

Blueprint for Success

Project Findings: Summary

Outcome 1: Initiatives in schools which focus on dealing with the root causes of broken week attendance can have a positive impact on attendance in the long term and can make pupils feel more positive about school.

Outcome 2: Working in partnership with the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector can help schools work in innovative ways and bring in new shared resources to the education sector.

Outcome 3: Both schools and the VCSE sector are struggling for capacity so projects wanting to engage with them need to offer additional resources (both financial and time) to enable stronger engagement and bigger impacts.

Bromford.



**Southern
Brooks**
Registered Charity No. 1510361

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Background

In late 2016, Merlin Housing (now Bromford) and the South Gloucestershire Education Partnership commissioned Bristol University to carry out a research project. This project worked to understand the drivers behind broken week attendance in our local schools in three cluster areas of South Gloucestershire, and recommended best practise interventions to help tackle broken weeks.

Following the publication of the research Merlin Housing commissioned Southern Brooks Community Partnerships to coordinate piloting interventions in schools in South Gloucestershire and measure the impact that these interventions had on broken week attendance. Merlin asked Southern Brooks to work in each of the three research clusters, piloting one intervention across at least 4 schools in each area and to share the results widely with relevant partners.

In order to deliver this project over the last year Southern Brooks has:

- Worked with the VCSE sector to create menus of potential interventions for schools linked to the causes of broken week attendance.
- Presented information about the project at early help meetings throughout South Gloucestershire.
 - Recruited schools and organised school cluster meetings to select interventions.
- Designed a monitoring and evaluation process to measure the impact of interventions.
 - Supported schools and intervention providers to set up and deliver interventions.
- Collected and analysed the data from schools and created this report to disseminate learning.

Bromford.

Blueprint for Success

Project Findings: Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Schools should use targeted interventions that tackle the root causes of attendance issues working closely with the VCSE sector as an effective way of reducing broken weeks.

Recommendation 2: Schools should reach out to VCSE organisations and work in partnership with them to overcome barriers of capacity and resource.

Recommendation 3: Projects seeking to support schools need to understand the challenges schools currently face in terms of budget and capacity. Projects should have long enough time frames to allow schools to work with VCSE sector to bring in additional resource or come with the financial resources necessary to support schools to deliver additional work.



Bromford.

**Southern
Brooks**
Registered Charity No: 1107041
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Blueprint for Success

Project Findings: Headlines

100% of school staff with completed interventions said they think the intervention had a positive impact on the school

100% of school staff with completed interventions said they have seen changes in participants behaviours

100% of school staff would recommend the Blueprint for Success approach to other schools.

'All students found the sessions beneficial. They all have strategies they can use to help them cope and have been using these when they have been struggling. The project has helped us identify students who require further support—these are students who would likely have become school refuses without this initial work. The majority of them are needing less support from school staff.'

However, school staff did not feel that the project had an impact on attendance.

Bromford.

Blueprint for Success

Project Findings: Headlines

48.25% of pupils saw an improvement in overall attendance during the period of the intervention. However the results were mixed with some schools seeing a worsening overall attendance percentage as the most common outcome.

58% of pupils saw a reduction in broken week attendance during the period of the intervention. In contrast to overall attendance percentages no pupils saw an increase in the number of broken weeks during the intervention. There was again a wide variety between schools with some school seeing a 100% decrease in broken weeks with others mostly recording no substantial change.

For the school where longitudinal data was available – further improvements in attendance were seen over the long term in the terms following the intervention.

71% of pupils felt more positive about school at the end of the intervention.

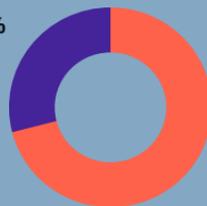
Bromford.

Outcome 1

Initiatives in schools which focus on dealing with the root causes of broken week attendance can have a positive impact on attendance in the long term and can make pupils feel more positive about school.

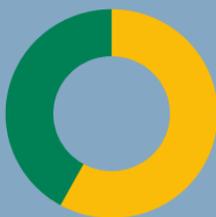
Across the interventions 71% of pupils felt more positive about school at the end of the intervention. This was the most common indicator to see an improvement.

29%



71%

42%



58%

Across the interventions 58% of pupils saw a reduction in the number of broken weeks during the period of the intervention.

In schools where we have been able to collect longitudinal data the improvements in attendance outcomes increased overtime.

In addition to improvement in attendance outcomes schools also noted that these holistic interventions targeting the causes of broken week attendance had wider positive outcomes for schools and pupils including:

- More open relationships between pupils and staff
- Improved self-esteem for pupils

Bromford.

Outcome 2

Working in partnership with the VCSE sector can help schools work in innovative ways and bring in new shared resources to the education sector.

In the Yate and Staple Hill cluster schools worked closely with Southern Brooks to apply for funding to deliver a Blueprint for Success intervention. This funding has been applied for in a consortium with one school holding the fund for other partners. Project delivery will be completed largely by school staff with the support of VCSE organisations, to make up for capacity shortages in schools. This has:

- Brought in £10,000 of extra resource into South Gloucestershire schools.
- Shown the value which the voluntary sector can add to schools by supporting them to find different funding streams and to plug capacity gaps through partnership working.

In the Kingswood and Cadbury Heath cluster Southern Brooks was able to use it's own resources to cover the cost for primary schools to attend training to up-skill staff in using sand box techniques to work with children who were struggling with broken weeks.



Bromford.

Southern
Brooks
Registered Charity No: 1107041
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Outcome 3

Both schools and VCSE organisations are struggling for capacity so projects wanting to engage with them need to offer additional resources (both financial and time) to enable stronger engagement and bigger impacts.

Both schools and VCSE organisations nationally are facing a squeeze on resources. Schools in South Gloucestershire are particularly hard hit by this, recent reports suggest that South Gloucestershire schools have the lowest amount of per pupil funding in England. In this context schools in particular have struggled to find the resources and capacity necessary to engage with this project, even while recognising that it was a needed and positive intervention for their pupils. This has meant that a number of schools who initially engaged with the project have had to drop out during the year and that the project has been unable to pilot the intervention and collect data from as many schools as was initially hoped.

Intervention provider: 'it isn't a very long time to be able to carry out the work for the project research as it only included Term 1-4 and as a therapist delivering the interventions and having 3 schools signed up to the project it hasn't given me much time to do this'

School: 'ultimately, I feel that we need to wait until the school have the capacity and wouldn't want to push for it to go ahead sooner than that- as I am aware of how busy schools and staff are, especially where there is absence and the research will add extra pressure.'

School: 'we fully intended on implementing... however, unexpected staff changes and budgetary constraints have meant that we have been unable to do this so far'

Bromford.

Patchway and Filton



Top 3 reasons for broken week attendance:

- Resilience and mental health
- Physical health
- Valuing education

Initial meeting attended by 5 schools. Schools selected an intervention to support young people with their resilience and mental health through a mixture of one-to-one sessions and group case work.

4 schools ended up engaging with the intervention and at the date of writing we have data from 3 schools as one school is only just starting the intervention. See outcome 3 for discussions about capacity and why some schools were forced to delay or drop out of the programme.

39% of pupils saw an improvement in their overall attendance percentage and 37.5% of pupils saw a reduction in broken weeks.

The intervention helped 68.75% of pupils to feel more positive about school.

Bromford.

Patchway and Filton

In the school where we were able to collect longitudinal attendance data positive outcomes for attendance indicators went up in the terms following the interventions. 50% of pupils saw an improvement in overall attendance during the period of the intervention but 75% showed improved attendance in following terms. Similarly the percentage of pupils who had reduced broken week went up from 50% during the project to 62% in the following terms. This suggests that the impact on attendance may be more apparent over the long term however, as we were only able to collect longitudinal data for 1 school more data is required to corroborate this.

All pupils who filled in questionnaires felt positively about the project and felt that it had helped them to improve their confidence and manage their own mental health. Comments from pupils included:

- I know how to deal with anxiety more
- More confident and how to help my mental health.
- I'm not silent
- My feelings have become more happy and proactive

Parents surveyed similarly felt positive about the intervention: 'x really enjoyed the sessions and interacting with the children he probably wouldn't mix with otherwise. He found the coping exercises helpful and does them when he feels the need. I'm so glad he was lucky enough to be offered a place.'

These comments reflect the fact that schools noticed a myriad of benefits to schools and pupils from the interventions not just improvements in attendance. These positive outcomes may explain the long term improvements in attendance witnessed in the longitudinal case study.

Bromford.

Yate and Staple Hill



Top 3 reasons for broken week attendance:

- Valuing education/ parental experience of education
- Resilience/ family organisation
- Health

Initial meeting attended by 4 schools. 3 primary schools elected to do a intervention focused on developing resilience and family organisation through a family learning programme. 1 secondary school selected an intervention focused on developing resilience for pupils through workshop sessions but was unable to share data with the project.

As there was a cost associated with the primary interventions, Southern Brooks supported the primaries to put in a joint funding bid. See outcome 2 for a discussion of how working in partnership with the third sector can lead to innovative approaches to financing. Due to the amount of time required to complete the funding process at the time of this report there is not yet any data from this intervention, as it is only just getting under way in schools.

Bromford.



Southern Brooks
Registered Charity No. 1107041
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

1

1

Kingswood and Cadbury Heath



Top 3 reasons for broken week attendance:

- Valuing education
- Resilience/ parenting
- Mental health & overall health

Initial meeting attended by 4 schools. 3 primary schools elected to do a intervention focused on supporting pupils with their mental health and resilience by training staff on how to use sandbox techniques. 1 secondary school was unable to take on any interventions due to capacity. The 3 primaries were given the opportunity to access staff training, for free, with the costs covered by Southern Brooks. Of the 3 schools signed up 1 school did not attend the training due to staffing issues, of the 2 schools who attended the training only 1 has been able to go on to deliver the intervention due to capacity issues.

100% of pupils who undertook the intervention saw an decrease in the number of broken weeks during the period of the intervention.

The intervention helped 75% of pupils to feel more positive about school.

Bromford.

Blueprint for Success

What's Next?

Following the year long pilot many of the schools which engaged with the project continue to deliver interventions, using the new skills staff have developed and the new funding streams schools have accessed thanks to the partnerships between schools and VCSE organisations.

Based on recommendations 1 and 2 we would encourage other schools in South Gloucestershire and beyond to use a Blueprint for Success approach to deal with issues of broken week attendance. For schools in South Gloucestershire, the full research report commissioned by Merlin Housing (now Bromford) and the South Gloucestershire Education Partnership along with the menus of voluntary sector partners created for this project can be found at the website address below.

To access the full research project and to the the lists of VCSE providers who offered interventions to schools through this project visit:

www.southernbrooks.org.uk/blueprint-for-success

Bromford.



**Southern
Brooks**
Registered Charity No: 1107041
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

1 3