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Evidence for Excellence in Education

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation Impact Assessment: Year 2

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National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

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The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation Impact Assessment: Year 2

Suzanne Straw

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Executive Summary

1   About The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation ('SpringBoard') was established in 2012. It is a pioneering charity that offers fully-funded places at accredited state and independent boarding schools ('member schools') to disadvantaged pupils who will best benefit from a boarding education but whose parents cannot afford the fees. SpringBoard also has a wider agenda of increasing social mobility; SpringBoard pupils are supported to help raise educational aspirations in their home communities through sharing their experiences and acting as mentors to other young people.

The SpringBoard model includes tripartite support for pupils from SpringBoard itself, partner organisations and member schools who work together to ensure that pupils are well suited and prepared for a boarding education, matched to the right school for them and receive high-quality help and support, all year round. SpringBoard is currently working with 18 accredited partner organisations that assist in the application process, prepare pupils to join boarding school, and support pupils and their families during term time and holidays. Its current 35 member schools provide academic and pastoral support to smooth the transition, help pupils to adjust to the academic expectations, make friends and take full advantage of extra-curricular opportunities. SpringBoard hosts an online pupil portal; facilitates annual fellowship events for pupils, families and partners to celebrate achievements and encourage pupils to be ambassadors within their community; undertakes screening of pupils; attends pupil and parent forums hosted by partner organisations in their community to raise awareness of SpringBoard; and visits pupils at boarding school. SpringBoard is also soon to launch a parent portal to provide additional support to SpringBoard pupils' parents.

A total of 123 pupils have joined SpringBoard to date. The first cohort of 25 pupils started at ten boarding schools in September 2013. Thirty-six pupils started at 20 boarding schools in September 2014 and 62 pupils started at 29 boarding schools in September 2015.

2   About the evaluation

In September 2013, SpringBoard commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake a five-year evaluation to December 2018. This is the second report based on consultations with SpringBoard pupils and member schools. Subsequent reports are planned for 2016 and 2018. The aim of the evaluation is to explore the effectiveness and impacts of SpringBoard. Details on the two strands of the evaluation – research with SpringBoard pupils and research with school staff - are provided below.

The evaluation with pupils includes:

- baseline surveys on joining their new school (between October and December)
- annual follow-up surveys at the end of each academic year (during June and July)
- eight to ten telephone interviews at the end of each academic year (during June and July)

- the analysis of attainment and progression data using the National Pupil Database (NPD)[1] to be undertaken in autumn 2016 and 2018.

Table 1 below provides details on the number of Cohort 1 and 2 pupils completing the surveys to date. It also gives predicted numbers (in blue font) for baseline and follow-up surveys with Cohort 3 pupils and follow-ups with Cohort 1 and 2 pupils in summer 2016. All SpringBoard pupils have completed the surveys to date. Where numbers at follow-up are lower, this is due to pupils completing or leaving the programme.

Table 1   Pupils completing the baseline and end-point surveys

	Baseline survey	**First follow-up**	**Second follow-up**
Cohort 1	25	25	23
Started Sept 2013	Autumn 2013	Summer 2014	Summer 2015
Cohort 2	36	34	34
Started Sept 2014	Autumn 2014	Summer 2015	Summer 2016
Cohort 3	62	62	62
Started Sept 2015	Autumn 2015	Summer 2016	Summer 2017
Totals	123	121	119

The impact assessment also includes research with staff from member schools who are being asked to complete an online qualitative proforma at the end of each academic year. Table 2 below provides details on participation to date.

Table 2   Staff completing the annual proforma

	Completed first proforma	**Completed follow-up proforma**
Cohort 1 start schools: 10 schools	8 staff from 8 schools	9 staff from 8 schools
Started Sept 2013	Summer 2014	Summer 2015
Cohort 2 start schools: 12 schools	14 staff from 11 schools	
Started Sept 2014	Summer 2015	
Total	22	9

Given the small number of pupils placed in schools during SpringBoard's first and second years of operation, the findings in this report must be treated with some caution. At this stage, the findings provide perceptions of impact and samples are too small to explore sub-group differences, for example by gender or cohort. Future reports will provide more robust evidence of impact due to increased pupil survey responses (which will be over 100) and the analysis of NPD data comparing SpringBoard pupils' GCSE and A-level examination results to those of pupils from their original schools.

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[1] The National Pupil Database (NPD) contains detailed information about pupils in schools and colleges in England. The data includes test and exam results, prior attainment and progression at different Key Stages for pupils in the state sector, and attainment data for students in non-maintained special schools, sixth-form and further education colleges.

3 Key findings

3.1 How have pupils settled at school?

As a result of the effective tripartite support provided by SpringBoard, member schools and partners, pupils have made a successful transition to boarding school. In surveys and interviews, the vast majority of pupils reported that they:

- felt comfortable at school

- felt part of the school community

- had friends at school

- had people at school who cared about them

- liked boarding school

- were happy at school

- knew who to talk to if they had a problem at school.

As might be expected, most pupils reported that they had faced initial challenges relating to missing home and making new friends, the academic level and pace, and standards of conduct. However, with support from school staff, pupils had quickly adjusted to the new environment and expectations. Staff reported that only a minority of pupils still needed support to meet academic demands and expected standards of behaviour.

Pupils were very positive about the support provided by partners in relation to preparing them for school and during the school year and holidays. However, a small number of pupils felt that their partner organisation could have offered more support, particularly during the first term, in addition to preparing them for the expected standard of conduct and school work and explaining what an average day would comprise. Some pupils reported that they would have liked to have been visited at school during the first term rather than emailed and some commented that they would welcome ongoing contact as they progressed into their second and third years.

3.2 What are the key factors for pupils' successful integration in boarding school?

Teachers were asked what were the key factors for pupils' successful transition to, and integration in, boarding school. Figure 1 over the page presents their responses. However, a number of staff stressed that, although extra care and support might be needed, it was important to treat SpringBoard pupils in the same way as all pupils, allowing them the time and space to settle and making them feel the same as everyone else.

Figure 1: Key factors for pupils' successful transition to, and integration in, boarding school

School factors
- Strong drive from senior management in school to ensure the programme is firmly embedded into the culture of the school and there is universal buy-in.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of expectations and are adequately prepared to support the pupil(s) and understand the challenges the pupil(s) may face.
- Regular collaboration of staff with the designated SpringBoard lead in school.
- Open sharing of information on SpringBoard pupils' progress, difficulties and plans for support.

Prior to pupil starting school
- Support from partners in application process, providing in-depth information on what to expect academically and socially and what an average day will be like, and liaison with parents/carers and school staff.
- Meetings between boarding school staff and key staff from original schools to discuss expectations and the individual pupil's characteristics.
- Meetings between pupils, parents/carers and key boarding school staff so that all are aware of expectations (particularly the academic standards) and good lines of communication are established.
- (For looked after children) close collaboration with pupils' social workers and foster carers prior to the pupil undertaking the assessment process.
- Testing of academic ability to enable support to be tailored and to initiate an open discussion of need.
- Designated staff members being available for pupils from the first contact.
- Taster visits to pupils' school of choice, ideally with a boarding experience.

Once pupil has started school
- Providing intensive (e.g. two days) integration programmes and time for pupils to 'find their feet'.
- Assigning pupils a key worker/tutor/mentor who convenes regular meetings and review sessions and provides mentoring, coaching and other necessary support, as appropriate (particularly key in the first term).
- Ensuring appropriate academic support and tutoring and time management coaching is in place for pupils.
- Assigning an older pupil as a mentor or 'buddy'.
- Support from peers and pupil's house.
- Monitoring and support from partner organisations, particularly in the first term but also at key transition points and times of greater need.
- Having a sufficient number of bursary pupils to remove the pressure from pupils, both socially and in terms of staff expectations.

Support for family
- Meetings between parents/carers and school staff prior to pupils starting their new school, followed by regular ongoing communication.
- Providing a link staff member and regular mentoring and support, as needed: 'embracing the pupil and their family'.

Collaboration between schools and partner organisations
- Open, honest and close relationships between schools and partner organisations: 'It is important to hear both sides of the story to judge how well pupils are settling'.

Pupil characteristics
- The individual character and motivations of the pupil can affect how well they settle at school. Schools stress the importance of selecting the 'right' pupil.

3.3 What impacts are being realised?

Although findings to date are based on a small-scale consultation, the evidence suggests that the SpringBoard programme is resulting in a range of impacts for its target groups. Figure 2 below summaries the impacts on pupils, and Figure 3 over the page provides an overview of the impacts on school staff, peers, families/carers and home communities.

Figure 2: Impacts on pupils

Improved academic progress and attainment
- Boarding school has enhanced pupils' academic experience in terms of, for instance, the range of subjects available, small class sizes, the quality of teaching and facilities, individual support and being surrounded by highly-motivated peers.
- Nine out of ten pupils agreed that their boarding school was helping them to get good qualifications and was better than their original school in helping them to achieve their academic potential, with four out of five reporting that they were doing well at school. Pupils also reported that they were working harder at boarding school and felt challenged by the raised academic standards.

Raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects
- Most pupils had high aspirations prior to changing schools but, for those who did not, boarding school had raised their aspirations.
- Being at boarding school has influenced half of all pupils' career aspirations, with nine out of ten planning to go to university and more than two-fifths having a definite idea of what they want to do. Most are aspiring to professional careers such as law, accountancy, engineering, computing and health and scientific careers.
- Nine out of ten pupils reported that being at boarding school had changed their life for the better and that it would give them a better chance of getting a good job than their original school, or the school they otherwise would have attended.
- In some cases, pupils' raised aspirations have led to concrete results, for example where they have been offered university places in subjects including medicine, engineering, geography, anthropology and biomedical sciences.

Improved communication and social skills
- Pupils reported that boarding school had developed their communication and social skills and their confidence in social situations.
- Pupils commented that it had been easy to make new friends, with many having made friends with pupils from diverse backgrounds. This had led to their increased awareness of social diversity.
- Pupils and school staff reported very few problems with pupils adjusting to their new peer group with staff reporting the 'deepening' of friendships in pupils' second year.

Increased confidence, independence and resilience
- Although confidence is an attribute looked for in selection, pupils' confidence had increased since joining their new school, with four-fifths reporting that they were confident in social situations, speaking in class and in their academic ability.
- Pupils also noted their greater independence and personal responsibility in addition to a growth in their resilience through adapting to living away from home.
- Pupils reported feeling comfortable and happy at school and part of the school community. They felt that there were people at school who cared about them and they knew who to go to if they had a problem.

Development of extra-curricular interests and abilities
- Pupils reported that they had access to a larger number and wider range of extra-curricular activities than at their previous school.
- Most pupils had fully involved themselves in school life through, for example, taking part in sports, the arts, fund raising and other school societies. Some were working towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or had taken on responsibilities such as prefect or a member of the house council.

Benefit of a stable and secure environment
- Many of the impacts noted above - particularly raised aspirations and improved academic progress and attainment - have been realised as a result of pupils being provided with a stable and safe school environment, with more than three-quarters of pupils agreeing that boarding school had helped them stay away from bad influences.

Figure 3: Impacts on school staff, peers, families/carers and home communities

Impacts on school staff

- Development of knowledge and skills as a tutor and key worker
- Personal satisfaction gained from the experience of working with a more diverse and disadvantaged group of pupils.
- Staff bringing more sensitivity to their work with all pupils due to their developing awareness of pupils' potential difficulties and challenges.
- Increased collaboration through sharing information on bursary pupils.
- Enhanced communication skills through liaising with parents whose first language is not English.
- Increased focus on recruiting bursary pupils and, in one school, increased work with looked after children.

Impacts on SpringBoard pupils' peers

- Staff frequently reported that SpringBoard pupils were well liked and that many acted as postive role models. A number had significantly contributed to school life - both academically and through extra-curricular activities - and had positively affected others by their enthusiam, warmth and intellectual inquisitiveness.
- Most schools reported that they already had a diverse pupil population but, where this was not the case, taking SpringBoard pupils had raised awareness of social, socio-economic and ethnic diversity, broken down barriers, prejudice or ignorance and supported staff in strengthening an accepting and tolerant ethos.

Impacts on pupils' familes/carers and home communities

- Families/carers and friends at home were said to have reacted with feelings of pride and happiness when their child or peer secured a SpringBoard bursary.
- There has been a 'ripple effect' in some pupils' home communities where other family members or young people are now aspiring to follow in the footsteps of SpringBoard pupils, or have raised their aspirations.

3.4 How effective is SpringBoard?

Staff have been wholly positive about the SpringBoard programme commenting on its professional and efficient management and the care and understanding staff take in working with schools and pupils. They have also praised the training they have been provided with, the openness of SpringBoard staff to new ideas and ways of working and their focus on looked after children. Pupils, too, have been very positive about SpringBoard and all would recommend the experience to other young people.

In the first and second year of the evaluation, staff and pupils were asked for their suggestions for enhancements to the SpringBoard programme and the majority struggled to think of anything that needed changing, reporting that the programme already worked very effectively. However, a small number suggested minor tweaks that could be made. In the first year, these related to: enhancing the application process; increased tailoring of partners' support; and providing opportunities for staff across schools to share practice. SpringBoard

staff have demonstrated commitment to continuously improving the programme by actively responding to these suggestions. In the second year of the evaluation, a small number of further suggestions for improving the programme were made which are set out in the recommendations section below.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The findings to date from the two-year impact assessment are overwhelmingly positive. Pupils and staff have reported a wide range of positive impacts as a result of pupils moving to boarding schools, and remarkably few negative consequences.

Effective working relationships have been developed between the partner organisations, original and member schools, pupils and families/carers, which has enabled pupils to settle quickly in their new school. The unique and comprehensive network of support that the SpringBoard model provides appears to be central to its success.

A range of impacts have been realised for pupils including: improved academic progress and attainment; raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects; improved communication and social skills and increased awareness of social diversity; increased confidence, independence and resilience; and the development of extra-curricular interests and abilities. Many of the above impacts have been achieved as a result of pupils benefitting from a stable and secure school environment.

Staff have also benefited in terms of, for example: the development of knowledge and skills as a tutor and key worker; personal satisfaction; increased collaboration; and improved communication and skills in working with parents. Furthermore, impacts are beginning to be seen in SpringBoard pupils' home communities where they are acting as positive role models and inspiring others to follow in their footsteps.

4.2 Recommendations

Below are a number of recommendations for the ongoing enhancement of the SpringBoard programme.

- Partners play an important role in supporting young people before and during their time at school and in the school holidays. Although feedback on partners is overall very positive, some partners need to set in place mechanisms to keep in touch more regularly with the pupil(s) they have placed, particularly during the pupil's first term at their new school but also on an ongoing basis at key transition and pressure points, as needed. In addition, as far as is possible, partners should focus on face-to-face contact with pupils, again particularly in their first term.

- Many pupils find the level and amount of school work challenging at first and some struggle on a more ongoing basis. A number of partners and schools have provided personalised tuition to students in subjects in which they are struggling, or in which they have been used to a different teaching style and/or syllabus. This has been particularly important before pupils have started school and during the first term. However, the evaluation findings suggest that pupils' academic support needs can fluctuate as they move through the school and face key examination periods. Although many schools are

providing pupils with effective support on an ongoing basis, it would be useful for all schools, in conjunction with partner organisations as appropriate, to continually monitor pupils' academic support needs and provide additional support when it is needed.

- Although issues are rarely seen or serious, in their regular reviews with pupils, staff in member schools and partner organisations should continue to ensure that they discuss any negative reactions that pupils may be facing from their peers. This is particularly key in the first year.

- It would be useful for SpringBoard to consider undertaking additional academic and psychometric testing of pupils prior to placing them in boarding schools. This will help schools to set in place immediate support to meet pupils' individual needs.

- Pupils have suggested a range of ways in which their transition to boarding school could be made smoother which SpringBoard, member schools and partners might consider adopting. These include: setting up a system in which pupils are linked with a pen-pal in another SpringBoard school; encouraging all schools to offer pupils an opportunity to board during the selection process; and providing pupils with more information as to what an average day at their chosen school entails.

- In selecting pupils, SpringBoard could place more focus on young people from less stable backgrounds where schools have the infrastructure and skills to support them.

- In terms of the placement of pupils, SpringBoard could, in some cases, increase communication with housemasters and mistresses to allow a more knowledgeable placement of pupils, including providing more information on pupils' backgrounds and requirements and setting in place the right support from the outset.

- SpringBoard has a growing number of member schools and partners. Within this context, it is important that it continues to support schools and partners to share learning and effective practice, by facilitating regular events and brokering collaboration and networks.

- Partner organisations should ensure that they continue to create opportunities for SpringBoard pupils to speak to other young people in their home communities about their experiences; pupils value these opportunities to raise the aspirations of others and positively impact on their futures. In particular, pupils who have been at boarding school for more than a year can be an 'untapped' resource.

- There is continuing evidence of a 'ripple effect' in pupils' home communities. Carrying out a systematic consultation with families/carers and others in pupils' home communities would offer more robust evidence of this broader aim.

5   Future research activity

We will continue to consult with Cohort 1 and 2 school staff and with SpringBoard pupils in Cohorts 1, 2 and 3, increasing the overall number of pupils surveyed and the robustness of the dataset. To provide more robust evidence of impact, we will also be analysing pupils' attainment and progression using the National Pupil Database (NPD) to compare the attainment of SpringBoard pupils at GCSE and A-level with a matched comparison group of pupils from their original schools. We will produce further reports in 2016 and 2018.

1 The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation

1.1 Background to SpringBoard

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation ('SpringBoard') was established in 2012. It is a pioneering charity that offers fully-funded places at accredited state and independent boarding schools ('member schools') to disadvantaged pupils who will best benefit from a boarding education but whose parents cannot afford the fees. SpringBoard raises funds from donors for the bursaries, while some are paid in whole or in part by member schools themselves. SpringBoard also has a wider agenda of increasing social mobility; SpringBoard pupils are supported to help raise educational aspirations in their home communities through sharing their experiences and acting as mentors to other young people.

SpringBoard was inspired by The Arnold Foundation, which offers disadvantaged children full bursaries to attend Rugby School. The National Foundation for Educational Research's evaluation of the Arnold Foundation (Lamont *et al.*, 2010) strongly endorsed its work, and there was demand for an organisation such as SpringBoard to work with other boarding schools to lead a national roll out of a similar scheme.

SpringBoard's mission is to:

- offer life-transforming opportunities for disadvantaged children by widening their educational and social opportunities through the delivery of full bursaries for them to attend state and independent boarding schools

- work closely with schools and partners to ensure that each child is nurtured in a coherent and cohesive pastoral environment

- urge its pupils to maintain close contact with their home communities during school holidays and after leaving school, in order to disseminate their experiences and extend the impact of those experiences by motivating, mentoring and raising aspirations amongst their home community.

SpringBoard works closely with its partner organisations and member schools to ensure that pupils are well suited and prepared for a boarding education, to match each pupil to the right school for them, and to ensure each pupil receives high-quality help and support all year round. Schools wishing to work with SpringBoard are required to go through a rigorous accreditation process and partners must also complete an assessment process.

SpringBoard is currently working with 35 member schools and, for Cohort 1 and 2, SpringBoard worked with 14 partner organisations. This included: 'mentoring' organisations, many of which are educational charities working with disadvantaged pupils; maintained schools, Academies and Free Schools; and Local Authority Virtual Schools. An additional four partners joined SpringBoard for Cohort 3 and a further three are currently going through the assessment process. A full list of SpringBoard schools and partners is provided in Appendix 1.

SpringBoard employs a Director of Partner Relationships and a Director of School Relationships to focus on developing and monitoring the support given to pupils, as well as

to engage and select the most appropriate pupils, and grow its partner organisations and member schools.

1.2 Recruitment and selection of pupils

SpringBoard works with its partner organisations to identify and select pupils who will most benefit from Springboard's help; it is not about finding the most gifted and talented young people. SpringBoard is looking for pupils who meet the following criteria:

- are from a low income family (i.e. are eligible for free school meals)
- are from a genuinely disadvantaged background
- will best benefit from a boarding environment.

Pupils must also be able to meet the usual entry requirements of the school they will attend.

Table 1 below provides details on the first three cohorts of SpringBoard pupils joining the scheme in 2013 (Cohort 1), 2014 (Cohort 2) and 2015 (Cohort 3) which are the focus of this evaluation. A total of 123 pupils have joined the scheme to date. Pupils can join the scheme from age 11, with the largest proportion joining aged 16+. The table provides an overview of the total numbers of pupils entering SpringBoard schools in Cohort 1, 2 and 3. It also provides information on the ages of pupils when they joined, and the number of state schools they came from.

Table 1   Pupils awarded SpringBoard bursaries, 2013-15

Date started	Number of SpringBoard pupils	Number of schools they came from	Number of member schools they went to	Age of SpringBoard pupils			
				11	12	13-15	16+
2013	25	10	10	3		7	15
2014	36	29	20	1	1	12	22
2015	62	45	29	11	1	13	37

Source: The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation, 2015/16.

1.3 Intended impacts of SpringBoard

SpringBoard aims to realise the following impacts for pupils, amongst others:

- help pupils to feel secure and supported during term time and in the school holidays
- broaden horizons and raise aspirations and perceptions of what is possible
- improve social skills and social engagement and open up other opportunities and support that arise from new friendships
- increase independence, well-being, confidence and resilience
- expand intellectual capacity and improve academic performance
- enhance prospects for further education, employment and careers

- increase and enhance social mobility through widening educational opportunities.

More broadly, the programme aims to break down prejudice and social jealousy and raise awareness of social diversity amongst SpringBoard pupils and their peers.

SpringBoard intends that its pupils, in addition to benefiting personally from a broadening of their social and educational opportunities, will help to raise educational aspirations in their home communities through sharing their experiences and acting as a mentor to other young people. It is important that the benefits go beyond impacts on individual pupils. SpringBoard's wider agenda is to lead and support an increase in social mobility through widening educational opportunity.

2   The evaluation

In September 2013, SpringBoard commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake a five-year evaluation to December 2018. This is the second report based on consultations with SpringBoard pupils and member schools. Subsequent reports are planned for 2016 and 2018.

The aim of the evaluation is to explore the effectiveness and impacts of SpringBoard. In terms of impacts, the primary focus is on SpringBoard pupils but impacts on other pupils and staff within boarding schools, and families and home communities are also being explored. Details on the two key strands of the evaluation – research with SpringBoard pupils and research with staff in member schools - are provided in section 2.1 below.

In addition to the external evaluation, SpringBoard undertook a small-scale qualitative consultation with parents during summer 2015. The consultation was undertaken using SurveyMonkey and a total of 14 parents took part. The findings strongly echoed those of the external evaluation and selected quotations have been included in this report. In addition, SpringBoard has been gathering examples of the 'ripple effect' of its work and, again, this report has drawn on examples from this work.

2.1   Research with SpringBoard pupils

The evaluation with pupils includes:

- baseline surveys on joining their new school (between October and December)
- annual follow-up surveys at the end of each academic year (during June and July)
- eight to ten telephone interviews at the end of each academic year (during June and July)
- the analysis of attainment and progression data using the National Pupil Database (NPD)[1] to be undertaken in autumn 2016 and 2018.

Table 2 over the page provides details on the number of Cohort 1 and 2 pupils completing the surveys to date. It also gives predicted numbers (in blue font) for baseline and follow-up surveys with Cohort 3 pupils and follow-ups with Cohort 1 and 2 pupils in summer 2016. All SpringBoard pupils have completed the surveys to date. Where numbers at follow-up are lower, this is due to pupils completing or leaving the programme.

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Table 2   Pupils completing the baseline and end-point surveys

	Baseline survey	**First follow-up**	**Second follow-up**
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Started Sept 2014	Autumn 2014	Summer 2015	Summer 2016
Cohort 3	62	62	62
Started Sept 2015	Autumn 2015	Summer 2016	Summer 2017
Totals	123	121	119

Nine telephone interviews with Cohort 1 pupils from nine different schools were undertaken in summer 2014. The pupils included eight boys and one girl: two pupils were in Year 7, two were in Year 9 and five were in Year 12. In addition, eight telephone interviews were undertaken with a mixture of Cohort 1 and 2 pupils in summer 2015 from eight different schools. This included three pupils from Cohort 1 and five from Cohort 2. The pupils included four boys and four girls: one pupil was in year 7, two were in year 8, one was in year nine, one was in year 10 and three were in year 12.

The surveys and interviews explored pupils' expectations of the scheme, views on the effectiveness of the support they had received and the benefits and impacts realised to date.

The NPD analysis will compare the attainment of SpringBoard pupils at GCSE and A-level with a matched comparison group of pupils from their original schools. It will focus on pupils joining the scheme at age 13 and 16 who will complete GCSEs and A-levels during the timescale of the evaluation. Results of the analysis will be available in December 2016 (pilot stage) and December 2018 (full analysis).

Given the small number of pupils placed in schools during SpringBoard's first and second years of operation, the findings in this report must be treated with some caution. At this stage, the findings provide perceptions of impact and samples are too small to explore sub-group differences, for example by gender or cohort. Future reports will provide more robust evidence of impact due to increased pupil survey responses (which will be over 100) and the analysis of NPD data. The 2016 report will include frequency tables for the surveys which are not included in this report due to small numbers.

2.2 Research with staff in member schools

The impact assessment also includes research with staff in member schools who are being asked to complete an online qualitative proforma at the end of each academic year. Table 3 over the page provides details on participation to date.

Table 3   Staff completing the annual proforma

	Completed first proforma	Completed follow-up proforma
Cohort 1 start schools: 10 schools Started Sept 2013	8 staff from 8 schools Summer 2014	9 staff from 8 schools Summer 2015
Cohort 2 start schools: 12 schools Started Sept 2014	14 staff from 11 schools Summer 2015	
Total	22	9

The proforma is administered with the member(s) of staff in member schools who have a specific responsibility for the SpringBoard programme. It explores their perceptions on:

- the impacts of the programme on SpringBoard pupils, their peers in school and pupils' home communities

- impacts on themselves and other school staff

- key success factors of the scheme and what improvements are required.

3   How have pupils settled at school?

This section explores how pupils have settled at school and their views on the support they have received from partners. It also presents the views of member schools on the key factors for pupils' successful integration in school.

3.1   How are pupils being prepared and supported?

Part of what is unique about SpringBoard is that it works closely with its partners and member schools to prepare pupils for boarding school and provide the support pupils require all year round. Figure 1 below outlines the tripartite support that is provided.

Figure 1: Tripartite support provided to SpringBoard pupils

Partner organisations	Member schools	SpringBoard
Assist in the application process, in preparing pupils to join a boarding school, and in supporting them and their families in term time and through the holidays.	Provide pastoral support to help pupils to adjust academically and socially. They also ensure the right mechanisms and appropriate skills are in place in school to do this adequately.	Supports pupils through an online pupil portal, hosting fellowship events for pupils and their families, pupil screening, attending pupil and parent forums, and visiting pupils in school.

SpringBoard is also soon to launch a parent portal, alongside the pupil portal, the aim of which is to provide additional support to SpringBoard pupils' parents.

More details on the roles and activities of member schools, partners and SpringBoard are provided in Appendix 2.

3.2   How did pupils feel about being offered a place?

At baseline, pupils were asked to list the three words that best described how they felt at being selected through SpringBoard. The most popular words given were 'ecstatic', 'elated', 'excited', 'happy', 'overjoyed', 'overwhelmed', 'nervous', 'grateful', 'privileged' and 'proud'. In the interviews, pupils explained their happiness and excitement at being selected alongside their anxiety at moving away from home to board, not knowing what to expect and worries about not making friends or fitting in.

3.3   How have pupils settled at boarding school?

In general, pupils have settled into their new school very well and are very happy with the support they have received.

The pattern of survey responses at baseline and follow-up was very similar across all questions on this theme demonstrating little change across the time-points. Nearly all surveyed pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the statement 'I feel comfortable at school' at follow-up and nine out of ten pupils indicated that they felt part of the school community. In addition, most pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the statements 'I have friends at school', 'There are people at school who care about me', 'I like boarding school', 'I feel happy at school' and 'I know who to talk to if I have a problem at school'.

Most interviewed pupils reported that they were settled at school and were happy with the support provided by their school and did not feel any improvements were needed: 'I feel fully part of the school, not at the start but now I feel right in the thick of it' (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015). They reported that they had been assigned a member of school staff who they regularly met with and, where needed, they were being provided with additional mentoring or tutoring (primarily in mathematics). The regular meetings had made the settling-in process much easier: 'I think they helped me settle in a lot quicker...I'm never going to regret coming here at all' (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015). In addition, the fact that they were living with other young people 24 hours a day and that everyone 'was so welcoming and friendly' made settling much easier. Those pupils who felt they were not part of the school community aligned themselves more with their house in which they felt well integrated.

Pupils were often surprised at the number of pupils from different backgrounds at their school and how everyone was accepted: 'You couldn't tell which students didn't have much money. Everyone is so welcoming. Everyone's accepted – there's no looking down on people' (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

The majority of staff consultees echoed pupils' views by reporting that their SpringBoard pupils had settled in very well. They reported that pupils had 'embraced' school life, including quickly making new friendships, actively participating in extra-curricular activities and contributing to the life of the school: 'They settled quickly, immersed themselves in their houses and gathered friends quickly. They are all at ease with their peers and in college' (Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2015).

3.4   What difficulties have pupils faced?

In general, pupils and staff did not report any significant difficulties and challenges other than those that would be expected and which had been quickly overcome. These included: missing home; adjusting to boarding school life and routines (described by staff as 'a huge culture shock' and pupils feeling 'displaced'); a lack of self-confidence and nervousness; and mixing with pupils from other backgrounds and countries. The sections below provide further details.

3.4.1 Missing home and making new friends

As might be expected, at baseline and follow-up, the vast majority of pupils (just over four-fifths) reported missing home/family and friends 'a lot' or 'sometimes', with only ten pupils responding 'not at all'. In addition, around a quarter of pupils at follow-up reported that they had experienced some negative reactions from pupils at their new school 'sometimes' or 'a lot'. However, only three pupils responded 'a lot' at the first follow-up and no Cohort 2 pupils followed up at the end of their second year responded 'a lot'. This suggests that these issues are rarely serious and are resolved over time but they should continue to be monitored by pupils' tutors/key workers and by partner organisations.

In the interviews, pupils reported missing home at different times. In general, this got easier the longer they were at school although a change in family circumstances could increase a pupil's feelings of missing home. For example, two pupils had experienced upheavals and family tragedies during the school term which had made them much more unsettled at school.

One pupil reported that he had initially faced 'racial discrimination' from pupils at school and another complained that some of her peers had been 'selfish and snobby'. In addition, one staff member reported that their SpringBoard pupil had made poor decisions in relation to friendship groups. However, the vast majority of pupils did not experience any issues with other pupils at school and were accepted from the outset.

3.4.2 Adjusting to the academic level and pace and standards of conduct

The other main difficulties that pupils reported were struggling in class and with prep work. Around three-fifths of pupils reported that they faced these difficulties 'sometimes' and a small proportion (less than a tenth) reported that they faced them 'a lot'. This figure did not change from baseline to first follow-up which suggests that pupils would benefit from further support with certain types of work and at key transition or stress points. Having said this, four-fifths of pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the statement 'I am doing well at school' in the first follow-up survey. And, in the second follow-up of Cohort 1 pupils, this challenge was less apparent, with an even higher proportion reporting that they were doing well in school.

Interviewed pupils reported that they found the academic work 'tough' initially as the work was harder, they needed to be more independent and there was less 'spoon feeding'. In addition, just under a half of staff consultees reported the initial challenges pupils faced such as: adjusting to academic levels, pace and workload; presentation of work; poor organisational and time management skills, including management of private study time and meeting deadlines; completing prep and assessments; and the need to be more demanding of teachers and develop a constructive relationship. Pupils and staff also reported the challenge for pupils joining the school in Year 12. As one staff member noted: 'They have to make the simultaneous jump to A-levels and to a new school' which was echoed by pupils: 'the standard of work has gone up a notch...and I have been questioning if I am doing alright'. However, schools had put in place support for pupils facing these academic challenges – such as tutoring or one-to-one mentoring - and most pupils were now putting in the necessary effort and had adjusted to the academic expectations. Quotations from two pupils and a staff member are provided in the box below.

> **Box 1: Pupils' adjustment to the academic level and pace and standards of conduct**
>
> *If you struggle, you get more support...because they want to make sure everyone in the class is doing well...they give you extra lessons* (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).
>
> *They get you on the right track even if it takes one or two months to get into the swing of things* (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2014).
>
> [Name of pupil] *found some of the subjects quite a challenge and wanted to drop one but persevered* (Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2015).

A small number of staff reported that individual pupils still required support to meet academic demands and levels or to manage their time. One staff member also reported issues as a result of a pupil having chosen unsuitable A-level subjects due to lack of guidance from the previous school. Isolated issues had also been faced in relation to pupils' disruptive and angry behaviour in class which was being tackled, sometimes with the involvement of the partner organisation, local authority partners (e.g. foster carers and social workers) and parents.

3.5   How have pupils adjusted between home and school?

A question asked at follow-up explored how difficult pupils had found it to readjust at home during the school holidays. Almost half said that they had no problems at all, with around a third reporting that they 'sometimes' found it difficult with just less than a fifth reporting 'a' lot' of difficulty.

Interviewed pupils were asked how they had found going home in the holidays. They generally felt that they 'fitted back in' easily and reported that they were equally happy at school or at home. Most did not feel that they needed the support of their partner organisation to adjust although some commented that they had initially found it strange to go home to a completely different routine and slower pace of life. A minority of pupils noted that they had 'drifted apart' from friends at home but were not concerned about this. Two pupils in their second year had been more homesick recently as a result of family tragedies. Nearly all pupils responding to the follow-up survey 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they felt 'part of their home community' so it was more the initial adjustment between the school and home environment that pupils found difficult.

3.6   How effective is the support from partners?

In general, pupils were very positive about the support that they had been provided by their partner organisation in preparing them for school and during the school term and holidays. Most of those interviewed felt that they had received all the support they needed, as this comment illustrates: 'There is nothing else they could do; they give me all the support I need' (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2015). However, a small number of pupils commented that they would have liked more face-to-face support in the first term and more ongoing support as they progressed in school. Further details are provided in the sections below.

3.6.1 Application process and preparation for new school

At baseline, pupils were most positive about partners' support during the application process with nine out of ten pupils describing this support as 'very helpful' or 'helpful' (with more than two-thirds reporting it was 'very helpful'). In addition, more than three-quarters reported that the support to help them prepare to join their new school, in explaining to their family/carers what SpringBoard was about, and giving them the right amount of information needed to feel comfortable starting their new school was 'very helpful' or 'quite helpful' (with around a half reporting that these two types of support were 'very helpful').

Pupils taking part in the telephone interviews reported a range of useful support received during the application process, such as: help to prepare for entrance exams/tests; being brought to the school to look around; talks about what boarding school is like and the level of the work; question and answer sessions; home visits; and confidence building. In most cases, pupils had met with their partner organisations several times during the application process.

Pupils were also very positive about the preparation they had received from partners for the expected standard of behaviour/conduct with around three-quarters reporting that this support had been 'very helpful' or 'helpful' (and more than two-fifths describing it as 'very helpful'). However, a small number of pupils felt that they could have received more preparation for the level of academic work, as well as information on what an average day at boarding school is like, including the different routines, extra-curricular activities and social events.

3.6.2 During the school year

Although three-quarters of pupils were positive about the support provided during the first few weeks of term, a larger proportion of pupils described this support as 'quite helpful (two-fifths) as opposed to 'very helpful' (just less than a third) which suggests that some partners might increase support for pupils at this stage.

Survey findings were reflected in the interviews in which most pupils were very happy with the support they had received from their partner organisation. However, a small number of pupils reported that they did not hear from their partner until the end of the first term, or after two terms, and that they would have benefitted from more support early on: 'What could they have done better? Keep in contact within the first term...that's the hardest term, it's scary' (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015). In addition, one pupil who had been in email contact with her partner organisation during the first term said that she would have preferred face-to-face contact. Pupils also felt that support could be increased in preparing pupils for the expected standard of school work, with around a third of pupils describing support in this area as 'very helpful' and another third as 'quite helpful'. Again, this was borne out in the interviews.

3.6.3 During school holidays

In terms of support provided during the school holidays, a third of surveyed pupils reported that this support was 'very helpful' and another third as 'quite helpful'. A small number of pupils taking part in the interviews had been to meetings or reunions in which pupils got

together to talk about their experiences, met pupils who had been at boarding school longer who had provided advice and tips, and attended talks on motivation. They had also met with partners to discuss their progress and gain support with areas of difficultly such as mathematics. A number of pupils had received targeted tutoring or information on their new GCSE or A-level courses prior to starting school, whilst some who had not received or requested this type of support felt it would have been useful.

3.7 Key factors for pupils' successful transition to, and integration in, their new school

Staff were asked what they considered to be the key factors for successfully integrating SpringBoard pupils into their school. Comments most frequently related to preparing pupils before they joined the school, support provided in their first few weeks/months, and having staff in place who were willing and appropriately skilled to support pupils from different backgrounds.

The key factors and strategies highlighted by staff are set out in Figure 2 below. However, a number of staff stressed that, although extra care and support might be needed, it was important to treat SpringBoard pupils in the same way as all pupils, allowing them the time and space to settle and making them feel the same as everyone else.

Figure 2: Key factors for pupils' successful transition to, and integration in, boarding school

School factors

- Strong drive from senior management in school to ensure the programme is firmly embedded into the culture of the school and there is universal buy-in.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of expectations and are adequately prepared to support the pupil(s) and understand the challenges the pupil(s) may face.
- Regular collaboration of staff with the designated SpringBoard lead in school.
- Open sharing of information on SpringBoard pupils' progress, difficulties and plans for support.

Prior to pupil starting school

- Support from partners in application process, providing in-depth information on what to expect academically and socially and what an average day will be like, and liaison with parents/carers and school staff.
- Meetings between boarding school staff and key staff from original schools to discuss expectations and the individual pupil's characteristics.
- Meetings between pupils, parents/carers and key boarding school staff so that all are aware of expectations (particularly the academic standards) and good lines of communication are established.
- (For looked after children) close collaboration with pupils' social workers and foster carers prior to the pupil undertaking the assessment process.
- Testing of academic ability to enable support to be tailored and to initiate an open discussion of need.
- Designated staff members being available for pupils from the first contact.
- Taster visits to pupils' school of choice, ideally with a boarding experience.

Once pupil has started school

- Providing intensive (e.g. two days) integration programmes and time for pupils to 'find their feet'.
- Assigning pupils a key worker/tutor/mentor who convenes regular meetings and review sessions and provides mentoring, coaching and other necessary support, as appropriate (particularly key in the first term).
- Ensuring appropriate academic support and tutoring and time management coaching is in place for pupils.
- Assigning an older pupil as a mentor or 'buddy'.
- Support from peers and pupil's house.
- Monitoring and support from partner organisations, particularly in the first term but also at key transition points and times of greater need.
- Having a sufficient number of bursary pupils to remove the pressure from pupils, both socially and in terms of staff expectations.

Support for family

- Meetings between parents/carers and school staff prior to pupils starting their new school, followed by regular ongoing communication.
- Providing a link staff member and regular mentoring and support, as needed: 'embracing the pupil and their family'.

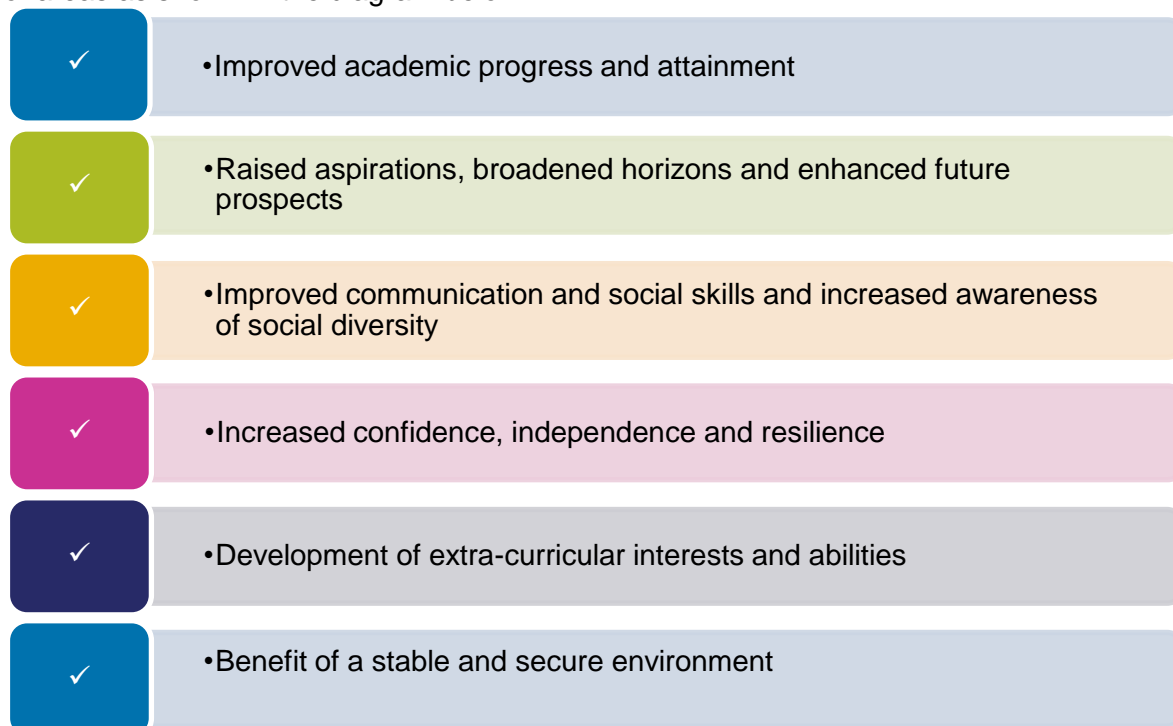### Collaboration between schools and partner organisations

- Open, honest and close relationships between schools and partner organisations: 'It is important to hear both sides of the story to judge how well pupils are settling'.

Pupil characteristics

- The individual character and motivations of the pupil can affect how well they settle at school. Schools stress the importance of selecting the 'right' pupil.

4   Impacts for pupils

Pupils and staff were asked what impacts had been realised for pupils as a result of them joining boarding school. In some cases, pupils were asked to compare their last year's experiences to what they would have expected them to be at their previous ('original') school. Although SpringBoard has clearly selected a group of bright young people, who are already well motivated with high aspirations, impacts on pupils have been realised in a range of areas as shown in the diagram below.

✓	•Improved academic progress and attainment
✓	•Raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects
✓	•Improved communication and social skills and increased awareness of social diversity
✓	•Increased confidence, independence and resilience
✓	•Development of extra-curricular interests and abilities
✓	•Benefit of a stable and secure environment

Around three-quarters of pupils agreed that, if they had not been selected to attend boarding school and had instead stayed at or gone to their local school, their experiences over the last school year would have been 'worse' and they would not have achieved as much academically and socially. Further details on the range of pupil impacts reported are provided in the sections below.

4.1   Improved academic progress and attainment

Pupils reported that boarding school had improved their academic experience and, in some cases, raised their attainment[2]. At the end of their first year, around nine out of ten pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that attending boarding school was helping them to get good qualifications and was better than their original school at helping them to achieve what they were capable of. And, between a third to more than a half of pupils reported that they 'strongly agreed' with these statements.

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[2] Pupils' perceptions of their raised attainment will be supplemented by the NPD analysis comparing their attainment at GCSE and A-level to those of pupils in their original schools, which will be undertaken in 2016 and 2018.

All but one of the surveyed pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they worked harder at boarding school than at their previous school, when followed up at the end of their first year. A slightly lower number of pupils felt that they were doing well at boarding school compared to their original school, perhaps due to the raised academic standards. Nine out of ten pupils reported that they felt challenged at boarding school whilst half felt challenged at their original school which bears this suggestion out. In addition, the trend is for pupils to feel more challenged as they progress in school and move towards important GCSE and A-level examinations.

Interviewed pupils generally reported that, by the end of the first year, they were doing well and had learnt more than at their previous school. However, as mentioned above and in section 3.4.2, pupils often commented that they did not do as well initially as expectations were higher and the level and pace of work was more challenging than their previous school. In addition, in some cases, where they had changed school during GCSEs, some pupils were now following a different syllabus. However, pupils reported a range of provision at boarding school, and facilities and support not generally available at their previous school, which had built their confidence and enabled them to quickly adapt and progress. This included:

- small class sizes
- a different teaching style, with more constructive class discussion and less didactic teaching
- regular feedback on work in class and homework
- individual support e.g. one-to-one help from teachers and tutors
- a focus on structured prep time which enabled them to keep up with their homework
- being surrounded by highly motivated peers
- better technology/science facilities, which allowed more focus on practical work
- learning around subjects, which encouraged further interest in them.

Pupils also reported having the opportunity to study new subjects such as German, French, Latin and economics not offered at their original school. Selected quotations from pupils and a parent are provided in the box below.

Box 2: Pupils' improved academic progress and attainment

I think I get more support here in lessons...I feel like I'm doing better academically than I would be in my other school...I feel like I've learnt so much more...I do feel like I'm more motivated here (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

One important thing is that a lot of the students want to learn which helps the teacher get their point across. There is no-one messing around and everyone is engaging and in a learning mode. There was more messing around at my old school which made it hard for teachers to teach (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

I think they cover more in the lessons – they teach us more and the teachers are really good...it's made me more grateful for what I've got so I want to try harder (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

> [The benefits of SpringBoard are] *academic and small classes. Living, sharing and working in a community with a common purpose to succeed. The great experience of best teachers who love to teach. Support structures to unleash my child's full potential* (Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).

The vast majority of staff consultees reported pupils' high motivation for learning and ongoing improvements in their academic progress and attainment over the year. As one staff member commented: 'Her progress has been remarkable as she has gone from C to A. She is highly motivated' (Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2015).

In some cases, improved progress related to pupils' increased confidence in asking for help, increased responsibility and independence, and improved organisation and planning skills, for example in relation to taking control of their prep and revision. Echoing pupils, staff also stressed that the small class sizes, being surrounded by pupils who were highly ambitious, and individualised support were helping pupils to progress. In a small number of cases, pupils were still struggling with the demands of boarding school and staff reported that supporting them with their challenges was 'work in progress'.

4.2 Raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects

Many pupils already had high aspirations before they changed schools but, for most of those who did not, boarding school had raised their aspirations. At follow-up, all but three pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that it was important to have a future career in mind and almost three-quarters had lifelong (i.e. ten years + ahead) goals.

Almost half of surveyed pupils reported that being at boarding school had changed their job/career aspirations. More than two-fifths had a definite idea of what they wanted to do and the same proportion had a few ideas, with nine out of ten planning to go to university. Pupils tended to have more definite career ideas as they progressed on the programme. In general, pupils were aspiring to professional careers such as accountancy, law, engineering, business management, computing, banking, medicine and health and science careers.

Pupils' confidence in achieving their career goals stayed constant at baseline and follow-up, with more than four-fifths of pupils reporting that they were 'very confident' or 'quite confident'. However, a larger number of Cohort 1 pupils followed up at the end of their second year had confidence in achieving their career goal than at the end of their first year.

In terms of achieving their goals, almost half of surveyed pupils thought that the cost of higher education was a key barrier, whilst a third felt that not achieving the necessary grades might prevent them from progressing onto university. Having said this, nine out of ten pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that being at their current school would give them a better chance of getting a good job and had changed their life for the better. In addition, concern about these barriers seemed to reduce over time; a slightly lower proportion of Cohort 1 pupils followed up at the end of their second year reported these barriers compared to at the end of their first year, with an even higher proportion being positive that their school would help them get a good job.

In the interviews, pupils reported that, as a result of attending boarding school, they were aiming higher and felt more certain that they wanted to go to university. However, in some cases, they had changed their aspirations to something more realistic and achievable. When asked what had changed their aspirations, pupils mentioned a range of activities and influences such as:

- being more confident in themselves, what they were achieving and could achieve and that they would be able to succeed in life

- being 'in an environment of ambitious and competitive individuals' and in a school which influenced pupils to aim higher and be highly motivated

- boarding school having 'opened up an array of many opportunities' and inspired 'many different careers and jobs' and 'introduced new and interesting subjects'

- speakers from business and ex-pupils talking about their experiences as well as visits to universities

- work experience, careers information days, careers fairs and careers guidance and support with university applications – which both encouraged pupils to aim higher or to be realistic about what was achievable

- realising that they were adaptable and could cope with being away from home which they would need to do if they went to university.

Staff agreed that pupils had raised aspirations and broadened horizons as a result of being in an environment where high expectations were 'the norm'. Pupils were now more aware of their own potential and what they could achieve with a good education. However, a minority of staff consultees reported that a small number of pupils had unrealistic expectations or were not yet grasping the full range of opportunities available. Selected quotations from pupils, staff and parents are provided in the box below.

Box 3: Pupils' raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects

It's [boarding school] *made me feel I can do well and realise there are so many opportunities in life and it's made me consider them* (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

It is now realistic to aim to become a lawyer whereas at my old school it seemed impossible, as even the number of people applying to university was low. But now, with plenty of careers help and more contacts, it seems a realistic goal (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2014).

There are so many different people from different backgrounds, countries and cultures. Where home for them is really interesting. This has widened my horizons further (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2015).

Immersed in an environment where high expectations are the norm has encouraged him to pursue his own desires for further study (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2014).

Aspiration is now university...which is a huge step in confidence and self-esteem given the circumstances (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2014).

Being surrounded by high expectations and by structured guidance appears to be making a difference (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2014).

> *I think* [name of pupil] *had a very limited view of his future before…The boarding school environment that he is in has broadened his horizons…The fact that he absolutely loves somewhere that is clearly so good for him, well we couldn't ask for more. We are extremely grateful to Springboard and* [name of partner organisation] *for this opportunity* (Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).
>
> *… my son has matured into a wonderful young man and made many new friends. He has experienced many opportunities one could only dream of and he can now look forward to using this going forward in life* (Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).

In some cases, pupils' raised aspirations had led to concrete results in the second year of their bursary. Some had been offered university places, for example in medicine, engineering, geography, anthropology and biomedical sciences. The quotation from a Cohort 1 pupil below provides an example of the enhanced prospects of SpringBoard pupils:

> *Today I received my A-level results, following the two most enjoyable years of my life (so far) at* [name of school]. *I achieved A grades in maths, physics, chemistry A-level and biology AS, meaning I have made my offer from St Andrews to read medicine! I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for the life-changing opportunity you provided me with; I have not only received a top class education, but grown as a person and made life-long friends along the way. Two years ago I could only dream of being in the position I'm in today.*

Staff reported that the vast majority of students now had enhanced future prospects in terms of higher education and careers but, in a small number of cases, they commented that it was too early to tell and more progress was needed first.

4.3 Improved communication and social skills and increased awareness of social diversity

4.3.1 Improved communication and social skills

Pupils frequently reported that their boarding school education had developed their communication and social skills and that they had quickly made new friendships. All but three of surveyed pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they had friends at school.

Interviewed pupils reported that they felt more confident in social situations at their new school than they did at their old and that they had easily made friends. Sometimes, this had been made easier by schools facilitating team building exercises at the beginning of term or through all-school activities – such as weekly visits to chapel – or regular social events.

In interviews, pupils also reported that, as well as making friends with pupils within their own year group, they had made friends from different year groups. This was less common in their original schools where there tended to be close-knit friendship groups within one year. They had also made friends within their house, as well as with pupils with similar interests through taking part in extra-curricular activities. In some cases, pupils reported having developed strong friendships with others starting at the same time as them. These new friendships had often opened up other opportunities, such as pupils meeting up and visiting each others' homes during holidays and going away together.

Echoing pupils' reports, staff reported the development of SpringBoard pupils' social skills and new friendships and, where they were in their second year, the 'deepening' of friendships. Staff commented that pupils had a good circle of friends, often from varied backgrounds and nationalities. Friendships had developed as a result of pupils living together with others 24 hours a day and taking part in a wide range of educational, sporting and cultural activities. Staff also gave examples of how pupils had demonstrated their communication and social skills by welcoming visitors to the school, joining the student council and volunteering in the local community. Selected quotations from pupils, staff and parents are provided in the box below.

Box 4: Pupils' improved communication and social skills

When I see people passing by, instead of just walking past them as I normally would, I can stop and say 'hi', 'good morning' and stop for a bit of conversation (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

I've formed a lot of new friendships and the friends I have are [now] *much stronger. When you're at boarding you can't be shy and I feel more comfortable in my own skin* (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2015).

[Name of SpringBoard pupil] *has developed really well and has a good mix of friends and always participates in boarding school house events* (Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2015).

They learn how to work a room, make small talk and connections. New friendships have opened up opportunities to see the world in a different way (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2014).

The pupils get to know and accept each other from face value… My child has eventually been honest about her status and everyone has been amazing with her… (Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).

My child is a lot more socially adept. She is a very popular student and is well respected by her peers (Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).

…she also has a greater understanding of the world around her and how to interact with people (Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).

4.3.2 Pupils' increased awareness of social diversity

As a result of their new friendship groups, SpringBoard pupils have developed an increased awareness of social diversity. Pupils reported having friends from a range of different backgrounds to their own and, in some cases, they had stayed with friends and their eyes had been opened to different cultures and lifestyles, as this comment illustrates: 'I've stayed with a lot of friends, and seen a different way of life. It's important to see how people live; it helps explain how they are' (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2014).

Staff also reported that SpringBoard pupils' awareness of social diversity had been raised as a result of coming to a multi-cultural environment and mixing with other pupils from across the world and from varied ethic origins, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. One staff member suggested pupils could not help but do this given that the school had 'students from

44 different nations'. Staff reported that, in many cases, SpringBoard pupils had a 'socially diverse group of friends' which had raised their awareness of social diversity, 'strengthened their understanding of others' and 'enhanced their thoughtfulness and tolerance'. As one staff member reported: '[I am] impressed how students have managed relationships and engage, on a day-to-day basis, with a number of international students with widely varying backgrounds' (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2014).

Where they were surrounded by pupils more privileged than themselves, most staff reported that pupils did not appear to be inhibited or uncomfortable with this: 'She takes it completely in her stride'. However, one staff member remained concerned about the wealth differential and another reported that it was 'daunting/challenging' for pupils in some cases.

4.4 Increased confidence, independence and resilience

Although pupils selected for SpringBoard already have a certain degree of confidence in themselves as this is an attribute looked for, pupils' confidence has increased since joining boarding school. At follow-up, more than four-fifths of pupils reported that they were confident in social situations, speaking in class and in their academic ability.

Interviewed pupils frequently reported gradual and ongoing increases in confidence with younger pupils perceiving themselves as having changed more in this aspect, having initially been shy and nervous when meeting new people. Taking on responsibilities such as prefect and head girl/boy had contributed to pupils' increase in confidence.

Pupils also emphasised the greater independence and personal responsibility that they had developed at boarding school as a result of having to undertake a range of tasks without their parents' support. This included getting themselves ready for the school day, managing their time to ensure that they got their prep done as well as had time to engage in extra-curricular activities, and managing their own money. Pupils also recognised a growth in their resilience, through having to settle into a new school and adapt to living away from home, as well overcoming challenges academically or in social situations. Two pupils interviewed in their second year of school had taken a knock to their confidence due to family tragedies but were being supported to build it back up.

A number of staff commented that pupils were already confident, resilient and independent when they joined the school as these attributes were looked for in the selection process. However, having said this, the vast majority of staff consultees reported that their SpringBoard pupils had become more confident in their first year at school and continued to grow in confidence in their second year. This increased confidence related to their school work, speaking in meetings and in front of their house and in their interactions with staff and other pupils. Staff also reported that, for many pupils, linked to confidence was an increased resilience and strength of character in dealing with challenges in their school work, both in terms of improving it on an ongoing basis and dealing with the continuing increase in standards. Students were also adapting well to the requirement for increased independence in A-level study and were becoming better able to solve their own problems, organise themselves and meet academic expectations. Several staff also reported pupils' growth in leadership skills, for example as a result of taking on a role as a prefect or sitting on the house council.

For some pupils in their first year, staff noted that it was 'early days' and that there was still some way to go in terms of their confidence.

Selected quotations from pupils, staff and parents are provided in the box below.

Box 5: Pupils' increased confidence, independence and resilience

I think I've become a lot more independent and a lot more confident as well. I feel I can speak to new people easily without being shy (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

I think I've got a lot more confident, in doing these talks [talking to other young people about boarding school]. *I know that if I was at my other school...I would be so nervous I wouldn't be able to stand up and talk in public...at* [boarding] *school, people help and encourage you to try new things...and build your confidence* (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2014).

I think I have become more confident – you have to do because you have lots of different teachers...I am more independent too as I have to try to sort things out myself and do things my parents would usually do (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

Being brought into a radically new environment does improve confidence. The fact that they are nervous and then go on to succeed gives them great confidence for the remainder of their lives (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2014).

We have certainly seen [name of pupil] *confidence increase, immeasurably so. She has also shown great resilience in her approach to improving her work. Her independent learning is much improved as you would expect from students moving from GCSEs...* (Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2015).

She has certainly grown tremendously in confidence and has developed resilience through boarding hundreds of miles from home (Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2015).

Our SpringBoard pupils continue to grow in confidence every year (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2015).

[Name of pupil] *was appointed as a prefect this year and has shown real leadership skills. He has grown enormously in confidence in this position, displays real independence and is a happy young man* (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2015).

I have seen a great improvement in his whole well-being. He is becoming more confident, more settled, and a little more focused (Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).

She is so much more confident and independent in herself. More outgoing and bigger aspirations for the future. There are honestly no negative differences whatsoever with her (Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).

4.5 Development of extra-curricular interests and abilities

Staff reported that pupils had fully involved themselves in school life through, for example: taking on the role of a prefect; sitting on the house council; taking up a variety of sports and playing for the school team; working towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and undertaking leadership courses; joining the local Cadet Corps; taking part in debates, politics society, art, music and drama; taking cookery classes; going on weekend, field and year group trips in the UK and abroad; learning new languages; and fund raising for charities and other house activities. Some pupils were doing exceptionally well, particularly at sport with one representing the county at athletics. Others were taking part in sport even when they did not excel which was commended. However, four staff reported that involvement of some pupils in extra-curricular activities was 'variable' and sometimes out of necessity and not with great enthusiasm and that some pupils still needed to 'find their feet'.

Pupils commented that they had access to more and a much wider range of extra-curricular opportunities than they had at their previous school as well as better facilities. This was providing them with the opportunity to take part in and develop new and varied interests, as well extend existing interests further: 'I have the opportunity to get involved in various [extra-curricular activities], which I didn't attend at my old school due to money and lack of facilities' (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2014).

4.6 Benefit of a stable and secure environment

At the end of the first year at their new school, surveyed pupils reported that their boarding schools provided stable and safe environments. In addition, just under three-quarters of pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that being at boarding school had helped them stay away from bad influences, with a higher proportion of Cohort 1 pupils followed up at the end of their second year agreeing with this statement compared to at the end of year one.

Some pupils who were interviewed felt that their home lives and original schools had also been secure and safe. However, others had come from difficult family backgrounds or areas which were unsafe at night and in which they were at risk of negative social influences. As one pupil commented: 'Here there will be better influences around me. If I went to state school there might be some people who would influence me in the wrong way...' (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015). A number of parents taking part in SpringBoard's Parent Consultation echoed pupils' views, as illustrated by this comment from one parent: 'He concentrates more on his studies. It takes him away from a bad circle of friends. He has become more responsible and matured in his ways of thinking'.

All Cohort 1 and 2 staff consultees felt that their SpringBoard pupils were benefitting from a stable and secure school environment. They, too, reported that a small number of pupils came from stable home backgrounds but noted that the majority of pupils did not. As a result, pupils had benefitted from routines, clear boundaries and consistency of expectations, stable relationships within and outside their house, and the support of houseparents. Staff noted that those not used to a stable and secure environment had grown in confidence and developed raised aspirations and had been taken away from potentially negative environments at home and within their local community.

5 Impacts on schools, families and home communities

As well as seeking to transform the lives of the young people who gain a funded place at boarding school, SpringBoard has broader aims to impact on: member schools and SpringBoard pupils' peers; families and carers; and SpringBoard pupils' home communities. The evaluation design does not include direct consultation with SpringBoard pupils' families or home communities, or with pupils in member schools, as this is beyond the scope of the budget. However, we asked SpringBoard pupils and staff in schools to report their perceptions of impact on the following groups:

- staff in member schools

- SpringBoard pupils' peers

- families and carers of SpringBoard pupils

- SpringBoard pupils' home communities.

Sections 5.1 to 5.4 below set out the impacts they identified.

In addition, SpringBoard staff have also been collecting examples of the 'ripple' effect of pupils being placed at boarding school. These are described in section 5.5.

5.1 Impacts on school staff

The majority of staff reported that they found their work in supporting SpringBoard pupils positive and fulfilling but just under half did not note any particular impact on taking on this new role. This was because SpringBoard pupils acted, and were treated, the same as all other pupils in school, or because the school was already skilled in working with pupils on bursaries.

Impacts reported by staff included:

- the development of staff knowledge and skills as a tutor or key worker, for example, as one staff member phrased it, in 'dealing with a wider range of pastoral challenges and backgrounds...' (in one school, training had been provided to increase staff awareness of some of the social issues faced by SpringBoard pupils)

- staff bringing more sensitivity to their work with *all* pupils due to their developing awareness of pupils' potential difficulties and challenges

- personal satisfaction in supporting more pupils from deprived backgrounds – one staff member reported to be 'personally absolutely delighted at this development in school, and the chance to work on the scheme'

- staff working more collaboratively within school as a result of information being shared on pupils receiving bursaries

- enhanced communication skills developed through liaising with parents whose first language is not English.

One staff member reported that their school had selected looked after children and that the expertise of staff in working with children in this situation had greatly increased. This school has now broadened its work with looked after children, inviting them in from the local area in the school holidays and for weekend classes and increasing the number of places it offers to young people in this group. Another reported growing experience in and care in 'balancing the needs of the individual against the collective needs of the house'.

A small number of staff noted the time they had needed to give to oversee pupils and undertake administration. However, this was generally not seen as a negative as they had volunteered for this role in the first place and it was seen to be 'well worth it'. One respondent noted a 'slight negative' impact that they had experienced. They described 'taking flak' when a bursary pupil did something wrong: 'Other staff sometimes expect the same thing of a SpringBoard pupil as they might from an academic scholar, for example'. However, in contrast, another staff member commented that the view of bursary pupils had risen amongst staff as a result of 'pupils settling in easily, being bright and being engaged in the classroom'. Staff from other schools also reported that their experience of taking SpringBoard pupils to date had encouraged them to continue to work with SpringBoard or to support other bursary pupils in a similar way.

5.2 Impacts on SpringBoard pupils' peers

Staff reported that the vast majority of other pupils had been very welcoming, supportive and accepting of SpringBoard pupils. In many cases, particularly where the school had a tradition of taking bursary pupils or when SpringBoard pupil(s) had joined at the same time as others, SpringBoard pupils' peers were not aware that they were receiving a bursary and so they were not seen as being different to anyone else. However, some pupils openly shared information about themselves with their peers who were interested in their different life experiences.

Staff reported primarily positive impacts brought to other pupils as a result of taking in SpringBoard pupils. Staff frequently reported that SpringBoard pupils were well liked and had significantly contributed to school life and affected others by their enthusiasm: 'a breath of fresh air' (reported by two consultees), 'their presence here is a real asset' and '[name of pupil] has made the most of every opportunity he has had at school and other boys cannot help but be inspired by this'. One staff consultee mentioned that their SpringBoard pupil had been 'an excellent addition to the year group in House: as his peers have got to know him, they have really enjoyed the intellectual inquisitiveness he brings to proceedings' and another commented: 'She has brought a benefit to us. Hugely enriching for our pupils to have encountered such a warm and open personality'. In many cases, SpringBoard pupils were acting as positive role models, for example as prefects or members of the house council or, in one reported case, as a member of a local Cadet Corps. This was strengthening the unpretentious and tolerant ethos of member schools.

When asked if having SpringBoard pupils at school had raised awareness of social diversity, a common response from school staff was that the student population in school was already diverse. They reported that their intake included pupils from across the world and that a number of their pupils were on bursaries and from less affluent backgrounds, none of whom were easily identifiable. However, others, in schools with a less diverse student intake,

reported that, as a result of their involvement in SpringBoard, the pupil population had developed a greater awareness of social, socio-economic and ethnic diversity. Staff reported that pupils had 'definitely broken down barriers, prejudice or ignorance' and had supported the work of staff in strengthening an accepting tolerant ethos, sometimes through challenging 'disparaging and unhealthy beliefs in a direct though tactful way through discussion'. Some SpringBoard pupils' peers had become more aware of their privileged situation and had a greater sensitivity towards others from less affluent backgrounds. Staff also reported pupils in their school developing a greater awareness of geography, other cities and regional accents. Staff felt that this diversity of pupils was very positive and some were actively seeking to even further increase the diversity of their pupil population.

Only a minority of staff mentioned negative impacts. One reported their SpringBoard pupil not carrying out their daily routines which made more work for other pupils and had a negative impact in classes. Two others noted negative responses to SpringBoard pupils' access to the bursary, particularly where parents/carers were struggling to pay school fees or where 'extras' were being paid for by SpringBoard.

5.3 Impacts on families and carers

Pupils described their families' positive reactions and support when they had been offered a place at boarding school: 'They've all been really happy and supportive' (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015). Perhaps unsurprisingly, pupils reported that their families or carers had expressed pride in their child, and gratitude to SpringBoard, its partners and partner schools. Mixed feelings were also apparent as their child was moving away from 'their roots'. However, this was often deemed positive, particularly where their roots involved risk of gang violence, for example. Families were said to feel sad as they missed their child, but were very happy and proud of what they had achieved and their future prospects.

Pupils felt that their families were generally aware of their school life and were kept well informed by the school. Most pupils referred to regular telephone contact with their families. Interestingly, a small number of pupils commented in interviews that their family might never fully understand what it was like to attend their school, as being at a boarding school was so far removed from their home situation. However, these pupils were comfortable with, and accepting of, this, confessing that they too found some elements of their new life, as one pupil phrased it, 'weird'.

Staff were often not able to comment on SpringBoard pupils' impacts on their families and home communities. However, where they did, they commented on parents growing in confidence in engaging with the school and speaking to school staff and being very happy with their child's progress. In some cases, parents found it hard to 'let go' but were being supported by the school. In a growing number of cases, younger siblings were thinking of following in their sister's or brother's footsteps by applying to SpringBoard, as a result of hearing about their positive experiences. There were also examples of family members previously absent engaging more with their child as a result of them gaining a place at boarding school.

5.4 Impacts on pupils' home communities

In many cases, staff noted the potential for SpringBoard pupils to act as positive role models, inspiring others in their local communities to follow in their footsteps. However, in reality, the extent to which they were impacting on others often depended on the opportunities facilitated by their partner organisation.

In the follow-up survey at the end of their first year, two-fifths of pupils reported that their partner organisation had been 'very helpful' and just over a fifth 'quite helpful' in creating opportunities for them to tell young people at home about their experiences. However, a third reported that they did not know or that this question did not apply to them.

Some of the pupils taking part in the interviews described activities that they had been involved in such as giving a speech to headmasters of schools interested in joining SpringBoard and being invited to events to talk to and inspire pupils interested in joining SpringBoard. The box below includes some quotations from pupils who describe the activities that they have been involved in within their local communities.

> **Box 6: Examples of pupils' activities in their home communities and their impacts**
>
> *I was quite excited to be honest, certainly for them. When I went through the process we were the first year so we didn't have anyone who'd done it before to tell us what it was like. It was nice to be able to see how I was 12 months ago, they had the same questions I did, it was nice to tell them exactly what they would want to know and actually help them. I did feel it was useful for them to have someone who's going through the exact same process* (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2014).
>
> *I have gone and spoken to people, to potential candidates. I did a few sessions and I was preparing them, telling them some dos and don'ts. I think it was helpful. You can see what your work has done, that you have inspired people to do the same* (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2014).

However, data from the pupil surveys and interviews suggests that partners could be doing more to facilitate pupils to inspire others in their home communities. A number of pupils reported that they would like to have more formal opportunities to motivate young people in their local area. Although many had spoken to friends informally about their experiences, a number commented that they were keen to do something more organised, as this comment illustrates: 'I would like to do more with [partner organisation]. I would really enjoy that. They could be more proactive in asking people to support them once you're at school...When you are at school and settled you are still part of the programme' (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2015).

5.5 Further examples of the 'ripple' effect

SpringBoard staff have also been collecting examples of the 'ripple' effect of pupils being placed at boarding school. In the main, these echo those already reported above. Many examples relate to:

- raised aspirations of SpringBoard pupils' friends, families and peers at their original state schools and young people in the community more generally, including pupils at state

schools working harder as a result of being inspired by the opportunity to follow in SpringBoard pupils' footsteps

- families in communities sending their children to local feeder schools where there might be a chance of applying to boarding school

- the support of wider communities for SpringBoard pupils going to boarding school – for example lining the streets to wave them off when they leave for the first time

- SpringBoard pupils raising awareness of the scheme by speaking at events and meetings in both their local communities and nationally, including examples of pupils speaking about their experiences at high profile events, such as a training event for member schools and partner organisations and an event at the Department for Education.

There are also examples of closer links being forged between SpringBoard's partner organisations, boarding schools, state schools and tutoring organisations. This includes examples of: a boarding school running master classes for a partner organisation within their local community; Local Authority Virtual School representatives providing training to a boarding school on attachment and trauma, specifically related to supporting looked after children; and a tutoring organisation working with a partner organisation to provide free tuition to SpringBoard pupils prior to them joining boarding school.

The two quotations below from headteachers of feeder schools where pupils have gained places at boarding school through SpringBoard illustrate some of the 'ripple effects' occurring within local communities:

The SpringBoard foundation has created enormous opportunities for the young men of Croxteth and Norris Green in Liverpool. The pathways that have been given to them will make a real difference to the rest of their lives (Headteacher, SpringBoard feeder school, Liverpool).

This (the SpringBoard bursary programme) *has not just impacted significantly on their life chances* [SpringBoard pupils'] *but also this community. There is a sense of self belief and confidence spreading across this community and this is as a consequence of the collaborative work of SpringBoard and the school* (Headteacher, SpringBoard feeder school, Chester).

6 Effectiveness of SpringBoard and suggested improvements

This section sets out the views of staff from member schools and SpringBoard pupils on the effectiveness of SpringBoard's operations, as well as their suggestions for how the programme might be enhanced.

6.1 Staff and pupils' views on effectiveness

6.1.1 Views of staff

In the annual teacher survey, staff were asked an open question on their views of SpringBoard and their responses were consistently very positive, with all reporting that they were extremely happy with the programme and how it was being run. Staff praised the professional and efficient management of the scheme and the care and understanding staff took in working with schools and pupils. They were also impressed with, and appreciative of, the openness of SpringBoard staff to new ideas and ways of working and felt that they were unique in their focus on looked after children. In addition, staff were very complimentary about the training that SpringBoard had provided. Selected quotations from staff at SpringBoard member schools are provided in the box below.

Box 7: Member schools' staff views of SpringBoard

[They are] *professional, caring, understanding and supportive* (Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2015).

They have been impressive, efficient, helpful and supportive (Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2015).

It [the scheme] *is very precise and exacting, which is good for achieving the desired goal of everyone involved* (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2014).

SpringBoard has the energy of a new organisation and is open to new ideas and initiatives. Indeed, the fact that SpringBoard are open to supporting looked after children when no other national charity has done, sets them apart from all other foundations (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2014).

The opportunities offered to the scholar, family and the school is terrific (Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2014).

6.1.2 Views of pupils and parents

In the surveys and interviews, pupils were consistently positive about their experiences and all of them reported that they would recommend the experience to other young people. When asked what advice they would give to others considering applying to SpringBoard, they advised their peers to grasp the opportunity, to go for it, and described it as a life-changing experience. They also advised future pupils to go with an open mind, to be ready

to work very hard and persevere with any challenges. They stressed that the experience allows you not only to excel academically but also to make connections with people who can help you achieve your aspirations. Parents, too, were extremely complimentary about their and their child's experiences when consulted by SpringBoard in summer 2015. Selected quotations from SpringBoard pupils and their parents are provided in the box below.

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Box 8: Pupils' and parents' views of SpringBoard

Do not be afraid of taking the opportunity. Being given a place will change your life forever and you will realise how much more you can get out of life (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

It's an opportunity that may never come again, you need to push yourself, and the hard work will pay off (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

Go for it! This is a life-changing experience and you will not regret your decision because SpringBoard does an amazing job at finding a school that is perfect for you... (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

Definitely go for it. It opens so many doors and opportunities that I was unlikely to get at my old school. You meet so many people and it's nice to have a change in life … get involved in as many things as you can. Talk to a lot of people. Make the most of it (Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2015).

The possibilities are endless and the greatest thing about going is that you find out that you are...not who society deems you are...you go through a journey to discover yourself and your ambitions (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

Schools push you even further, to your absolute limit and you have to be aware that you're expected to put all of your effort in... (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

...you make connections with people that can help you later on in life and you are taught by teachers who are genuinely interested in their subjects, which is brilliant (Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015).

Go for it. It is an opportunity of a lifetime. Make sure your child's experience is shared and they know to give back to others who are up and coming… (Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).

[Out of 10, I would give SpringBoard] *an absolute 10! Emotional ups and downs at times with missing my child but it has been the best thing for her as her hard work and commitment has paid off and seeing her so happy is the best feeling ever…*(Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015).

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6.2   Suggestions for improvements

In the first and second year of the evaluation, staff and pupils were asked for their suggestions for enhancements to the SpringBoard programme. Both times, the majority struggled to think of anything that needed changing reporting that the programme already worked very effectively. However, a small number of consultees suggested minor modifications that could be implemented. In the first year, these related to: enhancing the application process; increased tailoring of partners' support; and providing opportunities for staff across member schools to share practice. SpringBoard staff have demonstrated

commitment to continuously improving the programme by actively responding to these suggestions. In the second year of the evaluation, a small number of further suggestions for improving the programme were made. These are set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Improvements suggested by pupils and school staff

Pupils	Staff
• Set up a system for pupils to have a pen-pal who is already a SpringBoard pupil in another school. • Provide an opportunity for pupils to gain an experience of boarding during the selection process. • Provide more information as to what an average day would comprise in the pupil's chosen school. • Increase support from partners during the first term and at key transition or pressure points. • Encourage partners to facilitate more opportunities for pupils to share their experiences in their home communities and inspire other young people.	• Provide more opportunities for SpringBoard leads in schools to meet and share learning and effective practice. • Place more focus on placing pupils with less stable backgrounds where schools have the infrastructure and skills in place to support them. • Increase communication between house masters/mistresses and SpringBoard staff to allow a more knowledgeable placement of pupils (though this consultee added that the process had worked well so far). • Provide more details upfront about the pupil's background so that staff do not have to ask too many questions. • Increase the focus on academic and psychometric testing so that appropriate support can be put in place at the outset.

7　Conclusions and recommendations

7.1　Conclusions

The findings to date from the two-year impact assessment are overwhelmingly positive. Pupils and staff have reported a wide range of positive impacts as a result of pupils moving to boarding schools, and remarkably few negative consequences.

Effective working relationships have been developed between the partner organisations, original and member schools, pupils and families/carers, which has enabled pupils to settle quickly in their new school. The unique and comprehensive network of support that the SpringBoard model provides appears to be central to its success.

A range of impacts have been realised for pupils including: improved academic progress and attainment; raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects; improved communication and social skills and increased awareness of social diversity; increased confidence, independence and resilience; and the development of extra-curricular interests and abilities. Many of the above impacts have been achieved as a result of pupils benefitting from a stable and secure school environment.

Staff have also benefited in terms of, for example: the development of knowledge and skills as a tutor and key worker; personal satisfaction; increased collaboration; and improved communication and skills in working with parents. Furthermore, impacts are beginning to be seen in SpringBoard pupils' home communities where they are acting as positive role models and inspiring others to follow in their footsteps.

7.2　Recommendations

Below are a number of recommendations for the ongoing enhancement of the SpringBoard programme.

- Partners play an important role in supporting young people before and during their time at school and in the school holidays. Although feedback on partners is overall very positive, some partners need to set in place mechanisms to keep in touch more regularly with the pupil(s) they have placed, particularly during the pupil's first term at their new school but also on an ongoing basis at key transition and pressure points, as needed. In addition, as far as is possible, partners should focus on face-to-face contact with pupils, again particularly in their first term.

- Many pupils find the level and amount of school work challenging at first and some struggle on a more ongoing basis. A number of partners and schools have provided personalised tuition to students in subjects in which they are struggling, or in which they have been used to a different teaching style and/or syllabus. This has been particularly important before pupils have started school and during the first term. However, the evaluation findings suggest that pupils' academic support needs can fluctuate as they move through the school and face key examination periods. Although many schools are providing pupils with effective support on an ongoing basis, it would be useful for all

schools, in conjunction with partner organisations as appropriate, to continually monitor pupils' academic support needs and provide additional support when it is needed.

- Although issues are rarely seen or serious, in their regular reviews with pupils, staff in member schools and partner organisations should continue to ensure that they discuss any negative reactions that pupils may be facing from their peers. This is particularly key in the first year.

- It would be useful for SpringBoard to consider undertaking additional academic and psychometric testing of pupils prior to placing them in boarding schools. This will help schools to set in place immediate support to meet pupils' individual needs.

- Pupils have suggested a range of ways in which their transition to boarding school could be made smoother which SpringBoard, member schools and partners might consider adopting. These include: setting up a system in which pupils are linked with a pen-pal in another SpringBoard school; encouraging all schools to offer pupils an opportunity to board during the selection process; and providing pupils with more information as to what an average day at their chosen school entails.

- In selecting pupils, SpringBoard could place more focus on young people from less stable backgrounds where schools have the infrastructure and skills to support them.

- In terms of the placement of pupils, SpringBoard could, in some cases, increase communication with housemasters and mistresses to allow a more knowledgeable placement of pupils, including providing more information on pupils' backgrounds and requirements and setting in place the right support from the outset.

- SpringBoard has a growing number of member schools and partners. Within this context, it is important that it continues to support schools and partners to share learning and effective practice, by facilitating regular events and brokering collaboration and networks.

- Partner organisations should ensure that they continue to create opportunities for SpringBoard pupils to speak to other young people in their home communities about their experiences; pupils value these opportunities to raise the aspirations of others and positively impact on their futures. In particular, pupils who have been at boarding school for more than a year can be an 'untapped' resource.

- There is continuing evidence of a 'ripple effect' in pupils' home communities. Carrying out a systematic consultation with families/carers and others in pupils' home communities would offer more robust evidence of this broader aim.

References

Lamont, E., Flack, J. and Straw, S. (2010). *NFER Evaluation of the Arnold Foundation for Rugby School: Summary Report*. Slough: NFER. [online]. Available: http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/RAF01/ [30, September 2015]

Appendix 1: SpringBoard member schools and partners

Member schools

Cohort 1 (started 2013/14 academic year)
Bede's Senior School
Eton College
King Edward's School, Witley
Lord Wandsworth College
Marlborough College
Merchiston Castle School
Oundle School
Rugby School
Uppingham School
Wellington Academy

Cohort 2 (started 2014/15 academic year)

Bedales School
Bradfield College
Eastbourne College
Monkton Combe Senior School
Oakham School
Rendcomb College
Repton School
Royal Hospital School
Sedbergh School
Sherborne Girls School
Wellington College
Wymondham College

Cohort 3 (started 2015/16 academic year)

Bede's Prep School
Bromsgrove School
Cheltenham Ladies' College
Christ's Hospital School
Dulwich College
Farleigh School
Glenalmond College
Gordon's School
Headington School
Monkton Combe Preparatory School
Old Swinford Hospital School
Reed's School
Windlesham School

Partners

Mentoring Organisations and Educational Charities
Clavis Aditum
Eastside Young Leaders' Academy (EYLA)
Hope Opportunity Trust (HOT)
IntoUniversity
Oakwood & Gardners Lane Federation
Southside Young Leaders' Academy (SYLA) – new for Cohort 3
The Clarion Education Foundation
Torch Academy Gateway Trust
Hope in Tottenham - going through assessment

Maintained Schools, Academies and Free Schools
Iceni Academy
The Boxing Academy - new for Cohort 3
Westside School

Virtual Schools
Brighton & Hove Virtual School
Dudley Virtual School
East Sussex Virtual School
Gloucestershire Virtual School
Hammersmith & Fulham Virtual School – new for Cohort 3
Redbridge Virtual School
Suffolk Virtual School - new for Cohort 3
Sandwell Virtual School - going through assessment
Walsall Virtual School – going through assessment

Appendix 2: Support provided to pupils

Part of what is unique about SpringBoard is that it provides pupils with a network of support before joining their school, during term time and in the summer holidays. More details of the tripartite support provided by SpringBoard, partner organisations and member schools are provided below.

Support provided by SpringBoard

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation offers direct support to pupils, as well as to member schools and partners. This includes:

- overseeing the three-stage screening/application process

- hosting a pupil portal that contains information on boarding school life from the perspective of SpringBoard pupils

- working with member schools and partners to ensure that pupils are getting the right kind of support, sharing best practice and monitoring activity

- hosting an annual Fellowship Event for current and new pupils, SpringBoard alumni, parents/carers and partner organisations from across the UK. The aim is to create a sense of fellowship and identity, celebrate achievements, encourage pupils to be ambassadors within their communities and inspire pupils returning to/starting school to 'give their all'. To date, two events have been held in August 2014 and August 2015

- attending pupil and parent forums hosted by partner organisations in local communities to support the application process, talk about boarding school life, alleviate any anxieties, discuss the next steps and answer any questions

- visiting pupils in school

- bringing partner organisations together three times a year to share learning, effective practice and 'top tips'

- running training sessions for partners to support them with their role.

Support provided by partner organisations

The work of partner organisations varies. However, partners typically:

- identify eligible pupils and liaise with their families

- support pupils through entrance examinations, interviews and other screening activities

- prepare pupils for starting at boarding school

- monitor pupils' progress at school and provide term-time support

- support pupils during school holidays

- support families through every step of the process, answering questions, setting expectations and giving encouragement.

In terms of supporting pupils with the admissions process, support can include: talks on boarding school life and question and answer sessions for pupils which a member of SpringBoard's staff usually attends; parent forums and question and answer sessions; master classes; taster visits to boarding school; preparing pupils for the assessments and interview; and one-to-one support for pupils and their parents/carers, as needed.

Regarding preparing pupils for starting at boarding school, support can include: mentoring, open weekends, academic tutoring, looking at the A-level syllabus to be studied, helping prepare pupils for prep, and workshops (e.g. to build self esteem and time management skills and coping mechanisms). In some cases, one-to-one support is provided, whilst in others it is group based.

During the school holidays, partners may provide academic tutoring and support and preparation for the autumn term, as needed.

Local Authority Virtual Schools, which promote the educational attainment of young people in care, tend to be more involved in supporting SpringBoard pupils. Through a network of educational staff, social workers and foster carers, they provide ongoing and consistent support for the children in their care. In terms of placing pupils with SpringBoard, this includes: visiting the member school and meeting pastoral staff; inviting member school staff to their offices; managing the pupil's academic and pastoral transition to boarding school; and convening planning and review meetings. Some Virtual Schools have also trained boarding school staff on attachment issues and will relay details on the child's background to school staff, as appropriate. SpringBoard staff are also heavily involved in supporting pupils placed by Virtual Schools.

Some more established partners provide a full range of support whilst others are developing and improving their support on an ongoing basis. Partners are now required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding which outlines their, SpringBoard's and the member school's respective roles and responsibilities.

Support provided by schools

In the annual surveys, staff are asked about the support they are providing to SpringBoard pupils. In some cases, staff have reported that SpringBoard pupils are not differentiated from other pupils and receive the same type of support that is available to all new pupils joining the school. However, more than half of the staff consulted have reported that a range of additional support is provided to SpringBoard pupils to facilitate their successful integration in school. As one staff member commented: '...our attention/care/observation has been heightened' (Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2015).

Member schools provide a range of support to ensure that pupils settle well at school. **Before joining the school**, this includes:

- sending school booklets and information to the pupils' home or original school
- staff from SpringBoard schools visiting pupils in their original school
- home visits
- visits to partner organisations or attending meetings about the prospective pupil (such as Personal Education Plan meetings or Looked After Children reviews)

- pupil taster visits, welcome days and school tours in which pupils meet with staff and other pupils and which can include an experience of boarding
- access to staff from their new school for help with queries during the summer holiday before they start
- summer activities before starting their new school (such as sports tours).

Once at school, support provided to pupils includes:

- staff across school being aware of SpringBoard pupils so that they can provide the best possible support and raise any issues with the SpringBoard lead and other relevant staff
- special SpringBoard pupil induction programmes and activities at the start of the academic year to familiarise pupils with the school and help them to make friends
- welcome packs introducing the pastoral team and explaining the support available
- a welcome supper
- opportunities to meet staff, such as 'meet and greet' sessions, 'chill out' days with staff and open access to key staff to ask any questions
- pupils being assigned a welcoming buddy or mentor from the year above
- pupils sharing a room
- regular meetings of bursary students
- pupils' weekly/ongoing meetings and/or mentoring with an assigned tutor/key worker and ongoing monitoring and review of progress
- academic tutoring
- discussion forums
- staff maintaining ongoing contact with partner staff and local authority key workers supporting the pupil
- ongoing communication with pupils' parents and the provision of parent support e.g. open access to their child's tutor/key worker.

This is all in addition to the usual tutoring and support provided by academic staff and housemasters/mistresses.

Staff working with looked after children tend to have a much larger role as they have the responsibility of keeping in regular contact with a range of agencies supporting the child.

In their second year of involvement with SpringBoard, half of the staff in Cohort 1 schools reported that they had not changed the support they provided to SpringBoard pupils whilst the other half had introduced a number of changes. These changes included:

- ongoing review and enhancement of the selection process
- monitoring of the effectiveness of support provided
- allocating additional staff to oversee and support SpringBoard pupils
- strengthened links with partner organisations
- the provision of additional and tailored support in response to an increased understanding of some of the issues faced by pupils (e.g. attachment)
- introducing mentoring support and taster days, where they had not previously been offered.

NFER provides evidence for excellence through its independence and insights, the breadth of its work, its connections, and a focus on outcomes.

- independent
- insights
- breadth
- connections
- outcomes