



**ImpactEd**  
Evaluation



# **City Premium Grant**

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Commissioned by Education Strategy Unit (ESU), City of London Corporation



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## About this project

The City Premium Grant is a combination of an annual grant to City Corporation's sponsored academies, and special grants around responsive and partnership projects across the Family of Schools. The City Premium Grant aims to support 'additionality' to the education offer of schools. In 2024-25 the City Premium Grant funded 118 programmes across the City of London Family of schools.

These programmes were funded by three grants:

- ▶ 74 projects (62%) were funded by the Disadvantaged Pupils Grant.
- ▶ 22 projects (19%) were funded by the Partnerships Grant.
- ▶ 22 projects (19%) were funded by the Responsive Grant.

All schools were given access to and training on using ImpactEd Evaluation's School Impact Platform (SIP), which is the single place where schools can bid for the grant funding, evaluate the work they do and write reflections on the outputs, outcomes and impact of this funding on pupils.

School projects are mapped onto one of the **five Strategic Priorities** set out by the Education Strategy Unit (ESU) in 2025 and are evaluated against those:

- ▶ **Supporting Educational Excellence**
- ▶ **Promoting Personal Development**
- ▶ **Reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing**
- ▶ **Embracing Culture, Creativity and the Arts**
- ▶ **Improving Employability**

It is worth noting that, for this academic year only, the projects were retrospectively mapped onto the five priority areas, as the priorities were developed after the applications opened for schools to apply for funding.

## About this report

This marked the final year of a three-year project using the School Impact Platform (SIP) to evaluate outcomes across a range of school-based projects. In this academic year, 118 projects were delivered. This report is designed to give a broad overview of the data collected by schools and offer insight into the outcomes of pupils participating in programmes across the City of London Family of schools.

This report will examine participating pupils' socioemotional and attainment outcomes against the five Strategic Priorities as outlined by the ESU. Within each strategic priority section, we will present only the measures relevant to that priority as implemented by the projects, acknowledging that schools may have also selected additional measures not included in that section.

## Executive summary of findings

### (a) Supporting Educational Excellence

- ▶ Participating pupils' motivation for learning and goal orientation were above the national average.
- ▶ Participating pupils' motivation for learning increased statistically significantly ( $p=0.003$ ).
- ▶ Primary and Secondary school pupils' KS2 SATs and GCSE scores respectively were notably higher than their baseline classroom scores.

### (b) Promoting Personal Development

- ▶ Participating pupils' average scores in Wellbeing, Team-working and Adaptability & Flexibility throughout the academic year 2024-25 were above national averages for the respective outcomes.
- ▶ Participating pupils' average Wellbeing scores increased from 3.65 to 3.89, a 6.2 percentage point change that was statistically significant ( $p = 0.043$ ).

### (c) Reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing

- ▶ Teachers predominantly reported on outcomes related to this strategic priority through qualitative reflections, which may indicate that outcomes concerning pupil safety, health and wellbeing are less easily captured through quantitative measures.



- ▶ Within projects reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing, teachers also reported reductions in classroom removals and incidents of fighting, suggesting improvements in pupil behaviour.
- ▶ Pupils' average Wellbeing score was slightly below the national average and their School engagement score was slightly above.

## (d) Embracing Culture, Creativity and the Arts

- ▶ Participating pupils scored above the national benchmark for Creativity, and marginally above for Openness.
- ▶ Thirty-six pupils who completed the Creativity questionnaire at both baseline and endline saw a 6.2 percentage point decrease that was statistically significant ( $p=0.003$ ). Ongoing monitoring in 2025–26 will be important to determine whether the observed decline is a one-off fluctuation or indicative of a longer-term trend.

## (e) Improving Employability

- ▶ Pupils' Goal orientation was above the national benchmark for Goal orientation by 0.40 points.
- ▶ Pupils' Goal orientation score didn't significantly change between baseline and endline timepoints.

Overall, early findings suggest City Premium Grant projects are beginning to deliver positive outcomes in the context of the new strategy, with the strongest evidence emerging within Educational Excellence and Personal Development. While variation in sample sizes limits direct comparison between priorities, the programme shows promising potential to support both academic and wider development outcomes. Strengthening consistency in measurement tools and a continued increase in response rates next year will help build a clearer picture of impact across all five priorities.

## Methodology

Data has been gathered from a range of sources to evaluate the outcomes of pupils participating in projects funded by the City of London Premium Grant. Schools are asked to collect quantitative data and reflective qualitative feedback for up to five projects. If they are running more than five projects, they can choose to only submit reflections for additional projects. This year, data was collected from 84.3% of the projects.

It is important to note that project funding for 2024–25 was awarded before the ESU's Strategic Priorities were finalised. As a result, **strategic priorities were applied retrospectively to projects once they were already underway**. This has meant that not all measures align directly with the Strategic Priorities, and schools were not aware from the outset which priorities their projects might align with.

### Quantitative Research

The following types of quantitative data has been collected on the SIP:

#### Academically validated ImpactEd Evaluation surveys

These are pupil self-report questions using Likert scales. Where possible, survey data was collected at the start and end of each programme to show change overtime.

These scales measure social and emotional skills linked to academic achievement and long-term life outcomes that have been developed and peer reviewed by academic researchers within the fields of education and psychology. These have been developed to ensure:

1. **Predictive validity.** These skills have been shown to be closely related to desirable life outcomes such as educational achievement, employability and earnings potential, or long-term health and life satisfaction. (In psychometrics, predictive validity is the extent to which a score on a scale or test predicts scores on some criterion measure. For example, the validity of a cognitive test for job performance is the correlation between test scores and, say, supervisor performance ratings).
2. **Construct validity.** The measure tests for the skill that it says it does, as defined in the literature.
3. **Test-retest validity.** The results stay the same when tests are repeated.

A full list of measures used in this report is cited in Appendix 2.

## Custom self-report survey questions

In order to evaluate aspects of specific projects, some customised questions have been used with pupils and staff.

### Behavioural data and attainment

This looks at existing school data from a variety of sources including attainment data, attendance and exclusions data automatically pulled from schools' Management Information Systems (MISs).

### Analysis

The survey data collected by schools throughout the year is automatically analysed and presented in the Reporting page of each school on the SIP, giving them access to live data throughout the academic year 2024-25.

Spotlights from the projects have been presented in this report. Schools were encouraged to collect data either one-off or at baseline (start of the intervention) and endline (end of the intervention). The following descriptive statistics are included:

- Average survey scores (i.e. pupils on average scored 3.5 out of 5)
- Frequency distributions (i.e. 30% of pupils chose this option)
- Percentage point change between baseline and endline average scores of surveys.

Pupils' data is compared to national averages where these are available.

Where there is a large enough sample size (upwards of 20 matched pupils completing both baseline and final surveys) we have included statistical significance testing using a parametric paired t-test or non-parametric Wilcoxon Sign-Rank tests.

### A note on statistical significance

Statistical significance is the likelihood that a given difference in scores could be observed if the true underlying difference was actually really zero. For example: "Following my wellbeing intervention, pupils' wellbeing levels increased by 6%. Is this a genuine difference, or could this simply be chance or noise?"

In order to answer this question, we may want to know if a 6% increase is 'statistically significant'. In this report, when we have noted that a comparison between the start and end data collections is statistically significant, that means that we believe there is a less than 5% chance that these differences in scores could be observed if the underlying difference was really zero. In the context of

this report, significance testing is important because we are looking to use the findings to make claims about individuals outside of our sample.

### Why statistical significance can be misleading in surveys

There are a range of reasons why statistical significance testing is potentially misleading when interpreting data from pupil surveys. Primarily, this is because statistical tests are very sensitive to sample size and don't help one understand the 'size' of differences (known as effect size). With larger pupil groups minor differences tend to be statistically significant. The opposite occurs with smaller groups: larger differences may not reach technical significance levels. When reading this report, it is important to keep this in mind, especially with a considerable sample size of respondents.

## Qualitative Research

Teacher comments and reflections have been collected throughout the academic year. These are written by staff running programmes across the family of schools. These have been thematically analysed.

## Limitations

- **No sub-demographic analysis:** No sub-demographic analyses were conducted, as sub-group sizes were below 20 pupils, limiting the potential for meaningful comparison. Also, not looking at subgroup differences helped us protect pupils' Personally Identifiable Information (PII).
- **Sample sizes:** Due to the focus of some programmes and challenges with data collection in some schools, some datasets explored in this report have small sample sizes. In part, these challenges reflect staffing changes during the year, where staff who had established projects moved on and incoming staff were new to the programme and data collection processes. Where possible, pupils' outcomes have been grouped to enable broader analysis of key themes. Findings based on small samples should be interpreted with caution; while they may not support wider generalisable conclusions, they provide valuable insight into outcomes and impact for individual pupils.
- **Measures:** As mentioned earlier in the report, strategic priorities were applied retrospectively to projects once they were already underway. This has meant that not all measures align directly with the Strategic Priorities, and schools were not aware from the outset which priorities their projects were aligned with.

## 1. Supporting Educational Excellence

- ▶ **Key finding 1: Participating pupils' motivation for learning and goal orientation were above the national average.**
- ▶ **Key finding 2: Participating pupils' motivation for learning increased statistically significantly ( $p=0.003$ ).**
- ▶ **Key finding 3: Primary and Secondary school pupils' KS2 SATs and GCSE scores respectively were notably higher than their baseline classroom scores.**

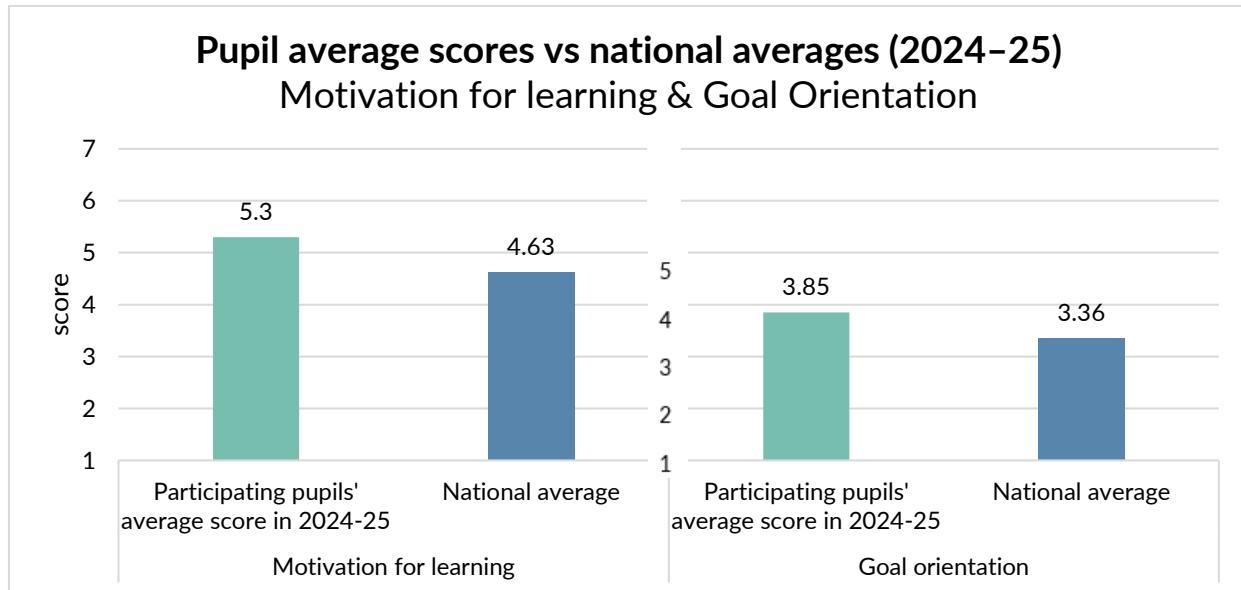
Out of 118 projects, 50 school projects across 13 schools aligned with the strategic priority 'Supporting Educational Excellence'.

Schools drew on 25 different measures available through the School Impact Platform to assess the impact of their Supporting Educational Excellence projects. These included measures related to problem-solving and critical thinking, oracy, attainment, self-efficacy, and metacognition.

For reporting purposes, pupil data has been aggregated and presented specifically for Motivation for Learning and Goal Orientation, as these measures were closely aligned with the programme aims and had sufficient sample sizes for analysis.

### Comparison to National averages

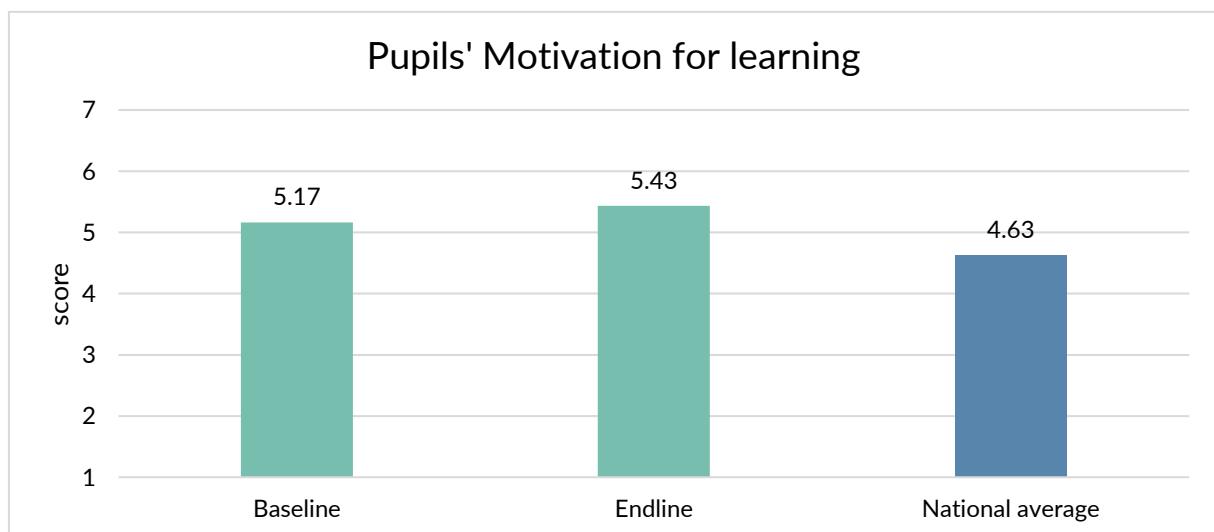
Pupils' motivation for learning score (5.3 out of 7) and their Goal orientation score (3.85 out of 5) in the academic year 2024-25 were above the national average by more than 0.5 point (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Pupils' average scores vs national averages (2024-25) in Motivation for learning (N=56), Goal orientation (n=154).

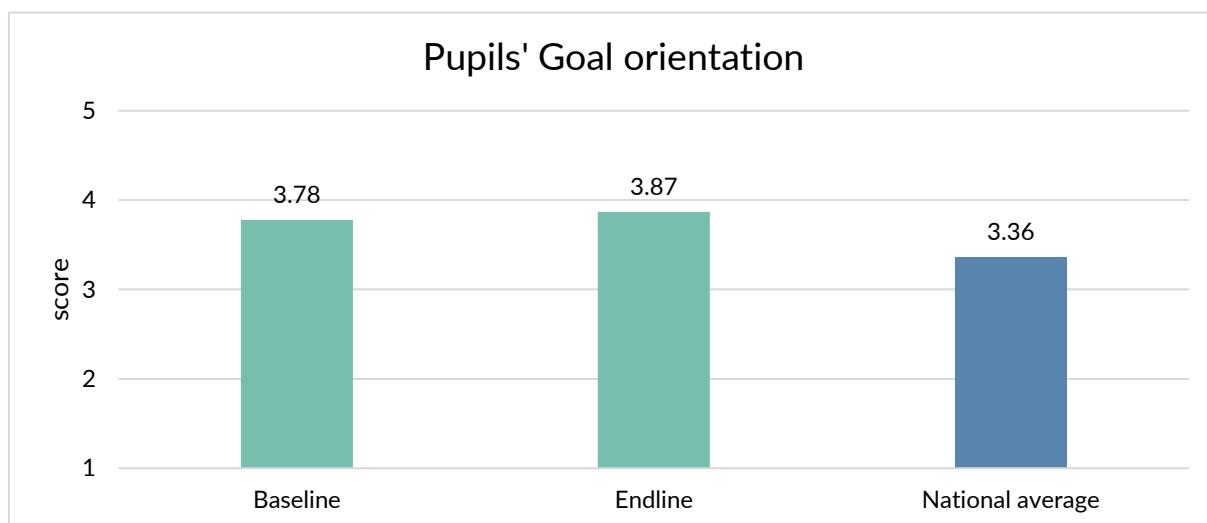
### Pupils' average scores over time

Looking only at participating pupils who completed the survey at both baseline and endline timepoints, their Motivation for learning score increased from 5.17 to 5.43 out of 7 – a 6.7 percentage point increase that was statistically significant ( $p<0.001$ ; Figure 2). Importantly, pupils' scores were at both baseline and endline timepoints above the national average for motivation for learning by more than half a point.



**Figure 2.** Pupils' average Motivation for learning scores against the national average for Motivation for learning (n=31 matched pupils' scores).

For pupils who completed the Goal orientation questionnaire at baseline and endline, their score increased from 3.78 at baseline to 3.87 out of 5 at endline (Figure 3). This marked a 2.4 percentage point increase that was not statistically significant, meaning that this increase might have been due to chance. Notably, pupils' goal orientation scores were already higher than the national average at baseline and remained so at endline. The same pattern was observed for motivation for learning. This raises an important consideration about targeting and how interventions can be best matched to those for whom they will have maximum positive impact.



**Figure 3. Pupils' average Goal orientation scores against the national average for Goal orientation (n=61 matched pupils' scores).**

## Strategic Priority: Supporting Educational Excellence

### Spotlight: City of London School – Primary Summer School

City of London School's Primary Summer School 2024 offered English and Maths sessions, enrichment activities, and a cultural day at the Guildhall Art Gallery with a visiting artist workshop. Targeting more able Pupil Premium pupils, the programme aims to enrich learning, boost readiness for school, and enhance academic, social, and cultural capital.

Through the three days of the Primary Summer School, pupils experienced an English session led by the Galleywall Deputy Head Teacher, learnt about adaptation and evolution in a hands-on “skulls session”, and solved a mystery in a science session using forensic experiments. The summer school included an entire day at the Guildhall where they visited the London Centre to look at the London miniatures, the Roman Amphitheatre to learn about gladiators, and the Guildhall Art Gallery where they designed their own London buildings and skyline.

To measure the impact of this event, pupils completed self-report surveys before and after the summer school to explore outcome changes over time. Growth mindset of matched pupils increased by 9.6% over the period suggesting the positive impact this event had on this skill.

#### Growth Mindset (primary) >>

Competency

Dates 1

Baseline  
16 pupils

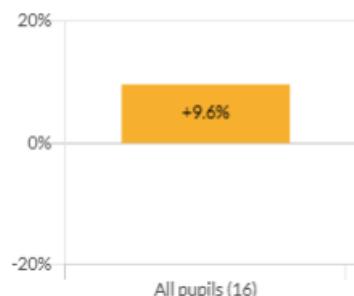
**4.14**  
/5

+0.59 from national average (all pupils)

Final  
16 pupils

**4.52**  
/5

+0.97 from national average (all pupils)



Confidence in oracy also increased, this time by 15.6% in matched pupils, again, indicating the positive influence the Summer School may have had on this important skill.

#### Oracy - confidence

Competency

Dates 1

Baseline  
16 pupils

**3.69**  
/5

+0.20 from national average (all pupils)

Final  
16 pupils

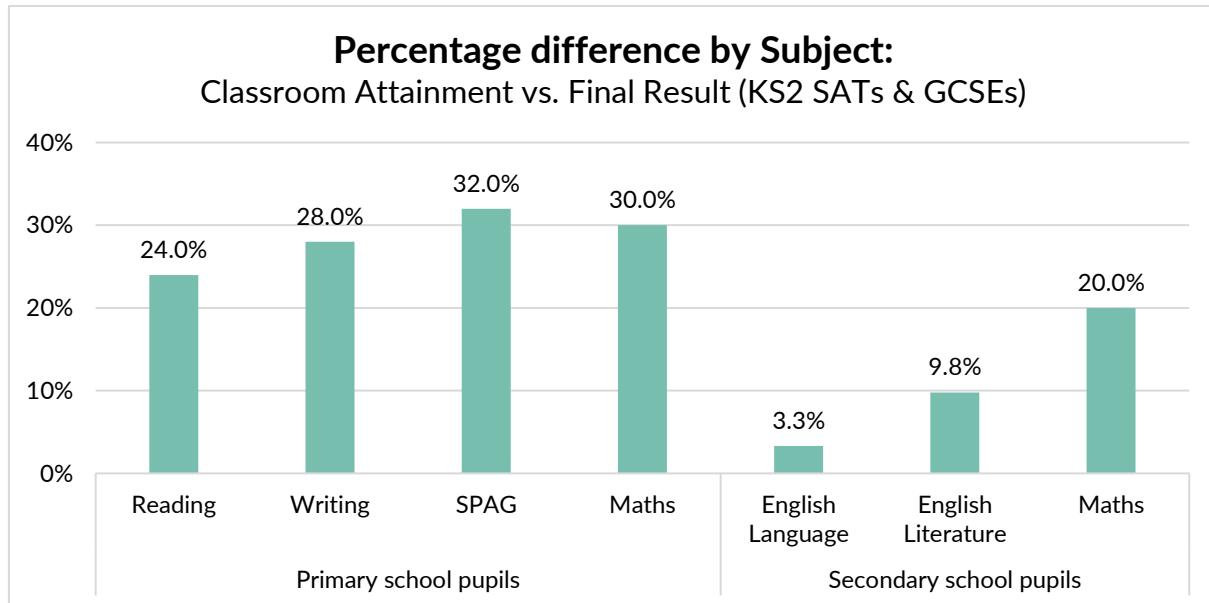
**4.31**  
/5

+0.82 from national average (all pupils)



While most 'Supporting Educational Excellence' projects weren't evaluated through attainment data collection, for pupils' whose attainment was collected, a large percentage point increase was observed across both primary and secondary school pupils across subjects (Figure 4).

No sub-demographic analyses were conducted, as sub-group sizes were below 20 pupils, limiting the potential for meaningful comparison.



**Figure 4. Percentage difference by Subject between Primary school pupils' Classroom attainment vs. KS2 SATs and Secondary school pupils' Classroom attainment vs GCSEs (n=57 Primary school pupils, n=41 Secondary school pupils).**

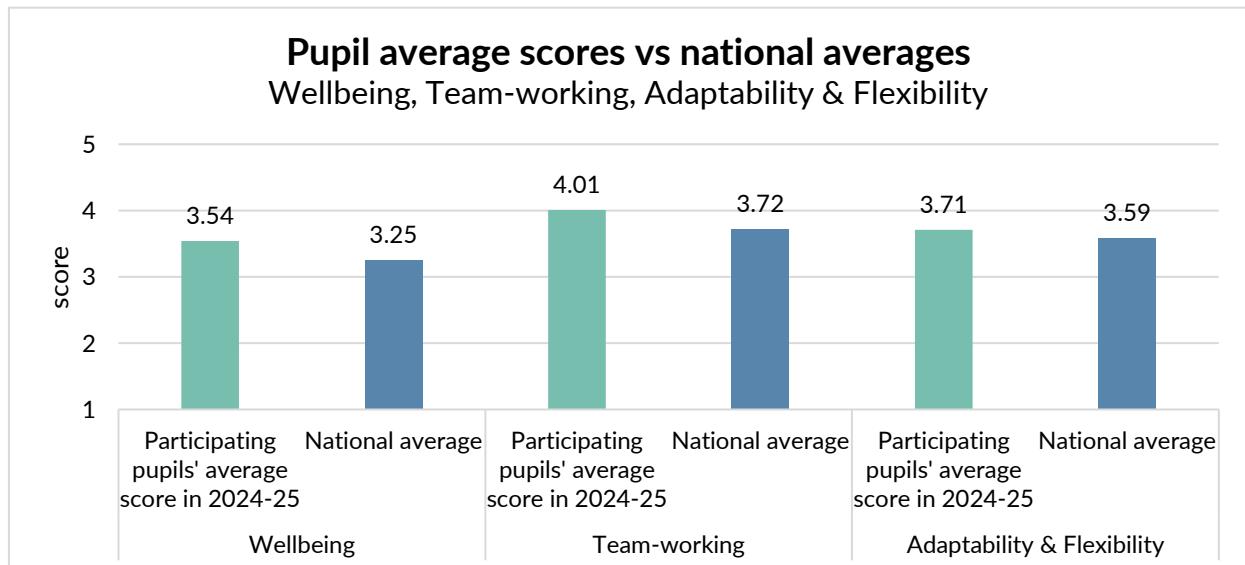
## 2. Promoting Personal Development

- ▶ **Key finding 1:** Participating pupils' average scores in Wellbeing, Team-working and Adaptability & Flexibility throughout the academic year 2024-25 were above national averages for the respective outcomes.
- ▶ **Key finding 2:** Participating pupils' average Wellbeing scores increased from 3.65 to 3.89, a 6.2 percentage point change that was statistically significant ( $p = 0.043$ ).

Out of 118 projects, 21 school projects across 12 schools aligned with the strategic priority 'Promoting Personal Development'. Schools selected 11 different measures to assess the impact of their Promoting Personal Development projects. These primarily included socioemotional measures such as wellbeing, team-working, independent learning and confidence in voicing opinions.

### Comparison to National averages

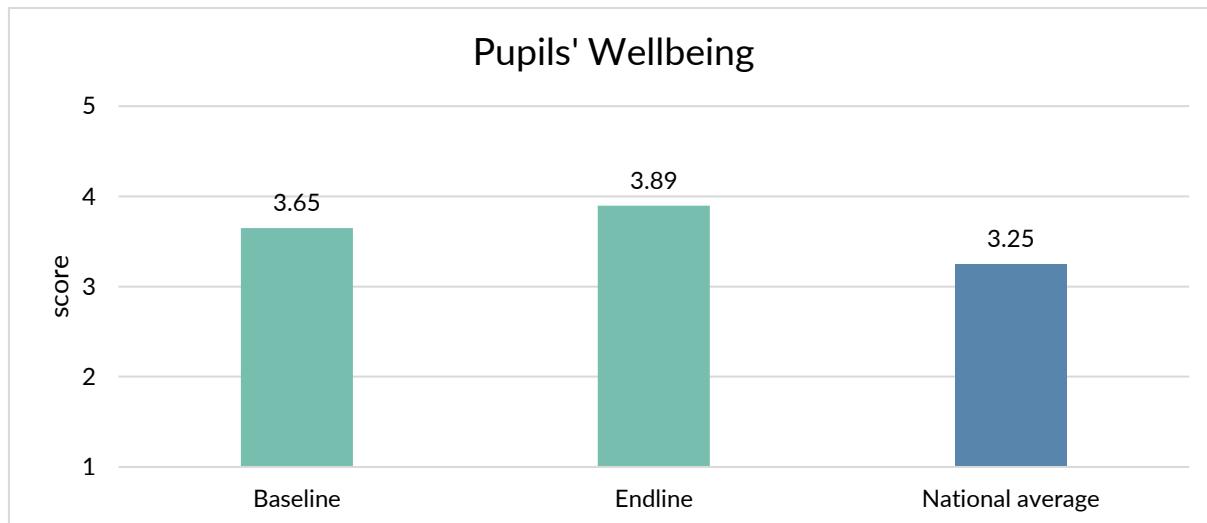
Participating pupils' average scores in wellbeing, team-working and adaptability & flexibility throughout the academic year 2024-25 were above national averages for the respective outcomes (Figure 5).



**Figure 5. Pupils' average scores vs national averages (2024-25) in Wellbeing (n93), Team-working (n=46) and Adaptability & Flexibility (N=57).**

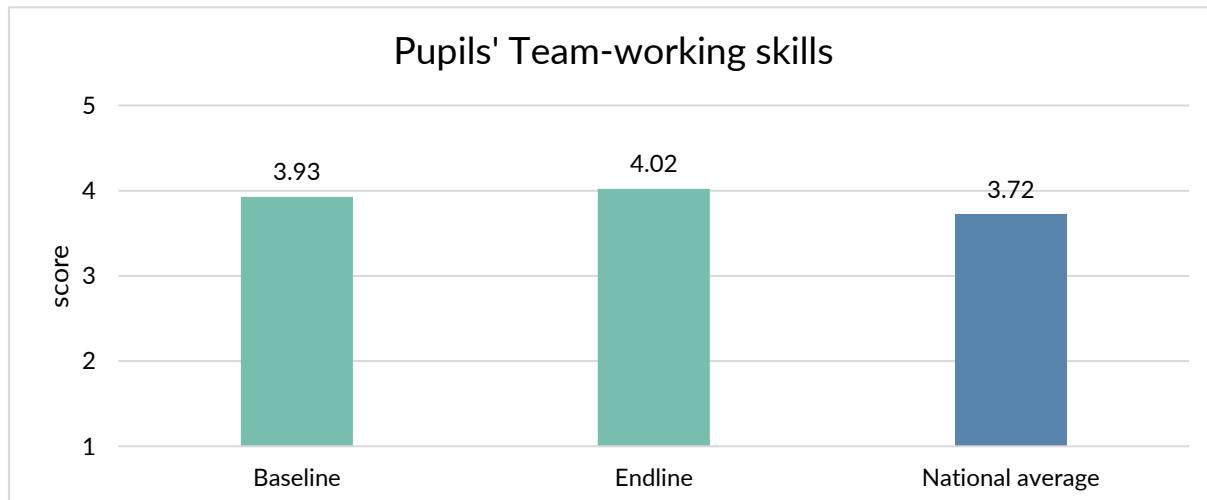
## Pupils' average scores over time

Of the samples above, only a number of pupils completed the surveys at both baseline and endline timepoints. Among these matched pupils' responses, average Wellbeing scores increased from 3.65 to 3.89, a 6.2 percentage point increase that was statistically significant ( $p = 0.043$ ; Figure 6).



**Figure 6. Pupils' average Wellbeing score against the national average for Wellbeing (n=38 matched pupils' scores).**

Pupils also saw a 2.4 percentage point increase in Team-working between baseline and endline timepoints, but this increase was not statistically significant (Figure 7).



**Figure 7. Pupils' average Team working score against the national average for Team-working (N=33 matched pupils' scores).**

## Strategic priority: Personal Development

### Spotlight: Highgate Hill – 24/25 6<sup>th</sup> Form Residential Trip to Oxford

In September 2024, Highgate Hill organised a two-night residential trip to Oxford University for the entire Year 12 group to kickstart their Sixth Form experience. They were offered workshops, meetings with professors, and a visit to the Natural History Museum with the aim of raising aspirations, increasing their adaptability and flexibility and encouraging them to be independent learners.

Participating pupils completed academically validated self-report surveys to measure their adaptability and flexibility, as well as their level of independent learning both before (baseline) and after (final) their residential trip.

Participating matched pupils (those that recorded both baseline and final data points) recorded an average increase in their adaptability and flexibility of 3.8% between the two time points.

#### Adaptability and Flexibility

Competency

##### Dates 1

Baseline  
27 pupils

**3.77**  
/5

+0.18 from national average (all pupils)

Final  
27 pupils

**3.83**  
/5

+0.24 from national average (all pupils)

Overall change  
For 16 pupils with baseline & final

**3.8%↑**

In addition, matched pupils' independent learning increased by 3.6%, suggesting the positive influence that this project had on these pupils' social and emotional skills.

#### SRSSDL - Independent learning (secondary)

Competency

##### Dates 1

Baseline  
24 pupils

**3.85**  
/5

+0.14 from national average (all pupils)

Final  
25 pupils

**3.91**  
/5

+0.20 from national average (all pupils)

Overall change  
For 15 pupils with baseline & final

**3.6%↑**

### 3. Reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing

- ▶ **Key finding 1:** Teachers predominantly reported on outcomes related to this strategic priority through qualitative reflections, which may indicate that outcomes concerning pupil safety, health and wellbeing are less easily captured through quantitative measures.
- ▶ **Key Finding 2:** Within projects reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing, teachers also reported reductions in classroom removals and incidents of fighting, suggesting improvements in pupil behaviour.
- ▶ **Key finding 3:** Pupils' average Wellbeing score was slightly below the national average and their School engagement score was slightly above.

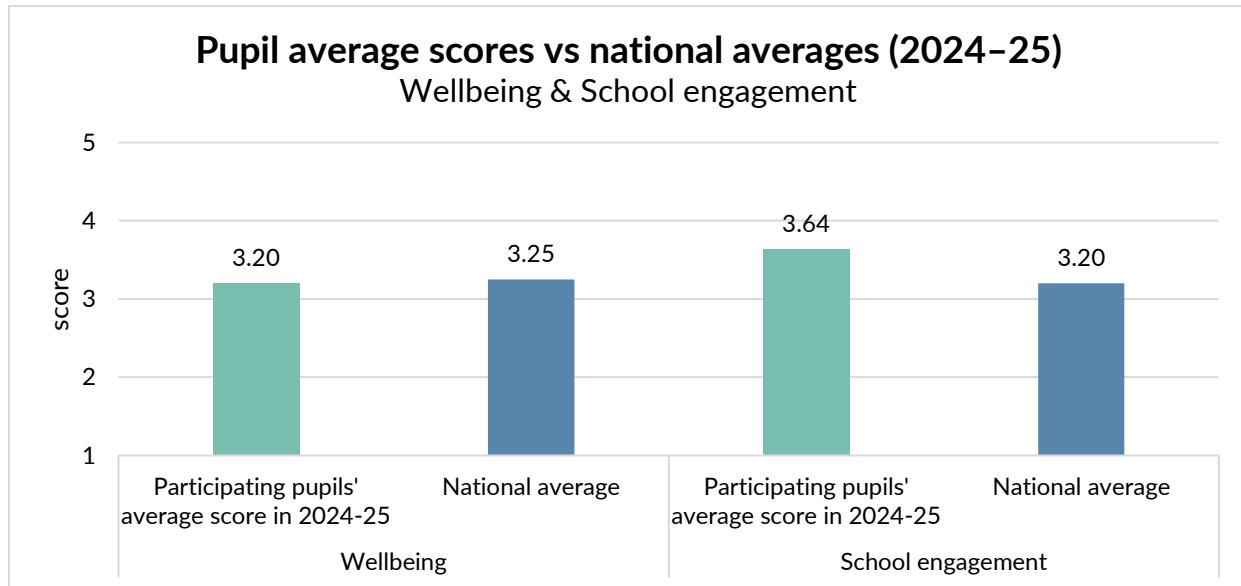
Out of 118 projects, 28 school projects across 8 schools aligned with the strategic priority 'Reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing'.

**Teachers predominantly reported on outcomes related to this strategic priority through qualitative reflections, which may indicate that outcomes concerning pupil safety, health and wellbeing are less easily captured through quantitative measures.**

For projects where quantitative measures were selected, teachers used indicators such as wellbeing, school engagement, team-working, attendance, and behaviour points to assess outcomes. Given the available sample sizes and alignment with this strategic priority, analysis focuses on trends in wellbeing and school engagement.

#### Comparison to National averages

Pupils' average wellbeing score was slightly below the national average (Figure 8). In contrast, pupils' average school engagement score was above national averages for the corresponding measure. However, a small number pupils completed the school engagement survey, and therefore these findings should be interpreted with caution.



**Figure 8. Pupils' average scores vs national averages (2024-25) in Wellbeing (n=46) and School Engagement (n=8).**

It is worth noting that, for five pupils who completed the wellbeing survey at both baseline and endline, scores increased by 6.4 percentage points—from below the national average (3.20 vs 3.25 out of 5) to above the national average (3.46). While encouraging, this reflects a very small cohort. Collecting wellbeing and school engagement data from a larger number of pupils over time would enable a more robust understanding of change in outcomes.

A teacher expressed that the wellbeing programme that took place in their school helped improve pupils wellbeing and in turn their sense of safety in school:

*"The [name of the programme] has had a positive impact on pupils' sense of wellbeing, belonging, and safety within school...there is a stronger culture of care and mutual respect across the school, where pupils feel heard, valued, and safe." - Teacher*

Teachers in their reflections of a Boxing Therapy programme also mentioned an improvement in pupils' behaviour. For example:

*"Incidents of fighting have reduced substantially, with a notable decline in conflict-related behaviour." - Teacher*

A different teacher from the same school added:

*"Removals from lessons have also fallen, indicating better classroom behaviour and relationships with staff." - Teacher*

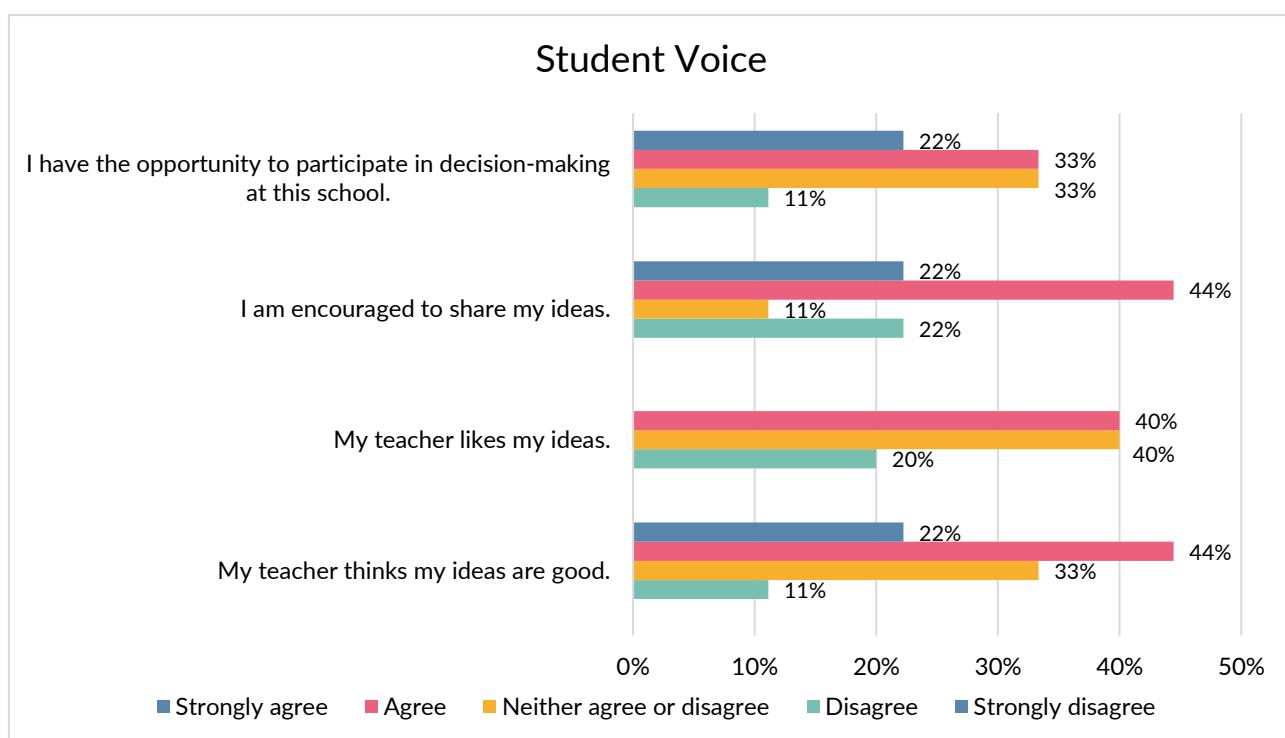
A different teacher who was describing their experience of teaching pupils in their school to self-regulate stated the following as a way to improve pupils' behaviour:

*"Groups of children as well as key individual children, have received regular interventions throughout this period and have developed a deeper understanding of their own individual emotional toolboxes: they can describe which strategies help them to regulate. **Having this language embedded throughout the school has been fundamental to our behaviour approach this year** and has meant that we have a shared language when children are reflecting and repairing." - Teacher*

## Strategic Priority: Reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing

### Spotlight: Highbury Grove – Lunchtime enrichment

Leaders at Highbury Grove offered enrichment opportunities for pupils with the aim of broadening the offer of extra-curricular clubs and experiences for students during lunch and break times. At the end of the school year, pupils who had taken part in these enrichment opportunities were asked to complete a student voice survey which aimed to better understand how pupils viewed their agency in their school experience.



Feedback from the survey on a small number of pupils was positive, with 55% of pupils agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have the opportunity to participate in decision making at the school, with only 11% disagreeing with that sentiment.

66% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they are encouraged to share their ideas at school,

Again, 66% agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers think their ideas are good, with only 11% disagreeing with that statement.

## 4. Embracing Culture, Creativity and the Arts

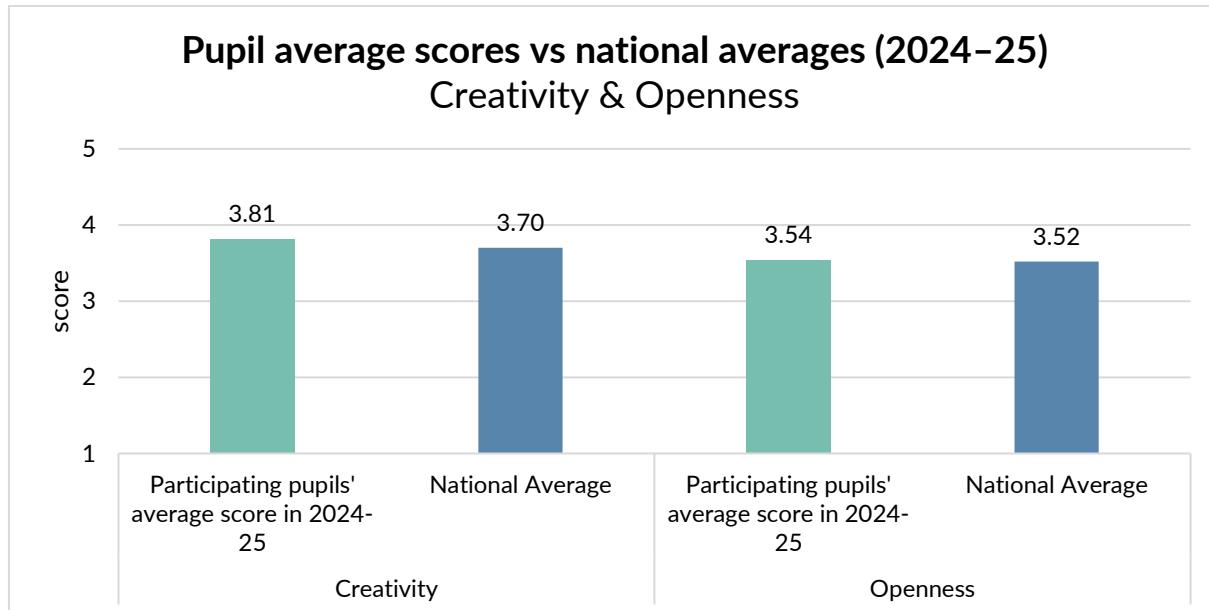
- ▶ **Key finding 1:** Participating pupils scored above the national benchmark for Creativity, and marginally above for Openness.
- ▶ **Key finding 2:** Thirty -six pupils who completed the Creativity questionnaire at both baseline and endline saw a 6.2 percentage point decrease that was statistically significant ( $p=0.003$ ). Ongoing monitoring in 2025–26 will be important to determine whether the observed decline is a one-off fluctuation or indicative of a longer-term trend.

Eleven (11) school projects across 8 schools aligned with the strategic priority 'Embracing Culture, Creativity and the Arts'.

Naturally, several schools chose a measure for creativity – 'Fusion-Creativity' – in order to measure the impact of their project in relation to embracing culture, creativity and the arts. Apart from this measure, measures of socio-emotional outcomes such as openness, extraversion and confidence in and love of reading were selected.

### Comparison to National averages

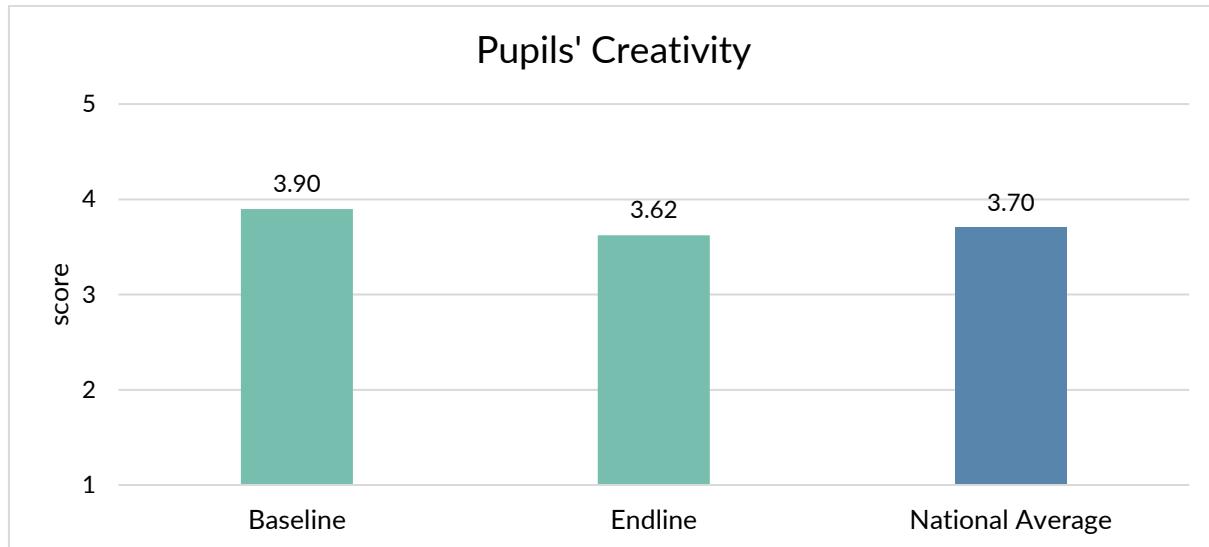
Looking at participating pupils' creativity scores during the academic year 2024–25, the average score was 3.81 out of 5, compared to the national average of 3.70, indicating that participating pupils scored above the national benchmark for creativity (Figure 9). Pupils' Openness scores for those who completed the survey during 2024–25 were broadly in line with the national average (3.54 vs. 3.52 out of 5).



**Figure 9. Pupils' average scores vs national averages (2024-25) in Creativity (n=146) and Openness (n=142).**

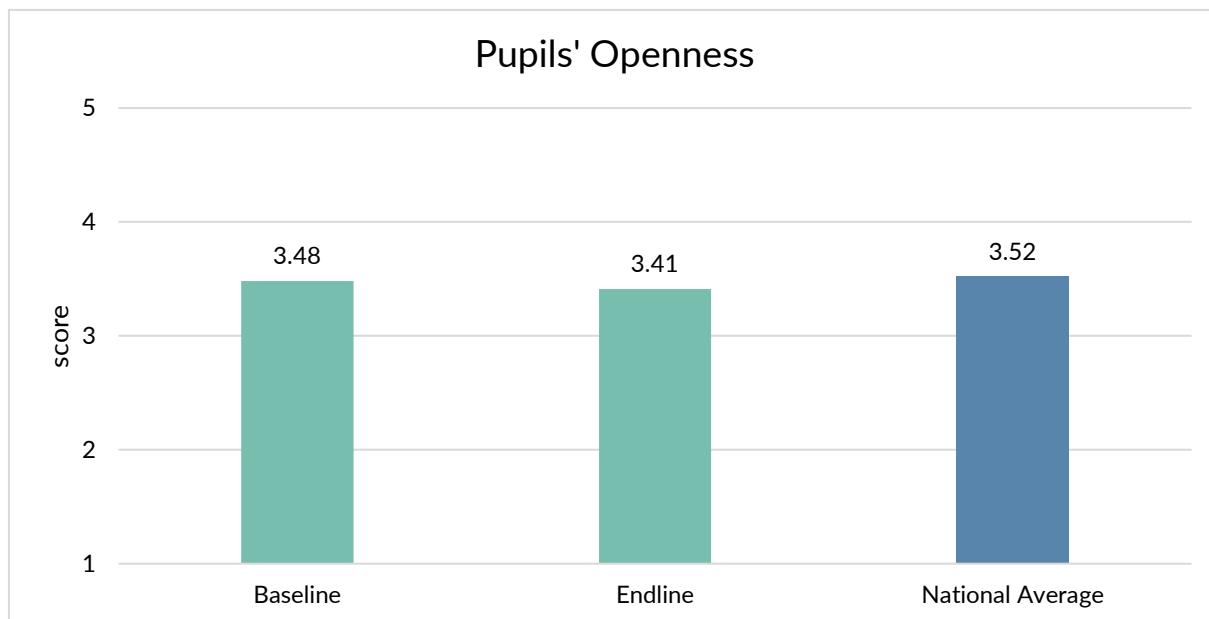
## Pupils' average scores over time

Pupils completed the creativity survey at both baseline and endline, unlike the rest of the cohort who completed the survey only once. Among these matched pupils, mean creativity scores decreased from 3.90 to 3.62 out of 5 - a 6.9 percentage-point reduction, which was statistically significant ( $p = 0.003$ ; Figure 10). Notably, pupils began with creativity scores above the national average (3.90 vs. 3.70) but fell slightly below it at endline (3.62). While pupils' creativity scores remained broadly comparable to the national average, ongoing monitoring in 2025–26 will be important to determine whether the observed decline is a one-off fluctuation or indicative of a longer-term trend. It is worth noting that this evaluation is observational, based on benchmarks and pre-post comparisons rather than a causal design where trends can be isolated and attributed to the intervention. For this reason, findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than conclusive evidence of impact.



**Figure 10.** Pupils' average creativity scores against the national average for creativity (n=36 pupils' matched scores).

For pupils who completed the Openness questionnaire at both baseline and endline in 2024–25, their average score decreased slightly from 3.48 to 3.41 (a 1.8 percentage-point drop), though this change was not statistically significant (Figure 11). In line with the overall cohort, these scores were broadly comparable to the national average (3.52), albeit marginally lower.



**Figure 11.** Pupils' average openness scores against the national average for openness (n=36 pupils' matched scores).

In addition to outcomes such as creativity and openness, pupils learned about the logistics of being an artist or an author. For instance, a pupil participating in the 'Primary Author Visit 2025' intervention said:

*"I learnt that being a writer is not just about using your imagination, you also need to do lots of research." - Pupil*

It will be important to examine whether the fluctuations in Creativity scores, along with the slightly lower-than-average Openness score, reflect limitations in the measures selected to assess the Strategic Priority 'Embracing Culture, Creativity and the Arts', or whether they indicate a genuine need for projects to place greater focus on this priority.

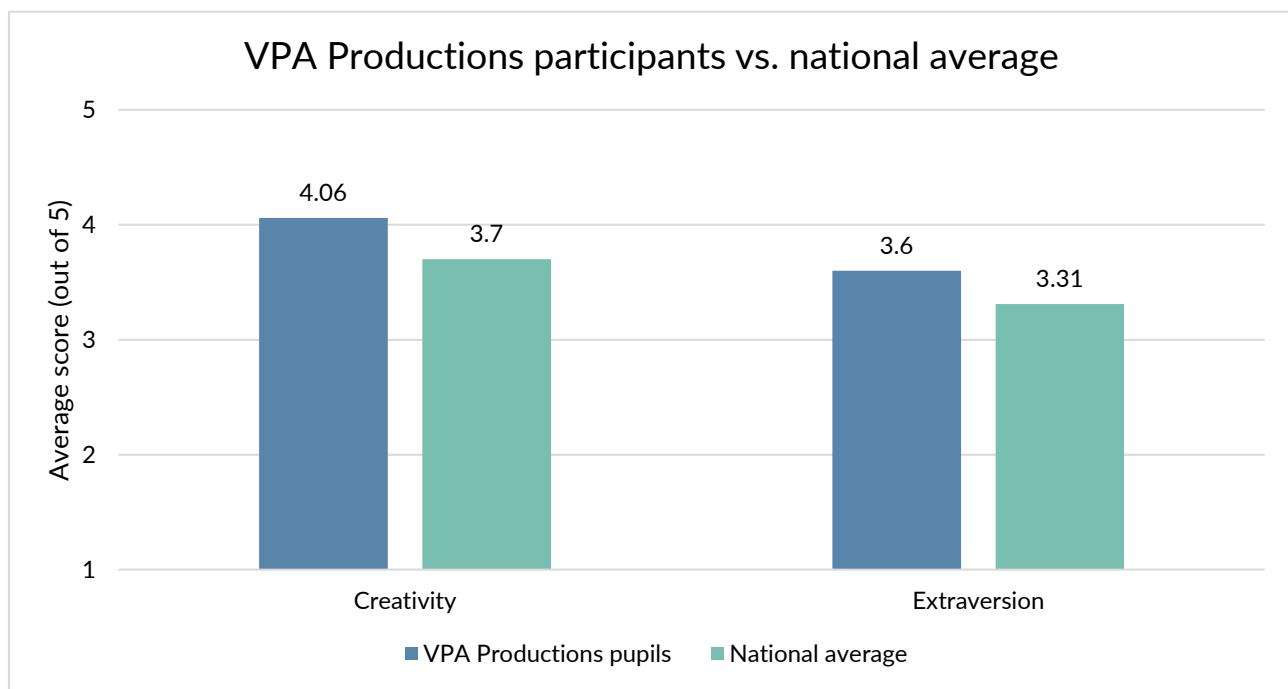
## Strategic Priority: Embracing Culture, Creativity and the Arts

### Spotlight: Southwark – VPA Productions

The allocated funds supported a whole-school production and three musical showcases at Southwark. While both initiatives involved students from all years, the primary target group consisted of approximately 30 students, mainly from Year 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12.

The aim was to ensure the successful execution of a school musical production, fostering creativity and collaboration among participating students.

In order to measure the impact of this programme, pupils completed academically validated surveys as measures of creativity and extraversion after the project was complete.



Pupils, on average, recorded a level of extraversion that was 7.3% above the national average for this measure. For creativity, pupils' average score was 9.3% above the national average, suggesting the positive impact that this programme had on participating pupils.

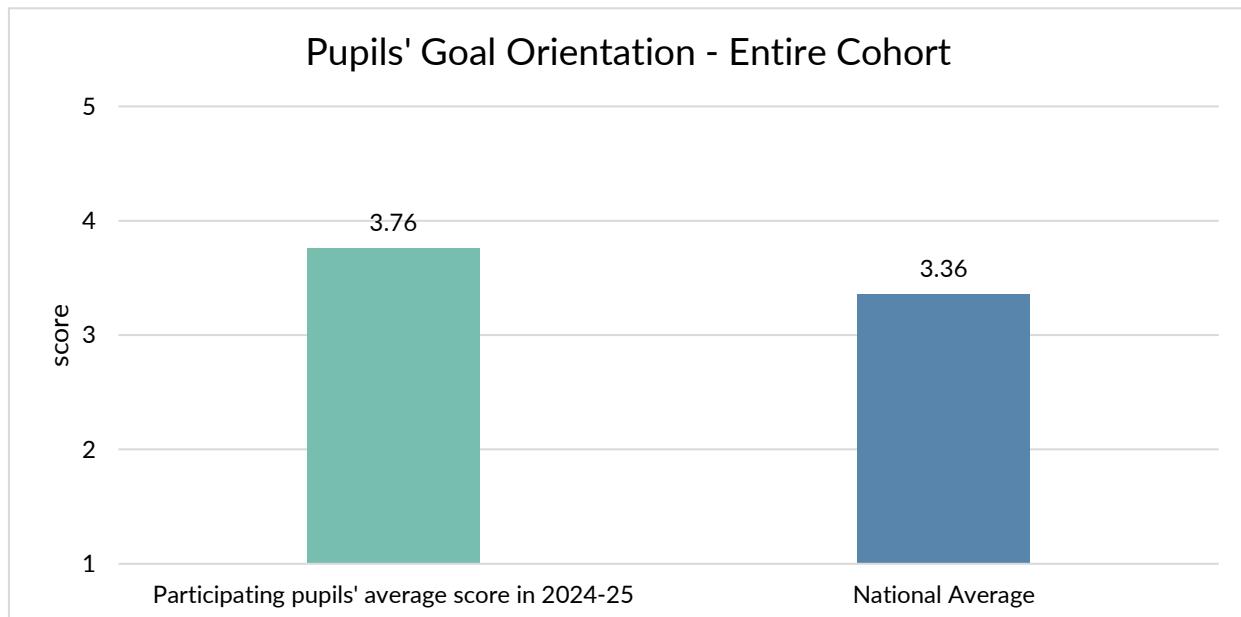
## 5. Improving Employability

- ▶ **Key finding 1: Pupils Goal orientation was above the national benchmark for Goal orientation by 0.40 points.**
- ▶ **Key finding 2: Pupils' Goal orientation score didn't significantly change between baseline and endline timepoints.**

Eight projects aligned with the strategic priority '**Improving Employability**', delivered across five schools.

### Comparison to National averages

The only outcome with sufficient sample size for further exploration was pupils' Goal orientation (across two projects). Sixty-seven pupils completed the Goal Orientation questionnaire, with an average score of 3.76 out of 5 – 0.40 points higher than the national average (3.36; Figure 12).



**Figure 12. Participating pupils' average scores in goal orientation against the national average for goal orientation (n=67 pupils' scores).**

## Pupils' average scores over time

For pupils who completed the goal orientation questionnaire at both baseline and endline scores, we are observing a slight decrease between baseline score (3.83 out of 5) and endline score (3.77), marking a 1.6 percentage point decrease (Figure 13). This decrease was not statistically significant, meaning that this decrease is most likely due to chance.

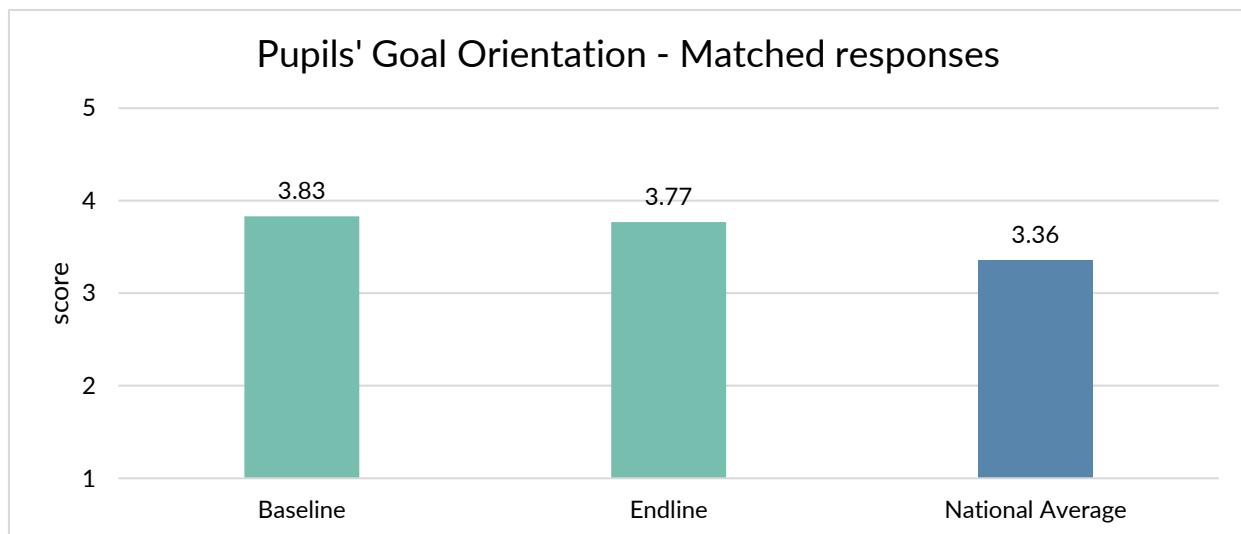


Figure 13. Pupils' average goal orientation scores against the national average for goal orientation (n=54 pupils' matched scores).

## Strategic Priority: Improving Employability

### Spotlight: ThinkForward - COLAI

ThinkForward is an ongoing coaching programme that is focused on preventing students ending up as NEET (not in education, employment or training).

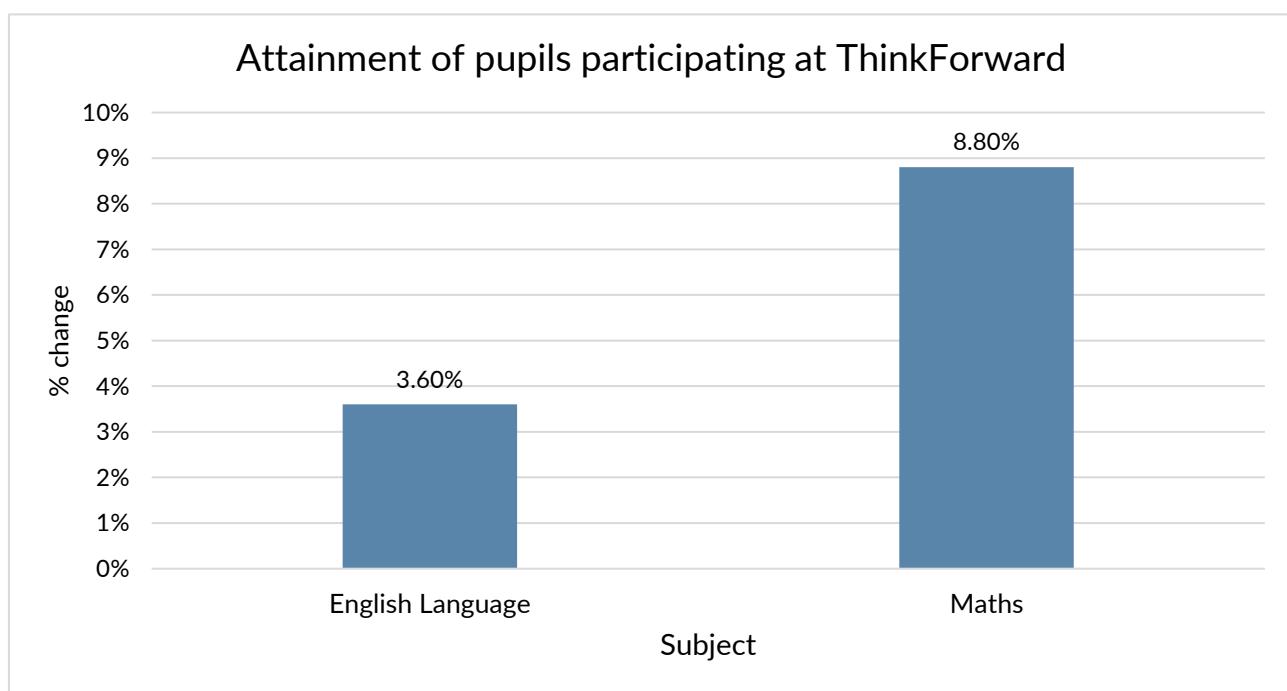
COLAI has an on-site coach who works with target students to ensure their ongoing engagement in education and who provides students with access to a range of work-related learning opportunities and support students to apply to aspirational post-16 destinations.

Attainment data was collected for a sample of participating pupils.

Predicted grades were compared to end of year (EOY) assessment grades for this sample of participating pupils.

Pupils' EOY assessments in Maths and English language improved from their predicted grades, suggesting the positive impact of the Think Forward programme on participating pupils' attainment and, ultimately, employability.

Subject	Predicted	Actual	% change
English	2.52	2.78	3.60%
Language			
Maths	2.04	2.44	8.80%



## Summary & Next steps

This was the first year in which the outcomes of pupils participating in projects funded by the City Premium Grant were explored against The Education Strategy Unit's five Strategic Priorities. For each priority, relevant outcome measures with sufficient aggregated sample sizes were compared to national benchmarks and, where possible, tracked over time using matched baseline and endline responses.

Positive trends were particularly notable within projects supporting Educational Excellence, where statistically significant increases were observed in pupils' Goal Orientation and Motivation for Learning. This is likely influenced by the priority having the highest number of projects and therefore the largest dataset, increasing the capacity to detect measurable change.

A statistically significant increase was also recorded in Wellbeing among pupils engaged in projects promoting Personal Development. Additionally, average pupil scores in Wellbeing, Teamworking and Adjustability & Flexibility exceeded national benchmarks.

Within projects reinforcing Safety, Health and Wellbeing, teachers also reported reductions in classroom removals and incidents of fighting, suggesting improvements in pupil behaviour. Although average Wellbeing scores were slightly below the national average overall, further exploration of 'distance travelled' over time would help to understand whether individual pupils experienced meaningful improvement throughout the intervention. Tracking changes longitudinally would allow the programme to better evidence progress for pupils who started at different baselines and may benefit most from targeted support.

In projects focusing on Culture, Creativity and the Arts, pupils scored above the national benchmark for Creativity and slightly above for Openness. However, among the 36 pupils who completed Creativity measures at both timepoints, scores declined by 6.2 percentage points, a statistically significant decrease. Continued monitoring in 2025–26 will be important to determine whether this reflects a one-off fluctuation or an emerging trend, and whether measurement approaches or programme components require review.

For projects centred on improving Employability, current data is positive but limited. While it is encouraging that pupils' Goal Orientation scores were above the national benchmark, additional

measures and larger sample sizes will be needed to better understand progress and impact within this priority.

**Overall, these findings indicate that projects funded through the City Premium Grant are beginning to demonstrate positive pupil outcomes across several priority areas, particularly in Educational Excellence and Personal Development.** Variation in sample sizes and breadth of measures across the five priorities means that trends are more reliable in some areas than others, but the early signals suggest that the funded programmes have the potential to influence both academic and wider developmental outcomes. Strengthening consistency in measurement tools and increasing participation in baseline and endline data collection next year will enable deeper comparisons across priorities and a clearer picture of how different programme types contribute to pupil progress.

## Next Steps for the Evaluation

- ▶ **Strengthen further data collection processes.** Data collection processes and communication with schools have continued to improve each year as our learning from the evaluation cycles accumulates. However, the shift in the evaluation structure—from reporting by grant type (three categories) to reporting against five strategic priorities—means that data is now distributed across more themes, reducing the volume available for aggregation within each priority. To support robust analysis moving forward, it will be important to continue strengthening data collection systems, ensuring that information is gathered consistently across projects, at the correct timepoints, and with sufficient frequency.
- ▶ **Align measures more closely with strategic priorities.** The ESU should consider adopting specific measures for reporting against each strategic priority. Doing so could streamline schools' workload, make outcomes easier to identify and evidence, and increase the likelihood of achieving larger sample sizes—ultimately improving the robustness of data and analysis.
- ▶ **Review projects with lower outcome scores.** Looking at the Projects' tracker with the rag ratings, it is advised that the ESU and each school reading this report examines whether low scores reflect genuine challenges experienced by schools or whether adjustments are needed in how impact is measured. One should consider how project delivery or

measurement approaches can continue to be tailored to better support improvements in outcomes.

- ▶ **Further investigate trends in creativity.** Creativity scores declined this year; therefore, continued monitoring is recommended to determine whether this trend persists. It will be valuable to explore whether this reflects pupils' experiences or is influenced by the current measurement approach. A further consideration is to explore more advanced causal evaluation designs in future years – such as quasi-experimental approaches—to better isolate trends in pupils' creativity and attribute effects to the interventions.

## Appendix 1: All projects – RAG Rating

The table can be found on a separate document named “CPG Funded Projects 2024-25 - Data collection tracker”.



## Appendix 2: Social & Emotional Measures

Programme leads selected from a variety of social and emotional measures, depending on the outcomes and impact they wanted their programme to have. Schools also asked some customised questions relevant to their settings.

The key measures highlighted in this report are set out below.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing measures

<b>Wellbeing</b>	<p>Wellbeing refers to a state in which individuals thrive and flourish, including contentment and overall sense of purpose as well as day-to-day happiness.</p> <p>The measure of wellbeing used in this research programme (WEMWBS) is a self-report scale designed to measure wellbeing in UK populations and has also been validated for use with school pupils (Clarke et al., 2011). Its items have high internal consistency, at above 0.7 (Clarke et al., 2011).</p>
<b>Test Anxiety</b>	<p>Test anxiety is concerned with pupils' emotional responses to tests (Pintrich and De Groot, 1990). Greater levels of test anxiety can result in worse performance in exams.</p> <p>Test anxiety has been positively associated with meta-cognition and self-regulation (Pintrich and De Groot, 1990). However, test anxiety has also been shown to result in lower test scores (Cassady &amp; Johnson, 2001). The impact of test anxiety on motivation is mixed, with some studies indicating that test anxiety increases persistence, and other studies showing that it decreases persistence (Benjamin et al., 1981; but also see Hill &amp; Wigfield, 1984).</p>
<b>Anxiety</b>	<p>Anxiety is a feeling of worry or fear that is experienced as a combination of physical sensations, thoughts or feelings. Feelings of anxiety are associated with significant negative outcomes, including impaired academic, social and health functioning (Reardon &amp; Spence, 2018).</p>

The measure used in this research programme (GAD-7), is a short scale of 7 items, which assesses the severity of generalised anxiety disorder. It has shown excellent internal consistency (Spitzer et al., 2006) and has been validated for primary care patients, the general population as well as with adolescents.

### Oracy Measures

<b>Oracy</b>	This looks at key skills such as pupils ability to explain, use grammar, use new words, speak and understand. The measure was developed in partnership with Voice21 <sup>1</sup> .
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**Confidence in** This is a custom measure that examines pupils' confidence in oracy.

### Oracy

### Other Key measures

<b>Growth Mindset</b>	Growth mindset is a belief that your skills and intelligence are things that you can develop through effort. Pupils with a greater level of growth mindset will tend to embrace challenge and judge success by being about how much they stretch themselves, not just what they achieve (Dweck, 2008).
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Students with a growth mindset think of their ability as something that they can develop through effort, practice and instruction. They don't believe that everyone has the same potential or that anyone can do anything, but they understand that even successful individuals wouldn't be successful without years of passionate and dedicated practice (Dweck 2009).

<b>Openness</b>	Openness is the tendency to be open to new aesthetic, cultural, or intellectual experiences. In pupils it is associated with the motivation to engage in self-examination, and relates to both academic performance and wellbeing.
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<sup>1</sup> <https://voice21.org/membership-2/>

Openness to experience is a widely recognised personality feature, involving sub-categories such as imagination, sensitivity, attentiveness to feelings and intellectual curiosity. Openness in individuals is associated with the motivation to seek new experiences and to engage in self-examination (Almlund et. al., 2011).

<b>Motivation</b>	Motivation is what causes an individual to want to do one thing, and not another. Intrinsic motivation relates to pupils' inherent enjoyment or interest in a task, and has positive effects on academic performance.  Motivation relates to the underlying goals that give rise to an action (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation can be shaped externally by the environment, or driven internally by the individual - referred to as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is driven by outcomes separate to the individual, while intrinsic motivation is linked to inherent enjoyment or interest (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).
<b>Voicing opinions</b>	Taken from the Cognitive Autonomy and Self Evaluation inventory. The Cognitive Autonomy and Self Evaluation (CASE) Inventory (Beckert, 2007) is a measure of cognitive autonomy in adolescence.
<b>Climate change</b>	The Climate Change Attitude Survey measure students' beliefs and intentions toward the environment with a focus on climate change. (Christensen et al. 2015)
<b>Critical thinking</b>	This skills measure forms part of the General Decision Making Style assessment tool. This was designed to assess how individuals approach decision situations. (Sott 1995)
<b>Team-working</b>	Team-working is defined as a young person's perceived ability to collaborate and work with others to achieve a common goal in a group or team context

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(Anderson-Butcher et al., 2014). It is often particularly associated with capacity to engage in collaborative learning and work well in groups.

As a general construct, teamwork involves members of a group or team willing to interact appropriately with one another by demonstrating various social skills and group processes such as problem solving, negotiating, supplying feedback, and illustrating responsibility and accountability (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2014; Baker, 2004; Gould et al., 2008).

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## Appendix 3: Glossary

### Academic attainment

This refers to test scores in academic subjects such as maths, science, English etc. Some evaluations will compare pupils' attainment in tests for these subjects at the start (baseline) and end (final) of an evaluation to see whether they have made progress over time.

### Academically validated measures

These are scales to measure social and emotional skills linked to academic achievement and long-term life outcomes that have been developed and peer reviewed by academic researchers within the fields of education and psychology. These have been developed to ensure:

**Predictive validity.** These skills have been shown to be closely related to desirable life outcomes such as educational achievement, employability and earnings potential, or long-term health and life satisfaction. (In psychometrics, predictive validity is the extent to which a score on a scale or test predicts scores on some criterion measure. For example, the validity of a cognitive test for job performance is the correlation between test scores and, say, supervisor performance ratings).

**Construct validity.** The measure tests for the skill that it says it does, as defined in the literature.

**Test-retest validity.** The results stay the same when tests are repeated.

### Baseline

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

### Change over time

The difference between a pupil's baseline result and their final result, either for attainment or social and emotional skills. This indicates progress made during participation in the programme. This will begin to indicate whether the programme has had an impact on pupils, though we must also account for other factors that could lead to this change, which is why we recommend the use of control groups and qualitative analysis.

### Evaluation

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

### **Evaluation Group(s)**

An evaluation will either cover one specific group of pupils, who all participate in the programme (e.g. a new programme trialled in one class, or an intervention with one small group). Or, the evaluation may cover multiple evaluation groups (e.g. as several small-group interventions, or with multiple classes carrying out the same programme). In the case of multiple evaluation groups, it can be useful to compare the outcomes for different groups to build up a stronger data set, as well as to compare differences in implementation to see whether this has an effect on results.

### **Endline**

The final assessment of pupils' attainment or social and emotional skills at the end of an evaluation or a project.

### **Matched Pupils**

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

### **Outcomes**

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

### **Participating pupils**

The group of pupils participating in the evaluation, and not forming part of a control group.

### **Programme**

This could be any intervention, programme or programme run in school with the aim of improving pupil outcomes or life chances. ImpactEd works with schools to build evaluations of their programmes in order to better understand whether they are having their intended impact.

### **Skills measures**

We use a set of academically validated skills measures to assess pupils' social and emotional skills.

#### **Social and emotional skills**

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

#### **Statistically significant**

When a trend is statistically significant, it is unlikely to have occurred due to chance.

#### **P-Value**

A p-value is a measure of the probability that an observed result could have occurred by chance alone. The lower the p-value, the greater the statistical significance of the observed difference. Typically, a p-value of  $\leq 0.05$  indicates that the change was statistically significant. A p-value higher than 0.05 ( $> 0.05$ ) is not statistically significant and indicates strong evidence for the null hypothesis; i.e. that we cannot be confident that this change did not occur due purely to chance.