

## ASE Executive Summary – External Evaluation Report

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### 1. The Inclusion in Schools programme

During the academic year 2022/23, the Association for Science Education (ASE) ran the Inclusion in Schools (IIS) programme. During that time, we worked with 99 state secondary schools in England, of whom 85 were invited to participate in the evaluation. The remaining 14 schools were onboarded to the programme too late to be involved in the evaluation. Using a combination of consultant-led support (mostly delivered virtually), CPD, network meetings and resources, the IIS programme sought to increase the number of students from underrepresented groups progressing to A-Levels in subjects that historically have shown discrepancies in uptake by gender and other underrepresented groups. We did this through targeted interventions to address barriers to inclusion at a whole school level.

The programme set out to achieve the following six outcomes as defined within the programme’s Theory of Change:

1. Outcome 1: Under-represented pupil groups demonstrate a positive attitude to subjects within the scope of the evaluation and a belief that the subject is ‘for them’.
2. Outcome 2: Increased numbers of Y10 students demonstrate an interest in studying physics post-16 (specifically including girls and recipients of free school meals)
3. Outcome 3: Improved teacher retention rates (with a particular interest in physics and Early Career Teachers).
4. Outcome 4: The school leadership creates a culture of inclusion across the whole school.
5. Outcome 5: Teachers demonstrate increased confidence to demonstrate inclusive practice in their teaching.
6. Outcome 6: Pupils have the information they need to make decisions about their future.

## 2. Successes and lessons learned

### *Successes*

Drawing on the findings from the external evaluation by Insightful Research (outlined in section 4), the ASE considers the IIS programme to have been successful on several fronts. The IIS programme was found to have positively contributed to improving Senior Leadership Teams' (SLT) ability to create a culture of inclusion (outcome 4). Nearly all lead contacts (n=44) responded that the programme had met this objective completely or to a large extent. The staff survey showed evidence of an improved focus on inclusion, with more staff being aware of their school's inclusion policy by the end of the programme, and more staff agreeing that their school communicates its vision for inclusion clearly by the end of the programme compared to the baseline survey.

Furthermore, for outcome 5, there was evidence from the teacher surveys of an increase in confidence in ensuring that resources and classroom displays are inclusive and representative of diversity (+7%) and staff becoming more aware of their own unconscious bias (+5%). Finally, there was evidence of a positive impact on: staff confidence in making links between the curriculum and careers (+5%); knowledge of career pathways relating to their subject area (6%); staff knowledge of inclusive teaching practices (+4%); and use of strategies to increase participation in lessons of all students (+4%). There was also qualitative evidence of the IIS programme improving teacher confidence in dealing with inclusion at an individual level, where teachers have worked directly with their IIS programme coach (outcome 5). Nearly all lead contacts (n=43) responded this objective was met completely or to some extent.

Findings around increased teacher confidence linking curriculum to careers and knowledge of career pathways also provides evidence for outcome 6. There was no clear evidence of an improvement in pupils having the information they need to make decisions about their future; however, nearly all lead contacts (n=41) responded that this outcome has been met completely or to some extent.

With regard to outcome 3 on staff retention, data provided by the external evaluators show there was some evidence of positive impact on retention, particularly relating to Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and physics teachers. By the end of the programme, the percentage of ECTs intending to leave teaching decreased (-8%) as did the percentage of physics teachers (-30%), with no physics teacher responding they intended to leave teaching in the final survey. Furthermore, though some Senior Leaders were more likely to say they intended to leave teaching at the end of the programme than the beginning (+6%), other Senior Leaders were more likely to say they intended to be in the same job in the same school (+5%). Finally, there was not a significant change for Middle Leaders or teachers with regard to their intention to leave teaching. Middle Leaders were more likely to intend to do the same job in a different school at the end of the programme (+7%) and teachers were less likely to consider retirement (-7%).

The process evaluation found that school satisfaction with the programme was high. Nearly all lead contacts (n=44) reported that they achieved what they wanted to some extent or completely. Schools have been satisfied with what they have achieved at a school level, especially given the time and resources available to them. 32 schools said they had achieved what they wanted to some extent; 12 said they had achieved what they wanted completely by taking part in the programme; with only three unsure if they had achieved what they wanted to.

There was a strong feeling that the IIS programme accelerated change in schools and enabled them to make more and faster progress towards their inclusion goals than they would have had they not taken part in the programme. The greatest impact has been amongst the individual contacts who have worked with the consultants and sometimes a small group working alongside them and/or SLT.

More than half of the schools (n=24) that participated in the survey said they would not have achieved what they achieved this year without the IIS programme; under one third (n=14) responded that it would have taken them longer to achieve what they did without the IIS programme.

Schools were very positive about the quality of support and the expertise of the consultants. The consultant relationship emerged as the main advantage and most valued part of the programme; schools consistently highlighted consultant support as the most impactful element of the programme.

### *Lessons learned*

There were further findings around outcome 1 that have provided an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned. Pupils showed an increase in agreement with the statement 'physics will be useful to me in the future' (+7%). However, they also showed a decrease in agreement with the statement 'physics is for people like me' (-5%). Over half of the lead contacts (n=28) responded that the programme had helped deliver the outcome that 'under-represented pupil groups demonstrate a positive attitude to physics' (outcome 1) and a belief that 'physics is for them' to some extent.

Furthermore, though there was an increase in numbers of Y10 students demonstrating an interest in studying physics post-16, this was driven by a 14% increase in male students whilst remaining stable for female students. Half of lead contacts (n=23) responded that the programme had helped deliver this outcome either completely or to some extent. However, though it is encouraging that around half of all lead contacts considered there was some positive impact in these areas (n=28 and n=23, respectively), this can be compared to over 80% of lead contacts (n=38) responding that this outcome was relevant to their school. This gap reflects that some lead contacts (~20-30%) thought it was a relevant outcome but that the programme did not help deliver it. Together, the pupil survey and lead contact survey results suggest that more needed to be done for outcome 1 to have been met successfully, which is a key lesson learnt from this phase of the programme and will inform future phases.

Finally, the process evaluation found that a third of lead contacts considered the CPD and networks provided by Inclusion in Schools as being the least impactful elements of the programme (7 lead contacts for each of CPD and networks). The feedback provided to the external evaluators from teachers is they lacked time to be able to participate, which is corroborated by feedback the IIS consultants also received from the schools they worked with. Some teachers also reported to the evaluators that the training came too late in the year or that information about available CPD was shared too late to be scheduled into a school's CPD programme, where it would have been most effective. This feedback is useful for future phases of the programme and is reflected in the recommendations below.

### 3. Recommendations

The recommendations listed below are taken from the external evaluation report and either have been or will be acted on in current and future iterations of this programme.

#### 1. Programme outcomes

Ensure that the programme's measurable outcomes are achievable, given the timing and scope of the project, and are relevant to what can reasonably be expected to change.

Outcomes which need a long time to embed and bring about change are less helpful for short-term programmes where any immediate impact is going to be focussed directly on those participating, and are unlikely to result in evidence of change for other audiences (e.g. pupils).

#### 2. Onboarding and engagement

There have been many lessons learned in the onboarding and engagement of schools, and the IIS programme team has adapted over the course of the project to learn quickly from issues as they have arisen. These are:

- Plan the timing of the programme with due regard to schools' calendars and ways of working.
- Think carefully about the schools who are targeted and accepted onto the programme and agree a school profile that will most likely benefit from the programme. Some of those who were most dissatisfied were already on an inclusion journey and felt the level of support and training was pitched too low for them.
- Have greater accountability of schools and consultants about what is being delivered.
- Maintain engagement with schools – both so they participate fully in the programme but also that the programme doesn't compete with its own evaluation.
- Put in place a clearer contract with schools.

#### 3. Match consultant skills to school aims

The IIS programme consultants are a key strength of the programme. They are a vibrant team of experts with special knowledge and skills. At times, there could be better matching of consultants to schools to make use of their expertise and align their special interests with schools who share their values and approaches.

#### 4. Provide a consistent experience to schools

In terms of what is on offer, the time consultants spend with each school and the working approach, the school experience has not always been consistent.

#### 4. Impact evidence: Inclusion in Schools Programme's six stated outcomes

In reporting on the impact of the Inclusion in Schools programme, the stated outcomes were used as a starting point to assess the impact and evidence of impact drew on the following data available:

- **Pupil survey data** (evidence of impact comparing baseline data with end data)
- **Staff survey data** (evidence of impact comparing baseline data with end data)
- **Lead contact survey data with 47 responses** (extent to which lead contacts agreed that the IIS programme had helped them to deliver the stated outcome)
- IIS programme consultant **impact matrix** completed by **eight consultants** (evidence of self-reported impact from IIS programme consultants)
- Two sets of **interviews with lead contacts** – the first with **nine lead contacts** and the second with **13 lead contacts** (qualitative research findings)

Definitions of key stakeholders involved are as follows:

- **Lead contacts**  
Each school had one lead contact who was the contact point for the programme and took the lead on inclusion work in their school.
- **Inclusion in Schools consultants**  
The IIS consultant team is made up of 12 education consultants.
- **Inclusion in Schools Leads**  
A subset of the team (four in total) that work on a strategic level across evaluation, resources and quality assurance, communications, and coaching/mentoring.

After a thorough review of the external evaluation report, which involved the IIS Leads alongside the Director of Professional Development and the Director of Curriculum Innovation, we outline findings from the external evaluation report in more detail below. Where appropriate, additional findings derived by the IIS Leads are included, which are from the data tables produced by the external evaluators.

#### **Outcome 1: Under-represented pupil groups demonstrate a positive attitude to physics and a belief that 'physics is for them'.**

- There was evidence that pupils at schools taking part in the IIS programme demonstrated an increase in positive attitudes towards physics over the course of the project and there was also evidence that there was an increase in negative attitudes.
- The IIS Leads found that the positive attitudes related to pupils showing an increase in agreement with the statement 'physics will be useful to me in the future' (+7%) and, with regard to the negative attitudes, pupils showed a decrease in agreement with the statement 'physics is for people like me' (-5%).
- 38 lead contacts responded that this outcome was relevant to their school. 28 lead contacts responded that the programme had helped deliver the outcome 'under-represented pupil

groups demonstrate a positive attitude to physics' and a belief that 'physics is for them' to some extent.

**Outcome 2: Increased numbers of Y10 students demonstrate an interest in studying physics post-16 (specifically including girls and recipients of FSM).**

- There is evidence that more pupils at schools who participated in the IIS programme were interested in studying physics post-16 at the end of the programme than at the beginning.
- The increase in interest in studying physics was largely driven by increased interest amongst male pupils (+14%).
- There is insufficient data for reporting on students on Free School Meals (FSM).
- 37 lead contacts responded this stated outcome was relevant to their school and 10 did not. 23 lead contacts responded that the programme had helped deliver the outcome either completely or to some extent.

**Outcome 3: Improved teacher retention rates (with a particular interest in physics and Early Career Teachers (ECTs)).**

- The evaluators concluded that no impact was made on retention. The IIS Leads, however, found nuanced evidence of impact in the data tables provided by the evaluators.
- The percentage of Early Career Teachers (ECTs) intending to leave teaching decreased (-8%). The IIS Leads found this was alongside an increase from other ECTs in intending to do a different job at the same school (+14%).
- The sample size for physics teachers is small (n=17 at beginning and n=13 at end); nonetheless, the IIS Leads found that there was a 30% decrease in physics teachers intending to leave teaching, with no physics teachers responding in the final survey that they intended to leave.
- Senior Leaders were more likely to say they intended to leave teaching at the end of the programme than the beginning (+6%). The IIS Leads found that other Senior Leaders were more likely to say they intended to be in the same job in the same school (+5%).
- Some Middle Leaders were more likely to say they would leave teaching. The IIS Leads found that there was not a significant change for Middle Leaders with regard to leaving teaching (-3%) and other Middle Leaders were more likely to intend to do the same job in a different school (+7%).
- Teachers were more likely to say they intend to leave teaching at the end of the programme than the beginning. The IIS Leads found that there was not a significant change for teachers with regard to leaving teaching (-2.5%) and a decrease in the number that intended to retire (14% to 7%).
- There was an increase across all staff intending to change schools by 5%. The IIS Leads found the number across all staff intending to leave teaching remained largely the same (+1%).
- 11 lead contacts responded that this outcome was not relevant to their school. 15 lead contacts said the programme had had no impact at all on staff retention and 12 said it had some impact.

**Outcome 4: The school leadership creates a culture of inclusion across the whole school.**

- The IIS programme has positively contributed to improving Senior Leadership Teams' (SLT) ability to create a culture of inclusion.
- 44 lead contacts responded that the programme had met this objective completely or to a large extent.
- The staff survey showed evidence of an improved focus on inclusion, with more staff being aware of their school's inclusion policy by the end of the programme, and more staff agreeing that their school communicates its vision for inclusion clearly by the end of the programme compared to the baseline survey.
- The IIS Leads found that nearly 90% of all staff (regardless of seniority) agreed completely or somewhat that the school communicates its vision for inclusion clearly.
- There was no evidence of an impact on pupils' feelings of belonging.
- The extent to which this culture of inclusion cascades down through the school from the leadership to all staff and pupils is limited. Senior staff and middle leaders are more likely than teachers to feel that the vision for inclusion is communicated clearly, and teachers are more likely to feel that way than support staff. The IIS Leads found that the differences between each group of staff were minimal (under 5%) when taking together 'very clearly' and 'somewhat' in response to the question 'How clearly do you feel your school communicates its vision for inclusion?'.
- Lead contacts reported other aspects that they felt had changed as a result of the IIS Programme, which the IIS Leads consider most appropriate under outcome 4. Examples include:
  - Introduction of rainbow lanyards to identify staff with whom pupils can discuss LGBTQ+ issues.
  - Introduction of gender-neutral reports
  - Plans for gender neutral toilets
  - Systematic reporting of non-inclusive language on internal school systems and tracking systems to record the number of instances of different types of non-inclusive language.
  - Having an external consultant review a curriculum topic to make it more relevant to careers [but this was a separate, paid-for consultant introduced by the IIS programme rather than a direct impact of the programme]
  - Introduction of a named governor for diversity
  - Making adjustments to allow a pupil who identified as the opposite gender to that assigned at birth to take part in a different PE class.

**Outcome 5: Teachers demonstrate increased confidence to demonstrate inclusive practice in their teaching.**

- There was evidence from the teacher surveys of an increase for teachers in their confidence to demonstrate inclusive practice in their teaching (+4%), ensuring that resources and classroom displays are inclusive (+7%) and becoming aware of their own unconscious bias (+5%).



- There was evidence of positive impact on staff confidence in making links between the curriculum and careers (+5%), knowledge of career pathways relating to their subject area (+6%) and use strategies to increase participation in lessons of all students (+4%)
- There was also qualitative evidence of the IIS programme improving teacher confidence in dealing with inclusion at an individual level, where teachers have worked directly with their IIS programme coach.
- Nearly all lead contacts (n=43) responded this objective was met completely or to some extent.

#### Qualitative evidence

- One consultant was able to report on impact relating to this outcome in one school:

*“Teachers have valued the ‘unconscious bias’ training and have asked for more for next year. One Maths teacher has been through the whole of his curriculum taking out all the boy/girl references and replacing them with neutral terms.”*

- Positive impact is also reflected in some of the feedback from lead interviews, where teachers reported reviewing the displays around school or in their classroom and being more systematic in ensuring that they are representative of the diversity found in their school. There has been evidence of teacher confidence increasing in teaching and talking about inclusive topics. One teacher told us how they felt more confident to tackle LGBTQ+ issues in the classroom. An increase in awareness of unconscious bias is also supported by comments made in the interviews, where teachers told us that unconscious bias training had been rolled out to staff in some instances.

*“I completed the unconscious bias training and have been trying to then roll that out across my department and then the school and [my consultant has] supplied me with a much-shortened version that I can then use with them.”*

*“Because of the unconscious bias training, we’ve had some really good conversations between staff, where staff had certain preconceived ideas. But they kind of took a step back and went oh, maybe I do get the boys to do this a bit more or maybe I could tweak my displays to make them a little bit more open for other people.”*

*“We completely looked at our displays of people who worked in science and we were quite horrified when we first looked at how not inclusive it was. We’ve started looking at the displays around the whole school and there are many, many more inclusive examples up around the school.”*

*“For me in geography this year we do the Middle East so talk about the World Cup in Qatar and I felt more confident this year talking about their rules and regulations and expectations on being gay and how that is illegal in Qatar, I felt more confident this year.”*

- One teacher said how a focus on inclusive language had led to collecting more data on how inappropriate language was dealt with in school.



*“400 inclusive points have been entered on SIMS since September... that’s 400 points where students have been spoken to about inappropriate language. So that conversation has happened, we know that, so that in itself is successful.”*

**Outcome 6: Pupils have the information they need to make decisions about their future.**

- There was evidence of an improvement in pupils having the information they need to make decisions about their future.
- Over a third of lead contacts (n= 19) said that careers had some relevance to their focus, although it was not necessarily a focus that was sustained throughout the programme.
- Nearly all lead contacts (n=41) responded that this outcome has been met completely or to some extent.