



St George's University of London: Primary Practice

Impact Evaluation Report

January 2023



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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the annual evaluation of the Primary Practice programme. Primary Practice is a **widening participation (WP) programme** ran by St George's University of London. The programme is **targeted at pupils from underrepresented backgrounds in higher education**. Over the course of a year, pupils attend an after-school club, pay a visit to the university, and take part in a summer school, during which they undertake problem-based learning activities which are designed to spark their interest in science and healthcare.

Pupil survey data was collected at the start of the programme in January, at the end of the summer school in July, and at the graduation ceremony in November. Since this evaluation did not include a control group and the matched sample size was very small ($n=13$), it is hard to attribute changes in pupils' non-cognitive outcomes measured by self-reported surveys to the programme alone. To mitigate this, **qualitative research was conducted, and focus groups were held with Student Ambassadors in July, and Parents and carers in November.** These focus groups were well attended and extensive discussions on pupil outcomes were held.

Findings suggest that the **programme has made a positive impact on pupils by increasing their resilience, confidence and interest in science and healthcare.** Although the pupil survey data did not show an increase in the pupils' resilience and self-efficacy, the School Concerns Questionnaire suggests that pupils' readiness to transition to secondary school increased over the course of the programme. Furthermore, the qualitative research showed that parents, carers, and Student Ambassadors noticed a **marked difference in pupils**, particularly in terms of their **social confidence, communication and team-working skills**. Furthermore, **pupils were highly engaged in the programme and their interest in science and healthcare grew.** The full list of key findings and recommendations can be seen below.

Key Findings: Pupil Outcomes

RQ1: What is the impact on pupils' readiness to transition to secondary school?

- ▶ Pupil concerns about secondary school dropped by **13%** over the course of the programme and over **80%** of pupils reported feeling more confident and prepared overall.
- ▶ Parents and carers thought that their children had experienced an **easier transition to secondary school** because of the programme.
- ▶ Student Ambassadors highlighted that **the pupils gained key skills from the programme that improved their readiness to transition to secondary school.**

RQ2: What is the impact of the programme on pupils' interest in science and/or healthcare?

- ▶ Although the **Science Aspirations and Career Choice (ASPIRES)** measure fell by 8%, Student Ambassadors, parents and carers highlighted **pupils' increased interest in a wide range of science and healthcare professions.**
- ▶ Student Ambassadors, parents and carers highlighted how important the programme had been in **raising aspirations** and **providing positive role models** in the science and healthcare profession.

RQ3: What is the impact of the programme on pupils' academic self-efficacy and resilience?

- ▶ Even though pupils **reported feeling less academically confident** at the end of the programme than at the start, their parents, carers, and the Student Ambassadors observed ways in which **their confidence and self-esteem grew.**
- ▶ Pupils' **grit levels decreased by 6%** over the course of the programme but **remained far above the national average.** Student Ambassadors, parents and carers observed an **increase in pupils' resilience levels** and pointed to the summer school experience as being a significant factor in that change.

RQ4: What is the impact of the programme on pupils' social confidence, teamworking skills and engagement in the programme?

- ▶ **75%** of pupils reported feeling more confident at the end of the programme, and parents, carers and Student Ambassadors observed **pupils learning to make new friends and interact with new people.**
- ▶ **81%** of pupils reported being able to communicate well with their group, and Student Ambassadors observed **pupils learning how to work effectively with others** over the course of the programme.
- ▶ Student Ambassadors, parents and carers described the pupils as **'enthusiastic'** and **'highly engaged'**, whilst over **70%** of pupils responded positively to questions about overall satisfaction and enjoyment.

Key Findings: Student Ambassador Outcomes

RQ5: What is the experience of Student Ambassadors who participate in the programme, and what motivates them to take part?

- ▶ Student Ambassadors were motivated to volunteer because they **wanted to help pupils from underrepresented and widening participation backgrounds** and found the **experience rewarding**.
- ▶ Student Ambassadors **developed communication, presentation, and problem-solving skills**.
- ▶ Student Ambassadors **felt well supported** during the programme and found the **training useful**.

Key Recommendations

Programme Recommendations

- ▶ Incorporate discussions with the pupils about their transition to secondary school into the programme.
- ▶ Show pupils the steps they can take to pursue careers in science and healthcare.

Evaluation Recommendations

- ▶ Consider running a survey at the end of the after-school club.
- ▶ Build parent/community outcomes into the outcomes framework.
- ▶ Baseline the School Concerns Questionnaire in January.
- ▶ Ensure data completeness by asking pupils to write their full names in capital letters on the surveys to make it easier to match the survey data.

About this report

This report begins by outlining the Primary Practice programme, evaluation background and aims. It then provides an overview of the evaluation process, detailing the rationale behind the measures and analysis methods used. The main body of the report contains the evaluation findings; it begins with pupil outcomes and then moves on to Student Ambassador outcomes, addressing each research question in turn. The report ends with a brief conclusion followed by detailed programme and evaluation recommendations.

1. Introduction

About the Organisations

St George's is an independent medical and healthcare university, affiliated with the University of London. With a strong historical commitment to widening participation activities, St George's is now increasingly working across the whole student lifecycle to support students from under-represented backgrounds.

ImpactEd is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to improve pupil outcomes by addressing the evaluation deficit in education. ImpactEd works in partnership across the education sector to support high-quality monitoring and evaluation that informs decisions about what will work most effectively to support students. Their work in access and widening participation has included evaluation projects with University College London, Goldsmiths University and London South Bank University among others.

Programme Overview

Primary Practice is a 12-month programme targeted at pupils from backgrounds under-represented in higher education. The aim of the Primary Practice programme is to help pupils develop the skills required for a positive and successful transition from primary to secondary school, while also building their knowledge of medicine and healthcare.

The short-term outcomes for the programme include the participants acquiring and developing new study skills, experiencing and overcoming challenges, becoming more confident when meeting new children and adults in an educational setting, and improving knowledge of medicine and healthcare. In addition, the theory of change predicts that parents/carers of the participants will become better prepared to help their child overcome the challenges of transition to secondary school.

In the long-term, it is hoped that a smoother transition to secondary school will contribute to participants' educational success and ultimately increase access to higher education for disadvantaged & under-represented groups. In 2022, the programme was delivered in 3 primary schools to a cohort of approximately 30 pupils.

Evaluation Background and Aims

ImpactEd partnered with SGUL in 2019 to create a robust evaluation of Primary Practice. This process began by identifying key outcomes and appropriate measuring tools. Due to COVID-19, the programme was halted during the academic year 2020/21, and then began again in 2021/22. This report is therefore the first full evaluation of the programme in its current form.

Early in the partnership, both parties agreed on a set of evaluation principles which would underpin this work:

- ▶ **The approach should be repeatable and manageable.** It should not be a major additional burden on stakeholders or pupils.
- ▶ **The evaluation should take a pragmatic approach to implementation** ensuring that it is easy to put into practice.
- ▶ **The evaluation should use robust methodologies,** including the use of academically validated scales, national data to benchmark findings and control groups where possible.
- ▶ **The approach should not rely on pupils' prior attainment data** such as SATs scores.

2. Methodology

This section begins by explaining the approach taken to the evaluation. It then outlines the data collection process and analysis methods used.

Research Questions

This evaluation aims to answer the following research questions (RQs):

1. What is the impact on pupils' readiness to **transition to secondary school**?
2. What is the impact of the programme on pupils' **interest in science and/or healthcare**?
3. What is the impact of the programme on pupils' **academic self-efficacy and resilience**?
4. What is the impact of the programme on pupils' **social confidence, teamworking skills and engagement** in the programme?
5. What is the **experience of Student Ambassadors** who participate in the programme, and what **motivates** them to take part?

Outcome Measures

The above questions were answered by evaluating the impact of the programme on pupil outcomes. The table below shows the key outcomes and explains the rationale behind the measuring tools used.

Outcome	Measurement	Measurement Details
Resilience	Grit-S survey	The Grit-S survey is used to test a range of linked non-cognitive skills: resilience, locus of control, perseverance, persistence, diligence and self-control. This scale tests how diligently an individual works towards achieving their goals, maintaining focus and effort despite having to face adversity and a lack of progress. Individuals who score highly face challenges with a stamina and when faced with disappointment or loss of interest they maintain focus and stay the course.
Readiness to transition to Secondary School	School Concerns Questionnaire	The School Concerns Questionnaire asks pupils to self-report their feelings about commonly reported concerns about secondary school. It was designed specifically to evaluate targeted school-based initiatives that aim to promote positive secondary transition.
Interest in science or healthcare	Science Aspirations and Career Choice (ASPIRES) survey	The ASPIRES survey comes from a 5-year longitudinal study which seeks to trace and track changes in students' interest in science and in scientific careers over the key period of ages 10–14.
Self-efficacy and academic confidence	Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)	The MSLQ is a self-report scale which measures motivation and self-regulated learning (i.e. learning strategies). There are two sections to the scale; a motivation section and a learning strategies section. The motivation section measures students' goals and value beliefs, their beliefs about performing well (e.g. self-efficacy) and test anxiety. We have used the 'self-efficacy' sub-scale only.
Programme engagement and teamworking skills	Custom survey and focus groups with student ambassadors and parents/carers	A custom survey was designed to measure how pupils perceived their own social and emotional skills and overall engagement in the programme. This was triangulated with qualitative data from focus groups with student ambassadors and parents/carers.

Evaluation Design

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation collected three different types of data from the various stakeholders, seen in the table below.

Approach	Stakeholder	Rationale
Before and after 'core' surveys	Pupils	Pre/post surveys were used to track pupil progress, and validated scales were compared against a national benchmark.
Feedback surveys	Pupils	Feedback surveys were used to measure the impact of the different programme components and learn about implementation factors affecting impact through self-reported feedback on the programme experience.
Focus groups/interviews	Student Ambassadors Parents	Specific outcomes such as pupil engagement and interest in science and healthcare were investigated in qualitative focus groups held with student ambassadors in the summer term, and parents during the graduation event.

Evaluation Rhythm

The following table highlights the key evaluation activities and the frequency of each activity through the programme cycle.

Evaluation Activity	Timeline	Measurement tools
Baseline Pupil Survey	Jan 2022 (start of the programme)	Grit-S survey ASPIRES survey MSLQ Self-efficacy subscale
Midpoint Pupil Survey	July 2022 (end of summer school)	Grit-S survey ASPIRES survey MSLQ Self-efficacy subscale School concerns questionnaire Custom survey
Student Ambassador Focus Group	July 2022	1 hour long semi-structured focus group with 5 participants

Endline Pupil Survey	Nov 2022 (graduation event)	School concerns questionnaire Custom survey
Parents Focus Group	Nov 2022 (graduation event)	1 hour long semi-structured focus group with 10 participants

Analysis

The following steps were taken in the analysis:

- ▶ The data was cleaned and matched for each of the survey measures, leading to the following sample sizes:
 - o Baseline – Midpoint (n=13):
 - i. Grit-S survey
 - ii. ASPIRES survey
 - iii. MSLQ Self-efficacy subscale
 - o Midpoint – Endline (n=12):
 - i. School Concerns Questionnaire
- ▶ For each pupil, we calculated the average score at baseline, mid-point and endline for each survey measure, and then the percentage change.
- ▶ From this, we calculated the overall average scores for each survey measure, and average percentage change.
- ▶ We compared the Grit-S scale and MSLQ self-efficacy to the ImpactEd national benchmark. (The national benchmark is derived from data collected from a sample of over 100,000 pupils nationally who have completed the surveys on the ImpactEd platform. Grit-S and MSLQ are the only measures in this evaluation we have a benchmark for.)
- ▶ A frequency table was drawn up for each of the custom survey questions (which have only endline data). From that, we calculated the proportion of pupils who answered, 'pretty true' and 'really true' to the statements. (This is referred to in the findings as 'answering positively to the statement').
- ▶ We decided not to sub-group any of the quantitative data as the sample sizes were so small.
- ▶ Qualitative data from the parent and student ambassador focus groups was coded using codes derived from the key outcomes. From the coded data we drew conclusions about the impact of the programme on the key outcomes.

Limitations

There are some important limitations with this evaluation that should be considered when assessing its findings:

- ▶ **The sample sizes for all the cohorts were relatively small.** Across the surveys, the sample sizes were relatively small meaning that it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the findings presented.
- ▶ **No control group design.** This evaluation does not feature a control group. Control groups allow us to assess whether changes in pre- and post-intervention data are limited to just those individuals that received the intervention, or whether they are part of a wider background trend in the population. Without a control group, we cannot confidently conclude that these changes are associated with the intervention, rather than another background factor.

3. Pupil Outcomes

This section contains the key findings relating to each of the four research questions (RQs). Each section presents the quantitative survey results, and qualitative focus group findings.

RQ1: What is the impact on pupils’ readiness to transition to secondary school?

Key Finding: Pupil concerns about secondary school dropped by 13% over the course of the programme and over 80% of pupils reported feeling more confident and prepared overall.

The pupils took the School Concerns Questionnaire at the end of the summer school in July (as part of the mid-point questionnaire), and after the graduation ceremony in November (as part of the endline questionnaire). During this time, they had transitioned to secondary school, moving up from year 6 to year 7. The survey measured changes in pupil concerns around different aspects of the primary to secondary transition, such as ‘getting lost’ and ‘making new friends’.

The data contained 12 matched responses. **The average score at baseline was 3.5 and the average score at endline was 2.3. The average percentage change in pupil scores was -13% and represents a fall in pupil concerns.** The baseline and endline scores are particularly low if you consider that the survey asks pupils to rate their level of concern on a scale of 1 – 10.

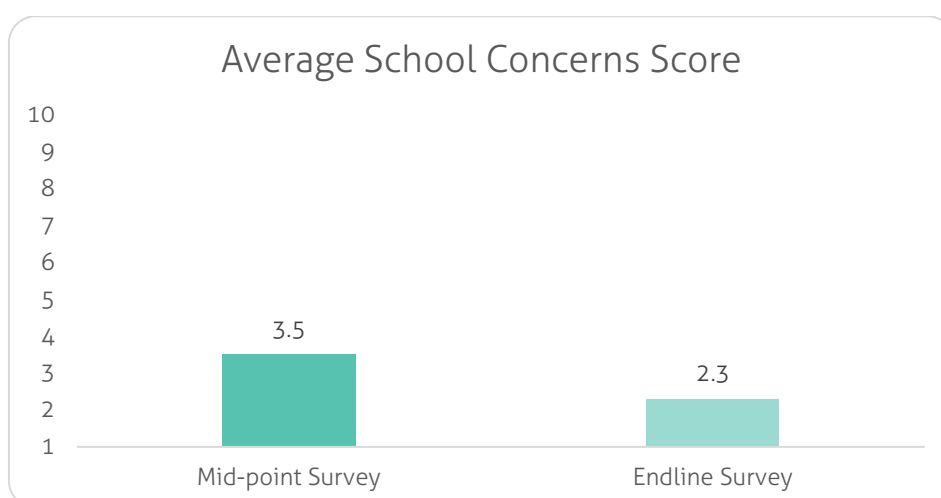


Figure 1: Average School Concerns Questionnaire Score, n=12

The graph below shows the percentage change for each question (or area of concern). We can see that the aspects of transition that pupils became less concerned about are getting lost (-33%), being bullied (-31%), and older children (-28%), whilst the things they became more concerned about were homework (+6%), and what to do when feeling ill (+3%).

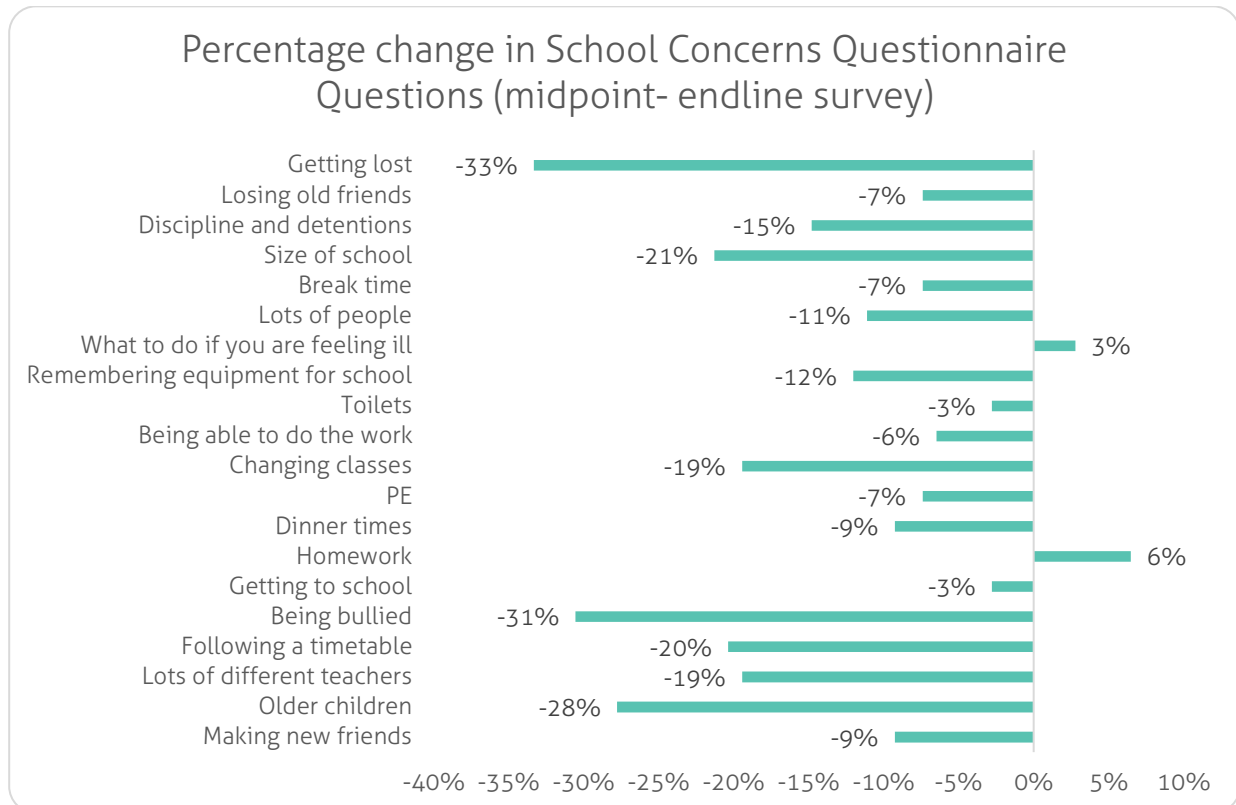


Figure 2: Percentage change in School Concerns Questionnaire Questions, n=12

It is hard to draw conclusions from this data as the sample size is so small, but these survey results suggest that the programme helped to counteract some of the negative impacts of the pandemic which have led this year group to become more anxious than previous cohorts.¹

This hypothesis is supported by the **positive responses of the pupils to the custom survey questionnaire**, which measured how the programme had impacted on pupil confidence and preparedness. Pupil responses were overwhelmingly positive in the survey following the summer school; **81% answered positively to the statement 'I feel prepared starting secondary school'**, whilst **88% said they 'had learnt what to expect at secondary school'**. Furthermore,

¹ ImpactEd (2022). Working Well: exploring staff engagement and pupil wellbeing in English Schools. Research Report [online]. Available: <https://impactted.org.uk/impactinpractice>.

after the graduation ceremony in November, 88% of pupils said that they had 'felt confident starting secondary school'.

Key Finding: Parents and carers thought that their children had experienced an easier transition to secondary school because of the programme.

Parents and carers emphasised the impact the programme had made on their children's confidence and readiness to transition to secondary school. They thought that by providing a safe environment for the children to mix with children from other schools, the summer school had made their children feel more confident being around new people and in their ability to make new friends. One parent commented that following the summer school her daughter said that she felt that she 'knew how to make new friends, and now felt that going to secondary school was going to be okay'.

bb My daughter gained so much motivation from this programme. At first, she felt apprehensive, but then she went along and she realised that she could make new friends and learn new things and skills. It transformed her confidence, and she really grew up."

(Parent)

Key Finding: Student Ambassadors highlighted that the pupils gained key skills from the programme that improved their readiness to transition to secondary school.

bb I really enjoyed watching them working together because everyone every single person was really contributing and really wanting to put their ideas forward, but also listening to other people's ideas as well."

(Student Ambassador)

The Student Ambassadors pointed to a range of skills the pupils developed over the course of the programme, which they thought increased their readiness for secondary school. The Student Ambassadors said they noticed that pupils became more mature, better behaved and more able to regulate their emotions. Particular activities required the pupils to act as they would at secondary school, taking notes for example.

At the end of the summer school, pupils were given 'free reign' over the task of creating a presentation in groups. The Student Ambassadors observed the pupils working through and developing each other's ideas; all inputting to the conversation and

listening and responding to one another. One Student Ambassador said that she felt that by the end of the activity, 'they are more confident in expressing their ideas ... they had learnt to

compromise and work as a team'. Another Student Ambassador said that they noticed the pupils **developed strong leadership skills** because they were able to lead during group activities and role-model good behaviour and motivation.

RQ2: What is the impact of the programme on pupils' interest in science and/or healthcare?

Key Finding: Although the Science Aspirations and Career Choice (ASPIRES) measure fell by 9%, Student Ambassadors, parents and carers highlighted pupils' increased interest in a wide range of science and healthcare professions.

The pupils took the ASPIRES survey at the start of the programme in January (in the baseline survey), and again at the end of the Summer School in July (in the mid-point survey). Over the course of the programme, **the average score in the ASPIRES survey fell from 3.8 to 3.5, an average percentage change of -9%.**

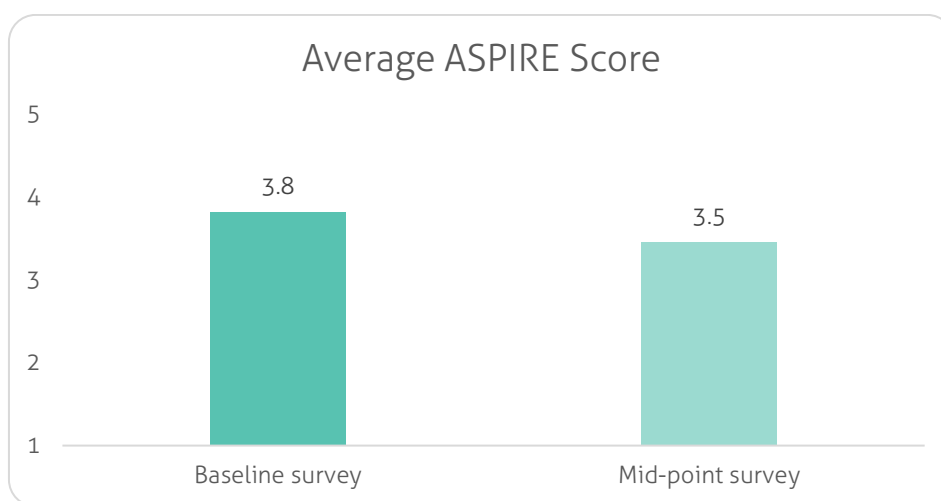


Figure 3: Average ASPIRES Score, n=13

The questions with the lowest score decrease were to do with pupil aspirations, 'I would like to study more science in the future' remained the same (0%), and 'Healthcare workers have exciting jobs' fell by only 4%, and the **questions with the highest score decrease tended to be to do with academic confidence**; 'I can do well in science' for example fell by 17%, and 'I think I could be a good scientist one day' fell by 15%. This reflects the qualitative research finding that parents, carers and Student Ambassadors felt that **whilst the programme had encouraged the pupils to be interested in a wider range of science and healthcare pathways, it had also made them more aware of the hard work and dedication required.** Despite this, parents and carers said that this had only **made their children more motivated to study.**

bb Before the programme my daughter was just interested in playing and in swimming ... but now she really wants to be successful in medicine. She knows that it takes hard work, and so she is very committed to getting good grades.”

(Parent)

exposure to science or healthcare’ before the programme, and that they did not know anyone who was a science or healthcare professional. Despite this, the pupils and their parents were very engaged and, in the words of one of the Student Ambassadors, ‘clearly all had goals’ when it came to career ambitions.

This was reflected in the data from the parents and carers focus group which revealed the importance of the programme for the pupils and their families. One parent said that they felt that it was ‘very important for their community to have their children selected for a programme like this’, whilst another stated, ‘it is important because it raises aspirations, and it makes our children know that people around them believe in them’. They were grateful that the university was investing in their children and community and thankful that someone was ‘taking an interest in our children and their futures’.

The parents emphasised how welcoming and kind the student ambassadors had been, and how inspiring it had been for their children to see someone ‘like them’ in the science and healthcare professions. They said that they could see the impact of this on their children because they could ‘see themselves in those roles now’.

Key Finding: Student Ambassadors, parents and carers highlighted how important the programme had been in raising aspirations and providing positive role models in the science and healthcare profession.

Student Ambassadors emphasised the value of the programme in terms of exposing pupils to new experiences and opportunities and raising their aspirations. They said that the pupils had commented that they ‘hadn’t had much

bb The parents were really passionate and they all had goals ... I remember, during the summer school, one them walked up to me and asked if she could bring one of her older sons to join the programme because she could see the impact it was having.”

(Student Ambassador)

RQ3: What is the impact of the programme on pupils' academic self-efficacy and resilience?

Key Finding: Even though pupils reported feeling less academically confident at the end of the programme than at the start, their parents, carers, and the Student Ambassadors observed ways in which their confidence and self-esteem grew.

Self-efficacy is a measure of a person's belief in their ability to achieve a specific task (Gutman & Schoon 2013, DeWitz et. al. 2009). People have different levels of self-efficacy in different spheres of their lives; for instance, a child may have high self-efficacy in their school work because they believe they can do well, but low self-efficacy in their social life because they believe they are bad at making friends.

The MSLQ self-efficacy survey measures academic self-efficacy, i.e. a child's belief that they will be successful at school. **The average self-efficacy score of pupils was measured at 4.2 at the start of the programme (in the baseline survey), and at 3.9 at the end of the summer school (in the mid-point survey). This represents a fall of -7%.**

Although pupils' self-reported academic self-efficacy fell, it remained a long way above the national average, which stands at 3.75 for this key stage. This means that the pupils who participated in the programme tended to be self-efficacious at school; it is likely that they were selected by their teachers because they work hard. **The decline shown here may be explained by an increased self-awareness of the pupils of the demands of a career in science and healthcare, which may have negatively impacted their belief that academically they can succeed.**

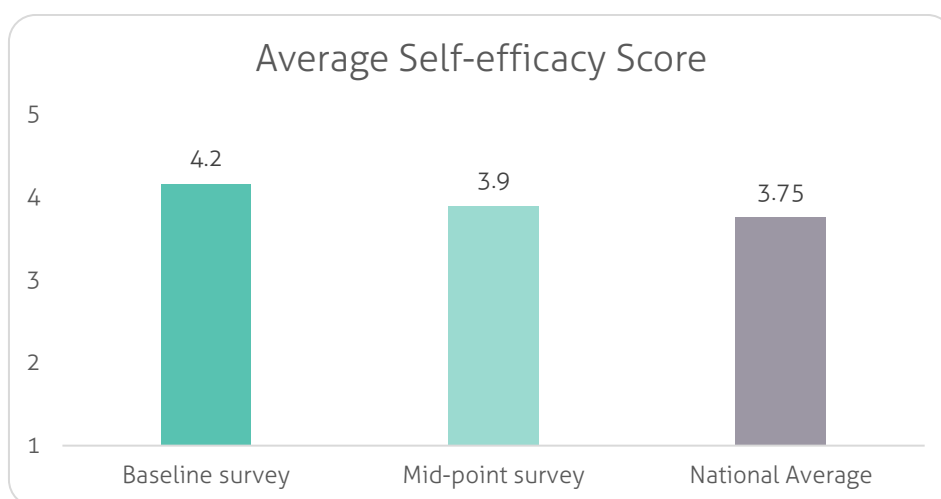


Figure 4: Average Self-Efficacy Score, n=13

Student Ambassadors said that they **observed the pupils learning to talk confidently in small, and then big, groups about science and healthcare;** 'when we went into a big group after being in small groups, they were way more comfortable sharing and much more confident'. Furthermore, over the course of the programme some of the shyer pupils began asking questions and 'their confidence and self-esteem improved'.

bb **My daughter gained so much motivation from this programme. At first, she felt apprehensive, but then she went along and she realised that she could make new friends and learn new things and skills. It transformed her confidence, and she really grew up."**
(Parent)

Similarly, parents and carers talked about how their children had come home from sessions feeling academically confident. One parent said that her son 'felt very proud to have been selected for the programme ... he now wants to go on to study medicine and he is committed to his schoolwork', whilst another described her son 'showing off' to his siblings about what he had learnt. The parents also pointed to

the new vocabulary the pupils learnt, such as 'defibrillator' and 'paediatrician', suggesting that this made them feel confident and 'like part of something ... a career or profession that they didn't know about before'. They said **the programme gave their children confidence to talk to adults about science and healthcare because they were proud of what they had learnt.**

Key Finding: Pupils' grit levels decreased by 6% over the course of the programme but remained far above the national average. Student Ambassadors, parents and carers observed an increase in pupils' resilience levels and pointed to the summer school experience as being a significant factor in that change.

The Grit-S survey measures resilience, perseverance, and passion for long-term goals. Pupils with high levels of grit can overcome challenges, and work persistently over years to achieve goals despite experiencing setbacks. Pupils' grit level was measured in the baseline survey in January and in the mid-point survey at the end of the summer school in July.

Results show that pupils' average grit levels decreased by -6%, from 3.6 to 3.4. At the end of the programme the average grit score was 10 percentage points above the national average, and at the end of the summer school it was 5 percentage points above the national average.

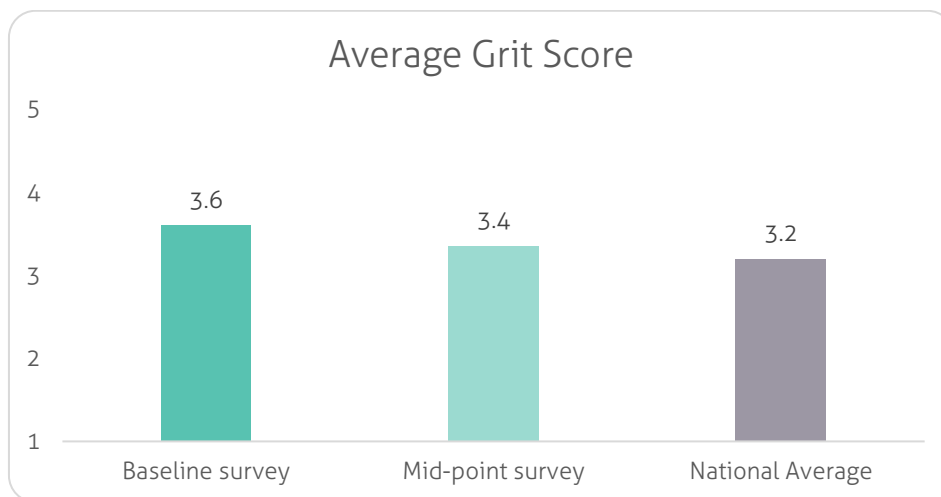


Figure 5: Average Grit Score, n=13

Despite the fall in the self-reported pupil survey measure, parents described how their children became more resilient over the programme – particularly during the summer school - because they had to learn how to be away from home and apart from their parents for an extended period. Parents said that their children had felt somewhat anxious about the summer school in the lead up to it but were full of confidence and joy when they came back because everything had gone well. Knowing that they could cope on their own, the parents said, gave their children a sense of independence and 'they seemed more mature'.

bb **My daughter gained resilience because she had to go away on the summer school and that was a big deal for her, but she did it and then she knew that she could do it again.”**
(Parent)

Student ambassadors also pointed to the summer school as being critical to this change. They described noticing the pupils’ overcoming anxiety and fear of being without their parents. On arrival some pupils had wanted to call home, but after just a couple of hours, all of them settled in and joined the activities, showing their ability to overcome adversity and cope with social and emotional challenges.

RQ4: What is the impact of the programme on pupils’ social confidence, teamworking skills and engagement in the programme?

Key Finding: 75% of pupils reported feeling more confident at the end of the programme, and parents, carers and Student Ambassadors observed pupils learning to make new friends and interact with new people.

At the end of the summer school, 75% of pupils said that it was they felt “confident in (their) ability to work with new people”. This finding is reflected in the qualitative data which shows that parents, carers and Student Ambassadors observed a marked difference in the pupils’ ability to interact with new people (adults and children) over the course of the programme.

bb **At the start some of them were just sat, taking notes, because they were shy, like, they didn’t want to talk with the class. But as we continued with our session, their confidence improved, and their self-esteem also improved. And by the end they were chatting freely. They became aware that they were all from different classes and different backgrounds, but that that was fine. And they could all get along with one another.”**

(Student Ambassador)

The Student Ambassadors described how at the start of the programme, many of the pupils sat on their own and found it hard to talk to others. The pupils came from across a number of different primary schools, and so could not depend on their usual friendship group. However, over the course of the programme, they became more confident, and learnt to talk freely, 1-1 and in front of a group. Their confidence enabled them to ask more questions and interact more confidently with the Student Ambassadors, through which they supported each other’s learning.

Parents highlighted how specific learning activities had given their

children more confidence. The role play activities and real-time demonstrations that showed what would happen in the case of a 999 call, or cardiac arrest, instilled confidence in the pupils that they would be able to act in the right way in the case of an emergency.

bb **When she saw the 999 calls and healthcare things done in a structured way and learned how to offer up first aid, she felt empowered by knowing what to do and became more confident. She made up her mind about who she was and what she wanted to do – she often still talks about how to use a defibrillator!” (Parent)**

Key Finding: 81% of pupils reported being able to communicate well with their group, and Student Ambassadors observed pupils learning how to work effectively with others over the course of the programme.

At the end of the graduation ceremony, pupils 75% of pupils reported that they "make an effort to include other members of (their) group", and 81% reported that they are "good at communicating with (their) group". These self-reported scores are reflected in the qualitative data which revealed that Student Ambassadors thought that the pupils developed strong team-working skills over the course of the programme. Student Ambassadors described how they

observed the pupils encouraging each other in group activities, creating a positive atmosphere, which meant that participation was 'always 100%'.

Key Finding: Student Ambassadors, parents and carers described the pupils as 'enthusiastic' and 'highly engaged', whilst over 70% of pupils responded positively to questions about overall satisfaction and enjoyment.

bb The pupils were so enthusiastic, and so interested in everything that we did... I thought, you know, there might be some things that they might have been slightly less interested in, but they just brought so much energy to every single thing, it was really nice."

(Student Ambassador)

bb The encouragement that they got from their friends was always a huge motivator ... and the conversations that they had with their friends helped them a lot more than we did, which was really nice to see actually".

(Student Ambassador)

At the end of the summer school, 73% of pupils said they had enjoyed participating in the Summer School, and 71% of pupils said they had felt supported during the summer school.

Student Ambassadors described how the pupils were always very enthusiastic and nearly always showed a keen interest in the learning activities. Learning sign language and doing 999 accident and emergency role-plays appeared to be a highlight for many of the pupils.

The parents and carers were extremely positive about the programme, stating that their children had 'absolutely loved it'. Many of the parents described how their children had talked a lot about the programme at home and taught their siblings new skills they had learnt (sign language for example). The parents were extremely keen for the programme to be expanded and hoped that their younger children would get a chance to participate in the future.

The only barrier to the programme highlighted by the parents was the timing of the summer school. A couple of parents said that their children had been unable to attend because it clashed with their summer holiday. The parents suggested that it could be held during May half-term instead.

4. Student Ambassador Outcomes

This section contains the key findings from the Student Ambassador focus group relating to the experience of the Student Ambassadors.

RQ5: What is the experience of Student Ambassadors who participate in the programme, and what motivates them to take part?

Key Finding: Student Ambassadors were motivated to volunteer because they wanted to help pupils from underrepresented and widening participation backgrounds and found the experience rewarding.

The Student Ambassadors said that they volunteered for the programme because they wanted to support pupils from widening participation (WP) backgrounds; **some of them had a WP background themselves and had seen the difference these kinds of programmes can make.** They recognised the importance of being exposed to science and healthcare careers and settings at an early age, and felt that it was something they wanted WP pupils to have.

The Student Ambassadors said that they were proud of being part of the programme because **they felt they had inspired and motivated the pupils.** One Student Ambassador said that she

could see how the pupils' horizons broadened through the experience and they now 'saw life from a different perspective'.

bb I wanted to take part in Primary Practice because I like working with kids. Also, I'm from a widening participation background myself and did some programmes when I was at school, so I just know how important it is for these kids." (Student Ambassador)

Key Finding: Student Ambassadors developed communication, presentation, and problem-solving skills.

Student Ambassadors highlighted the range of skills they developed through being part of the programme. They learnt various teaching skills such as how to communicate and present to different types of audiences. They also learnt how to build strong relationships with the children and manage behaviour. The Student Ambassadors talked about how they overcame feelings of stress and anxiety related to managing groups of children and learnt to problem-solve quickly.

Key Finding: Student Ambassadors felt well supported during the programme and found the training useful.

All the Student Ambassadors agreed that the training was extremely helpful, particularly because it helped them to think about how they might overcome challenges, such as running out of time, or working with disengaged pupils.

They found the programme handbook very useful, stating that it was 'detailed enough for us to go through and kind of figure out what the activities were and how to use them... but with enough kind of leeway for us to change our plan based on for example the size of the group, or what we know works better for them'.

bb I enjoyed how my presentation and communication skills greatly improved. Because of the programme, I learned a lot. I learned especially how to communicate with children in that age bracket." (Student Ambassador)

5. Conclusion

This report has shown the Primary Practice evaluation findings from the year 2022. Pupil surveys and focus group data was used to measure changes in pupils' social and emotional skills, and interest in science and healthcare. Although the pupil survey sample size was relatively small and the study did not involve a control group, clear findings were able to be drawn from the in-depth qualitative research.

Whilst the self-reported pupil survey data did not show an increase in the resilience and self-efficacy levels of students, **the School Concerns Questionnaire suggested that pupils' concerns about secondary school reduced.** Furthermore, the accounts of **Student Ambassadors and parents evidence the many successes of the Primary Practice programme.** It is clear that the programme **stimulates intellectual curiosity in pupils** through problem-based learning activities which encourage them to probe real issues, enact real-life emergency situations and ask questions about science and healthcare professions. The evaluation has highlighted the **important role played by Student Ambassadors** who, through their support and guidance, **become significant role models,** and help to **inspire pupils through their own passion for their work.**

The parents focus group revealed the **broader impact of the programme on the pupils' families and wider community.** In their eyes, the programme was **inspiring a generation of children to become interested in the science and healthcare professions,** also indirectly impacting the pupils' siblings through **shared knowledge and skills.** Parents were keen for the programme to be expanded and **emphasised the importance of the programme in raising their children's aspirations and motivating them to work hard and succeed.** They felt valued by the university and grateful for the new opportunities their children had been given.

Programme Recommendations

- ▶ **Incorporate discussions with the pupils about their transition to secondary school into the programme.** The School Concerns Questionnaire highlighted the various things that worried that pupils about secondary school. Whilst the programme is designed to develop key skills which will aid transition, it could also be a good opportunity for adults who are not directly linked to school to talk with the pupils about how they are feeling and discuss how they might overcome anxiety and stress.
- ▶ **Show pupils the steps they can take to pursue careers in science and healthcare.** The evaluation showed that whilst the pupils were inspired by the programme, their academic confidence dropped, perhaps because they felt daunted by the work required to succeed in the science and healthcare professions. We

recommend talking to the pupils about the steps they might take to pursue in these types of careers (i.e. GCSE and A Level options, and the types of universities offering science/healthcare courses). Student Ambassadors could also talk to the pupils about their own career journeys, and help them to feel like a career in a science or healthcare profession is an achievable goal.

Evaluation Recommendations

- ▶ **Consider running a survey at the end of the after-school club.** Such a survey would capture endline survey responses from pupils who only attend the after school club and increase the sample size of matched pupils. It would also measure the impact of the programme on the sub-group of pupils who do not attend the summer school. A larger sample size would also make sub-group analysis (i.e. looking at the outcomes of PP and non-PP pupils) possible.
- ▶ **Build parent/community outcomes into the outcomes framework.** The qualitative research showed that the programme is highly valued in the community of parents whose children it targets; this should be investigated further in the future.
- ▶ **Baseline the School Concerns Questionnaire in January;** follow this up with the mid-point survey at the end of the summer school, and the endline at the end of the graduation ceremony. This would allow tracking of transition outcomes from the start to the end of the programme (rather than just mid-point to endline, as it currently stands).
- ▶ **Ensure data completeness** by asking pupils to write their full names in capital letters on the surveys to make it easier to match the survey data.

Glossary

Evaluation terminology

Baseline

The initial assessment of pupils' attainment or social and emotional skills, at the start of an evaluation.

Evaluation

An evaluation is set up to measure the impact of a particular programme. This will involve monitoring the programme over a specified period, for one or more groups, in order to evaluate the progress participating pupils make. One programme can involve multiple evaluations, and we recommend gathering data across multiple time points to ensure valid and reliable results are generated.

Matched Pupils

Matched Pupils are pupils who carried out both a baseline and a final assessment at the start and end of the evaluation. It can be useful to consider results from Matched Pupils only because this means only including those pupils who participated in the full duration of the programme.

Outcomes

We use outcomes to refer collectively to any social and emotional skills and academic attainment scores that are being measured over the course of an evaluation.

Social and emotional skills

The term 'social and emotional skills' refers to a set of attitudes, behaviours, and strategies that are thought to underpin success in school and at work, such as motivation, perseverance, and self-control. They are usually contrasted with the 'hard skills' of cognitive ability in areas such as literacy and numeracy, which are measured by academic tests. There are various ways of referring to this set of skills, such as: non-cognitive skills, twentieth century skills and soft skills. Each term has pros and cons; we use social and emotional skills for consistency but we recognise that it does not perfectly encapsulate each of the skills that come under this umbrella.

Measures of social and emotional skills

Grit

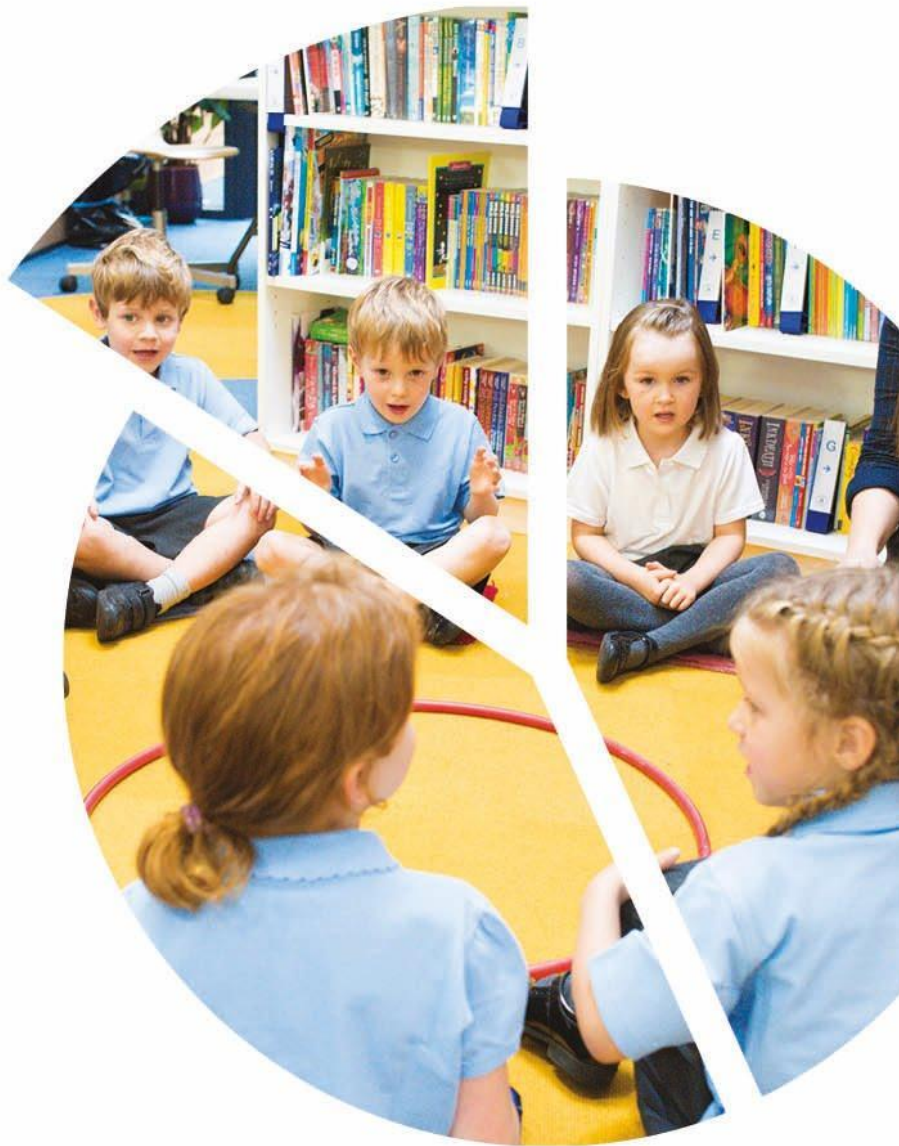
Grit is defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals, with an emphasis on the long-term. Pupils with high levels of grit and resilience may work persistently over years to achieve goals despite experiencing setbacks. Resilience has been related to life outcomes including higher earnings and fewer career changes (Duckworth and Quinn, 2009).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a measure of pupils' belief in their ability to achieve a specific task in the future. Self-efficacy is correlated with higher academic achievement and persistence, and also contributes to pupil wellbeing. (Gutman & Schoon 2013, DeWitz et. al. 2009).

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