

# Benefits Realisation Report for the Board

Audience: Partnerships for Schools (PFS) Board  
Date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 2010

## FINAL DRAFT

### Purpose:

- To provide an analysis of the progress BSF schools have made against national measures.
- To use the data to provide a picture of impact that the BSF process, amongst other strategic approaches, has had on schools involved in the programme
- To raise issues and further questions to ensure evaluations are more secure
- To draw some conclusions that will help to inform further developments of capital programmes.

### Executive Summary

An analysis of data relating to attainment, attendance and contextual value added (CVA) for 29 schools involved in the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme was undertaken. The analysis indicates that significant improvements have been made in around two thirds of the schools between 2006 and 2009. This is the period covering the period from the start of the BSF process to the end of the first full academic year after completion of the build.

The data for this period on attainment shows that a substantial majority of these schools made average year on year gains in the percentage of pupils achieving the equivalent of a minimum of 5 A\*-C grades, including English and Mathematics at a significantly greater rate than the national average. Out of the 29 schools in the sample 65% improved at or above the national average with 62% of these schools improving at a rate above the national average. The highest individual average rise was 11.2 percent. The worst result was an average decline of -4.67%. In comparing the average rate of progress made over 5 years from 2004-2009 with 3 years between 2006 and 2009, 69% of the schools improved at the same or greater rate in the last 3 year period than over the whole 5 year period. This indicates acceleration in improvement from 2006-2009.

In relation to attendance, in 73% of schools in the sample the percentage of sessions missed due to overall absence (authorised and unauthorised combined) showed a decline between 2006/7 and 2008/9. The overall rate of decline in absence is greater than the average rate of decline nationally.

Data on CVA is less conclusive as the system for calculating it changed in 2009.

The involvement in BSF was one of a number of interventions for the schools involved. Almost all the schools were performing below the national expectations of 30% of pupils achieving the standard of 5A\*-C GCSE grades including English and Mathematics. Further investigation is needed to identify the specific impact of BSF.

## **Background to the report:**

This report focuses on the evidence of the extent of impact on attainment and attendance from the sample of 29 schools. These schools were fully operational post BSF build in September 2008 and have figures available up till 2009. The evidence of impact is over a short period of time and data will need to be examined annually until at least one full cohort of students has passed through each school.

The data from the schools is compared with both average achievements across each school's Local Authority and national averages.

29 schools were selected from 181 schools that Partnerships for Schools has worked with. Excluded from the list used for this report are:

- 37 that are primary schools, special schools or 6<sup>th</sup> form centres
- 28 where funding was for ICT only
- 13 that are academies
- 1 that has no GCSE students
- 73 that are recent openers in 2009 or 2010 and so are identified as too early for an evaluation of impact.

The context of the sample of schools is that they are almost all the schools that started from a very low position in relation to national averages and expectations for attainment at GCSE. The vast majority still have attainment in GCSE with English and Mathematics at below the national average with most performing below the floor target of 40% A\*-C with English and Mathematics. Many are involved in the national challenge. They are, therefore, the schools that have been identified as the hard to improve and have had interventions from many groups. The BSF influence has been a central part of Local Authority Strategy for Change and evaluation of impact needs to recognise this.

## **Main Findings:**

This section sets out the main findings from the analysis of the data from the sample of 29 schools.

### **The percentage of pupils achieving a minimum of 5 A\*-C GCSE's with English and Maths in the sample schools.**

- The average percentage rise in pupils gaining the equivalent at least 5 A\*-C grades including English and Mathematics over three years across all 29 schools is 3.07% compared to a 1.33% rise nationally over the 3 year period between 2006 and 2009. This is the equivalent of a 9% rise in the percentage of pupils reaching the 5 A\*-C equivalent standard over the three years compared to a 4% rise nationally.
- Out of the 29 schools in the sample 65% improved at or above the national average with 62% of these schools improving at a rate above the national average. The highest individual average rise was 11.2 percent. The worst result was an average decline of -4.67%.
- In comparing the average rate of progress made over 5 years from 2004-2009 with 3 years between 2006 and 2009, 69% of the schools improved at the same or greater rate in the last

3 year period than over the whole 5 year period. This indicates acceleration in improvement from 2006-2009.

- Provisional 5 A\*-C with English and Mathematics results in 2010 in 22 of the schools from which data is available indicate a further acceleration in the period 2007-2010. Over 3 years 2007-2010 68% of these schools made more rapid progress than for the 3 years 2006-2009. Only 5% of the 22 schools showed an average decline between 2007-2010 compared with 20% of the 29 school sample in the period between 2006 and 2009.
- There are 7 schools of the 29 that were part of Quick Win projects. Of these projects 4 out of 7 (57%) have seen a decline in the percentage of pupils gaining at least 5 A\*-C grades with English and Mathematics over 3 years from 2006-2009. In the 5 year period from 2004-2009 only one of the schools has shown a decline against this standard. Early indications from provisional 2010 results indicate that almost all schools are now making annual average rates gains in attainment.
- Of the BSF conventional and PFI funded projects following the full process 91% showed improvement over the three year period. 63% of these schools improved at or above the national rate. 28% showed improvement at a rate below the national average. 9% showed a decline in attainment over the three year period.

#### **The impact in Local Authorities**

The sample of 29 schools comes from 13 different Local Authorities. Three of these authorities were involved in BSF Quick Win projects only. Two more had Quick Win and full BSF projects. The other 8 authorities were involved in full BSF projects funded either by Private Finance Initiative (PFI) or by Conventional funding streams.

- In all the Local Authorities involved in BSF the average rise in 5 A\*-C equivalent grades with English and Mathematics across all their schools equals or exceeds the national average in the period 2006-2009. In 85% of these Local Authorities that rate of improvement exceeds the national average. The average improvement rate across all these LA's is 2.41% compared with the national average of 1.33%
- 57% of the schools in the sample equalled or exceeded the average rate of progress for all secondary schools within their Local Authority over the 5 year period 2004-2009, and 62% equalled or exceeded the average rate over the 3 years 2006-2009.

#### **Percentage of pupils achieving Level 1 and Level 2 thresholds**

- Over a five year period, the average percentage point movement in pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold (the equivalent of a minimum of 5 A\*-C GCSE's not including English and Mathematics) has been positive in all 29 sample schools. The most significant change has occurred at Park Hall School in Solihull where the percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold has increased from 30% to 85%.
- The average percentage point improvement for those achieving the Level 2 threshold for all 29 sample schools over a five year period is 4.6% each year. This exceeds the estimated national annual average improvement of 3.3% based on figures for 2005-2008. (The system changed in 2009 making it difficult to make real comparisons)

- The overall progress of those achieving the Level 1 threshold has been less significant than those achieving Level 2. The average percentage point improvement for the data set over a five year period is 1.3% annually.
- 79% of the sample schools have seen a continuous annual increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the Level 1 threshold.

### **Attendance:**

The data available for this part of the evaluation has been analysed over 2 academic years – 2006-07 and 2008-9.

- In 73% of schools in the sample the percentage of sessions missed due to overall absence (authorised and unauthorised combined) showed a decline between 2006/7 and 2008/9
- In 52% of schools in the sample the percentage of sessions missed due to overall absence (authorised and unauthorised combined) showed a decline in overall absence at a greater rate than the national average.
- Rates of persistent absence also declined in the sample of schools with 90% schools reducing rates, with 66% at a rate greater than the national average.
- The percentage of sessions missed due to authorised absence declined in 76% of the schools and at a greater rate than the national average in 59% of schools
- The Percentage of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence declined in 45% of schools and was at a greater rate the national average in all of these schools.

### **Contextual Value Added**

Because of the change in the way CVA is calculated it is not possible to show any trends over the 3 year period. Changes were made in 2009 to enable attainment in English and Mathematics to be included in the calculation. The evidence that comes from the analysis indicates that in 53% of the sample schools the Contextual Value Added scores improved from 2008 to 2009

### **Methodology:**

29 schools were selected from 181 schools that Partnerships for Schools has worked with. Excluded from the list used for this report are:

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Nationally available data relating to:

- Attainment;
- CVA;
- Attendance;

were used to identify the differences achieved at whole school level and to compare these with relative rates of progress across all schools in the LA and nationally over a 3 year period – September 2006 to July 2009. A three year period was chosen because it is the time range that the Department for Education uses to provide information on trends. It also represents the wider time frame in which the BSF process takes place. With the availability of provisional 2010 GCSE data for 22 of the schools, a further analysis took place for 5 and 3 year periods leading up to 2010.

To identify differences in attainment national performance tables available on the Department for Education website were used to identify:

- The percentage of pupils in each school achieving at least 5 A\*-C GCSE equivalent grades including English and Mathematics
- The percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 qualifications floor target of at least 5 A\*-C GCSE equivalent grades (not necessarily including English and Mathematics)
- The percentage of pupils achieving the Level 1 qualifications of at least 5 A\*-G GCSE equivalent grades (not necessarily including English and Mathematics)

The differences between the 2006 and 2009 achievements were calculated and set out as a 3 year rolling average change. The data for 2007 and 2008 was examined to identify any surprising performances including one off variations to the predominant trend. A five year rolling average – 2004-9 was also calculated. Data was taken from the Department for Education Performance Tables.

To identify changes in Contextual Valued Added (CVA) scores data has been taken from 2006 to 2009 and the difference calculated. Trends in improvement over that time have been identified. The evaluation could not be carried out effectively due to the changes in the way that CVA was calculated that were introduced in 2009.

To evaluate the impact of BSF on attendance figures data has been taken over the same 3 year period. The percentage improvement over the 3 years has been calculated using 4 different measures:

- Overall reduction in absence both authorised and unauthorised
- Separate figures for each of these
- Percentage reduction in persistent absence

The figures for these are supplied by the Department for Education..

Comparison with statistical neighbours of the sample schools was considered. However, the variations amongst statistical neighbours were so great that no trends were evident.

## **Summary:**

Whilst the exercise has begun to identify trends that demonstrate impact, there are several other influences other than BSF. Further investigation is needed to confirm any influence that BSF has on school improvement when compared to national headline data. However, the sample of schools is significant taking account of the full BSF programme.

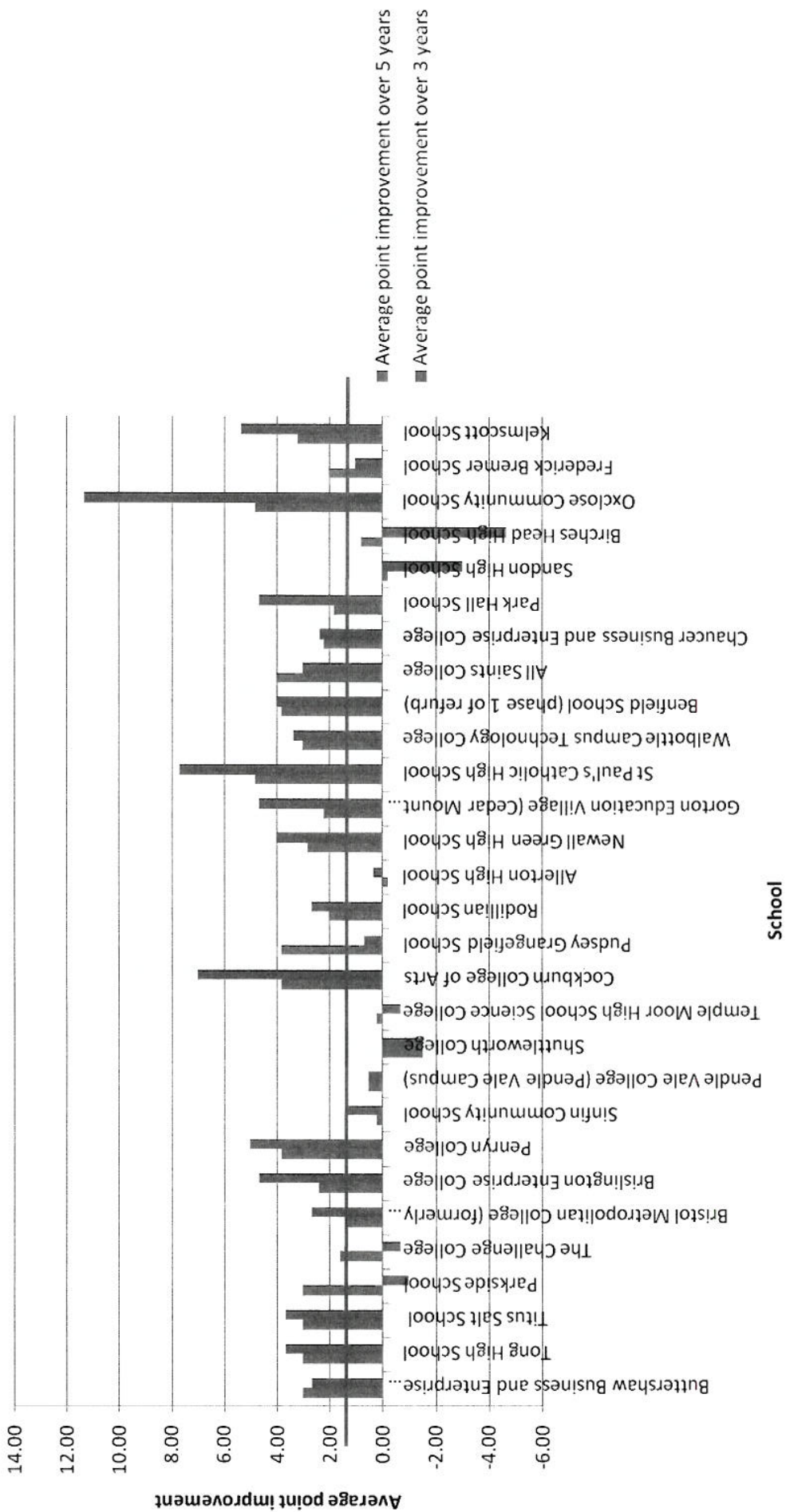
The effect of BSF would be more apparent if a full evaluation of the starting points for schools was available from the start of the project. This could include reference to national headline data but could also take account of other measures and indicators used by the schools themselves, and of local contexts. It would also help to identify the influence of the BSF process itself. For future Capital Programmes it would be helpful to be clear about the standards and achievements at the starting point.

There are clear patterns of improvement that compare favourably with both local and national data. The patterns are significant and need further investigation to provide explanations about the impact of the BSF process. As these schools have only been fully operational for two years, the evidence of impact is over too short period of time to be secure and data will need to be examined annually until at least one full cohort of students has passed through each school. This will provide a long term robust view of the impact of the programme on pupils' engagement and attainment. The development of more robust data in other areas in which achievement is important, such as behaviour and post-16 involvement in education, employment and training. This would help provide a wider view of the influence of Capital Programmes on the achievements and life chances of pupils.

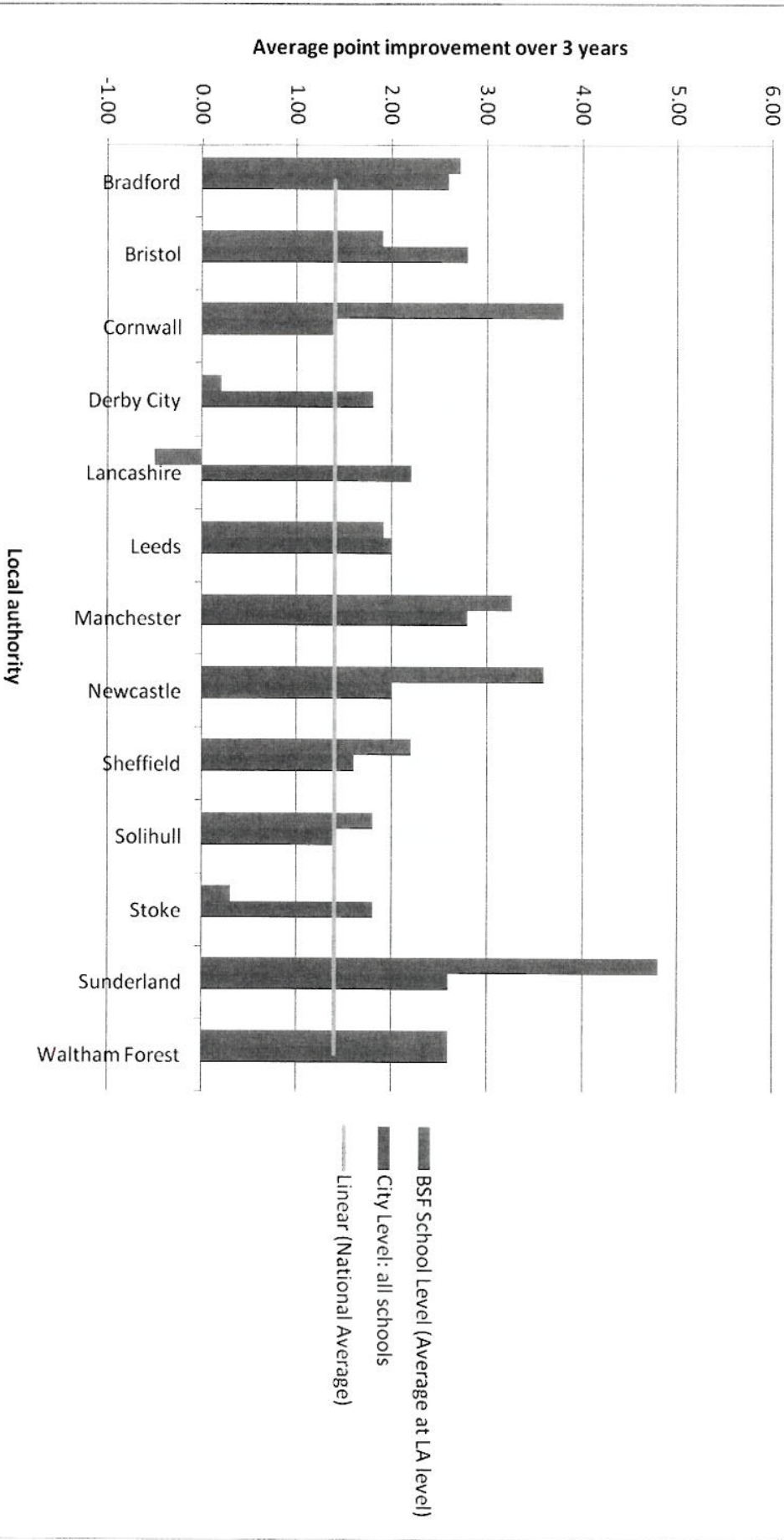
The patterns of improvement in this sample of schools are particularly significant because of the low starting point for many of the schools. Almost all started with attainment well below national expectations. Most schools are still performing below national floor targets. What is significant is the strong pattern of improvement over time and the clear differences in attainment in most of the schools. The study should be continued until the first full cohort of pupils has passed through each school in order to secure the longer term view of progress and impact.

The difference in attainment across Local Authorities themselves is also significant. Most of the BSF schools exceed average improvement rates across their Local Authorities. The reasons for this need further investigation with reference to how well Local Authorities met Readiness to Deliver Criteria and the quality of the Strategies for Change and the effect preparing for these had on their effectiveness.

# Year on year comparison of GCSE attainment over 5 years and 3 years at school level : sample schools



## Year on year comparison over 5 years of GCSE attainment in BSF schools compared to all schools at LA and national level





## Year on year comparison over 3 years of GCSE attainment in BSF schools compared to all schools at LA and national level

