However, analysis of the more detailed survey, administrative, and qualitative data has revealed issues with certain activities and resources. The core AfS assessments were used in the majority of cases, but barriers were experienced in engaging with the student exercise book, the Moodle, and some of the CPD. Six themes emerged in the analysis of enablers and barriers to implementation. First, a close alignment with existing practices—in terms of curriculum structure, assessment plans, administrative systems, and pedagogical approach—made it easier to implement the intervention. Pilot settings that lacked some of this alignment struggled to implement elements of the intervention. Second, ease of implementation was dependent on both teaching and management resources. Some pilot colleges were well-staffed with teachers and had high levels of teaching support, whereas others struggled in this regard. Third, some design features of the intervention (such as the paper-based assessments) were perceived to be enabling, whilst other features (such as errors in the assessment materials) caused barriers to implementation. Fourth, the communities of practice that were facilitated at both the department level and between colleges were seen to support implementation. Fifth, issues relating to the central management of the intervention were raised by both staff in pilot colleges and by the development team themselves, and these issues posed barriers to implementation. Three issues emerged within this category: staff capacity and roles, communication, and lines of accountability. Sixth, one very specific but important final barrier to implementation was the fact that students were joining classes over the course of at least the whole first term. This made it very difficult to use the diagnostic assessment for all students and, at some point, PC teachers made the decision not to keep administering it with new arrivals because they were joining too late in the year for it to be useful. All six themes contain barriers to implementation that can be overcome through improved design, execution and management of the intervention.

The inconsistencies in evidence of promise and the issues raised in relation to feasibility alone suggest that the intervention is not ready for trial. This conclusion is shared by the PC coordinators and teachers who responded to the evaluation surveys, giving quality ratings for the core intervention resources that suggest that substantial work is required. Resources for teachers require improvements, but also additions; most notably in terms of materials to support individualised learning for students. The training and CPD was perceived as useful in parts, but requires substantial design work and, whilst there is demand from pilot colleges to continue working on the project, it is less clear that there is demand for the intervention in the wider post-16 sector. Taking all these considerations into account, at least one more year of development and piloting seems advisable before the intervention is reassessed for readiness for trial. If the formative findings of this evaluation are implemented in full, it may take two additional academic years until the intervention is ready for trial.

This study provides further evidence that the post-16 education sector in England is struggling to support the large volume of students that are now required to resit the maths and English GCSE exams. Improving the attainment of these students to grade 4 or above is very difficult, as reflected in the very low national pass rates of these cohorts. This study indicates that, for some institutions, there is a substantial resourcing challenge that needs to be met before they can consider effectively implementing new interventions; some colleges do not have enough properly qualified teachers to teach the high volume of students resitting their GCSEs. Whilst there is evidence in the wider literature that formative assessment can have positive effects on attainment (EEF, 2015), this study shows how many conditions of design and implementation need to be met for these effects to be likely to be produced. This echoes the findings of Gorard et al. (2014) in their evaluation of the Anglican Schools Partnership feedback intervention.

This study had three main limitations, one that is inherent in the design relating to causal inference and two that relate to sampling.

First, in the absence of a control group, random assignment, and quantitative outcome measures, we are unable to provide unbiased estimates of the causal effects of the intervention. However, producing such estimates was not an objective of the evaluation. Whilst the study did aim to establish whether there was some evidence that the intervention was producing the intended outcomes, we acknowledge in the wording of the relevant research question ('evidence of promise')—and in the findings—that the design and methods used do not allow us to make definitive conclusions on this point. Our findings in relation to outcomes are based on the perceptions of staff and student participants and the researchers who observed intervention activities; no comparison of outcomes was made with non-intervention settings.

Second, our sampling of case study colleges was limited by the available data. Sampling of colleges was purposive, aiming in part for variation in levels of student deprivation. In the absence of student-level data on deprivation (such as free school meal status), area-level data (IMD ranking of the college's local area) was used as a proxy for student deprivation (see Table 6 above). Area-based indicators of deprivation are not always good indicators of individual deprivation (see for example, Gorard, Boliver, Siddiqui and Banerjee, 2019) so we may not have achieved good variation on this dimension.

Third, sampling of teachers and students for interview was carried out by pilot college staff. Sampling of these individuals was purposive again, based on participants' level of engagement with the intervention. In the absence of any data to indicate these levels at the time of sampling, we used the judgement of PC coordinators to select a group of teachers that represented the range of engagement and the judgement of PC teachers to select students in the same way. Case study sampling at both the college and individual levels was therefore limited in these respects. However, the purpose of the sampling strategy was to create a sample that represented as closely as possible the full range and diversity of experiences of the sampling population. The findings do reveal a wide range and diversity of experiences at the student and teacher level; this suggests that we had some success with our sampling in this respect. We also accounted for this limitation in the design of the study by issuing a survey to all teachers and coordinators in the pilot, achieving a 100% response rate from PC coordinators and an 85% response rate from teachers. The results of these surveys were triangulated with the qualitative findings from case study settings, giving us further confidence that we have captured close to the full range and diversity of experiences of teachers and coordinators. Overall, we are confident that the design and execution of the study, and the caveats in our analysis, give us good confidence in our findings.

Future research and publications

Given the conclusions of this evaluation, it is too early to make suggestions about future trial methodology as the content, form, and delivery mechanisms of the intervention may all change substantially in the interim period. If/when the next iteration of the intervention has been developed, it makes sense to re-ask the questions of this evaluation: 'Is there evidence of promise?', 'Is it feasible?', and 'Is it ready for trial?'. Before this, the findings from interviews with non-pilot colleges suggest that further market research amongst post-16 settings should be conducted on demand for the intervention. If the developers want to eventually scale the intervention beyond the pilot settings, this market research should inform the design of the next version of the intervention.

References

Allen, R. (2016) 'Repeat after "E": the treadmill of the post-16 GCSE maths and English retakes'. **https://educationdatalab.org.uk/2016/08/repeat-after-e-the-treadmill-of-post-16-gcse-maths-and-english-retakes/**

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3 (2), pp. 77–101.

Department for Education (2019a) '16 to 19 funding: maths and English condition of funding'. **https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding**

Department for Education (2019b) 'Get information about schools'. **https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/**

EEF (2015) 'Feedback'. **http://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/toolkit-a-z/feedback**

Elliott, V., Baird, J. A., Hopfenbeck, T. N., Ingram, J., Thompson, I., Usher, N., Zantout, M., Richardson, J. and Coleman, R. (2016) 'A marked improvement? A Review of the Evidence on Written Marking'*,* p. 5. **https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/EEF_Marking_Review_April_2016.pdf**

Gorard, S., Boliver, V., Siddiqui, N. and Banerjee, P. (2019) 'Which are the most suitable contextual indicators for use in widening participation to HE?', *Research Papers in Education*, 34 (1), pp. 99–129.

Gorard, S., See, B. H. and Siddiqui, N. (2014) 'Anglican Schools Partnership: Effective Feedback', p.6. **https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/uploads/pdf/FINAL_EEF_Evaluation_-_Anglican_Schools_Partnership_-_February_2014.pdf**

Ofsted (2019) 'Find an inspection report'. **https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/**

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2015) 'English indices of deprivation 2015, File 1: index of multiple deprivation'. **https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015**

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M. and Ormston, R., eds. (2014) *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*, Newbury Park CA: Sage.

Saldana, J. (2009) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Newbury Park CA: Sage.

Teddlie, C. and Tashakkori, A. (2009) *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*, Newbury Park CA: Sage.

Appendix I – Assess for Success: Teacher Information Sheet

Introduction

We are a social impact research organisation called The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). For more information, please visit our website: **https://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/**.

You are receiving this information sheet because you have signed up to the AfS Pilot programme which we are helping to evaluate. We would like to be able to contact you during the AfS programme to ask you to take part in research activities such as surveys and interviews.

It is important that you understand the purpose of the project and what will happen with your personal data if you agree to take part in our research so please take a few minutes to read this information sheet carefully. Please also note:

- You may object to your data being used at any time, without giving a reason.

- You will still be able to take part in AfS, even if you do not want your data to be used for research purposes.

After reading this information, if you are happy to take part, you need to complete this form.

What is the purpose of this project?

AfS aims to improve the way that teachers use assessment, so that students learn more and get better grades. This research project aims to evaluate the feasibility of AfS as a programme, any evidence of promise and whether or not it is ready to grow. It is not about assessing the performance of any individual teacher.

What does my participation involve?

If you participate in the research project, you will be invited to complete a survey at the end of the programme and may be invited to take part in a case study. You will still receive the same training and resources no matter whether you participate in our research activities or not.

What data will we collect?

We will require the following data about you:

- Full name

- Work email address

- Work telephone number

We will use your name and contact details to send you the end of programme survey and to invite you to participate in a case study (if you are selected for the latter). Your attendance data will be used to support the evaluation of the feasibility of AfS as a programme, any evidence of promise and whether or not it is ready to grow.

How will my privacy be protected?

- Your data will be processed in accordance with data protection law.

- Your data will be kept confidential and stored securely.

- BIT researchers will use a number to label and store the data instead of your name once the study is complete so your personal data will be deleted as soon as it is no longer necessary for the research.

- Your data will ONLY be used for the purposes of this project.

- You will not be identifiable in any of the reports produced after the project.

BIT will be the controller of your personal data and will be processing your personal data on the basis of your consent. Your personal data will only be processed so long as it is required for the research project. We will minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

Do I have to share my personal data with BIT?

No. If you do not want to be involved in research relating to the AfS programme, you do not need to take any further action.

If you do want to be involved, please complete the consent form at the end of this document and provide us with the requested contact details.

If you do not want to be involved in the research, this will not disadvantage you in any way. Also, if you do decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw your data at any time before 30 June 2019 without giving a reason.

Who do I ask for more information?

If you have any questions or are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact BIT's Data Protection Officer:

- Email: dpo@bi.team

- Address: 4 Matthew Parker Street, London SW1H 9NP

Details of data subject rights, are available on the Information Commissioner's Office website at: **https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/**.

Assess for Success: Consent

		Tick Box
	I consent to the processing of my name, contact details by BIT for the purposes of evaluating the AfS programme.	

Please complete the following details.

College name:	
AfS role:	For this project, I am a (please circle one): • Teacher • Coordinator • Other (please state:_____)
Your full name:	
Work email address:	
Work telephone number:	

Please hand this form to Patrick Taylor from BIT

Appendix II – Assess for Success Research: Student Information Sheet

Introduction

We are a research organisation called The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). For more information, please visit our website: **https://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/**.

You are receiving this information sheet because your English teacher has signed up to a programme called 'AfS' - a research project about teaching and learning. We'd like you to take part in this research.

It is important that you understand the purpose of the project and what will happen with your personal data if you agree to take part so please take a few minutes to read this information sheet carefully. Please also note:

- You may object to your data being used at any time, without giving a reason.

- Nothing will change about your maths classes, even if you do not want your data to be used for research purposes.

After reading this information, if you are happy to take part, you need to complete the form on the last page.

What is the purpose of this project?

AfS aims to improve teaching, so that students learn more and get better grades. This research project aims to find out whether AfS teaching methods look like they might be helpful for students.

What does my participation involve?

We would like to interview you for about 30 minutes about your experience of English classes. We'll be coming in to your college to do this.

What data will we collect?

If you decide to take part, we will collect the following data about you:

- Your full name

- A digital recording of our interview

We will use your name to arrange your interview and to keep a record of your interview (in case you want to see it later). The interview recording will be used for the research, to help us understand what your experience of English classes is like.

How will my privacy be protected?

- Your data will be processed in accordance with data protection law.

- Your data will be kept confidential and stored securely.

- BIT researchers will use a number to label and store the data instead of your name once the study is complete.

- Your personal data will be deleted as soon as it is no longer necessary for the research.

- Your data will ONLY be used for the purposes of this project.

- You will not be identifiable in any of the reports produced after the project.

BIT will be the controller of your personal data and will be processing your personal data on the basis of your consent.

Do I have to share my personal data with BIT?

No. If you do not want to be interviewed, you do not need to take any further action. If you do not want to be involved in the research, this will not disadvantage you in any way. Also, if you do decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw your data at any time before 30th April 2019 without giving a reason.

If you do want to be interviewed, please complete the consent form at the end of this document.

Who do I ask for more information?

If you have any questions, please contact the researcher, Patrick Taylor:

- Email: patrick.taylor@bi.team

- Address: 4 Matthew Parker Street, London SW1H 9NP

Details of data subject rights, are available on the Information Commissioner's Office website at: **https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/**.

PLEASE TURN OVER FOR CONSENT FORM

Assess for Success: Student Consent Form

		Tick Box
	I consent to the processing of my name and interview recording by BIT for the purposes of the AfS research project.	

Please complete the following details.

College name:	
English teacher name:	
Your full name (print in capitals):	
Your signature:	

Please hand this form to your English teacher

Appendix III – Teacher Survey Information and Consent

We would like to invite you to take part in a survey about your experiences of Assess for Success. Before you decide to take part, we want you to understand why the evaluation is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. If you are happy to take part, please tick the consent box at the end of this page.

WHO IS ORGANISING THIS STUDY?

The evaluation has been commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and is being carried out by the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). BIT is a social purpose company, which conducts research and evaluations and makes recommendations for how to improve services across government departments and other sectors.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS STUDY?

Assess for Success aims to improve the way that teachers use assessment, so that students learn more and get better grades. This research project aims to evaluate the feasibility of Assess for Success as a programme, any evidence of promise and whether or not it is ready to grow. We are not assessing the performance of any individual teachers.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

If you consent to take part, you will be asked to participate in a survey. Completing the survey will take about 10 minutes of your time.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE INFORMATION?

BIT is the data controller for this evaluation. We will collect your contact information and responses to the survey for the purposes of the Assess for Success evaluation. It will not be used for any other purpose. Your privacy is important to us and as such, BIT and its subsidiaries are fully committed to maintaining your privacy and the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation. Your data will be stored on a secure, encrypted server and access will be limited to the immediate BIT research team. A BIT researcher will also remove identifying information, such as names and places, from the data. The answers from the survey will be aggregated and analysed by BIT's research team. We will include results from this analysis in an evaluation report. This means that we will not use nor report your name or any information someone could use to identify you. We will share our report with the EEF and the final report may be published online. Data will be deleted once the final report has been agreed with the EEF (expected to be in September 2019).

For more information, or should you have any questions please contact Patrick.Taylor@bi.team. You can also contact BIT's Data Protection Officer at dpo@bi.team if you have any questions regarding your personal data.

GIVING CONSENT

You are free to decide whether you'd like to take part in the survey. To give consent, you just have to click the box at the end of this page. You can change your mind about taking part at any time and withdraw your data from the evaluation up until we begin analysis on 1st May 2019. You don't need to give a reason to withdraw your consent, just let us know by emailing Patrick.Taylor@bi.team. This will not affect your relationship with BIT or your college.

CONSENT FORM

By clicking the following box you are confirming that you:

- Have read and understood the information about the study and had the opportunity to ask questions about it.
- Understand your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw without giving a reason.

- Agree that any data may be used for the statistical analysis published in the final report, providing that they do not identify you.

If you are happy to participate in the study please tick the box below:

Appendix IV – Data Collection Instruments

Lesson Observation Guide

Purpose

To collect evidence on:

- Evidence of promise
- Feasibility

Observation framework

Evidence of promise - does it appear that this intervention could improve English GCSE resit attainment of FE learners?

Looking for evidence relating to:
1. How materials and approach are received by students:
    a. Enjoyment
    b. Engagement
2. Whether students seem to be achieving the learning outcomes of the lesson
3. Whether intermediate outcomes from 'project overview' are present:
    a. Students clear on what they need to learn and take more responsibility for their learning
    b. Teachers assess more accurately and effectively plan learning from known starting points to accelerate progress
    c. Teachers able to monitor and track progress and adjust curriculum to meet the specific skills gaps, and provide timely intervention for individuals
 	
Observation notes

Feasibility - can the intervention be delivered in a way that is effective for FE Colleges and FE English teachers?
Looking for evidence of: - Which A4S resources are being used by teachers and students? - Teacher confidence in A4S. How well integrated into wider curriculum? **Observation notes**
Key take-aways for report

Community of Practice Observation Guide - A4S

Purpose

To collect evidence on:

- Evidence of promise
- Feasibility
- Readiness for trial

Observation framework

Evidence of promise - does it appear that this intervention could improve English GCSE resit attainment of FE learners?

Looking for evidence relating to:
1. How materials and approach have been received by students
2. If and how teachers feel that the A4S can lead to improved outcomes for students
3. Whether intermediate outcomes are present
3. Evidence of community of practice session supporting these outcomes

Observation notes

Feasibility - can the intervention be delivered in a way that is effective for FE Colleges and FE English teachers?

Looking for evidence of:
- Use of Facilitators Recording Sheet
- Which A4S resources are being used by teachers and students?
- Teacher confidence in A4S. How well integrated into wider curriculum?
- Frequency and perceived feasibility of community of practice sessions
- Barriers and enablers to implementation
- SLT buy-in

Observation notes

Readiness for trial – is enough in place to allow the intervention to take place the following year at scale?

Looking for evidence of:
- Teacher confidence in delivering the programme
- Coordinator confidence in supporting others in the programme
- Teacher confidence in the readiness of programme and training materials
- Teacher knowledge of what the programme entails

Observation notes

Key take-aways for report

TMC CPD Observation Guide 1

Purpose

To collect evidence on:

- Evidence of promise
- Feasibility
- Readiness for trial

Observation framework

Evidence of promise - does it appear that this intervention could improve English GCSE resit attainment of FE learners?
Looking for evidence relating to: 1. How materials and approach have been received by teachers/coordinators 2. If and how teachers feel that A4S can lead to improved outcomes for students 3. If and how teachers feel A4S has positively affected their practice **Observation notes**

Feasibility - can the intervention be delivered in a way that is effective for FE Colleges and FE English teachers?
Looking for evidence of: ● A clear implementation plan from coordinators - is CPD planned for teachers within their college? How is A4S being implemented by teachers? ● If and how coordinators feel that the structure of cascading A4S is fit for purpose ● SLT buy-in **Observation notes**

Readiness for trial – to what extent is the intervention used as anticipated and is the programme sufficiently codified to operate at scale?
Looking for evidence of: ● A clear plan communicated by TMC ● Coordinator knowledge of what the programme entails ● Teacher/coordinator confidence in delivering the programme ● Coordinator confidence in training and supporting others in the programme ● Coordinator confidence in the readiness of programme and training materials **Observation notes**

Key take-aways for report

TMC Training Observation Guide 2

Purpose

To collect evidence on:

- Evidence of promise
- Feasibility
- Readiness for trial

Observation framework

Evidence of promise - does it appear that this intervention could improve English GCSE resit attainment of FE learners?
Looking for evidence relating to: 1. How materials and approach have been received by teachers/coordinators 2. If and how teachers feel that A4S can lead to improved outcomes for students 3. If and how teachers feel A4S has positively affected their practice **Observation notes**

Feasibility - can the intervention be delivered in a way that is effective for FE Colleges and FE English teachers?
Looking for evidence of: ● A clear implementation plan from coordinators - is CPD planned for teachers within their college? How is A4S being implemented by teachers? ● If and how coordinators feel that the structure of cascading A4S is fit for purpose ● SLT buy-in **Observation notes**

Readiness for trial – to what extent is the intervention used as anticipated and is the programme sufficiently codified to operate at scale?
Looking for evidence of: ● A clear plan communicated by TMC ● Coordinator knowledge of what the programme entails ● Teacher/coordinator confidence in delivering the programme ● Coordinator confidence in training and supporting others in the programme ● Coordinator confidence in the readiness of programme and training materials **Observation notes**

Key take-aways for report

Student Interview Guide

Section	Purpose of section	Guide time
1. Introductions and background	Explains the purpose and ground rules for the interview	3 mins
2. Describing A4S	Students know what we're talking about (what is A4S?) Students give first impressions of A4S	10 mins
3. Evidence of promise (engagement)	Do students seem engaged in the intervention?	5 mins
4. Evidence of promise (outcomes)	Evidence relating to secondary outcomes: - Self-knowledge of development needs - Personal responsibility for learning Evidence relating to primary outcome: improved English attainment	10 mins
5. Wrap up	Thank you and questions	2 mins

Topic guide

1. Introductions and background
Intro to me: ● Working on some research with English teachers in your college and some other colleges around the country Aim of this research: ● Understand your experience of English classes ● Not about assessing how good your teacher is - we'll anonymise everything and no-one will know which college we're discussing - so feel free to speak freely This interview: ● 30 mins ● Questions about your experience of English ● No right or wrong answers ● Just want to understand the world from your point of view Sharing our findings: ● Report for EEF and The Manchester College in June

- Published on EEF website

Anonymity and privacy:

- Will not use your name anywhere in any reports I write up
- If you feel uncomfortable answering a question we can just skip it
- Just say at any point if you want to stop altogether – no problem
- Later want to withdraw anything you said - let me know through your teacher - before May 31st (when the report will be written)

Recording:

- Would like to take an audio recording of the interview and take notes
- Is that okay?

Begin recording

2. Describing Assess for Success

Intros: Name, what subjects are you taking

How's your day going so far? What else have you got on?

How are you finding your English GCSE resit classes?

Was today a typical English lesson?

How, if at all, was it different to normal English classes?
- The way the teacher interacts with you?
- The type of activities you do?

How, if at all, was it different to the English classes that you did at school?

Show students A4S resources:
- *Diagnostic assessment*
- *Progress assessment 1*
- *Student Exercise Book (not all students will have used this)*

These are some resources that you might have been using in classes. Can you talk me through each one?:
- What's the purpose / what's it for?
- What do you have to do?
- How much have you used each one?

On a scale of 1-10, how much has this resource helped you?
- Why did you give it that score?
- What would make it a 10?

3. Evidence of promise (engagement)

How do you feel about your English resit lessons in general?
- What do you like about these lessons?
- What do you not like about these lessons?
- Why? Can you give examples?

Are your current English lessons similar or different to your previous English lessons (e.g. at school)?
- If different: how?

What about the rest of the class?
- Do you think they'd say the same kind of things that you have, or different things?

● Can you give examples?

4. Evidence of promise (outcomes)

Can you describe your strengths and weaknesses in English?:
● What are you good at?
● What do you need to improve at?
● What have you been working on in particular this year (personally) to improve in English?
● Can you give any examples?

How do you know what your strengths and weaknesses in English are?

What have you been doing to improve on your weaknesses? Probe:
● Homework
● General or focussed on specific skills/topics
● Anything that teachers haven't told you do?

Final probes:
● Has using these resources affected your confidence at all? If so, how?
● Have you had a real or mock GCSE yet?
  ○ How did they go?
  ○ How well prepared did you feel? (Probe: A4S resources)
  ○ What would have helped you feel more prepared?

5. Wrap up

What has been most useful in helping you to improve in English this year?

If you had a magic wand, what would you to do improve your English lessons?

Is there anything else that would help you learn?

Is there anything that we haven't touched on in this interview that you think would be useful to mention before we finish?

Do you have any questions on what we have covered in the interview?

Thank you for your time.

Class Teacher Interview Guide

Section	Purpose of section	Guide time
1. Introductions and background	Explains the purpose and ground rules for the interview	3 mins
2. Evidence of promise	What evidence is there relating to the effect of the programme on teacher practice and student outcomes?	10 mins
3. Feasibility	What evidence is there relating to the feasibility of delivery?	10 mins
4. Readiness for trial	What evidence is there relating to the readiness of the programme materials and training?	5 mins
5. Wrap up	Thank you and close	2 mins

Topic guide

1. Introductions and background

Intro to me:

- Working on the evaluation of the Assess for Success Pilot

Aim of this research:

- Evidence of promise
- Feasibility
- Readiness for trial

This interview:

- 30 mins
- Questions about your experience of A4S
- No right or wrong answers
- Just want to understand the world from your point of view

Dissemination:

- Report for EEF and TMC in June
- Published on EEF website

Anonymity and privacy:

- Will not use your name anywhere in any reports I write up
- If you feel uncomfortable answering a question we can just skip it
- Just say at any point if you want to stop altogether – no problem
- Later want to withdraw anything you said - let me know - before May 31st (when the report will be written)

Recording:

- Would like to take an audio recording of the interview and take notes

- Is that okay?

Begin recording

2. Feasibility

Intro qs:
- Your role
- Your students (doing for A4S) - target grades, other subjects

What is Assess for Success? How would describe it to a teacher who hadn't heard of it before?

What are the key resources for teachers? Probe:
- Diagnostic assessment
- Progress assessments
- Student exercise book
- Markbook structure
- Going for Gold resources - only one resource so far (bitesize assessment for Grammar)

Can you describe how you have used A4S in your college this year? Probe:
- Whole prog or certain bits? Why?

How have you found these resources?:
- How easy has it been to integrate the A4S programme into your wider curriculum for English GCSE resit students? Probe:
    - Barriers
    - Enablers

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the Moodle?:
- What makes you say this?
- What would make it a 10?

On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you delivering A4S with your resit students?
- What makes you say that?
- What would make you a 10?

Probe:
- Confidence with the general pedagogical approach (skills-based, using assessment to inform teaching decisions in real time)?
- Confidence with individual tools (DAs, LPR, bitesize assessments…)?

If it was up to you, would you continue using A4S next year? Why? Why not?

3. Readiness for trial

The plan in the future is to expand A4S to other colleges, so I'd like to get your views how ready you think the programme is to scale, thinking about:
- *Training/CPD programme*
- *Resources*
- *Moodle*

On teaching resources:
- Which are ready for scaling up?
- Which require more work? What kind of work?

How would you describe the training/CPD/support programme for A4S? What does it entail? Probe:
- TMC training days
- Action learning
- TMC Champion
- In-college coordinator

- In-college community of practice sessions

How have you found this package of support?
- Strengths
- Areas for improvement
- Ready for scaling?

If you had a magic wand, what 1 thing would you do to improve A4S and why?

4. Evidence of Promise

Do you think that you have seen any benefits from participation in the A4S programme?
- Probe teaching practice:
  - Are you doing anything more effectively than you were before? What? How?
  - Has your practice changed outside of A4S lessons? How? Examples?
  - What have you used the assessments for? (Probe for examples of assessment for learning)
- Probe outcomes for students:
  - What, if anything, do you think students can do better as a result of the A4S approach? How do you know?
  - Do you think that this will translate into better grades for individuals? How? Examples?
  - Do you think that this will translate into a better pass rate (grade 4 or above) for your class?
  - Probe on specific outcomes:
    - Knowledge of strengths and weaknesses?
    - More focussed independent learning?
    - Taking responsibility for learning?
    - English skills?

Are there some students that the A4S works better for? Why?
- What kind of students does it work less well for? Why?

5. Wrap up

Is there anything that we haven't touched on in this interview that you think would be useful to mention before we finish?

Do you have any questions on what we have covered in the interview?

Thank you for your time.

Coordinator Interview Guide

Section	Purpose of section	Guide time
1. Introductions and background	Explains the purpose and ground rules for the interview	3 mins
2. Evidence of promise	What evidence is there relating to the effect of the programme on teacher practice and student outcomes?	10 mins
3. Feasibility	What evidence is there relating to the feasibility of delivery?	10 mins
4. Readiness for trial	What evidence is there relating to the readiness of the programme materials and training?	5 mins
5. Wrap up	Thank you and close	2 mins

Topic guide

1. Introductions and background

Intro to me:

- Working on the evaluation of the Assess for Success Pilot

Aim of this research:

- Evidence of promise
- Feasibility
- Readiness for trial

This interview:

- 45 mins
- Questions about your experience of A4S
- No right or wrong answers
- Just want to understand the world from your point of view

Dissemination:

- Report for EEF and TMC in June
- Published on EEF website

Anonymity and privacy:

- Will not use your name anywhere in any reports I write up
- If you feel uncomfortable answering a question we can just skip it
- Just say at any point if you want to stop altogether – no problem
- Later want to withdraw anything you said - let me know - before May 31st (when the report will be written)

Recording:

- Would like to take an audio recording of the interview and take notes

- Is that okay?

Begin recording

---

2. Feasibility

Can you describe your role as a coordinator?

What is Assess for Success? How would describe it to a teacher who hadn't heard of it before?

What are the key resources for teachers? Probe:
- Diagnostic assessment
- Progress assessments
- Student exercise book
- Learner Progress Review framework for Markbook
- Going for Gold resources - almost definitely not ready - only one resource (bitesize assessment for Grammar)

Can you describe how you have used A4S in your college this year? Probe:
- Which classes? Why?
- Whole prog or certain bits? Why?

How easy has it been to integrate the A4S programme into your wider curriculum for English GCSE resit students? Probe:
- Barriers
- Enablers
  - (Both immediate and thinking about the wider system/context (e.g. resource constraints, restructures, policies...))

On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you in coordinating in your college A4S?
- What makes you say that?
- What would make you a 10?

Probe:
- Confidence with the general pedagogical approach (skills-based, using assessment to inform teaching decisions in real time)?
- Confidence with individual tools (DAs, LPR, bitesize assessments…)?
- Confidence with coordination responsibilities?

If it was up to you, would you continue using A4S next year? Why? Why not?

3. Readiness for trial

The plan in the future is to expand A4S to other colleges, so I'd like to get your views how ready you think the programme is to scale, thinking about:
- *Training/CPD programme*
- *Resources*
- *Moodle*

How would you describe the training/CPD/support programme for A4S? What does it entail? Probe:
- TMC training days
- Action learning
- TMC Champion
- In-college coordinator
- In-college community of practice sessions

How have you found this package of support?
- Strengths
- Areas for improvement
- Ready for scaling?

How about the teaching resources?:
- Which are ready for scaling up?
- Which require more work? What kind of work?

Have you used the Moodle? What for?

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the Moodle?:
- What makes you say this?
- What would make it a 10?

If you had a magic wand, what 1 thing would you do to improve A4S and why?

4. Evidence of Promise

Do you think that you have seen any benefits from participation in the A4S programme?
- Probe teaching practice:
  - Are you/colleagues doing anything better than you were before? What? How?
  - Has practice changed outside of A4S lessons? How? Examples?
  - What have you used the assessments for? (Probe for examples of assessment for learning)
- Probe outcomes for students:
  - What, if anything, do you think students can do better as a result of the A4S approach? How do you know?
  - Do you think that this will translate into better grades for individuals? How? Examples?
  - Do you think that this will translate into a better pass rate?

5. Wrap up

Is there anything that we haven't touched on in this interview that you think would be useful to mention before we finish?

Do you have any questions on what we have covered in the interview?

Thank you for your time.

SLT Interview Guide

Section	Purpose of section	Guide time
1. Introductions and background	Explains the purpose and ground rules for the interview	3 mins
2. Describing A4S	SLT know what we're talking about so are more able to answer next questions Evidence that there is a clear difference between A4S and 'business as usual'	5 mins
3. Evidence of promise	SLT perceptions of value of intervention SLT ability to monitor progress	5 mins
4. Feasibility	What evidence is there relating to the feasibility of delivery?	10 mins
5. Wrap up	Thank you and close	2 mins

Topic guide

1. Introductions and background
Intro to me: ● Working on the evaluation of the Assess for Success Pilot Aim of this research: ● Evidence of promise ● Feasibility ● Readiness for trial This interview: ● 20-30 mins ● Questions about your experience of A4S ● No right or wrong answers ● Just want to understand the world from your point of view Dissemination: ● Report for EEF and TMC in June ● Published on EEF website Anonymity and privacy: ● Will not use your name anywhere in any reports I write up ● If you feel uncomfortable answering a question we can just skip it ● Just say at any point if you want to stop altogether – no problem ● Later want to withdraw anything you said - let me know - before May 31st (when the report will be written)

Recording:

- Would like to take an audio recording of the interview and take notes
- Is that okay?

Begin recording

2. Describing A4S

Can you start by introducing yourself:
- How long have you been at the college?
- What's your role?
- How does this relate to GCSE English resits?

How important are GCSE English resits at the college?:
- Large cohort of students?
- Significant focus for the college?

What challenges do the college face in supporting this cohort?

Can you tell me what you know about the A4S programme?:
- The pedagogy
- The structure

How different is this to the way that you usually do things for English GCSE resit classes?

Do you know what the plan is for next academic year, if the pilot proves successful?
- What do you expect the coordinator and class teachers to be doing?

What's your view of the programme overall?

3. Evidence of promise

Have you seen any benefits of the programme so far?
- For teacher's practice?
- For student learning?
- **For your own ability to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment?**

If no, do you think that it will be beneficial in the longer term?
- How so?

3. Feasibility

How easy has it been to integrate the A4S programme into your wider plan for English GCSE resit students? Probe:
- Barriers
- Enablers
  - (Both immediate and thinking about the wider system/context (e.g. resource constraints, restructures, policies...))

Have you estimated the cost of the programme to the college (think about teacher time out of class)?
- This year
- Next year
- If yes, what's your estimate?

Do you think it's worth this cost? Why?

If the project continues next academic year, do you think that your college will participate?

Are you considering investing the resources spent on A4S on any other interventions instead?

57

Is there anything that we haven't touched on in this interview that you think would be useful to mention before we finish?

Do you have any questions on what we have covered in the interview?

Thank you for your time.

Non-Pilot College Interview Guide – first college that declined participation

Section	Purpose of section	Guide time
1. Introductions and background	Explains the purpose and ground rules for the interview	3 mins
2. Describing A4S	SLT know what we're talking about so are more able to answer next questions Evidence that there is a clear difference between A4S and 'business as usual'	5 mins
3. Evidence of promise	SLT perceptions of value of intervention SLT ability to monitor progress	5 mins
4. Feasibility	What evidence is there relating to the feasibility of delivery?	10 mins
5. Wrap up	Thank you and close	2 mins

Topic guide

1. Introductions and background
Intro to me: ● Working on the evaluation of the Assess for Success Pilot Aim of this research: ● Evidence of promise ● Feasibility ● Readiness for trial This interview: ● 20-30 mins ● Questions about your perceptions of A4S (as someone who hasn't taken up the programme) ● No right or wrong answers Dissemination: ● Report for EEF and TMC in June ● Published on EEF website Anonymity and privacy: ● Will not use your name anywhere in any reports I write up ● If you feel uncomfortable answering a question we can just skip it ● Just say at any point if you want to stop altogether – no problem ● Later want to withdraw anything you said - let me know - before May 31st (when the report

will be written)

Recording:

- Would like to take an audio recording of the interview and take notes
- Is that okay?

Begin recording

2. Describing A4S

Can you start by introducing yourself:
- How long have you been at the college?
- What's your role?
- How does this relate to GCSE English resits?

How important are GCSE English resits at the college?:
- Large cohort of students?
- Significant focus for the college?

What are the biggest challenges the college face in supporting this cohort?

Can you tell me what you know about the A4S programme?:
- The pedagogy
- The structure

What appealed to you about the programme initially?

What's your view of the programme overall?

3. Value

What was behind your decision not to proceed with A4S this year?

Can you describe the approach that you're taking instead?
- Main differences with A4S?
- Approach to assessment?
- Progress tracking?
- Formative assessment? (Teachers and students taking decisions about what to focus on based on assessment)

What about your approach do you think is more appropriate?
- Why?

How would A4S have to change or develop in order for you to consider using it in the future?

3. Feasibility

How easy do you think it would be to integrate the A4S programme into your wider plan for English GCSE resit students? Probe:
- Barriers
- Enablers
  - (Both immediate and thinking about the wider system/context (e.g. resource constraints, restructures, policies...))

Have you estimated the cost of the programme to the college (think about teacher time out of class)?
- This year
- Next year

- If yes, what's your estimate?

Do you think it's worth this cost? Why?

Are you considering investing the resources spent on A4S on any other interventions instead?

Is there anything that we haven't touched on in this interview that you think would be useful to mention before we finish?

Do you have any questions on what we have covered in the interview?

Thank you for your time.

Non-Pilot College Interview Guide – second college that declined participation

Section	Purpose of section	Guide time
1. Background	Explains the purpose and ground rules for the interview	3 mins
2. Introductions	Understand interviewee's role and college context	5 mins
3. Feasibility and value - resources	Perceptions of value of resources	10 mins
4. Feasibility and value - CPD	Perceptions of value of CPD	10 mins
5. Wrap up	Thank you and close	2 mins

Topic guide

1. Background

Intro to me:

- Working on the evaluation of the Assess for Success Pilot

Aim of this research:

- Evidence of promise
- Feasibility
- Readiness for trial

This interview:

- 30 mins
- Questions about your perceptions of A4S (as someone who isn't currently using the programme)
- No right or wrong answers

Dissemination:

- Report for EEF and TMC in June
- Published on EEF website

Anonymity and privacy:

- Will not use your name anywhere in any reports I write up
- If you feel uncomfortable answering a question we can just skip it
- Just say at any point if you want to stop altogether – no problem
- Later want to withdraw anything you said - let me know - before May 31st (when the report will be written)

Recording:

- Would like to take an audio recording of the interview and take notes
- Is that okay?

Begin recording

2. Introductions

Can you start by introducing yourself:
- What's your role?
- How does this relate to GCSE English resits?

How many GCSE English resit students at the college?

What's the profile of your GCSE English resit students?
- Target grades?
- Other quals?

What are the biggest challenges the college face in supporting this cohort?
- What have you tried to overcome these challenges? Interventions?

2. Feasibility and value - resources

What engagement have you had with TMC and Assess for Success?

What was the result of that engagement?

What was behind your decision not to proceed with A4S this year?

The resources for teachers consist of:
- *Diagnostic Assessment (1 - 1.5 hours plus marking and moderation)*
- *3 Progress Assessments (1 - 1.5 hours each plus marking and moderation)*
- *Student Exercise Books (used ongoing to set and review development goals)*

What's your overall view of the programme? Probe:
- Diagnostic Assessment:
  - Feasible? - Flexibility in curriculum, time, willingness of colleagues
  - Valuable? - for teachers, for students
  - What do you currently use?
  - How does A4S compare? (pros and cons)
- 3 Progress Assessments:
  - Feasible? - Flexibility in curriculum, time, willingness of colleagues
  - Valuable? - for teachers, for students
  - What do you currently use?
  - How does A4S compare? (pros and cons)
- Student Exercise Books:
  - Feasible? - Flexibility in curriculum, time, willingness of colleagues
  - Valuable? - for teachers, for students
  - What do you currently use?
  - How does the A4S tool compare? (pros and cons)

You may have noticed that the assessments aren't designed to mimic GCSE questions - they are skills-based (rather than focussing on GCSE assessment objectives), and have different style questions (e.g. multiple choice).

What's your view of this approach?
- Skills-based
- Not GCSE standard

3. Feasibility and value - CPD

How confident are you and your colleagues with the idea and use of formative assessment? Probe:
- Can you give examples of how it's done in your department?

Have you and/or your department ever received any training in formative assessment?

Do you have any interest in receiving CPD on this topic?
- How much of priority?
- What other CPD priorities?

Assess for Success has three core components to its CPD and support offer:
- *CPD sessions delivered by TMC teaching staff (a combination of training and practice sharing) - 4 days*
- *Peer Mentoring from TMC teaching staff - ad hoc*
- *An in-house coordinator at your college - to coordinate the programme and facilitate practice sharing - every other team meeting*

4 days of CPD for your teachers:
- Feasible?
- Valuable?
- Have you ever bought CPD from other colleges before?
- Do you see your peer colleges as sources of high quality CPD?

Peer mentor from TMC teacher:
- Valuable?
- What type of experience would you want to see from them?

Who would play the role of coordinator in your department?
- Would they have the time to coordinate?:
  - Delivery of assessments
  - Marking and moderation
  - Community of practice on use of resources
- Would this role be valuable to your department?

Any other views on the CPD and support?

3. Closing thoughts?

Returning to the 'biggest challenges for this cohort' that you mentioned earlier, do you think Assess for Success can help with these?

On a scale of 1-10, how likely would you be to sign up to Assess for Success next year?
- What makes you say that?
- What would make it a 10?

Do you have any questions on what we have covered in the interview?

Thank you for your time.

Non-Pilot College Interview Guide – for colleges with no previous contact

Section	Purpose of section	Guide time
1. Background	Explains the purpose and ground rules for the interview	3 mins
2. Introductions	Understand interviewee's role and college context	5 mins
3. Feasibility and value - resources	Perceptions of value of resources	10 mins
4. Feasibility and value - CPD	Perceptions of value of CPD	10 mins
5. Wrap up	Thank you and close	2 mins

Topic guide

1. Background

Intro to me:

- Working on the evaluation of the Assess for Success Pilot

Aim of this research:

- Evidence of promise
- Feasibility
- Readiness for trial

This interview:

- 30 mins
- Questions about your perceptions of A4S (as someone who isn't currently using the programme)
- No right or wrong answers

Dissemination:

- Report for EEF and TMC in June
- Published on EEF website

Anonymity and privacy:

- Will not use your name anywhere in any reports I write up
- If you feel uncomfortable answering a question we can just skip it
- Just say at any point if you want to stop altogether – no problem
- Later want to withdraw anything you said - let me know - before May 31st (when the report will be written)

Recording:

- Would like to take an audio recording of the interview and take notes

- Is that okay?

Begin recording

---

2. Introductions

Can you start by introducing yourself:
- What's your role?
- How does this relate to GCSE English resits?

How many GCSE English resit students at the college?

What's the profile of your GCSE English resit students?
- Target grades?
- Other quals?

What are the biggest challenges the college face in supporting this cohort?
- What have you tried to overcome these challenges? Interventions?

2. Feasibility and value - resources

The resources for teachers consist of:
- *Diagnostic Assessment (1 - 1.5 hours plus marking and moderation)*
- *3 Progress Assessments (1 - 1.5 hours each plus marking and moderation)*
- *Student Exercise Books (used ongoing to set and review development goals)*

Have you had a chance to look at the programme overview and resources? If no, look now and call me back in 5 mins?

What's your overall view of the programme? Probe:
- Diagnostic Assessment:
    - Feasible? - Flexibility in curriculum, time, willingness of colleagues
    - Valuable? - for teachers, for students
    - What do you currently use?
    - How does A4S compare? (pros and cons)
- 3 Progress Assessments:
    - Feasible? - Flexibility in curriculum, time, willingness of colleagues
    - Valuable? - for teachers, for students
    - What do you currently use?
    - How does A4S compare? (pros and cons)
- Student Exercise Books:
    - Feasible? - Flexibility in curriculum, time, willingness of colleagues
    - Valuable? - for teachers, for students
    - What do you currently use?
    - How does the A4S tool compare? (pros and cons)

You may have noticed that the assessments aren't designed to mimic GCSE questions - they are skills-based (rather than focussing on GCSE assessment objectives), and have different style questions (e.g. multiple choice).

What's your view of this approach?
- Skills-based
- Not GCSE standard

What was behind your decision not to proceed with A4S this year?

3. Feasibility and value - CPD

How confident are you and your colleagues with the idea and use of formative assessment? Probe:

- Can you give examples of how it's done in your department?

Have you and/or your department ever received any training in formative assessment?

Do you have any interest in receiving CPD on this topic?
- How much of priority?
- What other CPD priorities?

Assess for Success has three core components to its CPD and support offer:
- *CPD sessions delivered by TMC teaching staff (a combination of training and practice sharing) - 4 days*
- *Peer Mentoring from TMC teaching staff - ad hoc*
- *An in-house coordinator at your college - to coordinate the programme and facilitate practice sharing - every other team meeting*

4 days of CPD for your teachers:
- Feasible?
- Valuable?
- Have you ever bought CPD from other colleges before?
- Do you see your peer colleges as sources of high quality CPD?

Peer mentor from TMC teacher:
- Valuable?
- What type of experience would you want to see from them?

Who would play the role of coordinator in your department?
- Would they have the time to coordinate?:
  - Delivery of assessments
  - Marking and moderation
  - Community of practice on use of resources
- Would this role be valuable to your department?

Any other views on the CPD and support?

3. Closing thoughts?

Returning to the 'biggest challenges for this cohort' that you mentioned earlier, do you think Assess for Success can help with these?

On a scale of 1-10, how likely would you be to sign up to Assess for Success next year?
- What makes you say that?
- What would make it a 10?

Do you have any questions on what we have covered in the interview?

Thank you for your time.

Pilot College Coordinator Survey Questions

Theme	Question	Options
Identifiers		
Date	*Filled automatically*	
Time	*Filled automatically*	
IP	*Filled automatically*	
Personal details *Thank you for taking part in this short survey.* *To start, we'd like to ask you some personal details.*		
name	*Q1. What is your first name?*	RECORD NAME
surname	Q2. What is your last name?	RECORD NAME
setting	*What is the name of your college?*	RECORD NAME
Section 1 *Thank you. We'd like to get some figures from you about the use of Assess for Success in your college.*		
Evidence of feasibility: Can the intervention be delivered practically and are the systems in process to enable the intervention to be easily scaled?	*Thinking about your college's participation in the pilot this year...* *How many teachers used Assess for Success?* *How many classes took part in Assess for Success?* *How many students in total were in the Assess for Success classes (including students who dropped out or joined after the start of the year)?*	FREE TEXT BOXES, VALIDATED TO ACCEPT NUMBERS ONLY

	How many students in total completed the Diagnostic Assessment?	
	How many students used the complete Student Exercise Book?	
	How many students used part of the Student Exercise Book (for example if you photocopied pages from the book)?	
	How many internal sessions/meetings on Assess for Success have you held in your English department?	
	How many teachers attended each of your internal sessions/meetings on Assess for Success?: ● *Session 1* ● *Session 2* ● *Session 3* ● *Session 4* ● *Session 5* ● *Session 6* ● *Session 7* ● *Session 8* ● *Session 9* ● *Session 10* ● *Session 12* ● *Session 13* ● *Session 14* ● *Session 15* *(PLUS FREE TEXT BOX FOR THOSE WHO HELD MORE THAN 15 MEETINGS)*	
	What type of qualifications are your Assess for Success students taking outside of GCSE English? (Tick all that apply)	SELECT ONE OR MORE ● Foundation learning ● GCSEs ● Level 2 Technical Certificates ● AS/A Levels ● Applied General Qualifications (e.g. BTECs) ● Technical Levels ● International Baccalaureate ● Other (please specify)

Thank you. We'd now like to ask you about your role as a coordinator.	
Read each question below and then select the response that best fits your experience. *I am confident coordinating the delivery of Assess for Success in my college.* *I am confident facilitating a 'community of practice' on Assess for Success with English teachers in my department.*	SELECT ONE: ● Very confident ● Confident ● Neither confident nor unconfident ● Unconfident ● Very unconfident ● I don't want to answer
Section 2 *Thank you. We'd now like you to think about only your classes (not those of other teachers).*	
Read each question below and then select the response that best fits your experience. *Thinking about your English GCSE resit classes* **this year (2018-19)**... *Have you used the Assess for Success* **Diagnostic Assessment** *with your students?*	SELECT ONE: ● Yes ● No ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
LOGIC: ● *IF YES: How easy have you found it to integrate the* **Diagnostic Assessment** *into your lessons?* ● *IF NO: SKIP TO NEXT Q*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer
Have you used the Assess for Success **Progress Assessments** *(PAs) with your students?*	SELECT ONE: ● Yes - I've used all three PAs ● Yes - I've used two of the PAs ● Yes - I've used one of the PAs ● No ● I don't know what this is

		● I don't want to answer
		SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer
	LOGIC: ● *IF YES: How easy have you found it to integrate the **Progress Assessments** into your lessons?* ● *IF NO: SKIP TO NEXT Q*	
	*Have you used the Assess for Success **Student Exercise Book** with your students?*	SELECT ONE: ● Yes - the whole book ● Yes - part of the book ● No ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
	LOGIC: ● *IF YES: How easy have you found it to integrate the **Student Exercise Book** into your lessons?* ● *IF NO: SKIP TO NEXT Q*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer
	*Have you used the Assess for Success **Markbook structure** for recording Assess for Success results?*	SELECT ONE: ● Yes ● No ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
	LOGIC: ● *IF YES: How easy have you found it to use the **Markbook structure** for recording Assess for Success results?* ● *IF NO: SKIP TO NEXT Q*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer

	Overall, how easy have you found it to adopt the Assess for Success approach?	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer
	Thinking about your English GCSE resit classes ***in future years...*** ● *How easy will it be to integrate the* ***Diagnostic Assessment*** *into your lessons?* ● *How easy will it be to integrate the* ***Progress Assessments*** *into your lessons?* ● *How easy will it be to integrate the* ***Student Exercise Book*** *into your lessons?* ● *How easy will it be to use the* ***Markbook structure*** *for recording Assess for Success results?* ● ***Overall***, *how easy will it be to adopt the Assess for Success approach?*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
Section 3 *Thank you. We've now got some questions about your students and teaching.*		
Evidence of promise What evidence is there that the intervention can have a positive impact on student outcomes?	*Thinking about the students with whom you have been using Assess for Success resources, read each statement below and select the options that best fit your experience.* *As a result of Assess for Success...* ● *I can describe the individual development priorities in English for my students.* ● *I can describe the strategies being used to support each of my students' priorities.* ● *I have been better able to monitor the progress of my students.* ● *I have adjusted the curriculum to meet the needs of my students this year.* ● *I have been able to provide timely intervention for my students.*	SELECT ONE: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● I don't want to answer
	Thinking about the use of Assess for Success to support management in your English department, read the statement below and select the option that best fits your experience.	SELECT ONE: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree

		● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● I don't want to answer
	Assess for Success has improved the management team's ability to monitor student progress during the year.	

Section 4	
Thank you. We'd now like to ask you about the training events and meetings that have been part of Assess for Success.	

Readiness for trial To what extent is the intervention used as anticipated and is the programme sufficiently codified to operate at scale?	*Read each statement below and select the response that best fits your experience.*	SELECT ONE: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● I don't want to answer
	The training days at The Manchester College have improved my understanding of 'assessment for learning' as a teaching practice.	
	The training days at The Manchester College gave me the knowledge and skills I needed to implement Assess for Success in my English department.	
	The training days at The Manchester College helped me to implement Assess for Success with my students.	
	Do you know who your 'TMC Champion' is? (This is the member of staff from The Manchester College that was assigned to support you).	SELECT ONE: ● Yes ● No ● Maybe ● I don't want to answer
	LOGIC: IF YES or MAYBE…	SELECT ONE: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● I don't want to answer
	Read each statement below and select the response that best fits your experience.	
	My TMC Champion has improved my understanding of 'assessment for learning' as a teaching practice.	
	My TMC Champion helped me to implement Assess for	

	Success with my students.	
Section 4 *Thank you. Our last few questions are about the quality and readiness of the Assess for Success resources.*		
Readiness for trial To what extent is the intervention used as anticipated and is the programme sufficiently codified to operate at scale?	*Overall, how highly do you rate the quality of the Assess for Success programme and resources?*	SELECT ONE: ● Excellent ● Good ● Average ● Poor ● Very poor ● I don't want to answer
	How easy did you find it to access the Assess for Success resources on Moodle?	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
	In the future, the plan is to roll out Assess for Success to more colleges. We're interested to know how much development work you think needs to be done before this can happen. *Read each question below and then select the responses that best fit your experience.* *How much development work needs to be done on the **Diagnostic Assessment**?* *How much development work needs to be done on the **Progress Assessments**?* *How much development work needs to be done on the **Student Exercise Book**?* *How much development work needs to be done on the **Markbook structure**?*	SELECT ONE: ● A lot of work ● A bit of work ● Not much work ● None - it's ready to use ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer

Section 5		
Thank you. Last couple of questions!		
Readiness for trial To what extent is the intervention used as anticipated and is the programme sufficiently codified to operate at scale?	*Read the statement below and then select the response that best fits your view.* *I am willing and able to continue coordinating Assess for Success in my college, in the 2019-20 academic year.*	SELECT ONE: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● I don't want to answer
	Is there anything else you'd like to share about Assess for Success?	FREE TEXT

THANKS & CLOSE: *Thank you very much for participating in this survey.*

Pilot College Teacher Survey Questions

Theme	Question	Options
Identifiers		
Date	*Filled automatically*	
Time	*Filled automatically*	
IP	*Filled automatically*	
Personal details *Thank you for taking part in this short survey.* *To start, we'd like to ask you some personal details.*		
name	*Q1. What is your first name?*	RECORD NAME
surname	*Q2. What is your last name?*	RECORD NAME
setting	*What is the name of your college?*	RECORD NAME
Section 1 *Thank you. We would like to ask you a few questions about the practicalities of the programme. As a reminder, Assess for Success consists of:* 1. *Resources for you to use with your students (the Diagnostic Assessment, Progress Assessments, Student Exercise Book, and Markbook structure)* 2. *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions run by The Manchester College* 3. *CPD sessions / planning meetings run within your English department*		
Evidence of feasibility: Can the intervention be delivered practically and are the systems in process to enable the intervention to be easily scaled?	*What grades have your GCSE English students been targeting this year? (Tick all boxes that apply to the students in your Assess for Success classes)*	TICK AS MANY AS APPLY: • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9
	Read each question below and then select the response that best fits your experience.	

	*Thinking about your English GCSE resit classes **this year (2018-19)**...*	
	*Have you used the Assess for Success **Diagnostic Assessment** with your students?*	SELECT ONE: ● Yes ● No ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
	LOGIC: ● *IF YES: How easy have you found it to integrate the **Diagnostic Assessment** into your lessons?* ● *IF NO: SKIP TO NEXT Q*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer
	*Have you used the Assess for Success **Progress Assessments** (PAs) with your students?*	SELECT ONE: ● Yes - I've used all three PAs ● Yes - I've used two of the PAs ● Yes - I've used one of the PAs ● No ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
	LOGIC: ● *IF YES: How easy have you found it to integrate the **Progress Assessments** into your lessons?* ● *IF NO: SKIP TO NEXT Q*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer
	*Have you used the Assess for Success **Student Exercise Book** with your students?*	

		SELECT ONE:
		● Yes - the whole book ● Yes - part of the book ● No ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
	LOGIC: ● *IF YES: How easy have you found it to integrate the* **Student Exercise Book** *into your lessons?* ● *IF NO: SKIP TO NEXT Q*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer
	Have you used the Assess for Success **Markbook structure** *for recording Assess for Success results?*	SELECT ONE: ● Yes ● No ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
	LOGIC: ● *IF YES: How easy have you found it to use the* **Markbook structure** *for recording Assess for Success results?* ● *IF NO: SKIP TO NEXT Q*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer
	Overall, *how easy have you found it to adopt the Assess for Success approach?*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't want to answer
	Thinking about your English GCSE resit classes **in future years**... ● *How easy will it be to integrate the* **Diagnostic Assessment** *into your lessons?* ● *How easy will it be to integrate the* **Progress Assessments** *into your lessons?*	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult

	● How easy will it be to integrate the **Student Exercise Book** *into your lessons?* *● How easy will it be to use the* **Markbook structure** *for recording Assess for Success results?* *● **Overall**, how easy will it be to adopt the Assess for Success approach?*	● Very difficult ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer

Section 2

Thank you. We've now got some questions about your students and the support you give them.

Evidence of promise What evidence is there that the intervention can have a positive impact on student outcomes?	*Thinking about the students with whom you have been using Assess for Success resources, read each statement below and select the options that best fit your experience.* *As a result of Assess for Success...* *● I can describe the individual development priorities in English for my students.* *● I can describe the strategies being used to support each of my students' priorities.* *● I have been better able to monitor the progress of my students.* *● I have adjusted the curriculum to meet the needs of my students this year.* *● I have been able to provide timely intervention for my students.*	SELECT ONE: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● I don't want to answer

Section 3

Thank you. We'd now like to ask you about the training events and meetings that have supported your use of Assess for Success.

	Have you attended one or more of the Assess for Success training days at The Manchester College?	SELECT ONE: ● Yes ● No ● I don't want to answer
	LOGIC: IF YES... *Read each statement below and select the response that best fits your experience.* *The training days at The Manchester College improved my understanding of assessment for learning as a teaching practice.* *The training days at The Manchester College helped me to implement Assess for Success with my students.*	SELECT ONE: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● I don't want to answer

	Have you attended one or more internal meeting on Assess for Success in your college? *LOGIC: IF YES...* *Read each statement below and select the response that best fits your experience.* *The meetings that we have had within my English department have improved my understanding of assessment for learning as a teaching practice.* *The meetings that we have had within my English department have helped me to implement Assess for Success with my students.*	SELECT ONE: ● Yes ● No ● I don't want to answer SELECT ONE: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● I don't want to answer
	Read the statement below and select the response that best fits your experience. *The Assess for Success Coordinator in our college has given me all the help that I have needed to implement Assess for Success.*	SELECT ONE: ● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● I don't want to answer
Section 4 *Thank you. Our last few questions are about the quality and readiness of the Assess for Success resources.*		
Readiness for trial To what extent is the intervention used as anticipated and is the programme sufficiently codified to operate at scale?	*Overall, how highly do you rate the quality of the Assess for Success programme and resources?*	SELECT ONE: ● Excellent ● Good ● Average ● Poor ● Very poor ● I don't want to answer
	How easy did you find it to access the Assess for Success resources on Moodle?	SELECT ONE: ● Very easy ● Easy ● Neither easy nor difficult ● Difficult ● Very difficult ● I don't know what this

		is ● I don't want to answer
	In the future, the plan is to roll-out Assess for Success to more colleges. We're interested to know how much development work you think needs to be done before this can happen. *In your view, how much development work needs to be done on the **Diagnostic Assessment**?* *In your view, how much development work needs to be done on the **Progress Assessments**?* *In your view, how much development work needs to be done on the **Student Exercise Book**?* *In your view, how much development work needs to be done on the **Markbook structure**?*	SELECT ONE: ● A lot of work ● A bit of work ● Not much work ● None - it's ready to use ● I don't know what this is ● I don't want to answer
Last question!		
	Is there anything else you'd like to share about Assess for Success?	FREE TEXT

THANKS & CLOSE: *Thank you very much for participating in this survey.*