

The Impact of National College Grants Evaluation

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National College for
Teaching & Leadership

The Impact of National College Grants Evaluation

Research report

June 2015

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Glossary of Key Terms

Local authority: local level government responsible for the provision of schooling in its area.

LLE – Local Leader of Education: headteachers and principals locally recognised as outstanding leaders who are tasked with supporting other schools in school improvement.

NLE – National Leader of Education: headteachers and principals nationally recognised as outstanding leaders who are tasked with supporting other schools in school improvement.

NLE Deployment Grant: core fund used by NLEs and some LLEs to support improvement in other schools.

NLE Bursary Grant: additional grant to release NLEs to provide support improvement in other schools.

NSS – National Support School: schools led by NLEs, recognised as outstanding, with consistently high levels of pupil performance with a record of supporting other schools to improve.

PP – Professional Partner: experienced headteacher tasked with supporting those new to headship, in the first two years of their first headship. The role has now become part of the LLE role.

Building Capacity Grant: a programme to support schools that did not currently meet the eligibility criteria for becoming teaching schools, but were both close to meeting the criteria and wished to progress to a position where they were able to make a teaching school application.

Targeted Support Succession Planning (TSSP) Grant: A grant supported by project leads linked to local authorities used to increase the supply of school leaders in selected areas, with a variety of specific objectives and approaches.

1. Executive Summary

Introduction

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) commissioned a team from Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) to conduct an impact evaluation of a number of its grants in support of the development of a self-improving education system in England. The focus of this project was to assess the impact of grants over the two years from April 2012 – July 2014 and to conduct a thorough evaluation of a number of NCTL grants, focusing on the inputs, outputs and outcomes of these grants.

The five types of grants examined were:

1. National and Local Leaders in Education Deployment Fund: grant enabling NLEs and LLEs to support underperforming schools; evaluation of grants issued from 2011-13
2. NLE Bursary: grants used to supplement the Deployment Fund and leverage other sources to support underperforming schools; evaluation of grants issued from 2011-13
3. Professional Partner Grant: grant enabling experienced headteachers to support those new to headship; evaluation of grants issued 2009-2011
4. Building Capacity Grants: used to support those close to achieving teaching school (TS) status to meet eligibility criteria; evaluation of grants issued 2011-2013
5. Targeted Support Succession Planning (TSSP) Grants: used to support prospective headteachers in local areas identified as suffering headteacher supply issues; evaluation of grants issued in 2011-2013 (Waves 5 and 6)

Findings

Outcomes for individual leaders

Comparing the three broad school improvement grants, grants 1 - 3, the Professional Partner Grants had high levels of positive impacts for individual leaders' capacity to act effectively as a leader. For the others, developing strategic responses to emerging issues and confidence as a leader were the strongest outcomes. For the Building Capacity Grant, leadership practice and knowledge were noted as important positive additional outcomes.

The Succession Planning Grants led to a range of personal outcomes including improved confidence in leadership roles, wider career progression and taking the next step towards headship, and aspects of leadership. In relation to actual promotion, fewer respondents could see an impact. Personal outcomes were more positively viewed across the board for those in Wave 6 compared with Wave 5.

School and system outcomes

For grants 1 - 3 the highest levels of impacts were seen for the Bursary Grant (bearing in mind this grant always operated in conjunction with other funding sources which were sometimes substantial). Particularly positive system outcomes for both the Deployment and Bursary Grants included building teaching and learning capacity and having better support networks. For the Professional Partner Grant, support in planning and again, developing capacity to improve were important. For the Building Capacity Grant, positive impacts were seen in relation to continuous professional development (CPD), initial teacher training (ITT) and partnerships in particular.

In relation to the Succession Planning Grants, for both beneficiaries and programme leads, the crucial systems outcomes related to networks – linkages between schools, working across the local authority or region – as well as increasing the talent pool by growing leaders, providing a more diverse leadership workforce.

Pupil outcomes

For grants 1 - 4, although there was some perceived impact on pupil outcomes, respondents were much less likely to see positive outcomes compared with personal and system level outcomes. The Succession Planning Grants did not look at pupil outcomes.

Conclusions and recommendations

Recommendations focussed on cross-cutting issues for all grants were:

- NCTL should ensure clarity in how the grants are to be deployed and the outcomes expected.
- NCTL should collect consistent, systematic data and facilitate analysis to assist in impact evaluation. For instance, where possible destinations data for those engaged in support should be recorded and consistent processes for monitoring and evidencing impact for grants at the local level should be developed
- to enable success, schools and funders should consider:
 - the fit between support and the needs of the individuals and schools involved;
 - whether the characteristics of the individuals supported are such that they are likely to benefit;
 - to what extent the school context is conducive to successful implementation;
 - the local system context - the availability of key support networks.

2. Overview of the project - aims and objectives

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL, formerly The National College for School Leadership) commissioned a team from Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) to conduct an impact evaluation of a number of their grants. The NCTL issues grants in support of the development of a self-improving education system in England, where schools themselves are responsible for the delivery of leadership development and school to school support focused on driving improvement.

Due to the nature of the work NCTL undertakes, there are differences in the type of grants issued, their purpose and their intended impact. These include those which enable school to school support provided by system leaders (national and local leaders in education – NLEs and LLEs) and, for NLEs, their schools (national support schools - NSSs); grants to teaching schools to enable their setup and particular elements of their delivery; grants to those established headteachers who acted as Professional Partners supporting new headteachers entering the profession; and grants provided to schools and other organisations such as dioceses to enable targeted support in succession planning. For the purposes of this report the grants will be split into two key areas: **System Leader Grants** and **Succession Planning Grants**.

3. Outline methodology

The project focused on evaluating the impact of the five types of grants as detailed below.

National Leaders of Education (NLE) Bursary Grants issued in 2009:

These grants are intended to provide resources to cover some of the costs associated with the work of NLEs and their schools in supporting other schools. They can be used for items such as supply cover, additional administrative support, and development activities (such as coaching) to enable staff in the NSS to work effectively in support roles. They typically work in conjunction with other sources of support particularly local authority funding, and other NLE funding. The Bursary Grant was set at £6,000 in 2012/13 and was in the region of £10,000 in 2011/12; and it is awarded annually.

Deployment Fund Grants (to NLEs and some local leaders of education [LLEs]) issued in 2011/12:

These grants are provided to enable the NLEs/LLEs and their schools to support named schools which are identified as being underperforming (in relation to being below floor standards and/or being in an Ofsted category). The grant could be used for similar kinds of expenditure as the Bursary Grant, but, in addition, it could be used to secure support from beyond the NSS such as consultancy and training.

- In 2011/12, grants from the Deployment Fund were £25,000 and £35,000 respectively for each primary and secondary school supported;
- 228 schools were supported in 2011/12, 159 by NLEs and 69 by LLEs;
- The aims of the fund are to deliver school improvement and to encourage NLEs/LLEs to consider proposing their schools as sponsors for the supported schools to become academies.

Professional Partner Grants issued since 2009:

These were grants to enable experienced headteachers to support those new to headship, in the first two years of their first headship. The support used a coaching model tied to personal development as a headteacher.

- The grant was for £1,000 per headteacher providing support;
- Around 500 headteachers were supported per annum;
- In 2012, Professional Partner Grants became part of the local leaders in education programme.

Building Capacity Grants:

The Building Teaching Schools Capacity programme was established by NCTL to support schools who did not currently meet the eligibility criteria for becoming teaching schools, but wished to progress to a position where they were able to make a teaching school application. It was expected that applicant schools would be fairly close to the criteria and, following support, would be in a position to apply for teaching school status within 12 months. Priority for the grant was given to applicants in areas where there were fewer designated teaching schools.

Applicants were expected to make bids in one or more of the following areas:

- Creation of strategic partnerships
- Initial teacher training (ITT)
- Continuous professional development (CPD)
- School-to-school support
- Talent management and succession planning
- Meeting the Ofsted criteria
-

Examples of the ways in which the fund may be spent given in the application documentation were:

- building staff capacity to offer ITT, CPD, leadership development or school-to-school support as part of their role as a strategic partner in a teaching schools alliance;
- contributing towards the cost of paying for external assessments or inspections as part of an audit process;
- contributing to the cost of staff cover and expenses required when staff are taking part in training or development activity run by NCTL or other organisations;
- paying the cost of buying in programmes such as the Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP) or Improving Teacher Programme (ITP).

Succession Planning Grants:

The Targeted Support Succession Planning (TSSP) Grant was first issued in 2008 with waves 1 and 2 of the funding awarded to 1,200 beneficiaries. The reach of the grant was extended in subsequent years with 800 grant recipients in 2010 (wave 3), 2,000 in 2011 (wave 4), 5,000 in 2012 (wave 5) and 2,300 in 2013 (wave 6). (All figures are approximate)

- The grant aimed to meet the challenge of growing future school leaders. This was achieved through supporting aspiring leaders/headteachers to successfully gain a leadership post, deputy or headship position.
- The succession planning grants were supported by designated project leads (approximately 50 in total) that were connected to Regional Collaborative

Groups made up of school leaders, local authorities and other stakeholders and were often responsible for multiple projects in their area.

- The main interventions funded through succession planning for earlier waves focussed on pre-National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and post-NPQH (NPQH into headship) programmes. Specific and focused interventions included: diversity programmes (targeting more black and minority ethnic group leaders), Faith School issues and Women into Headship.

The evaluation was designed to take place in five consecutive phases. This five-stage process enabled methods to be piloted during the first 'developmental' phase and refined on a continuous basis through the remainder of the evaluation. Following the developmental phase, the four subsequent phases produced a bank of evidence that grew and became more robust over time. Phases 2 - 5 each took place over a period of approximately 4 - 6 months and incorporated the refinement of tools and the collection of qualitative data to showcase impacts and good practice. Four of the five grants examined had a logic model design phase that informed data collection (presented in earlier reports). The Building Capacity Grant was the exception as the outcomes were very tightly defined around becoming a teaching school, so the research moved straight into survey design without prior logic model development. Survey responses for each grant are included in the relevant subsections of Section 4 and 5.

The five phase evaluation process:

Phase number	Description
<p>Phase 1 (Development phase)</p>	<p>This involved undertaking a series of interviews to help frame a set of logic models. A logic model explains how programme or project inputs are related to processes and outcomes. The models presented the links between inputs on the one hand and a set of intermediate and then final outcomes on the other. This approach is more complex than some other presentations of logic models (which simply list inputs, outputs and outcomes) since we use these as the starting point for 'programme theories' of how programmes might work in practice, giving the potential for informing programme makers in their understanding of how grants can produce different kinds of outcomes. The logic models were subsequently used to underpin the design of survey instruments to undertake surveying of grant beneficiaries to enable impacts to be quantified in such a way as to populate the model with numerical data and to collate feedback from grant beneficiaries to assess their experiences of support and to identify the impact of funding on personal, professional and school development.</p>
<p>Phase 2</p>	<p>Phase 2 of the study focused on collecting primary data from grant beneficiaries to assess the impact of the Bursary, Deployment Fund and Professional Partner Grants. This took two forms. Firstly, large scale surveys were conducted with beneficiaries of all three grant types including a series of follow up telephone calls to boost responses. The survey data helped quantify the most frequent impacts and to assess the extent to which outcomes would have happened if the grants were not provided. To supplement the survey data and provide examples of how the grants work in practice, a series of case studies were also produced. The case studies helped to generate an enhanced understanding of the impact of the grants from the perspective of both recipients and beneficiaries. These included specifically identified areas of good practice (for the Bursary and Deployment Fund), along with randomly selected examples of the impact of the Professional Partner Grants.</p>
<p>Phase 3</p>	<p>The third phase of the study involved the introduction of an additional grant into the evaluation, succession planning. This</p>

Phase number	Description
	<p>included the required developmental work (interviewing stakeholders, plus creating and refining logic models, and designing surveys) to integrate Teaching School Grants into the overall evaluation. A series of interviews with both NCTL Associates and a sample of project leads took place to help identify and define the impacts of the grants and subsequently develop a logic model and survey tools. SHU were advised that the survey distribution should take place using a snowball sampling approach - the survey links and explanations were sent out to NCTL Associates, who then identified project leads in their area. Survey links were subsequently disseminated to projects leads to complete themselves, along with links to the beneficiary surveys which they were asked to forward on to participants. To address the initial low response rate, the survey was also distributed directly to grant beneficiaries during Autumn 2013.</p>
Phase 4	<p>Phase four included further evaluation of the Deployment Fund Grant (a follow up with 2011 beneficiaries and surveying the new 2012 cohort), in addition to new evaluation of the Building Capacity Grant. Development work for the Building Capacity Grant including interviewing a range of project stakeholders including beneficiaries and drafting a logic model and subsequently a survey to capture the impact of the grant.</p>
Phase 5	<p>The final phase of the evaluation included revisiting the Succession Planning Grant by surveying both project leads and beneficiaries who were involved in projects supported by Wave 6 funding (distributed in 2012). Additionally, further data collection to assess the value of the Deployment Fund Grants was undertaken by surveying grant recipients (those delivering the support) in addition to the other project beneficiaries. Original plans to re-visit the Professional Partner Grant were revised as this grant is no longer funded by NCTL.</p>

Table 1 Sample sizes for each grant

Grant	Survey respondents
Deployment Fund	210
Bursary	60
Professional Partner	187
Building Capacity	32
Succession Planning	378
Total	867

4. Findings: System Leader Grants

This section summarises the findings from research focused on:

- NLE grants (Bursary and Deployment)
- Professional Partners
- Building Capacity

NLE Grants: Deployment fund

Working with the NLE has brought many positive and impacting changes to our school and has greatly impacted on me as a teacher and as a member of the SLT [senior leadership team]. I am very grateful for the help and support that has been given and feel that we are continually learning and improving to make our school a better school for our pupils

The NLE deployment fund's overall purpose was to drive improvement in underperforming schools through the deployment of system leaders and promote academy sponsorship. Grants were made available for NLEs, to work with maintained primary schools and converter academies to build capacity and improve pupil outcomes, and enable the school to make an informed decision about the benefits of academisation. The aim was to work directly on practice in learning, teaching and assessment in key areas of the school while simultaneously addressing the school-level systems that support these practices. Interventions tended to involve processes that enable expertise from the NSS to be shared with the school being supported (e.g. coaching, mentoring, shadowing, joint lesson observation) or activities that enabled staff from the two schools to work together on particular issues (e.g. through exchange visits, joint projects).

In total, 210 individuals responded to an online survey designed to gather evidence of the impact of the Deployment Fund Grant. Most of these respondents were individuals belonging to schools that were being supported (197 beneficiaries), primarily headteachers or other senior leaders. A small number were individuals providing support using the grant (13 grant recipients).

The nature of the help received from NLEs was diverse with the majority focused on working collaboratively: sharing models of good practice, joint work including support teaching and exchange visits.

Personal outcomes

Beneficiaries - senior leaders

The majority of survey respondents acknowledged some impact across five personal outcomes (which were identified through the previous stakeholder interviews and developmental work). These personal outcomes were: development of strategic

responses to key issues, improved confidence, better understanding of aspects of the role, enhanced ability to diagnose and support pupil progress/attainment and improved leadership and management skills, knowledge and practice.

For each outcome the 'gross impact' was calculated (combining all survey respondents who had experienced the outcome) and adjusted for 'deadweight' (i.e. the proportion of respondents who would not have experienced the outcome without the grant) to assess the 'added value'. Table 2 below summarises the findings for each outcome.

Table 2 Personal outcomes identified by school senior leaders

Personal outcomes - beneficiaries (senior leaders)	Gross impact	Added value
Improved leadership and management skills, knowledge and practice	85%	18%
Development of strategic responses to key issues in school	89%	26%
Improved confidence	80%	33%
Better understanding of aspects of their role	70%	23%
Enhanced ability to diagnose and support pupil progress and attainment	80%	17%

n=176

The most prominent added value impacts were associated with improved confidence (33%) and the development of strategic responses to key issues (26%). It is important to note that the added value impacts are likely to be underestimates, because many respondents cited that although some outcomes would have happened anyway it would have taken much longer for this effect to materialise. Therefore, in some instances the grant accelerated the pace at which the benefit was realised. The estimated duration of personal outcomes reported by school leaders was three or more years.

Beneficiaries - middle leaders and others

The strongest added value experienced by the thirteen middle leaders, teachers and support staff surveyed was increased participation in collaboration and professional dialogue. There was also added value reported in terms of improved confidence and assessment practice. These personal outcomes were estimated by respondents to last typically for 2 - 3 years.

Grant recipients

All thirteen grant recipients surveyed reported experiencing personal outcomes, with the strongest added value noted for improved confidence, with improved coaching and mentoring skills and improved leadership skills, knowledge and practice also seen as having added value.

System outcomes

The survey findings also highlight that the majority of beneficiaries reported some impact across a wide range of system outcomes - see table 3 below. The system outcome identified by respondents as being least likely to have happened without the grant was better support networks (45%), followed by models and tools used to improve practice (30%), improved accountability of middle leaders and greater capacity for further improvement (28%). Respondents stated that system outcomes would typically last for around three years.

Table 3 System outcomes identified by beneficiaries

System outcomes	Gross impact	Added value
Improved leadership capacity	89%	23%
Improved teaching capacity	91%	21%
More effective strategic planning	81%	23%
More effective strategic responses to meet key challenges	75%	21%
Improved leadership of teaching and learning	91%	21%
More consistency in teaching and learning quality	86%	25%
More consistent behaviour management systems	46%	14%
Improved accountability of middle leaders for pupil outcomes	83%	28%
Improved governance	47%	16%
Greater capacity for further improvement	86%	28%
Staff roles adapted to meet school needs	70%	23%
Better support networks	87%	45%
Models and tools used to improve practice	86%	30%
Improved teaching and learning quality across the school	87%	22%

n=198

Regarding the impact of the Deployment Grants in relation to Ofsted inspections, around half of survey respondents had received an Ofsted inspection since the support began - and half of these had seen their grades improve. Overall, 91% of these respondents (31 individuals) stated that this change in grades was influenced by the Deployment Grant.

Enhanced **networking** was identified as a significant outcome with respondents citing access to a wide range of networks and cooperation between schools as positive impacts. NLEs are commonly viewed as important confidantes, providing non-judgemental support and encouragement. Another key impact from the grants – also identified in the case studies - is the **speed** in which schools were able to change and improve as a result of the help from NLEs.

Whole staff changes and increased team work within the school. Improved admin and resources giving teachers the tools they need to improve teaching and learning. Both schools now have consistency in practice and therefore less regression in Year 3. It also improved morale with some senior staff now confident to apply for headship and deputy headship positions.

Pupil outcomes

The majority of survey respondents acknowledged impact across four of the five pupil outcomes (77 - 79% of respondents reported observing these outcomes), with the fifth outcome (improved pupil behaviour) experienced by 38% of respondents.

Improved pupil behaviour recorded the lowest added value from the grant of all the pupil outcomes, with an added value score of 11%. However the additional impact on progress and attainment is higher, at between 19% and 21%. Overall there was a lower level of additional impact for pupil outcomes compared with either personal outcomes or system outcomes.

NLE Grants: Bursary

The school was at ground zero! As a result of the support, the DfE made the school become the academy sponsor. This formalised relationship has ensured that a school, which has always underperformed, will no longer be at risk of falling back into a category.

The Bursary Fund differed from the Deployment Fund in that the NLE accessed the bursary to fund the infrastructure costs to enable them to arrange deployments to client schools (such as partially resourcing school business management). The costs for backfill for supporting client schools were not funded through the bursary; they were funded by the schools receiving the support or by bodies acting to support them, such as local authorities or dioceses.

Interviews indicated that NLEs may have used the fund to facilitate work exclusively with one school or may work with more than one school. The purposes for engagement, the breadth of engagement and who provides the support for each school may have been substantially different. This leads to a broader range of potential **interventions**. The NLE played a pivotal role in establishing the needs of the beneficiary school/s and brokering appropriate support.

In total, 60 individuals responded to the online survey to gather evidence to assess the impact of the Bursary Grant. The vast majority of these were headteachers (75%) or other senior leaders (13%). The nature of the help received from NLEs was diverse, with the most frequently cited support focused on joint work to support teaching, sharing models of good practice and the delivery of CPD to staff. Additional qualitative data provided by respondents identified that much of the joint work support had focused on

performance management, handling difficult situations, leadership, curriculum planning, personnel issues, monitoring and evaluation. Specific examples of help included: "accelerating rates of progress for vulnerable groups of learners", "thinking strategically about how the school can improve from its present position", and "coaching and mentoring to manage difficult situations and personnel".

Mirroring the Deployment Fund survey, the Bursary Grant survey asked respondents to indicate to what extent they had experienced a series of personal, system and pupil outcomes, along with the likelihood of these effects happening anyway (without the grant).

Personal outcomes

The vast majority of respondents highlighted very positive impacts across all personal outcomes: improved confidence, development of strategic responses to key issues, improved leadership and management skills, better understanding of aspects of their role and enhanced ability to diagnose and support pupil progress/attainment.

Furthermore, the extent to which these outcomes generated additional 'added value' (against outcomes that were likely to have happened anyway) was significant across all areas. Comparing the additional impacts generated by the deployment fund using senior leader beneficiary data for both grants, the additional impact of the bursary is much greater for all outcomes, particularly improved confidence, the development of strategic responses and better understanding of aspects of the role. However, one must bear in mind that these outcomes are supported by other investment that is facilitated by the Bursary Grant, in other words the size of investment associated with Bursary Grants is higher than the Deployment Fund Grant. The differential impact may also partly reflect differences in the ways that the Deployment and Bursary Funds were implemented. There was a higher degree of negotiation with beneficiary schools for deployments not funded through the deployment fund. A much fuller discussion of these issues, based on both qualitative and quantitative data analysis is presented in the previously published Phase 2 report.

System outcomes

Survey findings also highlight that the majority of respondents reported some impact across a wide range of system outcomes. The most prominent outcomes related to improved teaching and learning, enhanced capacity and more effective strategic planning and responses (over 90% of all respondents reported these benefits). In terms of added value these three outcomes offer the greatest return. The majority of outcomes demonstrated a high level of additional output (9 of the 14 outcomes show a net impact of 50% or more), which compared very favourably with the deployment grant where the highest net impact for an outcome (better support networks) is 40%.

With reference to the impact of Bursary Grants in relation to Ofsted inspections, in total 58% of respondents had received an Ofsted inspection since the support was received. Of these, over three quarters had seen their grades improve. Overall 91% of respondents (20 individuals) stated that this change in grades was influenced by the help they received through the Bursary Grant. Qualitative data (presented more fully in the Phase 2 report) illuminated these responses, for example one respondent noted that:

Consistent support over time has allowed improvements to embed and for the school culture to change. This was not a quick fix but significant deep change which has transformed the school.

Pupil outcomes

The majority of respondents experienced impact across all the pupil outcomes covered in the survey (with over 85% of respondents experiencing four out of five outcomes). Once again the additional impacts from the Bursary Grant were more pronounced than from the Deployment Fund, comparing senior leader beneficiary responses for each.

Professional Partners

I would strongly recommend all new headteachers to sign up for a Professional Partner. It has been the single most significant support for me in my first years of headship. I don't know how I would have got through the first years without this support... New heads need all the support they can get, and this is the best kind of support they can get.

The main intervention used by the Professional Partner model was rather different from the Deployment Fund and the Bursary Fund in that it was a one to one support programme utilising a single mode of support, a coaching mode, with a focus on personal support for the individual new headteacher, rather than support for school improvement more broadly.

As a result of the personal coaching model used, the primary intermediate outcomes that were discussed in interviews were personal, relating to wellbeing, work-life balance, confidence and capacity to make decisions effectively (by discussing possible solutions with the Professional Partner). However, beneficiaries also referred to support for aspects of leadership and management of the school, and strategic work such as dealing with managing tight resources and re-scoping staffing roles.

A total of 187 individuals responded to the online survey, of whom, 98 stated that they had received coaching and 143 of whom had received mentoring support (with many respondents receiving both). Further qualitative data describing the type of 'other' help received highlighted support, encouragement and advice as the most frequent types of help received, along with practical support, visits and the sharing of good practice.

Specific support included help with staffing matters and getting schools out of special measures.

As with the Deployment Fund and Bursary surveys, beneficiaries were asked to indicate to what extent they had experienced a series of personal, system and pupil outcomes, along with the likelihood of these effects happening without the grant.

Personal outcomes

The vast majority of respondents receiving support from Professional Partners highlighted very positive impacts across all personal outcomes. The extent to which these outcomes generated additional impact (against outcomes that were likely to have happened anyway) varied between 14% (greater chance of promotion and increased likelihood of staying in post) and 26% (improved confidence). It is important to note that many respondents highlighted that an impact of the grant was speeding up positive outcomes and supporting rapid progress and development in a variety of areas: “The [Professional Partner] has made all these key progress indicators happen faster and at greater depth”.

[It was] important to have someone on the end of the phone in those early stages of headship for immediate help/signposting and encouragement. Certainly gave me more confidence in carrying out my role knowing that I could run my ideas or decisions past a more experienced practitioner. It was also beneficial to go and see an outstanding school context and get ideas/models to move my own school forward.

System outcomes

Survey findings also highlight that the majority of respondents reported some impact across a wide range of system outcomes, primarily focused on: better support networks, more effective strategic planning and responses, greater capacity for further improvement and improved leadership capacity (over 80% of all respondents reported these benefits). In terms of added value, better support networks, models and tools to improve practice, and more effective strategic planning and responses offer the greatest return.

The impact of the Professional Partner Grants in relation to Ofsted inspections was also positive. In total, 42% of respondents had received an Ofsted inspection since the support was received. Of these, 45% had seen their grades improve. Overall 70% of respondents (46 individuals) stated that this change in grades was influenced by help they received through the professional partner grant.

Many beneficiaries cited that the pace of progress and development had been quickened through professional partner support. Furthermore, having dedicated help and support

'on tap' prevented the need for headteachers to spend a great deal of time and resource identifying the necessary support.

...although I believe that most of the changes in our schools would have taken place without the Professional Partner (as I know the areas for development and I would have sought help and support elsewhere if not available from my PP), the pace of change and improvement has been swifter as I have known who/where to go to.

There were some negative experiences of professional partner support, although these were reported by a minority (less than 20 out of 187 respondents). The comments primarily related to professional partners retiring or being unavailable, unsuitable timing due to being too early or providing a style of support that did not suit the new headteacher.

Pupil outcomes

Research findings highlight that the majority of respondents acknowledged some impact across all the pupil outcomes, however in most cases these outcomes were deemed to be likely to happen anyway (without the grant). However, as stated earlier, this data does not take into account the reported fact the Professional Partner Grant sped up progress and development across a range of outcomes.

Building capacity

Profile of respondents

A total of 32 responses were received in response to the survey (which had been sent to 127 potential respondents). Of these, 14 had been designated as a teaching school, one was awaiting the outcome of its application and five more were intending to apply. A further five had made an unsuccessful application and seven were not intending to apply become a teaching school. The survey did not provide data on why they were not intending to apply.

Use of the grant to meet the teaching school criteria

Grant recipients could use the grant to support development in relation to one or more of the criteria required to gain teaching school status. The vast majority of respondents - 28 of the 32 - used some or all of their grant to support the creation of strategic partnerships and 24 used some or all of their grant to develop CPD activity. Nineteen respondents used some or all of their grant to develop school to school support and 16 used it for initial teacher education. The grant was used by fewer grant recipients to develop talent management and succession planning and to meet the Ofsted criteria, with 12 using it for each of these purposes. All but three of the respondents used the grant for more than

one criterion, with more than half using it for three or four criteria, and three using it for all six.

Importance of the grant in meeting teaching school criteria

As table 4 illustrates, respondents reported that their use of the grant was most effective in relation to developing CPD. Four in five respondents using the grant for this purpose reported that it fully met their objectives for this use of the grant. In addition three-quarters or more of the respondents who used the grant for creating strategic partnerships or ITT reported it had fully met their objectives. For respondents using the grant for meeting Ofsted criteria and school to school support, more than half reported that it had fully matched their objectives. In contrast, a quarter of respondents who used the grant for developing talent management and succession planning reported that its use had fully met their objectives. There was no indication in open responses as to why the grant had been less successful in meeting objectives for developing talent management and succession planning. The effectiveness of the grant in supporting the development of CPD and initial teacher training may be due to it facilitating the release of staff time to work with higher education institutions (HEIs), which would align with the finding reported later that partnerships with HEIs were an important enabling factor for meeting teaching school criteria.

Table 4: Extent to which the grant met the objectives set by the recipient by teaching school criteria - frequency

Objective	Fully met	Partially met	Not met at all
Creation of strategic partnerships	22	6	0
Initial teacher training	12	4	0
Continuous professional development	20	4	0
School to school support	11	8	0
Talent management and succession planning	3	9	0
Meeting Ofsted criteria	7	3	1

Respondents were also asked to rate how important the grant was in addressing each of the criteria (table 5). This was to explore whether in those areas where respondents felt it was most important to use the grant, it was helping them meet their objectives.

Table 5: Importance of using the grant to address different teaching school criteria - frequency

Objective	Very important	Important	Not very important
Creation of strategic partnerships	18	9	1
Initial teacher training	10	6	0
Continuous professional development	13	10	1
School to school support	11	8	0
Talent management and succession planning	3	9	0
Meeting Ofsted criteria	8	3	0

Using the grant to meet Ofsted criteria, create strategic partnerships and develop initial teacher training were rated the most important by respondents, and as table 5 illustrates respondents also rated the latter two of these as the most effective in meeting the objectives they set for the criteria.

Other outcomes

Respondents that had submitted or were writing a teaching school application were asked about other outcomes. Table 6 shows that the most important outcome by some way was building stronger relationships with other schools, with wider impacts on leadership and teaching important and relevant to a number of applications. Improved pupil outcomes were claimed by around 80% of these respondents, but the majority of these did not see this as relevant to the teaching school application.

Table 6: Other outcomes from the Building Capacity Grant

	Positive contribution to application	Neutral to application	No contribution to application	Not relevant or not achieved	n
Stronger relationships with other schools	14	2	2	1	17
Enhanced teacher knowledge	11	4	2	0	17
Improved leadership practices	10	2	2	2	16
Enhanced leadership knowledge	10	2	3	2	17
Improved teacher practice	13	3	2	0	18
Improved pupil outcomes	4	5	5	3	17

Supplementary resources

There was considerable variation in the extent to which respondents supplemented the Building Teaching School Capacity Grant with other funding or existing resource (bearing in mind this was not an expectation of the grant). Six of the 29 respondents that answered the question did not provide any supplementary funding or resource compared to four who supplemented the grant by more than 100%. Fourteen respondents supplemented the grant by up to 50% and 5 by 50 - 100% of the grant.

Contribution of the grant to meeting the teaching school criteria for successful applicants

Of the 14 responding schools that had been designated as teaching schools, eight reported that they would not have been able to meet the criteria without the support of the grant and the remaining six stated they would have been able to meet the criteria, but it would have taken them more time. The vast majority of these schools were very positive about the usefulness of the grant in enabling them to prepare to become teaching schools: 12 of the 14 thought the grant had prepared them very well, one thought it had prepared them well and one was neutral.

Contribution of activities undertaken using the grant to teaching school application

Schools that had either become a teaching school or had prepared a teaching school application whether successful or not were asked about the activities they had undertaken to prepare for the application. A comparison was undertaken between successful and unsuccessful applicants, but there were no clear differences.

As table 7 illustrates all respondents used their Building Capacity Grant to provide time and/or cover for senior leaders. The largest numbers used the grant to develop resources, to develop systems and processes, develop partnership agreements, raise awareness of the role and visit designated teaching schools. The activities least likely to be undertaken - although still used by over three quarters - were funded training for teachers, time or cover costs for middle leaders, website development and using consultants for partnership development.

Table 7: Activities undertaken using the Building Capacity Grant

Activities undertaken	
	Frequency
Time or cover costs for senior leaders	18
Developing systems & processes	17
Developing partnership agreements	16
Awareness raising of teaching school role with other schools	16
Visits to teaching schools	16
Administrative support	14
Time or cover costs for teachers	13
Funded training for leaders	13
Resource development	12
Funded training for teachers	9
Time or cover costs for middle leaders	13
Website development	11
Using consultants for partnership development	10

Table 8 shows that respondents were most positive about the contribution made by the grant to the teaching school application by visiting designated teaching schools and providing time and/or cover for senior leaders. In contrast, time or cover costs for teachers, using consultants for partnership development and website development had low levels of positive contribution.

Table 8: Views on contribution of activities undertaken using the Building Capacity Grant

	Very positive	Positive	Slightly positive	No contribution	n
Visits to teaching schools	11	3	1	1	16
Time or cover costs for senior leaders	12	4	2	0	18
Administrative support	9	2	0	3	14
Time or cover costs for middle leaders	8	2	2	1	13
Awareness raising of teaching school role with other schools	8	5	2	1	16
Funded training for teachers	4	4	1	0	9
Developing systems & processes	7	7	1	2	17
Funded training for leaders	5	6	2	0	13
Resource development	4	3	5	0	12
Developing partnership agreements	5	8	2	1	16
Time or cover costs for teachers	4	4	1	4	13
Using consultants for partnership development	3	1	1	5	10
Website development	2	4	1	4	11

Enablers and barriers to meeting recipients' aims for the Building Capacity Grant

Respondents were asked whether and to what extent a set of issues were seen to be barriers or enablers in meeting their aims. Table 9 shows that, overall, partnerships with universities and schools were the biggest enablers. Support from NCTL staff was also an important enabler as were staff skills. Respondents differed in relation to the extent to which resources and time allocation were experienced as enablers or barriers. Over half of respondents rated resource as an enabler, compared to about a quarter of respondents who found (presumably lack of) resource to be a barrier to achieving their aims. Respondents were split between those that found time commitment to be an enabler, and those that found lack of time to be a barrier.

Table 9: Enablers and barriers to meeting recipients' aims for the Building Capacity Grant

	Strong enabler	Enabler	Neutral	Barrier	Strong barrier	n
Partnerships with universities	7	5	1	1	0	14
Partnerships with other schools	9	6	1	1	1	18
Other partnerships*	2	1	1	1	0	5
Support from NCTL staff	6	6	1	1	0	14
Support from others*	2	2	1	0	0	5
Staff skills	4	5	1	0	0	10
Resource	5	3	2	3	0	13
Time commitment needed	3	3	2	6	1	15

*mentioned as barrier/enabler by very few respondents

Four of the five responses to an open question asking about other enablers and barrier to achieving the grant recipients' aims were related to meeting the criterion of an Ofsted outstanding judgment. Of these four, three had failed to meet to the outstanding criteria and one was waiting for a reassessment. The other response mentioned governors but did not make it clear whether this was an enabler or a barrier.

5. Succession planning

This section focuses on phase 3 and part of phase 4 of the evaluation relating to the Succession Planning Grants. Initial development data was collected via in-depth telephone interviews with four NCTL associates, and four project leads from geographically dispersed regions of England. Data from these interviews were used to construct a logic model which was then used to create two surveys to measure impact – one for beneficiaries (i.e. those who had been supported by the programmes funded by the grant) and another for project leads. The evaluation includes analysis of the grants issued as part of Waves 5 and 6 of succession planning.

Beneficiary data

In total, 329 beneficiaries responded to the online survey to gather evidence to assess the impact of the Succession Planning Grant (Wave 5 – 206 and Wave 6 - 123).

The nature of the help received from succession planning programmes was diverse. Coaching and mentoring, network development and peer support were the key types of support provided, reported by at least half of respondents across the two surveys.

Overall, 69% of the respondents supported in Wave 5 acknowledged that they had experienced at least one personal outcome, which increased to 99% for the Wave 6 sample. Included in these personal outcomes were confidence building, being a reflective leader and enhancing leadership skills. This finding was supported by qualitative work for example:

Before I was apprehensive and unconvinced about moving to headship, but now I've really realised that I can do it and just needed your little pushing and coercing... it has really given me the confidence to succeed.

The gross impact and added value across all personal outcomes were higher among the Wave 6 sample, as shown in table 10. For both waves, wider support networks was the outcome with the greatest added value (by some distance for Wave 6) and actual promotion had fairly low added value, below 40% in each wave. There was a marked improvement, however, in relation to other career development in Wave 6 compared with Wave 5. The estimated duration of these outcomes according to respondents was 2 - 3 years.

Table 10: Personal outcomes reported by beneficiaries of Succession Planning Grants

Personal outcomes	Wave 5		Wave 6	
	Gross impact	Added value	Gross impact	Added value
Improved confidence	69%	37%	97%	49%
Greater motivation	67%	32%	98%	45%
Wider support networks	66%	52%	97%	73%
Improved recruitment skills	65%	50%	88%	58%
Improved facilitation/presentation skills	65%	39%	90%	52%
Stronger applications/interviews	64%	49%	89%	66%
Better self-reflection/review	69%	41%	96%	52%
Better understanding of own strengths/limitations	69%	44%	98%	53%
Improved strategic thinking	68%	42%	99%	53%
Understanding the nature of senior leadership	68%	33%	97%	52%
Improved ability to motivate others	67%	31%	95%	43%
Improved leadership and management skills in general	69%	35%	98%	45%
Promotion to headship	43%	34%	53%	37%
Increased knowledge of systems and processes	61%	36%	96%	57%
Other career progression	48%	32%	75%	50%

The survey findings also highlight that the majority of beneficiaries reported some impact across a wide range of system outcomes. Table 11 indicates that the most prominent outcomes relate to elements of improved leadership and management and whole school improvements (over 80% of all respondents reported these benefits as having some impact); however some of these impacts were likely to have occurred anyway (without the grant). It is also significant to note that over 80% of survey respondents reported some impacts in relation to improved links between wider networks, improved links between placement schools, improved cultures of growing leaders, improved leadership and management, and whole school improvement. However much lower proportions of respondents reported impacts in relation to reducing headteacher vacancy rates, increased applications for headships and development of governors in each wave. In terms of added value, the outcomes relating to generating or enhancing networks offer the greatest return. The lowest returns were found for reducing headteacher vacancy rates; due to the lower number of respondents citing this impact, bearing in mind that other outcomes in relation to the senior leader talent pool were positive.

Table 11: System outcomes reported by beneficiaries of Succession Planning Grants

System outcomes	Wave 5		Wave 6	
	Gross impact	Added value	Gross impact	Added value
Improved links between placement schools	82%	56%	74%	42%
Improved links between a wider networks of schools	81%	59%	81%	55%
Improved school cultures of growing leaders	86%	53%	92%	48%
Increased joint working across local authorities and regions	58%	48%	66%	54%
Development of governors	25%	16%	38%	24%
Whole school improvement	87%	26%	86%	26%
Increased numbers of applications for headship	33%	28%	39%	22%
Reduced headteacher vacancy rates	13%	11%	21%	15%
Increased numbers of next stage promotions	48%	35%	59%	36%
Increased the senior leader talent pool	63%	42%	72%	48%
A more diverse leadership workforce	57%	39%	64%	44%
Improved the leadership and management of schools	81%	40%	85%	39%

Table 11 indicates that the greatest impact of the succession planning grants was in relation to improving leadership skills and networking across schools and local authorities, rather than increasing the number of applications and the success rates for headship posts. Qualitative analysis supported this finding, indicating that positive collaborative outcomes from cross-school working were enabled where there were already established relationships having already developed a set of shared, mutually understood working practices.

Additional qualitative data was collected from beneficiaries. The comments made were predominantly positive with many respondents highlighting how much they appreciated the support, the professional dialogue with colleagues, provision of specific and relevant information, and the practical opportunities. The courses/programmes were described as ‘well balanced’, ‘focused/targeted’, ‘personalised’ and ‘excellent’.

I was really grateful for the opportunity. Very soon after completing the programme a TLR [teaching & learning responsibility] became available in my school. I was supported by the programme leader in writing my letter and with interview questions and my knowledge from the course helped me with my interview

This support definitely gave me the extra knowledge, skills and confidence I needed to make the next step in my career.

I thought that the course was excellent and was the best CPD that I have ever done. All of it was valuable and it had an enormous impact upon me and my feeling about going on to headship in a church school.

Respondents were also asked to describe any negative impacts. These can be summarised as relating to poor delivery, the context making it hard to progress, personal barriers and school barriers. Suggestions to improve the grant included: ongoing mentoring, larger tutor groups, further support/follow ups, more structured programmes with a tighter focus and better planning.

There were several mentions by beneficiaries of career progression as a result of the succession planning programmes, including: “I got a new job”, “[the grant] helped me to achieve a promotion into senior leadership” and “the knowledge from my course helped me with my interview”. However on the whole there was more limited evidence of an increase in recruitment into headship with more impacts related to enhancing networking and joined up working and personal outcomes relating to enhanced confidence.

Project lead data

The survey of project leads generated a total of 49 responses (29 in Wave 5 and 20 in Wave 6). The findings highlighted that the majority of respondents acknowledged some impact across all five personal outcomes - see table 12 below. The key personal outcome reported by project leads was an increased understanding of succession planning. According to 66% of the Wave 5 sample and 63% of the Wave 6 sample, this outcome would not have happened without the grant.

Table 12: Personal outcomes reported by project leads

Personal outcomes	Wave 5		Wave 6	
	Gross impact	Added value	Gross impact	Added value
Improved CPD delivery skills	69%	28%	78%	36%
Increased understanding of succession planning	72%	66%	94%	63%
Improved confidence	62%	31%	83%	30%
Better understanding of own strengths/limitations	69%	34%	78%	36%
Promotion/career progression	48%	28%	56%	12%

Project leads were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt the support that they provided had led to a range of system outcomes for schools. Table 13 shows that the outcomes with the greatest perceived added value included networking and improving links, together with an increase in senior leadership promotions and headship vacancies filled. Some 94% of Wave 6 project leads reported that increased number of applications

for headship would not have happened without the grant. These positive recruitment/career progression impacts are much more pronounced than those reported by succession planning beneficiaries themselves.

Table 13: System outcomes reported by project leads

System outcomes	Wave 5		Wave 6	
	Gross impact	Added value	Gross impact	Added value
Benefits from links between placement schools	86%	72%	94%	79%
Improved links between wider networks of schools	90%	72%	95%	79%
More focus on growing leaders	86%	52%	95%	58%
Increased joint working between authorities	59%	55%	89%	44%
Development of governors	45%	38%	61%	49%
More coherent approaches to whole school improvement	76%	38%	89%	59%
Increased numbers of applications for headship	66%	55%	94%	94%
More successful applications to headships and vacancies filled	66%	59%	83%	78%
Increased numbers of next stage senior leadership promotions and vacancies filled	69%	62%	94%	83%
Increased numbers of applications to become a teaching school	24%	21%	22%	17%
Increased senior leader talent pool	86%	69%	89%	78%
A more diverse leadership workforce	72%	62%	72%	67%
Improved leadership and management of schools	86%	45%	89%	39%
Whole school improvement	83%	34%	78%	33%

Qualitative data also highlighted a range of additional outcomes. Additional qualitative comments provided an insight into why project leads had valued the system outcomes in the way that they had. Comments mainly focused on the need for the support to remain free of charge and included the following: “for our smallest schools it should be free”, “nothing as collaboration and the number of teaching schools is rising”, and:

The landscape has changed since wave 5 (2011-12). Schools are more used to paying for what they value and can afford. Developing leaders can be seen as an investment in a colleague who will move on to another school fairly quickly. A school may be unwilling therefore to make that investment for the benefit of another establishment. External funding is key to circumventing that issue.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to highlight any other benefits to the help that they have delivered for succession planning. The key benefits focused on networking (cross-diocese, across schools and across authorities), improved enthusiasm and providing inspiration.

The success of this Wave 5 project was that it covered a wide range of emerging leaders at different levels of leadership. This enabled the talent pool to be widened and deepened across the [local authorities] involved. The personal nature and ongoing support for delegates by [local authority] advisors was also a prominent feature (e.g. we held exit interviews at the end of 2 of the courses for delegates) and continue to provide career support and advice for leaders who are seeking promotion and career development.

6. Conclusions

Discussion

In this section, we draw together and compare the key findings for each of the grants. Firstly, we note that the grants evaluated as part of this project were aimed at different system **levels**. The Professional Partner Grant's focus is the individual new headteacher. The Deployment Fund and Bursary Grants, along with the Building Capacity Grant, provide support to schools or school clusters. The TSSP works at a local area level, but worked with a set of individual prospective headteachers.

The grants also differ in their **purposes**. The Professional Partner, Bursary and Deployment Fund Grants have a broad focus on school improvement. The others each have a more tightly defined purpose: supporting the process towards becoming a teaching school (Building Capacity) and increasing headteacher supply in a local area (TSSP).

The evaluations of each varied in relation to the **methods** used, whilst all used some form of survey, the range of qualitative methods used varied. However, each had a strong focus on outcomes, and these can be discussed and compared across at least some of the grants. In particular, the evaluations of the three broad school improvement grants shared similar survey tools, so some direct comparisons are possible here.

All of the grants had some perceived **outcomes for individual leaders**. Comparing the three broad school improvement grants, the Professional Partner Grants had high levels of perceived positive impacts for individual leaders' capacity to act effectively as a leader, although of course this would be expected since this was the direct focus of the grant. For the others, developing strategic responses to emerging issues and confidence as a leader were the strongest outcomes. For the Building Capacity Grant, leadership practice and knowledge were noted as important positive additional outcomes.

The Succession Planning Grants, like the Professional Partner Grant, focussed on support for individuals, and therefore led to a range of perceived personal outcomes including improved confidence in leadership roles and taking the next step towards headship, aspects of leadership (systems knowledge; nature of senior leadership; ability to motivate others; strategic thinking) and the ability to understand one's own strengths and limitations. In relation to actual promotion, fewer respondents could see an impact - although wider career progression figured more prominently for Wave 6 respondents: in fact, personal outcomes were more positively viewed across the board for those in Wave 6 compared with Wave 5. However, one should note that over a third felt that the work had supported this and the additionality in relation to promotion to headship was high – in other words, where there was a change in relation to promotion to headship identified, the programme was credited with having a particularly strong influence.

Turning to **school and wider system outcomes**, for the three school improvement grants the highest levels of perceived impacts are seen for the Bursary Grant, however it is important to note that this grant always operated in conjunction with other funding sources which were sometimes substantial. Particularly positive system outcomes credited to both the Deployment and Bursary Grants included building teaching and learning capacity, having better support networks, using models and tools to improve, improved accountability of middle leaders and having greater capacity for further improvement. For the Professional Partner Grant, support in planning and again developing capacity to improve were important, but with lower overall levels of perceived impact. For the small number of schools that had been inspected by Ofsted since the grant was received, the large majority (between 70 and 90%) felt the grant had positively influenced the outcome to at least some extent, with more than half seeing a significant influence for the Bursary and Deployment Fund Grants.

The focus of the Building Capacity Grant was more tightly defined on supporting schools in moving towards becoming teaching schools, so a different set of questions was used, focussed on the specific teaching school criteria. Positive impacts were seen in relation to CPD, ITT and partnerships in particular. Although relevant to only a small number of respondents, meeting Ofsted criteria was very important to those few. Wider system outcomes credited to the grant included teacher knowledge and practice.

In relation to the Succession Planning Grants, for both beneficiaries and programme leads, the perceived systems outcomes related to networks – linkages between schools, working across the local authority or region – and issues around increasing the talent pool by growing leaders, providing a more diverse leadership workforce. However, the two groups diverged on their views on the harder outcomes. Very few beneficiaries, though, saw reduced headteacher vacancy rates or increased applications for headship. Programme leads had a different view of the system than school senior leaders, and more than half saw additional impact of the programme on both increased successful headship applications and filled senior leadership positions.

Looking specifically at **pupil outcomes**, for both the school improvement grants and the Building Capacity Grant, respondents were much less likely to see positive outcomes compared with personal and system level outcomes. Given their focus, the Succession Planning Grants did not look at pupil outcomes.

The evaluations also considered the **factors associated with success** for each grant. It should be noted that these factors are drawn from across the published reports from this study, not simply the data presented here. Whilst these factors differed for each grant, it is possible to categorise them.

Looking first at the **quality and characteristics of the support**, this is of course a crucial factor for all grants. For sophisticated support programmes/activities such as the five grants discussed here, the background and knowledge of the supporting headteacher or developer/trainer was seen to be vitally important. For the Professional Partner grant,

having a balance between knowledge of the issues facing the headteacher as well as a degree of independence - not being from the same local authority or school cluster for example - were key issues. For the Bursary and Deployment Fund Grants, which often involved very close working mutual trust and respect between the supporting NLE/LLE and the school being supported were vital. The structure of the support was important too. The need for a systematic approach to change processes was identified in relation to support linked to the Bursary and Deployment Fund Grants - for example, starting with changes to the school leadership and staffing, then broadening out to focus on teaching and learning. For the Building Capacity Grant, support from NCTL and other staff was important.

Secondly, there were a series of factors related to the **individuals in receipt of support**. For both the Deployment and Bursary Fund Grants, a committed, trusted leader in place within the school being supported to underpin and validate to the wider staff the changes put in place by the LLE/NLE was necessary. For both personalised programmes – Professional Partners and Succession Planning - the fit between the needs of the leader being supported and the headteacher/developer were crucial. In relation to Succession Planning, the personal context of the individual was also important. In some cases, family issues or changed priorities hindered progress.

Thirdly, the **school context** was important - capacity for change in the school being paramount for the Bursary and Deployment Fund Grants. For the Succession Planning Grants, prospective headteachers engaged in the programme needed to be supported by the senior leadership team. For the Building Capacity Grant, this meant resource and time were needed.

Finally, the wider **local system context** was important for some grants. For Building Capacity Grant respondents, partnerships with universities and local schools were often crucial. And for the Succession Planning Grant if there were not seen to be realistic opportunities to progress in the locale and individuals were not able or willing to move, this was experienced as a barrier.

This last point, around the system context, is in some ways the most important. Cutting across all of the grants was the recognition that local collaboration, partnerships, networking and support between schools, and with other partners such as universities, were crucial to the success of grants in supporting school improvement in a school-led self-improving system.

Recommendations

A series of grant-specific recommendations for succession planning Wave 5 and the three school improvement grants have been submitted to NCTL during fieldwork. The recommendations here focus on common cross-cutting issues for all grants.

- **Clarity:** some grants – Professional Partners in particular - would benefit from greater clarity in how the grants are to be deployed and the outcomes expected.
- **Evidence:** consistent, systematic data collection and analysis is needed not simply for monitoring purposes but to assist in impact evaluation. There are particular issues relating to assessing impacts on pupils and, for the succession planning grants, systematically recording destinations data for those engaged in the support. Beyond this, developing consistent processes for monitoring and evidencing impact for grants at the local level should be undertaken. We found examples of excellent practice here, but also much poor and uneven practice.
- **Enabling success:** we identify a set of factors associated with successful outcomes for grants in the preceding subsection. NCTL and schools should identify to what extent these factors can be put in place prior to engaging in grants. Broadly, schools and funders should consider:
 - the extent to which the particular support offered fits the needs of the individuals and schools involved, and whether the quality is appropriate
 - whether the personal commitment, circumstances, skills and resources of the key individuals benefitting from the grants are such that they are likely to benefit
 - to what extent the school context is conducive to successful implementation, including commitment of senior leaders and staff, capacity to change, and capacity to provide opportunities for development for teachers and leaders.
 - the local system context - the availability of key support networks, such as local universities, schools and system leaders; as well as opportunities for career progression.



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