

Innovation Project: A pilot evaluation of increasing parent/carer engagement with breakfast provision

Behavioural Insights Team

Principal investigator: Pantelis Solomon



PROJECT TITLE	Innovation Project 1: A pilot evaluation of parent/carer engagement with breakfast provision
DEVELOPER (INSTITUTION)	Magic Breakfast and Family Action
EVALUATOR - INSTITUTION	Behavioural Insights Team
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	Pantelis Solomon
STUDY PLAN AUTHORS	Kim Bohling, Jess Heal, Patrick Sholl
STUDY DESIGN	Mixed-methods study based on two pilot randomised controlled trials, supplemented by surveys, observations, and interviews.
PUPIL AGE RANGE AND KEY STAGE	Primary school students of all ages
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	Approximately 65
NUMBER OF PUPILS	Based on recruited schools

Study plan version history

VERSION	DATE	REASON FOR REVISION
1.0 [original]	20/08/18	
1.1	1/12/18	Modify format; inclusion of data protection
2.0	8/7/19	Project terminated; study plan updated to reflect final project status

Update: 8th July 2019

This document outlines our initial study plans for the innovation project, focused on improving parent and carer engagement with, and therefore pupil attendance, at breakfast clubs delivered as part of the National School Breakfast Programme. However, between completing our exploratory work and implementing the first of two planned pilot trials, we concluded that sufficient school recruitment may not be feasible, and we would likely be running very underpowered trials. The original goal was to produce generalisable evidence about how to improve breakfast take-up through parental engagement, and this no longer seemed possible. As such it was decided to terminate the project early and hand over the intervention materials that were developed from the research conducted in the first phase of the project to Family Action and Magic Breakfast without testing them.

You can see our exploratory report generated as the main output from the “generating ideas” phase [here](#).

Introduction

This section outlines our approach to the project. We will address this work in three parts:

1. Generating ideas (July - December 2018);
2. Developing and testing (Pilot 1: January - March 2019; Pilot 2: April - June 2019)
3. Making the case (July - October 2019)

Our approach combines exploratory research methods, behavioural science and pilot evaluation methods. This is a sequential design, so each stage will inform the design of the next.

Project Objectives

This evaluation will focus on identifying new ways to engage parents and carers with breakfast provision in primary schools.

Stage 1: Generating Ideas/Development Phase

Purpose

The purpose of Stage 1 is to inform the development of our interventions and to help us decide on the most appropriate solutions to test. The main focus of this qualitative investigation will therefore be to understand the parental experience of breakfast

provision (BP). We will undertake this work in collaboration with Family Action (FA) and Magic Breakfast (MB).

Research Questions

The overarching research question during Stage 1 will be: What are the parental barriers and facilitators to primary age children attending school BP?

Within this we will explore three sub-questions:

1. What are the contact points for parents with BP?
2. What are the barriers and challenges to their children attending BP?
3. What facilitates and supports parents to bring their children to BP?

Indicators

The table below outlines the data we will use to address the research questions.

Table 1. *Research sub-questions and data sources*

Research Sub-Questions	Data Sources
What are the contact points for parents with breakfast club?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● User journey mapping exercise: drawing on accounts from MB staff, parents, BP staff and School Leadership Team (SLT)
What are the barriers and challenges to their children attending BP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accounts of SLT, MB staffs' prior experiences engaging parents in BP ● Parental experience of BP ● Parental attitudes towards BP
What facilitates and supports parents to bring their children to BP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accounts of SLT, MB staffs' prior experiences engaging parents in BP ● Parental experience of BP ● Parental attitudes towards BP

Research Methods

To address these research questions, we will use the following methods. Please see Appendix A for a description of our considerations of participant vulnerability and ethics for this phase.

1) Focus Groups & Document Reviews

First, one-to-one and small group interviews (dependent on availability) will be held with six key MB frontline delivery staff. This includes three regional managers and three 'school partners' (who hold the relationship with the individual schools on MB's

side) who represent the different geographic areas served. The objective of these sessions will be to understand the BP process from a parent/carer's perspective, focussing on the current points of engagement and the barriers faced at each point. We will also conduct a review of relevant documents FAMB shares with schools that provide advice on how to engage parents/carers around breakfast provision.

2) Semi-structured Interviews (by phone or in person)

Second, semi-structured interviews will be carried out in 4-5 schools that have previously or will soon be delivering BP through MB. These interviews will be with a small purposive sample of (i) members of schools' SLT who have some oversight of BP and/or community engagement (1 per school); (ii) parents of pupils at schools (3-5 per school); and (iii) staff who are involved with providing breakfast in the schools (1 per school).

These interviews will draw on the findings from the interviews with FAMB staff, aiming to generate more detailed insights on the barriers and enablers of parent/carer involvement in breakfast clubs.

3) Cross-sectional Survey

Third, a survey will be disseminated to all Wave A schools (20 schools) for completion by the member of staff most directly involved in operationally running the service. The survey will be a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. It will seek to capture their current parent engagement strategies (both for breakfast provision and more generally), any barriers and enablers of parent engagement, and any ideas they have for the innovation. See Appendix C for the survey content.

We will triangulate the data collected from the methods described above to gain a good understanding of the barriers and enablers of parent/carer engagement with BP.

Sample Selection

We will use convenience sampling and snowball sampling to identify MB staff, school staff, and parents at a 4-5 different schools that will be providing BP through MB. These schools will be a subset of 20 schools identified by MB as having an interest in being involved in parent engagement with MB innovation (these schools are known as 'Wave A' schools within the wider project). All of these schools have a high proportion of disadvantaged students. From these schools, 4-5 will be purposively sampled to ensure we capture a range of schools which:

- Have a mixture of high and low proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Are spread across both north and south regions of England.
- Vary in terms of their ethnic make-ups.
- Are a mixture of academy and maintained schools.

Within each school, we will aim to sample:

- 1-2 members of the school's SLT who have oversight of BP and/or community engagement.
- 1-2 members of school staff who are involved operationally with BP.
- 3-5 parents or carers whose children are eligible to receive BP.

Additionally, we will speak to up to six MB frontline delivery staff identified by MB's Head of Delivery. These staff are either regional managers or school partners, who oversee schools in a range of different regions and have varying levels of experience.

Recruitment

The schools will act as gatekeepers for the parents and the school staff. MB staff will help coordinate introductions to the schools. We will get the contact details of relevant MB staff from our primary contacts in the organisation.

Schools, with support from FA, will be responsible for arranging the interviews, providing private space where we can conduct the interviews, and translators (if needed). If the parent or staff member prefers to participate over the phone, we will advise the participant that they should ensure they take the call in a private space.

Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews (both individual and small-group) will be audio recorded and transcribed. The transcripts will be thematically analysed. Thematic analysis provides theoretical freedom which allows for a flexible useful research tool in the analysis of the data, unlike other approaches such as Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and grounded theory which are bound to a pre-existing theoretical structure.¹ We will take an inductive, data-driven approach, analysing patterns and developing themes which are very closely linked to the data. A contextualist method will be used, taking the individual perspective, as well as the social context into account, while maintaining focus on the data collected.

Descriptive statistics will be produced for the closed survey questions, whilst the open questions will be thematically analysed similarly to the interview data.

Data handling and management will be governed by BIT's data management protocol (see Appendix B for more detail). Data will be anonymised and stored on

¹ Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

secure servers accessible only to named BIT staff. Data will not be transmitted to third parties, except where this is appropriate under the conditions of appropriate data sharing agreements

The table below provides a summary of the research methods.

Table 2. *Stage 1 Research methods*

Participant	n	Rationale	Method	Analysis
MB frontline delivery staff	6 x 45 minutes	We perceive that MB frontline delivery staff will have a good oversight of both the barriers and facilitators that schools might face in terms of engaging parents, and also have an indication of the different points of contact that might be had with parents (either from them or the schools they work with).	Semi-structured interviews or small focus groups with 2-3 staff per group.	Thematic
Members of the schools' SLT who have oversight of breakfast provision and/or community engagement	4-10 x 30 minutes	We would expect relevant SLT members to be able to provide insights into contextual factors affecting the provision of breakfast club, what the levels and factors affecting parental engagement are and what steps the school might take to engage parents more generally.	Semi-structured interviews	Thematic
Members of school staff who are involved with BP	4-10 x 30 minutes	We would expect those most directly involved with breakfast provision to have good insight into what steps have been taken so far to engage parents and what has worked and hasn't to date. We would also expect them to understand what the contact points are with parents, and how children and parents interact in relation to BP.	Semi-structured interviews	Thematic
	17		Survey	Descriptive statistics & thematic analysis
Parents or carers whose children are eligible to receive BP	12-25 x 30-45 minutes	This will help us understand how parents experience BP, what affects their engagement, and what touch-points they are most aware or receptive to.	Semi-structured interviews	Thematic

Data collection timeline

The table below outlines the data collection timeline for Stage 1.

Table 3. *Stage 1 data collection timeline*

Month	Method
August - September 2018	Finalise TP and identify sampling strategies. Finalise interview schedules, survey, and consent forms. Secure ethical approvals.
September - November 2018	Interview MB frontline delivery staff. Interview and survey school staff (in Wave A schools). Transcribe interviews.
December 2018	Data analysis and writing up of findings to then present in an ideation session.

Outputs

Four core outputs will be produced at the end of Stage 1:

1. An insights brief

This will be a brief written report (2-3 pages) detailing the findings from our research activities (i.e. focus groups, interviews, surveys) during this initial stage.

2. A full list of proposed interventions

We will compile a list of all family engagement strategies shared or suggested, which will be shared with FAMB for broader dissemination to schools not participating in the pilots. Each idea will be coded in terms of feasibility (e.g., low-cost, little staff time required) and potential impact (i.e., the degree to which it addresses a barrier or enabler that is commonly mentioned by participating schools).

The ideas which seem to have the highest potential impact and to be feasible to implement will be brought to an ideation workshop with FAMB staff focussed on intervention development. In this workshop, we will also introduce FAMB staff to key concepts and evidence from the behavioural sciences that could be used to inform intervention design. The workshop will end by selecting the intervention idea(s) that we wish to pilot, based on their likely impact and feasibility.

3. Intervention design, including a logic model

We will provide a document outlining the intervention design for pilot 1 and a high-level summary of how it will be tested, which will be refined and documented in Stage 2. A logic model illustrating how the intervention is theorised to effect parent/carer behaviour and an updated study timeline will also be provided.

Stages 2 and 3 will be more fully developed upon completion of Stage 1.

Stage 2: Developing and Testing

Where possible, we will aim for an individual or cluster randomised controlled trial, complemented by a qualitative evaluation that will focus on four questions:

- **Evidence of promise:** Does it appear that the interventions work?
- **Causal mechanisms:** Are the hypothesised mediating mechanisms present?
- **Adaptations:** How do implementation staff alter the intervention, and what other strategies do schools use to try to increase parental engagement?
- **Feasibility:** Are the interventions easy to implement and deliverable at scale?

These questions, and the associated data collection methods, will be further refined with FAMB depending upon the specific intervention. We envisage taking a mixed-methods case study approach to this phase of the research. This is likely to include: semi-structured interviews (with pupils, parents/carers, breakfast club staff, senior managers), observations of breakfast club activities, and feedback surveys.

Outputs from Stage 2:

1. BIT and FAMB will then work together to develop the necessary intervention materials and an implementation plan for the pilot. Experienced colleagues from our education policy team will contribute to this process, based on their previous work engaging parents and carers. Before proceeding with implementation, we will publish the final study plan.

2. A midway insights brief will be produced (probably in March 2019) based on the findings from the first phase of data collection.

This will be used in combination with insights from the FAMB management team to decide on any adaptations that they wish to implement during the remainder of the academic year. These adaptations will then be agreed and documented in the study plan prior to implementation and BIT will continue evaluating in pilot settings.

Stage 3: Making the Case

After the end of the academic year 18/19, a final report will be produced, covering:

- Findings for each intervention in relation to the four research questions
- Recommendations on which iteration of the intervention warrants testing at scale
- Recommendations on further adaptations for the intervention

Findings from all data sources and cases will be triangulated to produce an answer to each of the four research questions. In some instances, some sources or cases may suggest promise, but others may reveal issues that suggest the intervention is not yet ready to progress. Analysis will therefore need to be detailed and nuanced: conclusions drawn from one source/case will be cross-checked with other sources/cases for validity in a non-quantitative sense.

To support this process, qualitative data will be analysed following a 'theoretical thematic' deductive approach², with the theoretical interests specified in the research questions leading the analysis of the data.^{3,4} Findings from across all four research questions will be assessed together to produce an overall recommendation as to whether the project is ready to progress, along with more detailed recommendations.

² Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 84.

³ Halperin, S., & Heath, O. (2016). *Political research: methods and practical skills*. Oxford University Press, 304.

⁴ Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 87.

Indicative Timeline

Table 4. Timeline for innovation project 1 evaluation

Date	Milestone
August-September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Exploratory research and ideation begins● User journey workshop
November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Interviews with parents/carers, breakfast club staff, and senior managers
December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Exploratory insights brief produced● Ideas report produced for FAMB● Ideation session with FAMB
January 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Intervention designed● Evaluation plan finalised
February 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Delivery of first pilot of innovation project● Data collection of first pilot
March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Midway insights brief produced
April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Adaptations to intervention agreed
May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Delivery of second pilot of innovation project● Data collection of second pilot
June - October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Final reporting and presentation

Appendix A: Stage 1 Ethics

All staff conducting interviews will be enhanced DBS checked (certificate numbers available upon request).

Vulnerability

The main risks in vulnerability lie with the parents. We are conducting research with parents in high socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. There may be a chance these parents are suffering from hardship and distress, and these factors and challenges may be brought up during interviews, given they may act as a barrier to bringing their children to breakfast club.

Given this potential sensitivity, we will interview parents individually, as opposed to in a group. We will also ensure we have appropriate signposting in place, speaking with the school in advance to procure a list of local support services and/or relevant support staff within the school.

Participants will be guaranteed anonymity in the research materials and they will be informed about confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality. These limits are:

- Participant discloses an immediate intention to harm themselves
- Participant discloses an intention to harm others
- Participant experiences severe mental health crisis
- Participant experiences a serious health crisis
- Participant loses capacity

If we believe the participant is at risk of hurting themselves, or others, we will report this to the emergency services. We will look for signs of distress during the interviews, and remind the participants they do not have to answer a question, or can stop the interview at anytime they wish.

Consent

Informed consent will be sought from all participants taking part in interviews. This will be done in writing prior to the interview, and verbally at the beginning of the interview. They will be informed they can withdraw at any time without giving a reason and do not have to answer a question if they prefer not to.

Anonymity

- The project will have a restricted access google drive spreadsheet (sampling hive) with participant contact information, where needed.
- We will assign an ID to each participant. The key linking the participant to the ID will be password protected and will be destroyed 6 months after project completion.

- All other records containing data (e.g. interview recordings, transcripts, notes, summaries) will refer to the participant ID only.
- Raw data will be destroyed after transcription is complete.

Risks

Risk/Issue	Detail	Mitigation
Guaranteeing anonymity/confidentiality	<p>Participant discloses something during an interview which you believe may cause harm to themselves or others.</p> <p>Some FAMB staff participants may be interviewed in small groups, and we will not be able to guarantee confidentiality in those interviews.</p>	<p>If in imminent danger, report to emergency services. If the participant discloses something related to their dependants, report to social services. For all others, sign post to appropriate services.</p> <p>Participants will be reminded they do not have to answer all questions, so they do not have to share any information in the group that they do not wish others to know about.</p>
Causing distress	Participant becomes distressed when talking about their experiences.	<p>Signpost key support services as agreed in advance with the school.</p> <p>Offer to stop the interview</p>

<p>Stigmatisation</p>	<p>If a participant discloses that they, for example, are not able to adequately feed their child at home this could lead to stigmatisation if revealed.</p>	<p>Researchers will conduct all interviews in a private place where participants cannot be overheard by non-participants.</p> <p>Researchers will uphold the guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality for individual interviews outlined in the information sheet.</p> <p>Participants in group interviews will be reminded that they can skip any questions they do not wish to answer.</p>
<p>Competence for consent</p>	<p>Interviewing parents with limited communication skills (for example, low levels of English spoken or learning disabilities), could make it hard to ensure they know the implications of their consent.</p>	<p>Schools/FA will have agreed to provide translators where necessary.</p> <p>After they have signed consent forms, ask comprehension questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) in what cases won't it be kept confidential. 2) whether they can pull out at any time. <p>Don't proceed if they are unable to engage with consent forms.</p>

Appendix B: Data protection

All data will be stored on secure, encrypted drives. Any interview sound files will be deleted immediately after transcription and all written data will be pseudonymised. Participants will be assigned a unique identifier number through the interview; one protected file will contain participant name and link their unique identifier. The participants will be made aware they can remove their data at a later date, up until the report is published in Autumn 2019. We will keep their name and unique identifier protected file until the report is published in case participants decide to remove their data from our research at a later date.

BIT will be the Data Controller of these transcripts and our legal basis for processing this data is on the basis of opt-in consent. The procedures for opt-in consent for interviews are described Appendix A. The consent language for the surveys can be found in Appendix C. Consent applies here as participants are capable of opting in to consenting to have their data used by us, given the information we will provide to them. We will not share the identifiable qualitative data with any other organisation for any purposes (including the EEF).

We will also let participants know they can see their pseudonymised transcript to check for themselves identifiable information has been removed. We will have informed consent of the participants to use their data in this way.

We will not be processing any special category data.

Quantitative data collected for the RCTs will not be identifiable, and as such does not constitute personal data (because it is not about identifiable individual persons) and is not subject to the GDPR.

Our Data Security Policy is available [here](#).

Appendix C: Stage 1 Cross-sectional Survey Content

Page 1

Thank you for taking part in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to capture key information about the strategies your school uses to engage parents, the barriers and enablers of parent engagement, and any ideas you might have for encouraging parents to bring their children to breakfast provision.

The survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete. You do not have to complete this all at once but can save and return to it at any time within the next 2 weeks. We will also send you a reminder 2 days before we close the survey.

The collection of this data is for research and reporting purposes only. We will not identify any individual schools in the reporting process. Once collected, the data will be kept on secure databases. If any personal identifiers are revealed through your answers, they will be removed. By completing this survey, you are consenting to take part in this research. If you would like to withdraw your consent later, or if you have any questions about the survey, please email magicbreakfastproject@bi.team.

Thank you for reading this.

If you are happy to proceed, please enter your school name so that we can track which schools have completed it, as well as link what you've told us to publically available data on your school. Then, click 'next'

1. What is the name of your school?

Page 2 - Parents' and carers' newsletter

2.1 Do you currently have a newsletter for parents/carers?

- Yes
- No

2.2 [If 2.1 = Yes] How do you distribute your newsletter? [check all that apply]

- Send home with students
- Post
- Email
- School website
- Social media
- Text message
- Other

2.3 [If 2.1 = Yes] What content do you cover in your newsletter?

2.4 [If 2.1 = Yes] How frequently do you publish your newsletter?

- Daily
- Weekly

Fortnightly
Monthly
1-2 times per term
Less frequently than once per term

2.5 [If 2.1 = Yes] What proportion of parents/carers do you send your newsletter to?

76 - 100%
51 - 75%
26 - 50%
1 - 25%
0%

2.6 [if 2.1 ="Yes" Would your school be willing to add in or edit content to the newsletter about breakfast provision at your school as part of the school's participation in research?

Yes
No
Not sure

Page 3 - Communicating with parents and carers

[If 2.1 = no] 3. Please estimate the percentage of parents you are able to communicate with via the following means:

3.1 Text

76 - 100%
51 - 75%
26 - 50%
1 - 25%
0%

3.2 Email

76 - 100%
51 - 75%
26 - 50%
1 - 25%
0%

3.3 Post

76 - 100%
51 - 75%
26 - 50%
1 - 25%
0%

3.4 Other (please specify)

76 - 100%
51 - 75%
26 - 50%
1 - 25%
0%

Page 4 - Texting parents and carers

4.1 [If 3.1 != 0%] What content do you typically send by text?
[If 3.1 = 0%] Why do you not text message parents/carers?

4.2 [if 3.1 = 1-25% | 3.1 = 26-50% | 3.1= 51-75%] What are the barriers to you texting a higher proportion of parents/carers?

4.3 Would your school be willing to send texts about breakfast provision at your school as part of the school's participation in research?

Yes

No

Not sure

Page 5 - Emailing parents and carers

5.1 [If 3.2 != 0%] What content do you typically send by email?

5.2 [If 3.2 = 0%] no] Why do you not email parents/carers?

5.3 [if 3.2 = 1-25% | 3.2 = 26-50% | 3.2= 51-75%] What are the barriers to you emailing a higher proportion of parents/carers?

5.4 Would your school be willing to email about breakfast provision at your school as part of your school's participation in research?

Yes

No

Not sure

Page 6 - Contacting parents and carers by post

6.1 [if 3.3 != 0%] What content do you typically send by post?

6.2 How often do you send information in the post?

Daily

Weekly

Fortnightly

Monthly

1-2 times per term

Less frequently than once per term

6.3 [If 3.3 = 0%] no] Why do you not send post to parents/carers?

6.4 [if 3.3 = 1-25% | 3.2 = 26-50% | 3.1= 51-75%] What are the barriers to you sending post to a higher proportion of parents/carers?

6.5 Would your school be willing to send post about breakfast provision at your school as part of your school's participation in a research, either as a new postal delivery or as an addition to already scheduled deliveries?

Yes

No

Not sure

Page 7 - Social media and parents' nights

7.1 Do you currently have the following for your school: [check all that apply]

Website

Twitter account

Facebook account

Instagram account

7.2 [if 7.1 includes Website] Would you be willing to edit your website to include content about breakfast provision at your school as part of participating in a research trial?

7.3 How frequently do you host parents' nights?

- Never
- Less than once a year
- Once a year
- Twice a year
- Once a term
- More than once a term

[If 7.3 != "Never"] What are your goals for these nights?

7.4 Do you provide other opportunities for parents/carers to come into school?

Yes

No

Not sure

7.5 [If 7.4 = "Yes"] Please describe these opportunities, and what you do to promote them

Page 8 - Facilitators and barriers to parent/carer engagement

8.1 What resources does your school have that helps your school engage parents/carers? (some examples might include an adequate number of translators, adequate pastoral support for families, etc)

8.2 What makes it difficult for your school to engage parents/carers?

Page 9 - Barriers to parent/carer engagement

9.1 We'd also like you to rate some specific barriers schools might experience. Within your school community, to what extent do you view the following factors as barriers to parent/carer engagement? [Not at all, Very little, Somewhat, Quite a bit, Not sure]

Language barriers

Parent/carer work schedules (unpredictable hours; hours that are not compatible with being at school activities; multiple jobs)

Parents with significant caregiving responsibilities (children under school age, elderly family member, family member with significant illness)

Reliable means of getting to school

Prior negative parent experience with education/schooling

Parenting skills

Parent relationship with the school and/or classroom teacher

9.2.4 Does your school currently offer breakfast provision to your pupils?

Yes

No

9.3 [if 9.2= Yes] Of parents/carers who currently bring their child to breakfast provision, why do you think they do so?

9.4 [if 9.2 = Yes] Of parents/carers who do not currently bring their child to breakfast provision, why do you think they do not?

9.5 [if 9.2 = Yes] What have you found works well in encouraging parents to bring their children to breakfast provision?

9.6 If you had unlimited budget and staff, how would you try to engage parents/carers with their child's learning?

9.7 [if 9.2 = Yes] If you had unlimited budget and staff, how would you try to engage parents/carers to ensure their child attends breakfast provision?