Open Futures Evaluation 2011-2013
Report to the Trustees

Pamela Woolner, Lucy Tiplady and David Leat
Research Centre for Learning and Teaching, Newcastle University

Contents

Introduction

This report reflects the findings from seven[i] case study schools from the 2011-2013 Curriculum Partnership cohort, as well as findings from a further two schools that received initial training from 2008-2010, to investigate sustainability and trajectories of change within those schools.

This evaluation built on, and was guided by, our previous formative evaluations of Open Futures through the development of the programme from 2006 to 2010. This report is intended to be a stand-alone evaluation of the current impact of Open Futures within programme schools. Where previous evaluations reflected changes in Open Futures as the programme developed, and reported on procedural elements so improvements could be made, this evaluation uses a mixed methods approach (drawing on both quantitative and qualitative methods) to investigate the processes and outcomes of change within the schools.

Methodology

The research team have engaged in collaborative research with seven case study schools from the Curriculum Partnership cohort over an 18 month period and, in addition, have made visits to two schools from the earlier wave. Our overarching aim was to consider change. From the start researchers worked with the Curriculum Partnership schools to collaboratively produce individual Theories of Change (please see Appendixes 1-7), which were then used as a structure to collect evidence of the impact of Open Futures in each school over the evaluation period. This worked by identifying school aims, in addition to the route along which the school expected to travel to their desired outcomes, so that we could look for evidence that they were indeed making progress. Longer terms trajectories of change, and, importantly, issues of sustainability, were investigated through contact with two schools that joined Open Futures in an earlier wave.

Evidence contributing to the evaluation included a combination of school collected evidence (such as curriculum and organisational documentation, school statistical data, parent and pupil questionnaires) and researcher collected evidence (such as interviews with staff and pupils and a staff questionnaire issued to all schools). Each of the seven schools received three visits from the evaluation team and email and telephone support throughout.

In addition to semi-structured interviews with head teachers, Open Futures co-ordinators, pupils and other key staff, we used the following data collection methods:

Diamond ranking

In February 2013 visually mediated interviews were conducted with small groups of pupils. A total of 77 pupils from across the seven schools completed a diamond rank activity (please see image below) comprising of the four Open Futures strands, literacy, numeracy, PE, art and a blank choice to be selected themselves.


Pupils completing the diamond rank activity and an example diamond

Staff Questionnaire

In April 2013 a questionnaire was posted to schools to gain perspectives of head teachers, teachers, other staff and any other adults about Open Futures in their school (Appendix 8). A total of 96 completed questionnaires were returned from six identified schools, providing views from 58 teachers, 30 teaching assistants (TAs), 2 head teachers, 2 other adults and 4 respondents who did not make clear their roles in school.

Smiley faces

This simple method for collecting individual pupil responses regarding enjoyment of the four Open Futures strands, literacy, numeracy, PE, art was provided to the schools. One school collected a total of 214 responses in June 2012 from children in Years 2 to 6.
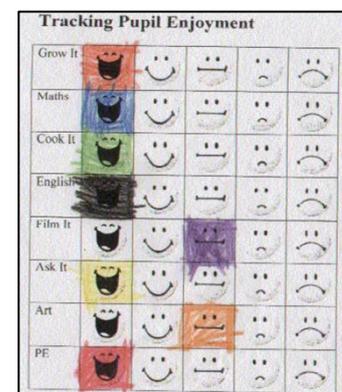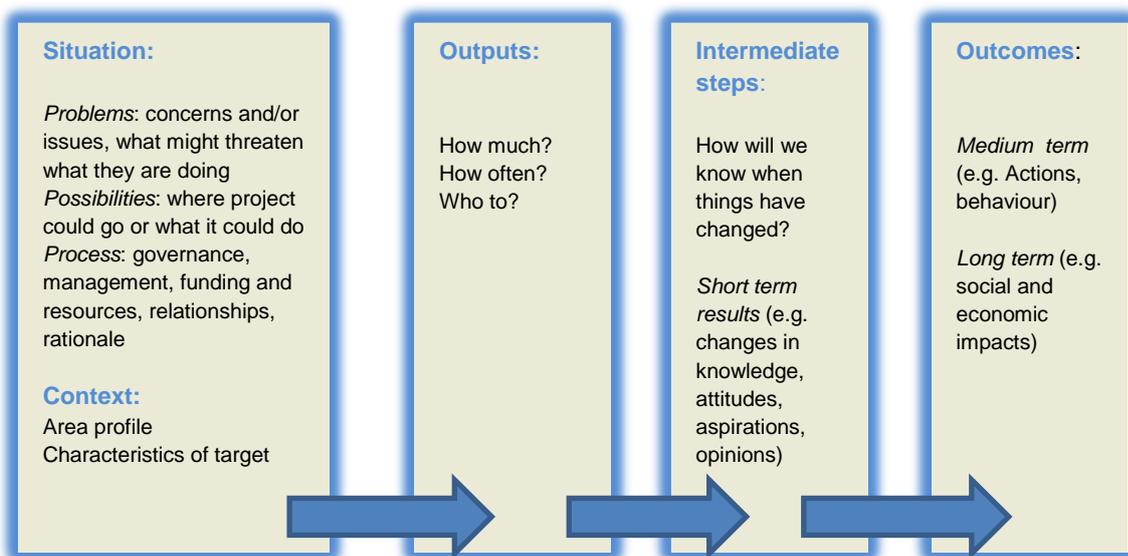
Parent questionnaire

Schools were provided with four short questions (these focused on parental awareness of the Open Futures strands and possible home-school connections) to include in their own parental questionnaires (Appendix 9). Two schools were able to do so (with a combined total of 33 responses), which were fed back to the research team.

Theory of change

Theory of change evaluations aim to surface the theories (implicit and explicit) about why an intervention is theorised to work and then collects and analyses data to evidence change (Weiss, 1995). Particular successes in using a theory of change methodology have been reported nationally (Dyson and Todd, 2010) and internationally (Connell and Kubisch, 1998) in making sense of multi-strand initiatives in varying and often complex contexts. The approach views outcomes as being the end point of a series of linked changes (steps of change) that are, in turn, linked to specific actions. The 'theory of change' itself, is an articulation of how particular actions are expected to produce intermediate changes, and how these in turn interact to produce outcomes.

Situation:	Outputs:	Intermediate steps:	Outcomes:
Problems: concerns and/or issues, what might threaten what they are doing *Possibilities*: where project could go or what it could do *Process*: governance, management, funding and resources, relationships, rationale **Context:** Area profile Characteristics of target	How much? How often? Who to?	How will we know when things have changed? *Short term results* (e.g. changes in knowledge, attitudes, aspirations, opinions)	*Medium term* (e.g. Actions, behaviour) *Long term* (e.g. social and economic impacts)

A theory of change approach

Thus, any theory of change evaluation can collect evidence about a chain of action, and effect and indicate the likelihood of predicted outcomes occurring in the longer term. Results are on-going, and so can feed into development processes, and indeed, the very action of developing a theory of change can assist in helping project managers to make explicit and articulate what they intend to do.

In interview, individual schools were very clear about the intended outcomes of engagement with the Open Futures project and there was a fair degree of agreement across schools that the primary aims were that of engaging pupils in learning, sometimes with a specific focus on developing independent learners, and secondly in engaging parents, and in some cases the wider community, in school life and their child's learning. Processes and steps of change were articulated by schools and theories of change co-produced with the evaluation team. Through planning and collaborating in data collection, schools were able to evidence

movement through their steps of change over the evaluation period. This, as expected, was different for each school but included, for example:, curriculum and organizational documentation together with physical structures and facilities to show when and how pupils were experiencing the strands; teacher assessments and pupil self-assessments of developing skills across the strands; pupil planning of Open Futures activities; teacher reports of some pupils using skills in other areas of the curriculum and/or at home, together with researcher observation of the use of *askit* skills in focus group interview; records of parental and family attendance at school events .

In evidencing this movement we are able to say that there is indicative evidence that schools will continue along their steps, although outcomes such as universal improvements in pupil achievement reflected in school level results and changes in community cultures are likely to be much longer term aspirations. This concurs with the research evidence base on educational change, which concludes that whole school change is difficult and takes considerable time (Fullan, 2007; Thomson, 2007).   Fullan suggests that the 'institutionalization' of an initiative which is required to underpin long-term change can take 2-4 years for 'moderately complex changes', while larger scale school change might take as long as 5 to 10 years (Fullan, 2007: 68). Furthermore, 'there is no single or simple recipe for sustainable change, although it is clear that it requires a complex ecology of policy, support and action' (Thomson et al., 2009).

Impacts

As stated, each school's theory of change is individual, however, a number of generalisations were seen across the schools, which will now be discussed. The structure of this section reflects the order in which changes are enacted and observed through Open Futures, resulting in impacts on staff, pupils and the school as a whole.

In asking the question **'What does Open Futures do?'** we may answer that Open Futures…

### …Initiates school change and development

Immediate physical changes inside and out to support Open Futures

Open Futures acts as a catalyst for immediate tangible changes that the school was intending or aspiring to make in curriculum content, development of physical space, enterprise and community links. For example, in finding and organising space for the programme, raised beds are built, notice boards are devoted to Open Futures, spaces are found and developed for cooking. At this initial stage (two to three school terms from start-up), initiatives include new topics in the curriculum to build links between strands and with existing content, open days to showcase gardening and cooking and the selling of produce. Heads report that they ensure that Open Futures is on the agenda for school and governors meetings, as evidenced by official records such as agendas and minutes, with a need to adapt budgets and staff deployment to accommodate and resource the programme.

School staff involved in this wave of Open Futures report getting involved in the programme as a school initiative; some have prior experience or skills in a particular strand. However, many do not and are therefore reliant on the training to up-skill themselves as well as learning specific teaching techniques relevant to the strands. School staff were very impressed with the initial training they received. The questionnaire revealed that virtually all respondents found the training either 'quite' or 'very' useful and appropriate, as the chart

below shows. These questionnaire results also show that, of the strands, *askit* training was most widely experienced and, in addition, most highly rated.
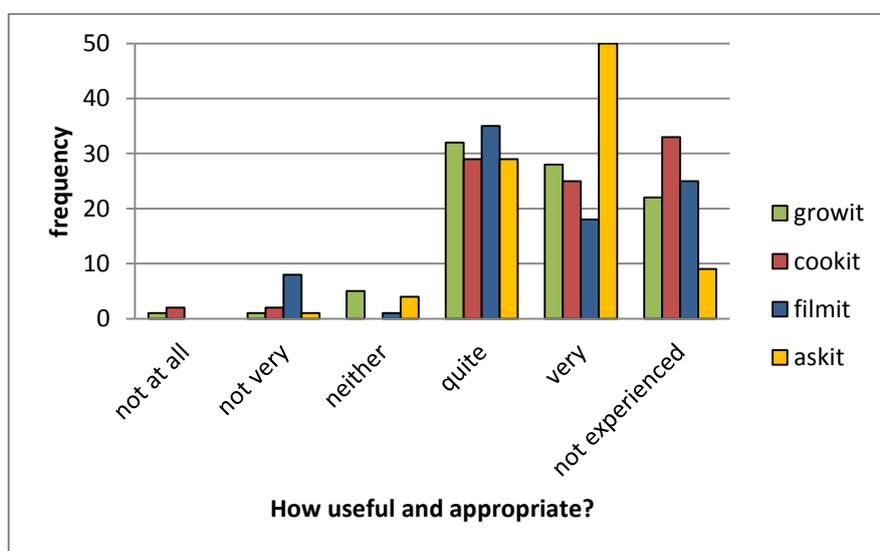
Responses to question about initial training

Comments regarding initial training were generally positive and included:

Enjoyed all the initial training - thought it was hands on and practical. (Teacher, School 2)

Gave good ideas to encourage children and link to projects (Teacher, School 1)

Attended ask it and found it very valuable with lots of ideas given to use in practice and resource ideas. (TA, School 7)

The initial training is not only important in terms of enabling staff to deliver the strands and also in supporting teachers to begin to embed Open Futures in the school curriculum. A commitment to ensuring that all pupils regularly experience all four strands is articulated in each school's theory of change (see Appendixes 1-7); after two years of involvement with the project six of the seven schools evidenced this through their curriculum and organisational planning, corroborated by interview data from staff and pupils. The school that had not achieved whole school participation in all four strands was undergoing a substantial rebuild, was situated on three split sites and so at this point had decided to concentrate particular strands on particular year groups according to the space and facilities available. The *askit* strand was, however, delivered whole school on a weekly basis and a plan was in place to roll out the remaining three strands once the building work is completed.

By the end of the second year of involvement, head teachers and senior leaders across the schools were enthusiastic about the impact of Open Futures on their school:

Open Futures has been a significant changer for the school and the way it's moved forward.
(Head teacher, School 6)

It's absolutely at the heart and the core of everything that we do … it really is embedded at the core of the curriculum. (School 4, Deputy Head)

Open Futures differs from many projects in that it is committed to whole school staff training wherever possible. This commitment is important, possibly essential, to achieve this school wide change in a relatively short time frame and has been seen to be transformative as articulated by one head teacher:

It is what I always envisaged this school to be but it only happened because of the training available with Open Futures … Open Futures was that key that unlocked the opportunity to make that come true. (Head teacher, School 6)

…Engages and motivates staff

As we have seen, immediate staff responses to the programme are that the training is excellent, both in conception and in practice. This must be considered in the present context where staff do plenty of Inset training days and CPD: Open Futures training is experienced as much more impressive. This may be in part linked to the on-going support provided by strand partners and the Open Futures curriculum advisors.

Staff room planning for Open Futures

As the chart below shows, the questionnaire respondents rated on-going support almost as highly as the initial training and, importantly, such support appears to have been experienced by just about everyone who was involved in initial training.
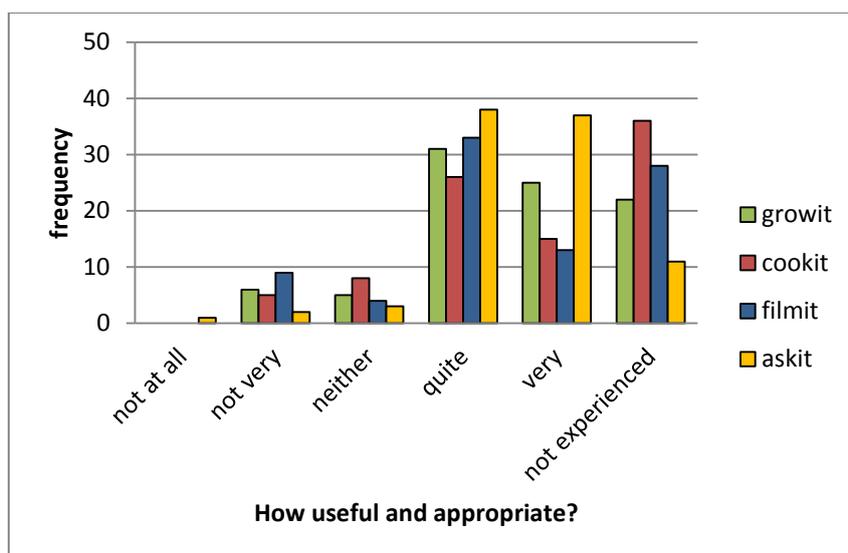
Responses to question about continued support

Comments regarding continued support suggested the value of this on-going commitment to support and included:

> *Growit guy from RHS was inspirational and has been a great encouragement all the way through* (Teacher, School 3)

> *Ask it – being modelled in my class by an experienced practitioner* (Teacher, School 2)

> *Film it – have had additional support which has been useful* (Teacher, School 3)

The appreciation of the training and support by staff with a range of school roles emerges clearly from questionnaire responses, as has been found in previous years; a consistent finding supported by comments at meetings and during interviews conducted by the evaluation team. Staff respond positively to the evident expertise of the strand partners and describe how they are enabled to progress from knowing nothing about, for example, gardening, through gaining some skills personally, to being confident to lead a group of children. Alongside this learning from scratch, other staff members seize the opportunity to get involved with particular strands, often tying them in with their curriculum responsibilities (e.g. the newly qualified teacher with a background in film making who has developed *filmit*; the keen gardener who, in her position as *growit* lead, supports other staff, runs an afterschool gardening club and has linked the growing to areas of the school curriculum for each year group). Teaching Assistants and caretakers often take vital roles in strands and in some cases these new responsibilities prove to have considerable positive impact on their professional practice:

> Pat (the growit coordinator) *was always enthusiastic member of staff but I think her job has been well, she'd say it herself, it's really added another dimension into her job that she never saw coming … she said that this was the happiest she's ever been in our school, that this has made a real difference.* (Deputy Head, School 3)

School 4 identified the opportunity to use Open Futures as a vehicle for staff development from the start, creating an additional ladder in the school's theory of change (see Appendix 4). A key part of this was developing strand teams or working parties to drive forward curriculum change across the school.

> *We've put the staff into teams or they've put themselves into teams so for each of the strands we've got a member of staff from each of the phases so foundation year 1 year 2 year 3 year 4 year 5 year 6 that lead that area so it's gone from one champion into like a working party because we found when you're having discussions about moving curriculum forward that it isn't what year 3,4 need it isn't what year 5, 6 need it's what across the school needs … so really everybody's is involved, do you know what I mean, it really is truly integrated* (Deputy Head, School 4)

This has proved to be successful in embedding the strands throughout the school and it is further hoped that such structures will play a role in developing individual's skills in areas such as leadership and dissemination.

In an education climate where projects quickly move in and out of fashion and teachers are often resistant to what has become known as 'initiative overload', the successes in embedding strands throughout the schools is significant. Senior leaders report that key to this success is the applicability of strands across the curriculum.

> *I don't think any member of staff has felt like it's an extra which is brilliant you know it's working when staff are like ah yeah that's fine it's just easy to plan.* (Deputy Head, School 4)

This together with a strong belief from staff that Open Futures is of fundamental benefit to pupils is central to the successes evidenced.

…Engages pupils and is enjoyed

Engagement is usually a pre-requisite for successful learning and there are clear benefits when children enjoy their learning (Lawson and Lawson, 2013). Most pupils experience the Open Futures strands as immediately engaging and enjoyable. Rating scales and mediated interviews used across the primary age range demonstrate the liking of the strands and a distinct tendency for pupils slightly to prefer Open Futures sessions to other lessons. This is demonstrated by the chart showing the results from School 7 of the Smiley Faces rating scale, administered towards the end of the first year of Open Futures (summer 2012, 214 respondents from Year 2 to Year 6). As can be seen, the majority of the children rated all the strands very positively, with between 64% and 93% choosing the two most positive responses (either 4 or 5 from the five point scale).
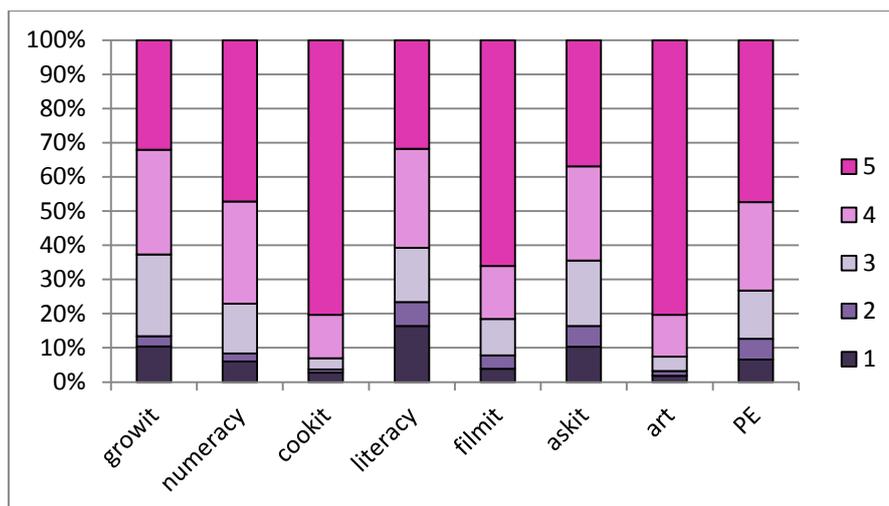
Pupil rating of the Open Futures strands and other lessons on 1-5 scale, where 5 is most positive

Further analysis revealed that these pupils had a statistically significant preference for Open Futures strands over other lessons (paired sample t-test, t=2.057, p=0.041) and that all strands apart from *askit* are equally liked by more and less academically inclined children (defined as those who rated literacy positively and negatively). These two groups were then compared on their liking for the Open Futures strands and there was generally no statistically significant difference between the ratings given by the two groups.

When pupils across the evaluation schools completed diamond ranking of the Open Futures strands and the other subjects, the majority of comments relating to the Open Futures strands were positive with examples including:

growit	*cookit*	*filmit*	*askit*
I like growit because it is messy	You get to learn new recipes	I like filmit because it's fun	You can ask lots of different questions
I like growit because you get to water	You get to make yummy food and then eat it	Fimit is friendly	I like talking
I like gardening at Grandad's allotment and with Mr Johnson	It's fun to cook and bake.	We get to be movie stars	You develop the skills to express yourself
It's fun because you get to plant stuff and I really like it	Because at home I don't get a chance to cook.	I love to film things about lots of different things. It is fun	I like askit because I like to find out

As these comments demonstrate, pupils are enjoying the strands and also describe with satisfaction learning specific skills and relevant knowledge. Again the idea of the learning being 'real' is noted.

Corroborating this pupil view, staff report that the strands engage pupils, with nearly 90% (82 out of the 92 who responded to the questionnaire) stating that pupils have responded 'well' or 'very well' to Open Futures. As can be seen from the chart below, there is a tendency for head teachers and teachers to rate this overall response slightly higher than do TAs.
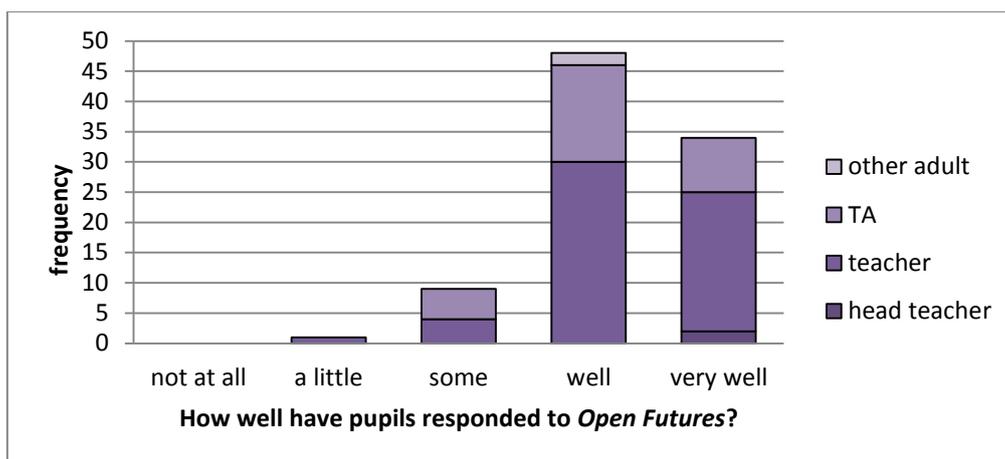
Questionnaire responses regarding overall pupil response to Open futures

Pupil engagement is seen as motivating learning for a wide variety of children, and providing purpose, with the practical and 'hands on' nature of many of the strands seen as appealing:

The children absolutely love it I mean let's face it it's active, which children tend to love and it's outside, which children tend to love. (Deputy Head, School 3)

It's giving them as I said a real context for the learning rather than you know those children that struggle with learning think 'why am I doing money' or 'why am I doing weighing', if you're using your cookit things the children can see a real value for learning how to use grams or kilograms or measuring to see how tall the sunflower is so I think it's giving those lower achievers a purpose to extend their learning. (Head teacher, School 5)

What we do know is that it tends to be the Open Futures things that children remember having done you know, so if you say to them you know we were talking about gasses and you say to them remember when we did that and it's the yeast activity in the cookery room they tend to remember. (Head teacher, School 6)

...Enhances pupil attitudes to learning

A primary focus articulated through the schools' theories of change concerns pupils' attitudes to learning; this includes pupil confidence, an enquiring mind-set and independent and collaborative learning skills. Schools recognise that such change takes time to achieve on a large scale, and they also believe that it is the kind of change that is essential and report witnessing steps towards that change.
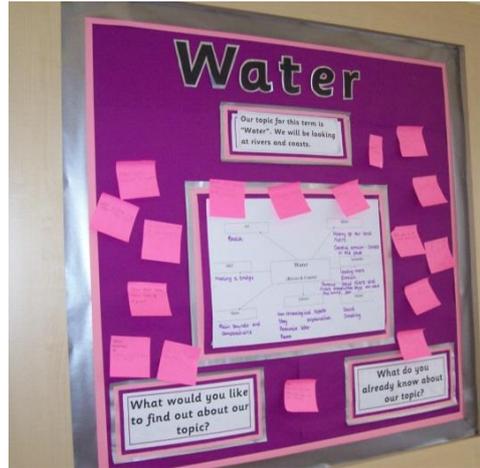
Pupils collaborate with teachers to plan learning

We're seeing the seeds of the independent thinking and the independent learning. I think one way that that is reflected is in the number of children who now voluntarily do additional work at home and that was something you know we struggled to get homework in but we now have numbers of children across the school who are willingly going home and doing more research. (Head teacher, School 6)

Staff report observing many pupils' increased confidence, initially across the strands, and also subsequently in their reaction to the wider school curriculum:

I have noticed confidence in a lot of pupils when doing filmit, growit and cookit (TA, School 7)

Many of our children have little experience of gardening and no knowledge of where food comes from. Grow it has given them practical science experience and they have found it empowering. (Assistant Head, School 2)

Immensely enhanced confidence in P4C [askit]. Quiet children talk more. We have a 'nurture' group of students who love gardening (Teacher, School 3)

As suggested by the middle comment above, there is a perception amongst school staff that Open Futures provides experiences that pupils might not otherwise have the opportunity to get involved in. This '*wider base of learning and discovery*' (Teacher, School 3) is valued, with many believing that this will equip pupils with 'skills for life'. For pupils who have previously struggled within the education system, Open Futures is seen to provide an opportunity to re-engage:

So we've got some children with behavioural difficulties that it helps them take away positive experiences, it's not about giving them something to do it's about giving them a way to buy back into learning … giving them something that enables them to see right I need this skill because I

haven't got a clue how much it's gonna cost me to go and buy the ingredients to do this bun sale so I need to break down what the coins are looking like. (Deputy Head, School 4)

...Improves pupil speaking and listening

Using the garden to learn French vocabulary

Schools have consistently identified the impact of Open Futures on pupils' speaking and listening skills. This has been particularly in relation to *askit* and also supported by the other strands in providing a context and purpose for developing skills. Teachers report increased skills in pupils listening, responding appropriately, asking more questions and reasoning.

It is significant that in this cohort of schools *askit* has been the most widely implemented with many schools choosing to have weekly sessions for each class; this undoubtedly has led to more immediate impact. Teachers report pupils using the P4C conversational structures across the curriculum and in other conversations, and this was witnessed by the research team during pupil focus group interviews ('*I agree with Alex because …*').The questionnaire and interviews demonstrated the particular impact of *askit* through the quantity of comments relating to this strand and the nature of the effects reported.

Comments from teachers, TAs and senior leaders relating to pupil speech and language skills included:

Every child has the chance to speak, listen and gain confidence in talking to others, listen to others and take turns (TA, School 3)

What we find is that articulation of the thinking impacts on those areas of the curriculum where you have analytical thinking like the histories … we're finding that there's a shift in the sorts of questions that they want answering from the factual yes to more open ended type questions. (Head teacher, School 6)

Children have really started to explain their reasons behind an answer (Teacher, School 1)

It's that way of looking at and asking questions and thinking deeply and getting the children to think in different ways and that moment when they go 'ah I never thought of it like that'. (Deputy Head, School 4)

It is worth noting, however, that the educational benefits of *askit* perceived by the teaching and support staff parallel the reasons some children expressed during the diamond rank activity for not entirely enjoying *askit* (e.g. having to listen, waiting to speak, and it being 'hard' or 'confusing').

...Contributes to pupil achievement
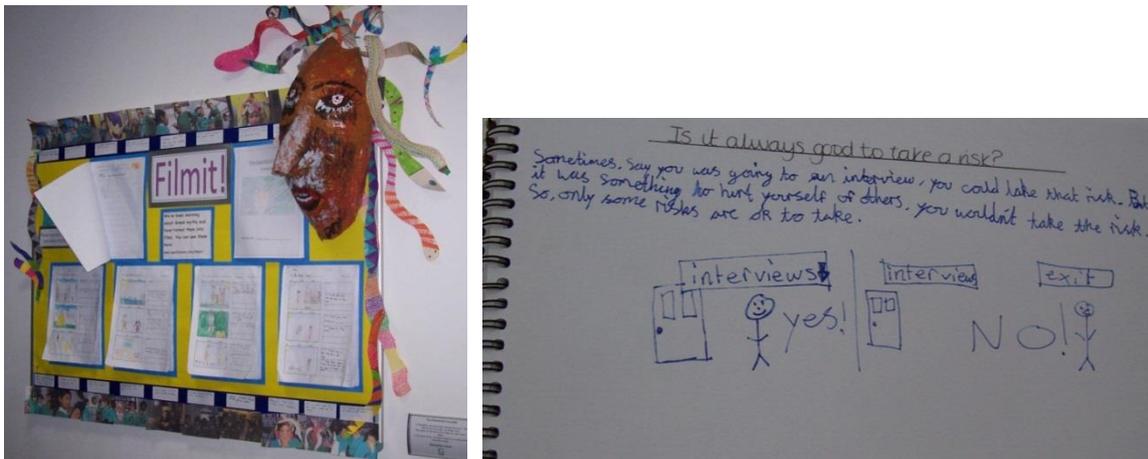
Using *filmit* to support the English curriculum and *askit* at home to enhance reasoning and literacy

There is a range of evidence to suggest that Open Futures does contribute towards pupil achievement. The questionnaire revealed that staff believe Open Futures does impact on social and academic skills, contributing to enhanced achievement. Asked to rate the level of impact (from 1= 'no impact', through 3='moderate impact' to 5='very strong impact') on a wide range of outcomes, median responses were 3 or 4 and mean responses were similarly high (see chart below).
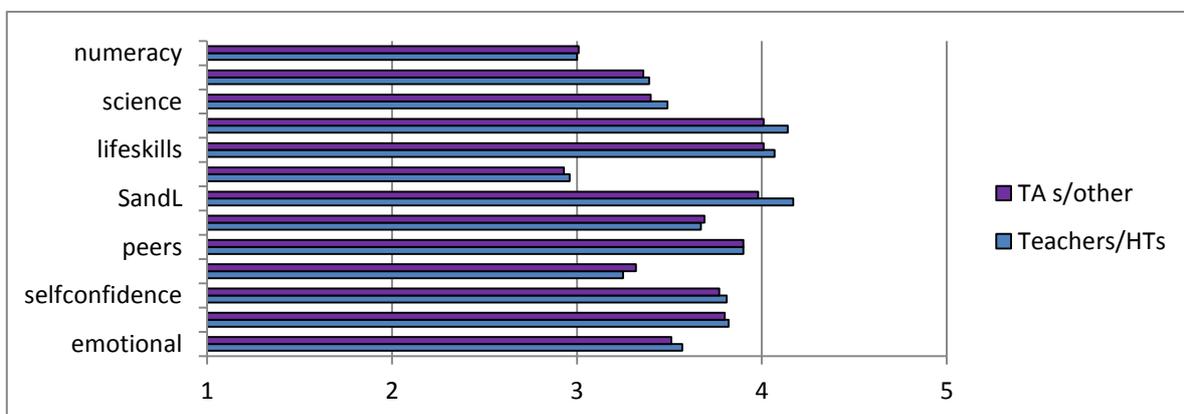
Mean staff ratings of level of impact (from 1= 'no impact' to 5='very strong impact')

The complete breakdown of responses for the three areas where staff perceive most impact (asking questions, speaking and listening and practical life skills) are shown below. As can be seen, for each of these aspects, between 75% and 80% of staff considered that Open Futures has *strong* or *very strong impact*.
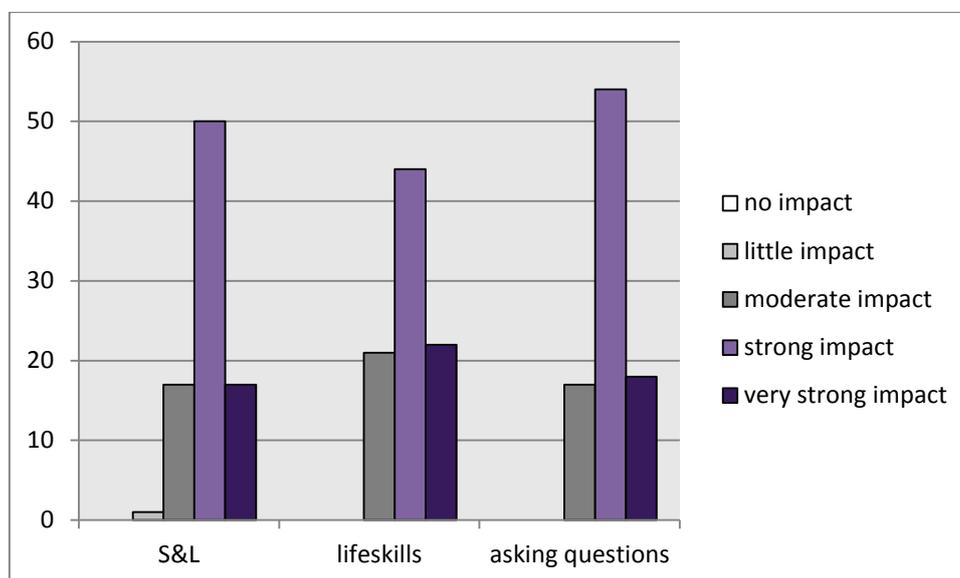
Response frequencies for the areas where staff perceive most impact on pupils

While school staff are slightly more cautious in attributing impact to Open Futures in relation to more clearly academic outcomes (e.g. writing, science, numeracy and literacy), comments in the questionnaire report that Open Futures is contributing to learning and, during interviews, teachers and school leaders have discussed the possibility of Open Futures enhancing pupils' academic attainment. For example, the head teacher at School 6, where higher than usual outcomes were expected in the KS2 writing SAT, explained:

> *It's about that engagement in the activities, it's about purpose for writing and reading … a combination of the context for which they are writing and the philosophy again you know that deeper thinking about what they're trying to do and that has given them an understanding of authorial intent which they're then more able to copy in their own writing so I think it has definitely impacted.* (Head teacher, School 6)

Early in their involvement with Open Futures, School 7 proposed that improvements in reasoning through participation in *askit* could be expected to result in attainment gains in the inference and deduction sections of standardised national reading tests. To test this hypothesis, results from optional SATs taken by pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 were analysed. The tests taken towards the end of 2012 were used to compare classes which had had relatively more and less *askit* experience. This did not reveal any differences according to involvement in *askit*, but established a baseline of attainment within this school on inference

and deduction questions within the reading SAT. When this baseline was compared with results in summer 2013, a statistically significant difference was found between 2012 and 2013 results for Year 3. The following box plots show the distributions in 2012 and 2013 of Year 3 pupils' percentages correct on inference and deduction questions.
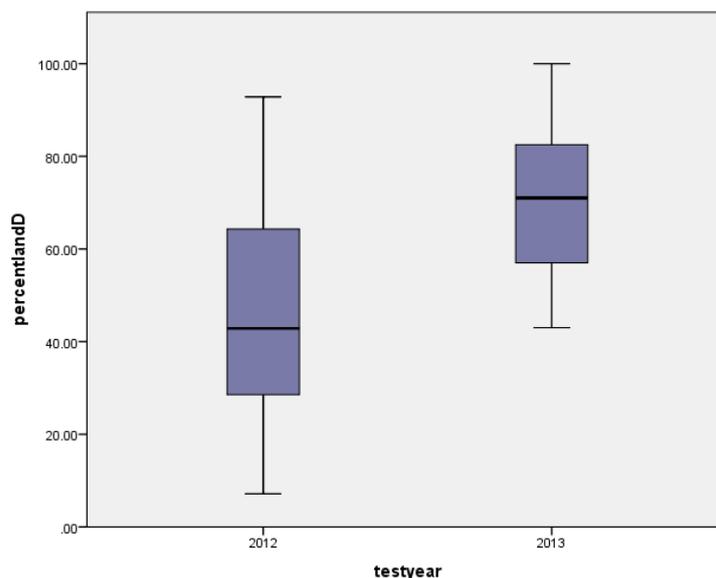
Attainment in inference and deduction questions by Year 3 pupils

Although there was not a corresponding statistically significant difference between 2012 and 2013 results for Years 4 and 5, the Open Futures co-ordinator at School 7 argues that the change for Year 3 children may indicate an impact that will gather pace through the school. She commented that the children in Year 3 in 2012-13

> *…have had a particularly good run with P4C. While they were in Year 3, they did P4C very regularly and when they were in Year 2, most of the children (but not all) also had a weekly session delivered by a member of staff who was trained in the first cohort. It's very difficult to isolate the impact of P4C with any cohort, because we were pushing other speaking and listening strategies at the same time. I am really not sure why there was less difference for the other year groups.* [….] *In my view, what the data suggests is that the successful cohort started regular P4C at age 6 and have had regular sessions, perhaps starting at the right age? I would hope that this cohort and the ones following them in years to come would also show improvements.* (Deputy Head Teacher, School 7)

The capacity of Open Futures, particularly the *growit* and *cookit* strands, to provide a context for learning has already been discussed and there is evidence that the linking of Open Futures activities to academic skills and concepts across the school curriculum has resulted in enhanced attainment for some pupils. In School 4 there has been an explicit attempt to link Open Futures content to maths, particularly using cooking contexts for certain

troublesome areas and concepts (e.g. ratios). Teachers feel this has been particularly beneficial for the children who do not struggle badly with maths, although they are equally not high attainers, and who have found the concrete contexts particularly useful for developing more abstract mathematical ideas. Describing a maths lessons delivered through *cookit*, a deputy head commented:

> *Sometimes we move too quickly from the concrete to the abstract and I think it brings back the concrete far more and it opens up learning for particular children, it opens up learning that they didn't feel they could access and you know when you see their faces and they just glow and they go 'I get that now, is that all you were on about', because it's been put in a context that they'd actually got their hands on.*   (Deputy Head, School 4)

It is possible that improvements in the mathematical understanding of these children are demonstrated by the change in distribution of scores on the KS2 SAT in maths. Although the mean scores for the Year 6 pupils who took the test in 2010 and 2012 were almost identical (59.67 and 59.65), the results are differently distributed, with less of a 'trailing edge' in 2012 after the introduction of Open Futures. This can be seen on the following box plots.
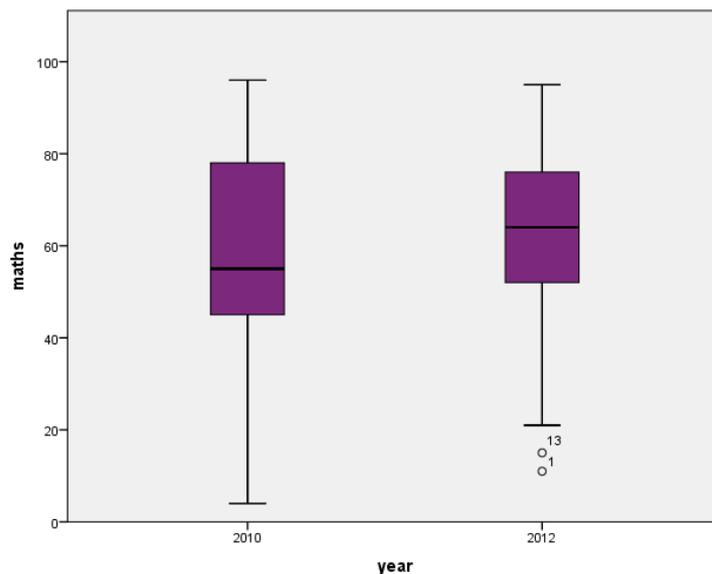
Attainment by Year 6 pupils in maths

Furthermore, in addition to contributing to achievement in traditional school subjects, staff often articulate the view that Open Futures increases pupils' wider experiences and knowledge. This includes boosting understanding in areas such as healthy eating, the environment and practical life skills.

> *I think that it does bring in links with the world that we wouldn't normally have and the processes that food in particular goes through before it hits the supermarket or the takeaway or anywhere else, that sort of global understanding of issues is definitely enhanced … yes I mean peas come in a packet from birds eye don't they until you see them growing that has*

definitely changed and it's also encouraged you know because they've grown it themselves they will try even if at the end of the day they still don't like it at least we know they've attempted and very often they do like it. So you know that has definitely improved their understanding of where food comes from and how it is grown and how it needs to be looked after. (Head teacher, School 6)

Indeed pupils' descriptions of the learning that they perceive as occurring through the Open Futures strands range through specific skills and knowledge, chances to apply ideas and opportunities to widen their experiences. Below are a sample of responses given from pupils at School 4 during a writing task entitled 'what I have learnt through Open Futures':

During growit this year I have learnt lots of things like how a seed develops, looking after plants, what conditions a plant needs to grow in, what plants you can and can't eat and loads more … Growit has helped me so when I am older this skill will be helpful for when I want to grow something for myself.

Cookit has helped me to understand fractions, ratio, proportion and percentages. It has also helped me to understand cooking more and to use different cooking skills such as the bridge, the claw, folding, kneading, identification of different herbs and other cooking skills.

In filmit we have been doing activities like changing images, photo stories, animation and presenting information. These skills I think are going to open my future because in any job you do you will at some point be using some skills like them.

Askit will help you in the future because you need to ask intelligent questions. It will help you think about the world easier. It will also help you with your job interview.

The experiences children gain of success in learning specific skills or concepts that previously proved challenging are important in building pupils' self-confidence and view of themselves as leaners.

And even if they're making errors its learning from those errors not being frightened to say well I can't start that and that's what you definitely see … Yeah absolutely and say even if I only get half of it right it's that sort of you know the cliché of the can do culture isn't it but it really is if you've got a child that's frightened of a subject. (Deputy Head, School 4)

…Supports school performance and progress

Head teachers and other staff report steady iterative improvements in teaching and learning in Open Futures schools. The structural changes to support the programme at the school and staff levels facilitate change in classroom practices, which are encouraged by the children's engagement, to create sustained change in expectations and some outcomes to be discussed below.

Whole school cross-curricular event

The strands are able to consolidate learning from across the curriculum and provide a real life context for learning abstract concepts. Teachers report that improvements to listening and questioning skills, initially developed in *askit* sessions, become more evident in other contexts. Teachers suspect that such improvements to learning dispositions[ii] and to specific skills support achievement including SATs. Head teachers comment that while they cannot link Open Futures in a simple causal way to improved SATs outcomes, they would not devote so much curriculum time to the programme if they did not think it was contributing positively to pupil learning and attainment. School staff making such 'tentative connections' between a complex initiative and SATs results has been found by other research into whole school change (Thomson et al., 2009: 52)[iii].

Attendance

The table below shows percentage attendance for each school for the academic year immediately preceding involvement in Open Futures and both years of involvement.

Code	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
School 1	92.6	93.9	94
School 2	93.8	94.4	94.7
School 3	94.4	96	95.4
School 4	93.5	95.6	95.4
School 5	93.2	95.4	96.7
School 6	94.4	95.2	94.8
School 7	94.5	96.2	95.9

It can be seen that across the schools, attendance is reasonably high and has generally held steady, or increased very slightly since the introduction of Open Futures. Some school staff do see a causal link between Open Futures activities and attendance for some pupils:

One school reported successes with a targeted group of pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees; after a number of intervention strategies over the school year, 29 of the original 45 targeted pupils were achieving good attendance. The head teacher believed Open Futures to have had an impact within this, although it was not the only factor.

Furthermore, even strong effects for some individual children will to be hard to see within overall attendance figures recorded for the whole school population, as discussed by this head teacher in response to the attendance evidence:

> *It is extremely difficult to get a full percentage point gain in primary schools, although to the lay person these may seem marginal amounts, they are not! […] I think the improvement from the 6 schools is actually very impressive. If OF is impacting on attendance then it will in turn have a bigger impact on achievement in literacy and numeracy over time. If the children are turning up for school because they are eager to cook / grow etc then they are also getting to school on time (late after register closes goes down as an absence) which means they must be getting the literacy and numeracy input they otherwise would not have got.*
> (Head teacher, email, 24.1.14)

Exclusions

Six of the evaluation focus schools collated exclusion figures for the same three years, shown below.

Code	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
School 1	0	2 children	2 children
School 2	7 temporary	8 temporary	5 temporary
School 3	1 permanent	0	1 temporary
School 4	0	0	-
School 5	-	-	-
School 6	13 temporary	14 temporary	*
School 7	0	0	0

*3 pupils given fixed term exclusions totalling 6.5 days

It can be seen that exclusions have also tended to hold steady for each school, but that there is distinct variation across schools, owing to differing contexts and local recording conventions, which is not surprising or unusual.

KS2 SATs

The following two tables show the percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving Level 4 or above (a common benchmark) in each school over the three years. The decision was taken to focus on Reading and Mathematics due to the fact that they are the only tests with consistent methodology of assessing and reporting over the three year period examined.

Reading

Code	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
School 1	90	95	86
School 2	82	87	79
School 3	84	80	69
School 4	93	85	88
School 5	96	86	92
School 6	68	75	79
School 7	81	86	85

Mathematics

Code	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
School 1	88	92	89
School 2	82	85	86
School 3	84	77	76
School 4	85	79	91
School 5	89	95	96
School 6	76	78	79
School 7	83	82	80

These results show assessed attainment tending to hold steady through the introduction of Open Futures. However, there has been some positive change for some of the schools, and interviews with senior leaders revealed that some of them do connect the improvements with Open Futures, as the following comment relating to the reading SAT demonstrates:

> *Some of the topics and some of the questions that they have brought up have been really quite phenomenal and the thinking behind the responses has been high order and actually I believe looking at the work they've done in preparation for their SATs I do believe we are going to get our best reading results with lots of level 5's and that's because the quality of those responses for the higher level questions are improved because of the way they now think and interpret information and I don't think it's any coincidence that they've had this experience and that we have made quite a significant leap.* (Head teacher, School 6)

Further, as reported above, School 4 identified a shift in the point scores obtained in their SATs results in maths, which they linked to teaching certain concepts through *cookit*. Although analysis showed that there was not a statistical difference between results achieved before and after the introduction of Open Futures (2010 and 2012 results), the results are differently distributed. Looking only at the scores between 41 and 80 (from just missing level 4 through to achieving level 4, but not level 5), corroborates this suggestion that there is a difference between the two years, with fewer children just missing level 4 (resulting in a higher percentage of pupils at the school who achieved level 4 in maths in 2012, compared to 2010), and also some tendency to achieve level 4 comfortably. This pattern concurs with the impressions of the school staff. However, it must be noted that,

even for this subgroup of students, there is no statistically significant difference between the results of the two years.
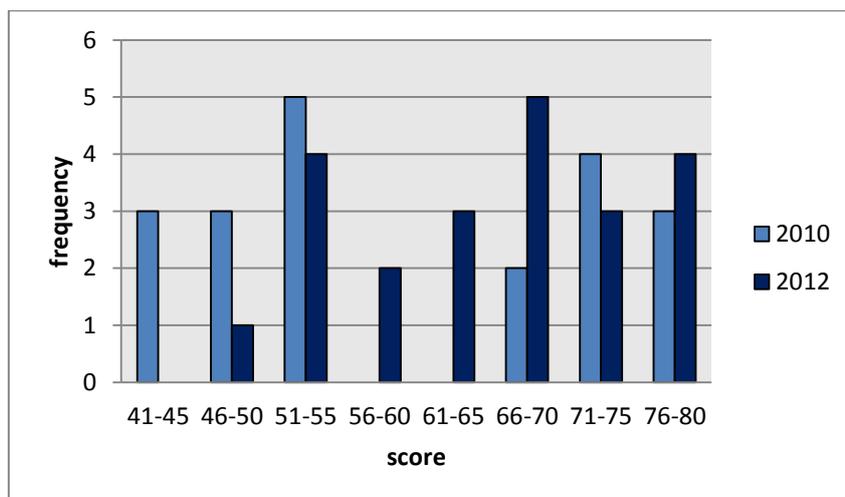
Maths SATs scores focussing on Level 4 achievement and just below

That has made a big impact on the maths results because not specifically the number of level fours but the point scores so the pass mark is usually 46/47/48 and we've noticed a massive shift into the late 50's … and now they absolutely attack it they are not frightened by the questions they are not worried by the questions, the confidence level, because they've done it in this way and unpicked the questions in this way they're not fazed by them at all whereas in the past they'd read that and go 'what?' … It allows us to say well you know there is this upward trend and Open Futures is part of that. (Deputy Head, School 4)

Progress

Overall, the school level attainment, attendance and exclusion figures suggest school quality holding steady. This is reassuring for any school looking to initiate Open Futures, although it leaves unconfirmed the head teachers' convictions that their schools had begun a process of change, improving learning in ways that will ultimately feed through to school level attainment figures and Ofsted recognition. For a flavour of this view, we close this section with the assessment of one head teacher:

…for attendance to make slight gains and for attainment as measured in SATs etc to hold steady at a time of curriculum change, i.e the implementation of O.F strands, is in itself noteworthy because change which involves everyone learning new skills and finding ways to include them across the curriculum could have been a disruption that caused a dip in these measures until it became embedded in practice. I think that it is a tribute to the quality of the training and to the staff of all the schools that this did not happen.
(Head teacher, email, 27.1.14)

...Catalyses whole school change and school to community links

Philosophy bear goes home to involve parents in *askit*; selling plants and produce

During the course of this evaluation, we have observed initial physical alterations and organisational changes becoming established, perhaps being further developed, and helping to embed Open Futures activities in the life of the school. There is less sense of individual strands and more talk of an Open Futures way of doing things. Open Futures may be less explicitly referenced in school planning, because it is now so accepted and is firmly rooted in protected budgets and staffing. During the later interviews, school leaders described how the changes due to the programme enable better learning processes and teaching practices to continue to develop. The cyclical nature of this development within school is shown in the following diagram.
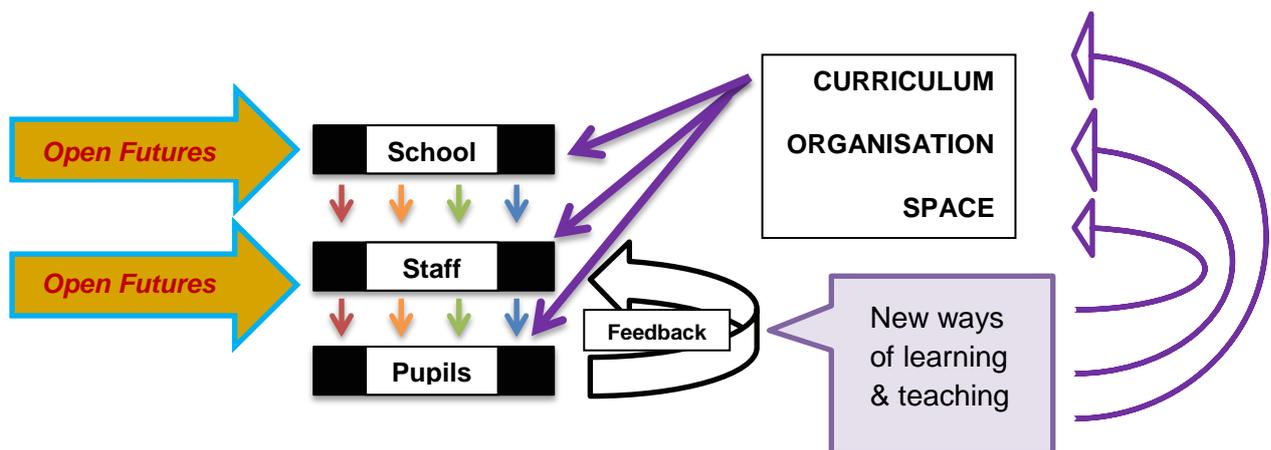
Model of Open Futures impact

Staff professional development through Open Futures enables teachers to make the strands and activities their own. Open Futures tends to embed collaborative practices between staff members, enhancing curriculum coherence and pastoral care across the school. Once Open Futures is established, there is on-going, mutually dependent development of

curriculum, organisation and space. So, for example, even where it is a caretaker who has taken the lead on *growit* because of horticultural knowledge, curriculum links such as a container for composting leaves constructed so as to demonstrate a cubic metre are found in the garden. In this and other ways, Open Futures strands are integrated with the wider curriculum and this integration is embedded in physical space, particular activities and ways of learning.

In establishing each school's individual theory of change all schools discussed the intention that Open Futures should impact upon parental (and in some cases the wider community) engagement. Each school had differing histories of parental engagement, with some regularly welcoming families into school for a range of purposes and others finding parental involvement extremely difficult. Nevertheless, regardless of their present situation, all schools envisaged Open Futures playing a role in extending that engagement, potentially adding an extra dimension to the model above. Substantial successes were seen in five of the seven schools by summer 2013 making parental and community engagement one of the most interesting prospects for Open Futures.

A number of the schools report conducting *askit* sessions with groups of parents. At the end of the first year of involvement with Open Futures, School 1 reported working with a core group of 10 parents using P4C to explore their own as well as their child/ren's learning, by the end of the second year this had increased to 20 parents regularly attending sessions. Growing and cooking workshops have run throughout the summer term of 2013 with representatives from over 200 families attending; the school report that this represents a significant increase in previous parental engagement.

> *We had 40 to 50 parents come along to the gardening workshop … I think only about three had previous gardening experience so it was about exposing families to those skills, getting them interested and where we can sending them home with some seeds and basic resources.* (Growit Lead, School 1)

School 4 has a long history of community involvement and participation in school, but nevertheless reported that Open Futures has opened doors for new families to engage:

> *Again bringing people in that wouldn't normally come into school and then with the different aspects of sort of getting the parents to help with the garden and you're pulling on different people's strengths, it isn't do you want to come and help in a classroom, which sometimes can be quite daunting for parents … the parents now all congregate again so I was looking out the window last night and more and more they're staying when the weathers nice they're staying longer so the community is becoming more together … if you've got some skills in*

gardening right okay I'll get you involved there and a bit of cooking there and a bit of filming there and they are truly celebrating their individual skills. (Deputy Head, School 4)

School 5 has implemented a school wide strategy for engaging parents with the *askit* strand: each week a child from each class in the school takes home the philosophy bear and book and is asked to think of and explore a philosophical question, they are then asked to make a record in the book, whether that be writing, pictures or both. This has been extremely successful as a result of the children's enthusiasm, with every family in the school making contributions, amounting to 100% participation in this home-school philosophy initiative.

> *We've been able to develop really good links with parents because they're totally involved when their children take the bears home on a weekend, you know thinking about questions I suppose at a different level really but it's parents and children together doing that … the children are so excited that it's their weekend that it's probably the first thing you know in those really deprived families that they've engaged with, we haven't had anybody not want to do it because you know it is exciting and different.* (Head teacher, School 5)

Schools, parents and pupils additionally report impacts outside of school with increased participation in gardening, cooking, film making and philosophy at home in some families:

> *One little boy said to me he said 'my mum is gonna buy me the ingredients to make this and we're gonna make it together just me and her' … that was just so powerful to think you know it doesn't really matter what they make he's got time that he would not normally have at home one to one with mum to make something and he was just all day thinking I'm gonna do it tonight. Another girl had made a film at home with dad they'd gone round a bit like homes under the hammer and gone 'this is the bedroom this is the…' she's like 'I wanna be a film maker' and you think it opens up that and once you've got children doing that at home that cycle is like gold isn't it do you know what I mean for them to be going out and then bringing it back in again it's obviously what you're looking for isn't it and in families that wouldn't normally engage.* (Deputy Head, School 4)

> *As a family we all include philosophy in our daily conversations. We discuss different answers and questions.* (Parent, School 1)

> *Making film about the great fire of London. Talking about what P4C is all about.* (Parent, School 2, in response to 'what activities does your child do at home?')

> *Philosophy helps you because when you are having an argument with your parents it helps you to have the reasons why you are right and they are wrong.* (Pupils, School 1)

Schools recognise that such successes are not universal for all pupils and families, but feel that they are moving towards fuller participation and are making progress along their steps of change reported in the theory of change documents.

Long term sustainability

Established space and newly built facilities to support active participation in Open Futures

The circumstances of the two schools from the 2008-2010 cohort have differed quite dramatically in recent years. Whereas School A has experienced fairly stable times to consolidate and develop Open Futures, School B is the result of an amalgamation of two schools that occurred in 2010 and required extensive building work, carried out over the following two years, and causing significant disruption particularly to *growit* (the new car park was built over the existing growing area). Yet, in both schools, staff are clear that they are Open Futures schools, facilities for the programme have been developed and the results of strand activity are evident.

School A reported regular and frequent involvement of all year groups (nursery to Year 2 as this is an Infant School) in all four strands, with the only exception being more limited involvement of the nursery children in *filmit*. The head teacher was pleased that the school has generally succeeded in adapting strand activities for these considerably younger children, including developing a nursery version of *askit*. In School B, *cookit* and *growit* are fully implemented across all year groups (Reception to Year 6), with *filmit* happening occasionally for most children, and more frequently in Year 6, where there has been particular success in integrating it into curriculum 'topics' for this age group. There was also evidence of activities happening across the strands:

> *I remember you doing some good film it with kids doing smoothies* (Teacher 1, School B)
> *yeah we'd kind of incorporated it in with cook it. They did their own Saturday kitchen style TV programme* (Teacher 2, School B)

Askit was described as happening formally much less often than it used to, due to the loss of the strand lead, but there was informal *askit* occurring in, for instance, *growit* sessions.

In both schools there was a clear sense of how Open Futures has developed and changed. School B teachers described limited cooking, using a cooker on a trolley, before their involvement with Open Futures, immediate change as they got involved and were equipped with induction hobs and, after a long wait, a new start with properly designed kitchen space included in the rebuild. Similarly, *growit* changed them from a school that did no gardening to one where *growit* space was planned into the rebuild as a key part of the school intended to contribute to teaching the wider curriculum. The head teacher in School A described a similar progression from doing 'baking' to 'cooking', with activities productively integrated with the wider curriculum (e.g. discussing 'food miles' in geography) and across strands:

> *when children actually start to harvest what they've grown then that really gave additional input into the cooking, you know. To hear them like just squeal when they harvest potatoes-and they still do it- and then they can cook that and make their potato salads* (Head teacher, School A)

> *Growit fits nicely in to the maths curriculum* (Teacher, School B)

While in School B the trajectory of change has been interwoven, positively and negatively, with the progress of the building work, the head teacher in School A explained how she had orchestrated changes to secure Open Futures through budgets, staff, timetabling and use of space; and the centrality of governor understanding:

> *You have to be able to you know convince governors to set their budget so that we can do it* [....] *and then you need to have time to bring them in and walk them round and show them and let them see the children working and make sure that it's on the governing body agenda so they know how important we think this is.* (Head teacher, School A)

> *I wanted the children to feel when they go out there this is learning and it's just as important as any other aspect of the curriculum and so I wanted them to be dressed properly and have the proper equipment for outside and give it the status.* (Head teacher, School A)

Both schools judged that *growit* and *cookit* are now as well, or better, developed than they were at the end of the training period, although *filmit* and *askit* were considered to have slipped slightly. Although much expertise continues to be cascaded through the staff, losses of particular staff had proved challenging and there were concerns that new members of staff need specific training. This was felt particularly acutely for *filmit* and *askit*, which are very reliant on individual teachers. It must be noted here that the training for *askit* is now

delivered quite differently from the experience of these schools with all teachers and relevant TAs being trained to Level 1, while fewer staff in these earlier schools received the training directly.

In both schools, staff were clear that Open Futures has impacted on the engagement and learning of individual children, and, as part of this, has changed school life and learning:

> *It's a way of getting them to feel motivated about writing if it's to do with what they've been doing in the garden* (Teacher, School B)

> *it is additional alternative opportunities, opportunities for the children to work in so many different ways. It's everything, it's teamwork, it's collaboration, it's excitement, it's sense of worth* (Head teacher, School A)

> *children teach other children* […] s*haring skills and knowledge. I mean now we do it with readers, writing* (Teacher, School B)

In differing ways, Open Futures has helped both schools with engagement beyond school. For School B, this centres on developing parental involvement through sharing ideas and information with parents, sometimes enlisting their help with practical tasks but mainly encouraging links between home and school life, so that children take home plants to grow or cook at home. In School A, there appeared to be more existing parental involvement so, although this aspect is present, it is combined with building links with the wider community, particularly through *growit*, which the head teacher believes to be 'the most accessible' strand:

> *I know that they go home and they say that 'we've cooked this'* (Head teacher, School A)

> *Church members come periodically and garden for us particularly helping us with tidying and that's great 'cause they always want to work with a group of children and a teaching assistant out there. That really helps us just to get down to some tidying and some sorting out in the garden* (Head teacher, School A)

Overall, it seemed clear that Open Futures was part of an important transformation of practice in both schools. The head teacher in School A discussed how it has supported school improvement, mentioned positive responses from Ofsted inspectors and her conviction that Open Futures has contributed to upward trends observed in the last five years in foundation stage and KS1 assessment. In both schools, staff articulated how involvement in the programme fitted with other values or aspirations, yet has tended to exceed expectations and have a greater impact than they were expecting:

It gave us a structure and a plan really to really work towards in an and be involved in a really exciting project that we knew was right for us (Head teacher, School A)

To sum up, a significant time after these schools completed their Open Futures training, the programme constitutes an important part of school life and continues to contribute to school development. Looking to the future, both schools were convinced of the place of Open Futures:

Now we're in a … much more positive position we can get things moving again. We can sign up and be a proper part of it. (Teacher, School B)

We wouldn't work without it - we just wouldn't - and [for] *the children it's part of our school for them* (Head teacher, School A)

Conclusions: what is it about Open Futures that is different?

The impact of Open Futures should be understood in the context of contemporary school teaching and management. There are many and varied projects and initiatives emanating from the Department for Education, Local Authorities, charities and organisations; all are competing for attention within a tightly packed curriculum, requirements for explicit tracking of pupil progress against national norms, and an inspection regime that is experienced as stressful and adversarial. Other projects and enthusiasms come and go, yet Open Futures tends to be sustained: changes are evident in schools years after initial training, with the effects on the curriculum underpinned by changes to school planning, budgeting and physical space. In fact this reliable 'institutionalization', and the evidence presented in this report of Open Futures' approach in action, exemplify the three elements of successful school change identified by Fullan: being embedded in school structures, having a critical mass of school staff trained and committed, and having a procedure for continued support (Fullan, 2007:102). Notably, progress is made quickly for a programme of this complexity, with the majority of the evaluation schools well on the way to the 'institutionalization' of Open Futures after the two years that Fullan proposes as a minimum for even a relatively simple innovation.

Open Futures endures and becomes a way of life in most programme schools through cyclical development, where tangible changes embed the initiative:

If you've got that infrastructure, you can use it and you want to use it don't you? (Head teacher, School A)

The changes made to school organisation, space and curriculum are interlinked, becoming increasingly coherent and mutually dependent, as depicted previously in our model of Open Futures impact.

The range and breadth of these changes is partly explained by another of the programme's strengths: the diversity of the elements of Open Futures. The range of the four strands enables the programme to appeal immediately to different staff for different reasons and get established in a number of ways. Importantly, it also makes Open Futures attractive to teachers who are very aware of the huge diversity of needs presented by a class of children over a school year. The diversity of Open Futures translates into a wide variety of impacts and effects for individual children: providing new experiences; improving engagement and motivation; learning specific skills and knowledge; contributing to achievement and social development. In sum, this evidences different ways to be a successful learner, providing the foundations for a 'multidimensional' Boaler (2008) school ethos, where the variety of ways to learn and succeed boosts confidence and, eventually, performance. Research into learning in multidimensional classroom environments has established this progression for certain curriculum areas, and we would therefore expect it to occur through Open Futures.

Although the range of elements embodied by Open Futures is immediately apparent, the later effects on learning are less obvious to schools as they begin involvement with the programme. This developing complexity would appear to be another reason for Open Futures' success: strand activities are immediately appealing to children, yet the integration of the four strands with each other and with the wider school curriculum enables them to be much more powerful. Similarly, school staff appreciate the thorough expert training in areas they are not familiar with, but as they develop the programme in their own context it is far from stand-alone enrichment. From the immediate appeal of 'hands-on' learning develops new contexts and purposes for learning and noticeable changes in the quality of classroom talk and interaction, supporting enhanced achievement.

These observations about the progression of the programme in schools underpin our final conclusion. This is that Open Futures seems to offer a particularly productive balance of structure and flexibility. There is plenty of support, which is especially useful to schools at the beginning of their involvement, together with clear requirements and obligations in terms of getting staff to training and implementing the strands. Yet, there is plenty of opportunity for staff and schools to 'make it their own': making curriculum links appropriate to their circumstances, using Open Futures as a vehicle to engage parents, developing enterprise within school or connecting the school to the wider community. Although there is clearly a

balance to be achieved between variation and commonality of implementation across schools, it is none-the-less vital to acknowledge that the variation makes a positive contribution to the programme. It enhances ownership, is appreciated by schools and, we propose, contributes to the success and sustainability of Open Futures:

I like it because it develops. (Head teacher, School A)

No two Open Futures schools look alike and when you think … am I you know just going off track here or you know is this what it's supposed to look like, you realise there is no model for what it's supposed to look like and it's what works for individual schools … we've found a model that works for this school you know. Other schools find different models to work with and you know its that's reassurance that it's okay to do that … when you embark on a project you tend to think that there's going to be a model and that we're all going to look very similar in our approaches and actually the three schools in [our LA] *don't even look the same I don't think really, except we have this common bond of wanting to use this as a driver in the school.* (Head teacher, School 6)

References

Boaler, J. (2008) Promoting 'relational equity' and high mathematics achievement through an innovative mixed-ability approach, *British Educational Research Journal* 34(2): 167-194

Carr, M. & Claxton, G. (2002) Tracking the Development of Learning Dispositions, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 9: 9-37.

Connell, J.P., and A.C. Kubisch. (1998) Applying a theory of change approach to the evaluation of comprehensive community initiatives: Progress, prospects and problems. In K. Fulbright-Anderson, A.C. Kubisch, and J.P. Connell (Eds) *New approaches to evaluating community initiatives, volume. 2: Theory, measurement and analysis,* 15–44. Queenstown:The Aspen Institute.

Deakin Crick, R., Broadfoot, P. & Claxton, G. (2004) Lifelong Learning Inventory: The ELLI Project, *Assessment in Education, Principles, Policy and Practice*, 10: 247-272.

Dyson, A. and Todd, L. (2010) Dealing with complexity: theory of change evaluation and the full service extended schools initiative, *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 33(2): 119 — 134

Fullan, M. (2007) *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (4th Ed) New York/Abingdon: Routledge

Lawson, M.A and Lawson, H.A. (2013) New Conceptual Frameworks for Student
Engagement Research, *Policy, and Practice Review of Educational Research*, 83(3):
432–479

Thomson, P. (2007) *Whole school change: a review of the literature.* London: Arts Council
England

Thomson, P., McGregor, J., Sanders, E and Alexiadou, N. (2009) Changing schools: more
than a lick of paint and a well-orchestrated performance? *Improving Schools* 12(1): 43-
57

Weiss, C.H. (1995) Nothing as practical as a good theory: Exploring theory-based evaluation
for comprehensive community initiatives for children and families. In J. Connell, A.C.
Kubisch, L.B. Schorr, and C.H. Weiss (Eds) *New approaches to evaluating community
initiatives: Concepts, methods and contexts*, 65–92. Washington, DC: The Aspen
Institute.

---

[i] One of the original case study schools had to be omitted from the evaluation at the school's request.
It is a special education school and felt that as such it did not fit with the evaluation as a whole. The
Open Futures team were made aware of this at the time.

[ii] Within educational research there is agreement that such enhanced dispositions towards learning
have long term importance. Research demonstrates that successful learners are those who are open
to continual learning, defining and refining their understandings as they apply them in a variety of
circumstances.   There have been a number of attempts to map the development of this beneficial
learning temperament. For example, the ELLI project developed an assessment tool that aims to
assess a person's 'learning power profile' (Deakin Crick et al., 2004) while an alternative approach
considers 'learning dispositions' (Carr and Claxton, 2002).

[iii] Thomson and colleagues report that following Creative Partnership projects 'Few schools claimed a
causal link between the implementation of project-related changes and the results that the children
achieved in SATs, but still some were prepared to make tentative connections between the two'
(Thomson et al., 2009: 52)

Appendix 1: School 1 Theory of Change

Engaging children in learning		***Parental engagement***

Engaging children in learning

- All pupils will experience OF strands (askit weekly; growit, cookit and fimit minimum of half termly)
- Pupils begin to develop skills across all four strands and are given the opportunities to develop new interests and life skills
- Pupils are able to use enquiry skills developed through askit across the curriculum.
- Pupils increase in confidence, are excited and engaged in learning and can articulate that.

Parental engagement

- School continues to work with core group of 10 parents to further develop relationships
- School finds ways to encourage other parents to attend school events
- Parents gain a better understanding of what the school is trying to achieve and how
- Parents engage with the school curriculum
- Parents are able to support their child in their learning

Pupils are able to apply learning and skills to new situations both inside and outside of the classroom.

Improved pupil achievement and skills for life

Appendix 2: School 2 Theory of Change

| **Engaging children in learning** | | **Engaging parents and families in learning** |

All pupils will experience OF strands
(askit minimum of half termly; growit, cookit and fimit minimum of twice over the school year)

↓

Pupils begin to develop skills across all four strands

↓

Pupils begin to see skills developed through OF strands as relevant tools for learning

↓

Pupils initiate use of skills in planning of topics

↓

Pupils are confident in the use of skills and can articulate the learning that is taking place

↓

Pupils increase in general confidence in learning and are excited and engaged in learning.

School identifies and targets individual parents to come into school to cook with their children

↓

School finds ways of engaging parents and families in growing

↓

Parents and families attend events that involve participation in their child's learning

↓

Parents and families are engaged in the school curriculum and their child's learning

↓

Parents and families are able to support their child in their learning

Pupils are able to apply learning and skills to new situations both inside and outside of the classroom.

↓

Improved pupil achievement

Appendix 3: School 3 Theory of Change

Developing pupils' independent learning skills

Parental engagement

Pupils to experience OF strands
(askit whole school at least weekly; growit, cookit and fimit as appropriate throughout year)

School to arrange events to engage parents in OF strands (possible parent and child P4C sessions and use of outreach centre on school site)

Pupils continue to progress in independent learning skills developed through askit and afternoon skills based topic curriculum; pupils begin to use P4C language in other areas of learning and are able to transfer collaborative learning and problem solving skills.

Pupils develop interests and skills from participating in growit, cookit and film it.

Extend already good relationships with parents.

Parents understand more about what the school is trying to achieve and engage with the school curriculum.

Pupils begin to use skills developed to evaluate own learning and make independent choices in learning.

Parents are able to support their child/ren in their learning.

Pupils are able to apply skills to new situations both inside and outside of the classroom and develop own interests.

Improved pupil achievement and skills for life

Appendix 4: School 4 Theory of Change

Open Futures at the core of school and staff development

Invested senior leadership and governing body time and resources to put Open Futures at the core of school development

↓

Curriculum planning from OF strands to go whole school as of September 2012

↓

Development of OF strand teams (created with staff across the key stages and to include expertise in skills, enthusiasm and leadership)

↓

Opportunities for continued professional development; staff to be supported to take on leadership roles both within school and in supporting other local schools

↓

Created capacity and sustainability so that OF is a permanent part of the school life

Developing pupils' independent learning

Existing pupils have experience of all four strands; these pupils to continue to progress in confidence and skills development across the strands, particularly least confident pupils

↓

New pupils to quickly gain an understanding and enthusiasm for OF strands and approach and to develop key skills (school experiences high mobility, approximately 33%)

↓

Pupils to continue to develop greater independence in learning, pupils able to direct their own learning by applying skills to new areas

Parental and community engagement

To sustain already good parental and community engagement through involvement with OF strands

↓

Parents and wider community gain an understanding of the ethos, approach and skills development involved in Open Futures

↓

Parents and wider community begin to use OF skills and approach at home and in the community and can support their child/ren in doing so

↓

There is a united home-school approach to learning based on the OF ethos and approach

Pupils have the key skills necessary for lifelong learning

Appendix 5: School 5 Theory of Change

Embedding OF in school curriculum	Engaging pupils in learning	Increasing family engagement in learning

Embedding OF in school curriculum

All teachers (including 3 new teachers) to be trained in OF strands and use of new technologies

↓

Champions drive OF strands forward and other staff are brought on board and increase in confidence in teaching strands

↓

OF to feature in performance management

↓

Teachers embed OF strands, plus CountIt, into the curriculum and their long term planning

Engaging pupils in learning

Pupils experience OF strands through the curriculum, participate in a wider range of experiences and develop skills

↓

Engage targeted boys in learning through providing a purpose and inspiration

Pupils are involved in the planning of topics and begin to identify opportunities for learning through OF strands

↓

Improved behaviour and engagement in school life

↓

Pupils take ownership of OF strands, pride in their achievements and the school

↓

Increased attainment in reading (whole-school) and writing (targeted boys)

Increasing family engagement in learning

Engage parents and families in OF strands, particular targeting of 'hard to reach' families in non-threatening learning activities

↓

Parents and families begin to understand the ethos and approach of OF and develop more positive opinions of school

↓

Attendance of target group is improved

↓

Parents and families begin to use OF skills and approach at home and can support their child/ren in their learning

Pupils are engaged and independent learners with the skills and confidence for lifelong learning

Appendix 6: School 6 Theory of Change

Engaging pupils in learning

Engaging parents in learning

Teachers to plan curriculum from four OF strands and develop clear progression of skills

Extend engagement of parents through OF strands (already had success through gardening, extend through other stands).

All pupils experience four strands through curriculum, thus experiencing a wider range of activities and opportunities for learning with real life applications and purpose.

Parents begin to understand the ethos and approach of OF and develop more positive opinions of school.

Pupils increase their knowledge of the world, are more excited by the curriculum and are more curious/motivated to learn.

Parents engage in a dialogue with the school and with their children about learning

Pupils can articulate their learning and justify their opinion – improvements in levels for speaking and listening levels at an earlier age.

Improvement in the rate of progress for pupils' reading and writing levels.

Improved attendance (particularly for target group of pupils)

Families begin to use OF skills and approach at home and parents can support their child/ren in their learning

Pupils develop skills for independent learning at school and beyond.

Pupils are engaged and independent learners with the skills and confidence for lifelong learning

39

Appendix 7: School 7 Theory of Change

Appendix 8

Open Futures
Adult Participant Questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to collect information about the involvement of you and your school in *Open Futures*. This is very **important** in order to maintain and improve quality and to support schools joining the project. Thank you very much for your time and thoughts.

Section 1: About you and your school

S1.1   School name _____ *(Please leave blank if you wish your responses to be anonymous)*

S1.2   What is your role within school (e.g. teaching assistant/parent/governor/teacher/deputy head)? _____

S1.3   What is your role within *Open Futures* (e.g. OF Coordinator/strand leader/participant)? _____

S1.4   How long have you been teaching or working ...

in schools?		in *this* school?	
0-1 year	☐	0-1 year	☐
1-5 years	☐	1-5 years	☐
6-10 years	☐	6-10 years	☐
11-15 years	☐	11-15 years	☐
16+ years	☐	16+ years	☐

Section 2: About *Open Futures* initial training and support

S2.1 How useful and appropriate was the initial training in the various *Open Futures* strands?

growit	Not at all 1	Not very 2	Neither 3	Quite 4	Very 5	Not experienced
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

cookit	Not at all 1	Not very 2	Neither 3	Quite 4	Very 5	Not experienced
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

filmit	Not at all 1	Not very 2	Neither 3	Quite 4	Very 5	Not experienced
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

askit	Not at all 1	Not very 2	Neither 3	Quite 4	Very 5	Not experienced
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

S2.2 Please comment about initial training if appropriate _____

_____

_____

S2.3 How useful and appropriate has the continued support in the various *Open Futures* strands been?

growit	Not at all 1	Not very 2	Neither 3	Quite 4	Very 5	Not experienced
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

cookit	Not at all 1	Not very 2	Neither 3	Quite 4	Very 5	Not experienced
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

filmit	Not at all 1	Not very 2	Neither 3	Quite 4	Very 5	Not experienced
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

askit	Not at all 1	Not very 2	Neither 3	Quite 4	Very 5	Not experienced
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

S2.4 Please comment about support if appropriate _____

_____

_____

Section 3: About your involvement in *Open Futures*

S3.1 Why did you get involved in *Open Futures*? Please tell us if you had any prior relevant experience in any of the *Open Futures* strands.

_____

_____

S3.2 From your point of view, please describe how you expected *Open Futures* to contribute to the pupils' experience in school.

_____

_____

_____

S3.3 How are you involved in *Open Futures* in your school? When and how often does this happen?

_____

_____

_____

Section 4: About the impact of *Open Futures*

S4.1 Overall how well have pupils responded to *Open Futures*?

Not at all	A little	Some	Well	Very well
1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

S4.2 Describe, if you can, how *Open Futures* contributes to the pupils' learning, motivation and development. _____

_____

_____

S4.3 Based on your experience, please tick boxes to indicate level of impact on pupils for each type of impact

	no impact	little impact	moderate impact	strong impact	very strong impact
emotional literacy					
motivation					
self confidence					
motor skills					
peer relationships, cooperation					
relationships with adults (including teachers)					
speaking and listening					
writing					
practical life skills					
asking questions					
science					
technology					
numeracy					
OTHER………………………….. …………………………(please state)					

S4.4 What do you think have been the key benefits of each of the *Open Futures* strands?

growit

_____

_____

cookit

_____

_____

filmit

_____

_____

askit

_____

_____

S4.5 Have there been any barriers to implementing and developing *Open Futures* so far? If so, what?

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return your completed surveys to: **Lucy Tiplady, School of ECLS, King George VI Building, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU.**

Appendix 9: Parental questions

What has your child particularly enjoyed at school this year?

_____

_____

_____

Are you aware of your child doing any of the following **at school**?

	Yes	No
Gardening	☐	☐
Cooking	☐	☐
Making films	☐	☐
Philosophy for Children (P4C)	☐	☐

Has your child talked about any of the following **at home**?

	Yes	No
Gardening	☐	☐
Cooking	☐	☐
Making films	☐	☐
Philosophy for Children (P4C)	☐	☐

Has your child done any of the above activities at home? If yes, please describe …

_____

_____

_____