

<p>Institution: UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM</p> <p>Unit of Assessment: C25 Education</p> <p>a. Context</p> <p>Education at Birmingham has a long and distinguished history of linking excellence in academic research with active engagement with a variety of international, national and local non-academic stakeholders. This has enabled our key areas of research - social justice, inclusion and character education – to have three major impacts:</p> <p>(1) Shaping educational policy to enhance social justice and inclusion. Research by the Dept. of Education and Social Justice (ESJ) and Dept. of Inclusion and Special Needs Education (DISN) has influenced policymakers at international, central and local government level (e.g. Dept. of Human Resources, Canadian Government; Dept. for Business Innovation and Skills; Birmingham City Council); as well as major national charities (e.g. the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Education Endowment Foundation).</p> <p>(2) Improving the provision of specialist and non-specialist teacher training. In addition to working with government agencies, such as the National College for Teaching and Leadership for non-specialist teacher training and achieving sustained ‘outstanding’ results for initial teacher training, research in the School of Education has been used by think tanks, lobby groups and charities to inform the: training policies of the Royal College of General Practitioners; those on autism education for the Autism Education Trust; and training guidance offered by the Royal National Institute of Blind People and Sightsavers.</p> <p>(3) Enhancing public understanding of educational challenges and possibilities. Our research findings have been extensively promoted through print, radio, television, social media and public seminars, and we actively seek new forms of outreach.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Impact is central to all we do. We ensure that strong relationships are formed with stakeholders by involving them as advisers in developing research proposals. These are sustained well beyond the conclusion of an individual project by ensuring their participation in dissemination events.</p> <p>We contribute to the research and development plans of our stakeholders through membership of their policy and practice boards, groups and committees. For example: Douglas was appointed to the committee that produced the UK Vision Strategy (2007-2008); Gillborn was appointed to the Department for Communities & Local Government ‘Reach’ project (2008-2009) which addressed race equality in education, and was also a member of the Advisory Board for Leeds Education Challenge (2011-2012); he is currently a member of the cross-disciplinary Runnymede Trust Academic Forum helping to set the research and policy agenda on migration, equality and ethnic diversity and is one of around a dozen academics invited to advise the Equality Challenge Unit (Hefce) on policy and practice issues for equity in higher education (HE); Grosvenor is a trustee of Birmingham Museum Trust; Thomas, H. has been appointed as an honorary member of the Royal College of General Practitioners.</p> <p>We respond to requests to provide direct advice to key stakeholders. For example, Allan has brought her expertise in inclusion to work with international stakeholders including as Consultant to the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on the education for pupils with special educational needs. Arthur has been invited to 10 Downing Street for a summit on character education. He has held major policy joint seminars with the Institute for Public Policy Research, the Labour Party and the British Army and has international connections with the Singapore Ministry of Education on citizenship and character. Skelton advised the Dept. for Children, Schools and Families on its ‘Gender Agenda’, contributing to meetings, conferences and seminars and was one of three authors of the subsequent publications on Gender Achievement (2008-2009) which forms the official guidance to all schools in the UK.</p> <p>Our research is commissioned by a range of international and national non-academic organisations to inform policy or practice developments. Our case studies provide key examples but other work during this REF period has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF – Vulnerable groups in education in emergencies in South Asia. • Higher Education Academy – The contribution of further education and sixth-form colleges to widening participation
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- MENCAP – identifying nature of educational provision for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties
- DCSF – Every Child Counts
- NASUWT – students' performance in PISA and GCSE: a critique of the Department for Education report.

We forge close relationships with policymakers and practitioners by inviting key figures to join the advisory boards of our research centres e.g. MPs Liam Byrne and Mary Macleod; and Lord Alan Watson and the Dean of Westminster Abbey for the Jubilee Centre for Character and Values (<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/402/about-us/advisory-board>). Similarly, policymakers (e.g. Sarah Howls, Head of Widening Participation at HEFCE) attended the launch of the Centre for Higher Education Equity and Access at Nuffield House in London.

We provide agenda setting leadership events which bring together academics, policy-makers and practitioners. These include debates, seminars and workshops, examples being: a Free Schools Debating Panel (Feb 2011) involving Fiona Millar, journalist and educational campaigner and Daisy Meyland-Smith, Centre for Policy Studies (attended by over 50 teachers); a joint conference with the School of Psychology on Autism (September 2011) with contributions from Sir Christopher Ball and Emily Rubin, Director of Communication Crossroad (attended by over 300 members of the public, practitioners and local policymakers).

We are also very active in engaging with the public by: making all research available in accessible formats and via our website. For example, in one of our regular contributions to the ESRC Festival of Social Science, a session on 'Technology use in the classroom' was attended by 120 practitioners, received local press coverage and our related website received over 1,000 hits. We facilitate engagement between researchers and the wider sector through on line discussions, blogs e.g. [<http://connectedcomms.wordpress.com/>], meetings and events involving parents and guardians.

The University actively supports the School of Education's impact strategy. It prioritises the appointment of staff who combine academic excellence with a reputation in and commitment to impact (e.g. Arthur, Gillborn, Artiles); and has invested in our impact focused research centres (e.g. Centre for Research into Race and Education [CRRE] and Centre for Higher Education Equity and Access [CHEEA]). This enhances the policy profile and contribution of our Centres (for example, Baroness Doreen Lawrence gave the keynote at the CRRE launch event). We also utilise the University's extensive media support, for example, by contributing to Birmingham Briefs (short, expert comment pieces on current policy issues [<http://preview.tinyurl.com/kkkjpyf>]) and actively encourage colleagues to take advantage of impact-related development activities offered by the University's research and support communications experts. This is also part of the development programme undertaken by our early career academics, including post-docs and PhD researchers, especially through the University's 3 day summer school on 'Getting Research into Policy'. The School is actively involved in high profile, cross-University impact initiatives. Youdell directs the Public Service Academy, an innovative partnership between the University and Birmingham City Council that facilitates engagement between researchers and city council officials and politicians around the major social and economic challenges facing the city and its communities. In addition, Grosvenor is the Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor responsible for cultural engagement, enabling him to bring his extensive expertise in research impact to the wider benefit of the University's cultural and educational relationship with citizens and communities.

c. Strategy and plans

Our strategy for the next five years recognises that we will continue to carry out rigorous and relevant research which is of the highest academic standards, alongside impacting on policy, practice and knowledge through a critical, ethical and creative engagement with research participants, co-researchers and other research users. In practical terms:

- [a] Target new and extend connections with stakeholders relevant to our Research Centres:**
- International connections through (i) newly recruited professors with global networks with policy makers and practitioners (e.g. Kristjansson and Curren in the Jubilee Centre, Gillborn in CRRE); (ii) Collaborative research: e.g. An AHRC Large Grant awarded to MOSAIC (Creese) involves 8

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national non-academic partners hosting joint public engagement events over 5 years. These partners have significant policy reach: e.g. Migrant Rights' Network holds the Secretariat of the All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Migration Building. CHEEA is internationalising its strong UK research and policy focus, e.g. through a commission from the Canadian government to review their online information system for university applicants.

Extending reach: (i) The Jubilee Centre's research is engaging with the Royal Medical Colleges, the British Army and Teaching Unions; (ii) collaboration with other Schools in the College (e.g. CHEEA is working with the University's multidisciplinary Centre for Household Asset and Savings Management to develop evidence based policy on higher education access and financial literacy.

Extend our connections through advisory groups for research projects. We intend to make policy advisory groups a standard feature of our large projects and these will guide us on how to establish and make best use of new connections.

Foster new connections by convening national events as well as providing a forum for dialogue between our stakeholders.

[b] Deepen relationships with key stakeholders in teacher education. The School will host the first University Training School (UTS) to be approved by the government, commencing 2015. This offers us a unique opportunity to enhance the impact of our teacher education. We will work closely with the UTS and a Federation of schools in the Midlands to promote and integrate research and teacher education.

[c] Sharpen guidance and support mechanisms to facilitate dissemination and impact.

Enhance internal capacity for impact: The Director of Research will monitor and record knowledge transfer activities and, with the Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee (R &KT), assess the School's performance against relevant targets and benchmarks.

Make greater use of knowledge exchange: Build on our visiting scholarships e.g. since 2008 MOSAIC has hosted 18 Visiting Scholars and Visiting Doctoral Researchers from eleven countries all with a strong emphasis on research impact. The R&KT Committee will target individuals/groups for Knowledge Exchange funding using programmes offered by ESRC, AHRC, the College of Social Science (through its Advanced Social Science Collaborative fund) and other sources.

Improve the documentation of impact by: using the University's research and information system (PURE) to track and record impact; conduct monthly searches at School level to collate evidence on impact of research findings; building evaluation for impact into all bids.

Improve ways to demonstrate impact: Each dept and Research Centre will nominate a stakeholder to be invited to an annual meeting on Research Strategy and Impact in the School of Education hosted by the School Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee.

Streamline and enhance information by: maintaining lists of current local, regional, national and international contacts ranging from politicians, specialist journalists, international agency personnel, invitees to events based on research interests.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies give an insight into how the School is working to promote impact.

Removing Barriers to Learning for Visually Impaired Children and Adults and Delivering Enhanced Educational Practice in Autism illustrate the impact of our commissioned research on the policies and practices of stakeholders through our involvement in their work, making our research findings accessible to practitioners and providing events bringing together academics, policymakers and practitioners. They also demonstrate how the high level of institutional support provided to our research centres enables them to undertake their mission of excellent research that shapes policy and practice. The commitment of the School and University has provided the Centres with staff continuity (via bridging funding to maintain researcher employment between contracts), enabling them to build long-term, sustainable relationships with research users. This in turn has enhanced impact, as well as a flow of external funding.

Overcoming Pupil Disadvantage demonstrates the kind of public engagement anticipated through the University policy of appointing academics with a reputation in and commitment to impact and the high level relationships they are able to build.