



Randomised Controlled Trial of Leadership Lite (cohort 2): Information for schools

What is Leadership Lite?

Leadership Lite is a whole-school leadership development and school improvement intervention that aims to reduce teacher workload and increase teacher satisfaction and, ultimately, improve teacher retention in the profession. The programme, delivered over two years, focuses on three aspects of teaching and leadership provision: quality assurance procedures; marking and feedback; and classroom practice. Leadership Lite has been piloted within maths departments in a small number of schools in the North East of England. This trial will focus on supporting developments within science departments and will offer the training to a larger number of secondary schools in England.

How is it delivered?

Leadership Lite was developed and piloted by Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust (BHCET) (formerly Carmel Education Trust - CET) – a Multi-Academy trust and Teaching School in the North East of England. Leadership Lite is delivered by a network of Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs) and/or consultants from Science Learning Partnerships to provide locally-based support to clusters of schools. Leadership Lite training is delivered through a blended learning model where possible; incorporating face-to-face training sessions, online sessions, tailored follow-up support, implementation meetings and support materials including videos and activities. The intervention uses a series of evidence-based school improvement strategies that have workload reduction as a core principle. Training is provided to: governors/senior leaders; middle leaders (heads of science); science teachers; and newly qualified and early career science teachers. Training and support for schools will take place termly over the course of the two-year programme.

What are the aims of the evaluation?

Leadership Lite is being evaluated through a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to explore the impact of the programme on teacher retention in the profession. The trial will also investigate the impact of the programme on teacher retention in the school; teacher workload and job satisfaction; pupil GCSE science attainment; and pupil progression to science A-level study. The trial will also explore the effectiveness of programme delivery to enable replication and application to other subject areas and in more schools across the country.

Who can take part?

Leadership Lite is being offered to secondary schools in England. There are training hubs in the North East, North West, Midlands and South East.

Who is conducting the trial?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and Wellcome Trust are funding the delivery and the evaluation of Leadership Lite. Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust (BHCET) is overseeing the delivery of the programme and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is independently evaluating the programme.

What will the trial involve for schools?

Joining the trial: The trial will involve approximately 70 secondary schools in Cohort 2 (2021-2023). Cohort 1 is fully recruited, and the programme is underway. Cohort 2 schools are being recruited between November 2020 and March 2021. The Headteacher of each school will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which should then be returned to BHCET. They will also nominate a lead contact to be the point of contact for the trial and senior leader, middle leader, teacher and governor training recipients.

Baseline data: Schools will identify the head of the science department and **all current teaching staff in the school responsible for teaching science**. For the purposes of the trial, we would like to include all teachers who teach any science subject/s¹ to any year group for over 50 per cent of their total teaching time, for a minimum of four hours per week for part-time staff. This should include science teaching staff on roll who are on Maternity Leave. Supply teachers will not be included in the trial. The senior leader will be asked by NFER to complete a spreadsheet to provide brief information on the head of science and each science teacher including: teacher name, Teacher Reference Number (TRN), Date of Birth, role in science department, school contact email and personal contact email.

At this time, we will ask schools to share information about the trial with all prospective participants in their school, and to notify science teachers of their right to withdraw from the evaluation and matching their personal data with the School Workforce Census (SWC). If teachers withdraw prior to NFER receiving their data, schools will be responsible for excluding their data from the spreadsheet. If teachers withdraw after their data has been collected, the individual teacher or the lead contact for the school will need to inform NFER, who will delete their data.

Where a school has an unfilled vacancy for science, there will be an opportunity to update NFER with details of newly recruited science teachers prior to the start of the intervention once the post is filled. If a science teacher leaves the school after their information has been provided to NFER and prior to the start of the trial, schools will need to update NFER and we will delete the teacher's data.

The head of department and science teachers will then be asked by NFER to complete a short online baseline survey exploring current practices associated with school culture and leadership, subject leadership, quality assurance of teaching, marking and assessment, planning and classroom practice, and workload. In order to be randomly allocated, schools will be required to provide science teacher details (by April 2021), and complete the baseline surveys (by May 2021). Schools will then be **randomly allocated** by NFER to either the intervention group or the control group. Schools will be informed of their group allocation by June 2021.

Cohort 2 Intervention group schools will receive the Leadership Lite programme for two years starting in September 2021. Control group schools will continue with their usual practices (i.e. business as usual) during the trial period. Control schools will receive a

¹ For the purposes of the trial, science subjects include: biology; physics; chemistry; general/combined science; and applied science.

payment of £1,500 following completion of data collection activities in lieu of the intervention itself (July 2023).

Participation data: the lead contact for the trial in each intervention school will be asked to indicate the school's participation in the programme activities (e.g. online/external training sessions attended, participation with follow-up school support) and any estimated costs incurred from participating in the programme.

Follow-up data: The head of science and science teachers in both intervention group and control group schools will be asked to complete a short online follow-up survey at the end of the intervention period (Summer term 2023). The follow-up survey will repeat the questions asked at baseline, plus ask additional questions about Leadership Lite or Business as Usual, as applicable. **It is important to have data about every teacher in the trial at baseline and follow-up.**

Observations and interviews: Some sessions of Leadership Lite training will be **observed** by the evaluation team (NFER). Interviews will be conducted, either in person or by telephone, in a sample of intervention schools to gather further information on the implementation of Leadership Lite from senior leaders, governors, heads of science and science teachers².

Matching to administrative records for analysis: The list of science teachers in each school (intervention and control) will be **matched to the SWC**, a database maintained by the Department for Education, using Teacher Reference Numbers. The purpose of this is to analyse the impact of the intervention on science teacher retention. We will also analyse (anonymised) pupil GCSE attainment in science and progression to science A-levels using the **National Pupil Database (NPD)**.

What will the Leadership Lite intervention involve?

Schools that are assigned to the 'intervention' group will receive the Leadership Lite programme for two years. The training and events will be delivered via a Blended Learning approach, including remote support. To find out more about how we are delivering this please [click here](#) to view a video on Blended Learning. We hope that, as restrictions lift, we may be able to deliver more 'face-to-face' training sessions.

For each participant the programme will involve:

- **Senior leaders and governors:** termly training sessions in the first year (three half day training sessions) and termly twilight implementation sessions in the second year.
- **Middle leaders/Heads of Science:** termly training sessions in the first year (three full day training sessions) and termly twilight implementation sessions in the second year.
- **Science teachers/NQTs:** support will be tailored to the developmental priorities identified by each school, though for a nominated science teacher is likely to involve termly training sessions in the first year (three full day training sessions) and termly twilight implementation sessions in the second year.

In the second year of the programme, 'catch-up' training sessions will be offered for any new staff or staff who missed the training in the first year of the programme, as required.

Each participant should therefore experience a minimum of three training events and three implementation sessions over the two year programme. In addition to attending training and

² If safety measures regarding Covid-19 are still in place, NFER will follow the most current government safety guidelines when collecting in-person data.

implementation events, each participant will be expected to engage with gap tasks, in-school support, and use the course materials.

Schools that are assigned to the **control group** will continue with their usual professional development during the trial period.

How will schools and teachers benefit from taking part in the trial?

All schools in the trial will contribute to the evidence base on what works in staff leadership approaches, workload-reduction practices and teacher satisfaction and retention. Schools and teachers allocated to the intervention group will have the opportunity to benefit from the training and support offered through the Leadership Lite programme. Schools and teachers in control schools will not receive Leadership Lite during the trial period as the impact on teacher retention will need to be tracked longer term, however, they will receive a compensatory payment of £1,500 per school for their engagement in data collection activities. The findings of the trial will be published in a final report in Spring 2025.

How will NFER and BHCET use and protect the data collected?

All data gathered during the trial will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The legal basis for processing personal data is covered by GDPR Article 6 (1) where our legitimate interest for processing personal data is to administer the trial and analyse its data. The data will be treated in the strictest confidence by NFER and BHCET. **No school, teacher or pupil will be named in any report arising from this work.**

Data collected during the evaluation (participation data, survey responses at baseline and end-point, interviews and observations) will be used to explore Leadership Lite's impact on teacher retention and the programme's other aims (see above). School and teacher-level information for the trial will be shared securely between NFER and BHCET using a secure data exchange portal. All teacher-level information collected by NFER will be stored securely. The NFER will share personal data about teachers with DfE. This will enable them to access SWC. There will be no direct pupil data collection as part of the trial and the NPD analysis will be conducted on anonymised pupil data, without identifying individual pupils. Both SWC and NPD analyses will take place within the Secure Research Service (SRS) hosted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

After three months from the completion of the project, all of the above data will be added to the EEF's data archive. The EEF archive is hosted by the ONS and managed by FFT (EEF's archive manager). This data is archived to allow for further research. Further matching to NPD and SWC data may take place during subsequent research.

A Privacy Notice for the study is available here:

https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/3287/eell_privacy_notice.pdf

What happens if a school or teacher wants to withdraw from the trial?

Schools or teachers can withdraw from the Leadership Lite programme at any point. However, it is important for a randomised trial to collect information from the full range of participants, which means that it is really helpful if we can collect data about all schools and teachers who are taking part, even if they do not attend all of the programme. NFER and BHCET really appreciate schools' and participants' support for data collection. They will handle all personal data in accordance with the rights given to individuals under data protection legislation – details of how to withdraw or correct data, restrict or object to its processing are provided in the privacy notice.

How will the findings be used?

The findings from the trial will be freely available on NFER's and EEF's websites in Spring 2025. They will be used to inform the development of the Leadership Lite programme, and contribute to the broader evidence base on teacher retention.

Who to contact?

For further information about Leadership Lite, please contact David Bailey at BHCET on leadershiplite@carmel.org.uk. For further information about the trial and data collection, please contact Max Falinski on ScienceRCT@nfer.ac.uk.