Environment template (REF5)

Institution: University of Sheffield

Unit of Assessment: 25 - Education

a. Overview

The School of Education aspires to be a world leader in the excellence of its educational research and subsequent impact on theory, practice, society and individuals' lives and work. We value ethical practice, scholarship and research that advances social justice and which is creative, critical, and challenging. Ours is a vibrant, collegial community of academics with strong international and interdisciplinary links.

b. Research strategy

The School's research strategy aims to promote and sustain research excellence in order to make a positive difference to people's lives and to society through the development of knowledge, theory and practice. Much of our work is aimed at understanding and reducing educational inequalities of all kinds and is grounded in local, regional, national and international contexts and concerns. Our commitment to socially just, ethical practice frequently involves participatory collaboration with the individuals and groups whose perceptions and experiences are at the centre of investigation. Research draws on a variety of disciplinary sub-fields (primarily sociology, psychology, philosophy, educational studies, plus the range of subject areas) and is underpinned by a distinct philosophy which recognises that the most insightful new research findings are often found at the boundaries of knowledge, theory and practice. Consequently we adopt a pluralist, transdisciplinary approach to research that embraces diverse and innovative approaches to methodology and to research re-presentation and reporting. Strategic management and realisation of our vision is overseen by the School Research Committee, and is monitored at Faculty and University level and through the annual academic planning cycle.

Future objectives set out in RAE2008 aimed to realise our commitment to excellence through: appointments reflecting our values; supporting research in the key areas of Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, Literacy, Early Childhood Education, Educational Psychology and Secondary Education; developing innovative theoretical perspectives and methodologies that take account of globalisation and technological change; obtaining external funding to develop existing and new areas of research; strengthening links with a wide range of users and facilitating their input to the development of research strategy; and, responding to re-structuring of national and local government provision of education and lifelong learning.

We have responded directly to all the above objectives. Shifting local, national and international priorities have been addressed through new appointments, restructuring and changes to our research centres. Whilst activities related to lifelong learning were included in RAE2008 objectives, the Institute for Lifelong Learning is no longer part of the School's remit and therefore does not form part of this return. Thus there are now 4 research centres: Children, Families and Learning Communities; Educational Development and Professional Lives; Higher Education; and Literacies. These strategic changes have enabled us to respond to methodological, theoretical and technological developments and have facilitated new research collaborations both within and outside of the academy. Specific research achievements which exemplify and demonstrate how RAE2008 objectives have been addressed are described under each research centre below:

Children, Families and Learning Communities - research focuses around two groups *Early Childhood Education* and *Educational Psychology*:

Early Childhood Education is a key development area with recent high-quality professorial (Wood) and Early Career Researcher (ECR) (Page, Levy and Yamada-Rice) appointments. The School has a strong international reputation for research and impact in the field. For example:

- Nutbrown's (ESRC funded and Impact Prize winning) research on family literacy in the early years has strengthened links with users and facilitated co-production of innovative practices and resources leading directly to national and international impact (see Impact Case Study).

- Levy and Yamada-Rice (ECRs) work in the field of early literacies and have developed innovative participatory research approaches with young children (Levy) and multimodal and visual methodologies to study communication practices in the UK and Japan (Yamada-Rice).

- Wood's theoretical work on play and pedagogy has led to both policy advice to departments of education in the UK, Switzerland, Australia and Eire, and production of practice guidance materials.

Educational Psychology benefits from recent high-quality professorial (Goodley) and ECR (Williams) appointments. Members share a common and distinctive focus on issues connected to social justice whilst innovative methods have been developed for accessing the narratives of those who are marginalised, e.g. vulnerable children and adults and those with additional needs. Research is often interdisciplinary and interagency. Examples include:

- Goodley's (ESRC funded) interdisciplinary research on interconnections of disabled childhoods and dis/ability studies which contests discourses of normativity, and has developed innovative arts-based research methods for co-producing critical narratives of dis/abilities.

- Billington's work on developing practitioner assessments and interventions and expanding the base of research evidence beyond reductionist psychopathologies, innovatively relocates Educational Psychology within a broader critical theoretical framework.

Educational Development and Professional Lives

Members are committed to critical, transformative and creative enquiry and to investigating conditions for, and influences on, the role of education in the quest for social justice. The centre incorporates a Philosophy of Education grouping, led by Allen (ECR appointment) and there is also a strong strand of scholarship focusing on the development of contextually appropriate, ethical and creative research methodology, practice and re-presentation. Work includes:

- Allen's innovative theoretical work using historical and philosophical perspectives to consider educational practices as forms of power.

- Webb's Society for Utopian Studies, Eugenio Battisti Award-winning work on utopias and hope.

- Sikes' research on teachers' experiences of being accused of sexual misconduct. Findings from this research were submitted to a Parliamentary Select Committee Review and the co-authored monograph reporting the study received an Honorable Mention for the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry Book of the Year Award.

- Lamb (PI) and Payne's involvement in the multi-institution *Research and Development of World Languages Strategies* team funded by the Teacher Development Agency (TDA).

Higher Education

Centre members undertake conceptual, empirical and policy research in the field of tertiary education, nationally and internationally. Research focuses on intellectual, professional and public debates about: system change and policy reform; access, participation and social equity; internationalisation and student mobility; transitions, progression and student identities; pedagogy and academic practice; assessment, qualifications and the vocational curriculum. Examples include:

- Parry's (ESRC and HEFCE funded) research on college systems in higher education which is addressed to policy development and institutional reform (see Impact Case Study).

- Ecclestone's investigation of the impact of assessment policy on educational practice, attitudes to learning and learning identities, in general vocational education, further, adult and higher education (*Constructions and Translations of Knowledge in General Vocational Education*, funded by Pearson/EdExcel).

- Papatsiba (who currently holds an EU Research Directorate/Marie Curie Scheme Individual Fellowship) is involved in a collaborative multi-country investigation into how higher education institutions are networked in knowledge societies in Europe, the USA and Japan (The *Change in Networks, Higher Education and Knowledge Societies* funded by the European Science Foundation's Higher Education and Social Change research programme).

Literacies

Literacy research has a long and renowned history at Sheffield. Currently the centre, which holds a highly regarded annual international conference, explores understandings of 'new' and 'digital' literacies, multi-literacies and modalities. Research investigates literacy practices in everyday life and learning contexts, uses methods from diverse disciplines and addresses issues such as

migration and emerging identities. This work engages with key national and international societal challenges and contemporary, cutting edge debates in relation to multimodalities, texts, practices and communication. For instance:

- Pahl's research under the AHRC Connected Communities Programme, including: *The Social, Democratic, Historical and Cultural Making of Civic Engagement:* (joint ESRC/AHRC funding); *The Ways of Knowing* project; *Language as Talisman* (with Hyatt); and the *Transmitting Musical Heritage* project.

- Marsh's inter-institutional research *Children's playground games and songs in the new media age* (funded by AHRC). Further related projects include *Childhoods and Play: An Archive* (funded by the British Academy) and *A Study of the Relationship Between Media, Commercial Markets and Children's Play in the UK Between 1950 and 2011* (funded by the British Academy).

- Other innovative work includes Rosowsky's studies of the ways in which multilingual young people negotiate and practise their ethno-linguistic and religious identities in different faith and community settings, and Davies' research on how people use technology to produce texts as part of their everyday-life, using social networking sites.

Research strategy for the next five years continues to be driven by our commitment to develop educational research in accordance with our mission and values. Objectives are to: appoint high quality staff committed to developing our vision in existing and new research areas; develop innovative theoretical perspectives and methodologies that take account of globalisation and technological change and which exploit interdisciplinary collaborations; capture grants to support cutting edge research addressing contemporary societal challenges and also to augment research time; support production of high quality publications; consolidate and further strengthen the reach and impact of our research in consultation with our Research Advisory Group (RAG, see REF 3b) through links with a wide range of stakeholders and research users, and by increasing involvement in collaborative and community projects; identifying, and responding to policy-initiated changes in the provision of education and associated services.

Key priorities include inter- and trans-disciplinary research and inter-institution and agency collaborations. These priorities are being realised through: Pahl's AHRC *Connected Communities* project; Nutbrown's *REAL* research and the ongoing impact of the ORIM framework; Goodley's Sheffield-led 2013 ESRC inter-disciplinary and inter-agency project *'Big Society? Disabled people with learning disabilities and civil society'*: Goodley, Wood and Ecclestone's Social Sciences Transformational Research Award *Transforming Disability, Lives, Culture and Childhood: Local, Global and Transdisciplinary Responses*.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

The staffing position over the current assessment period has been characterised by stabilisation, renewal and growth. The significant turnover experienced in the run up to RAE2008 has not been repeated and we have been able to focus staffing strategy on development of existing staff supported by key appointments that enhance the School's international research profile.

Recruitment and retention: Our staffing strategy aims to recruit, retain and reward world-leading research staff by providing the facilities, resources and mentoring necessary to sustain research excellence and support succession planning. Evidence that this policy has been effective includes: 3 professorial (Wood, Goodley and Ecclestone) and 10 ECR appointments (Page, Papatsiba, Levy, Williams, Petch, Hughes, Allen and Yamada-Rice. Sparkes and Corcoran have since left to take up respective posts in Korean and Australian universities); retention and promotion to Chair (Billington), Readership (Pahl), senior lectureships (Rosowsky, Lamb, Webb), and 6 Exceptional Contribution awards; 2 staff completing PhDs (Page, Yamada-Rice) and 2 EdDs (Hughes, Clemitshaw). Research performance, publications, impact, grant capture and international profile (actual or potential) are primary factors influencing recruitment and promotion.

The staff demographic profile has improved over the current period, most notably with regard to the gender of senior staff (5 of 9 professors, the 1 Reader, and 2 of 6 SLs are women) and in the balance between senior staff and ECRs. Of the 10 ECRs appointed over the period 4 were Sheffield doctoral students (Page, Hughes, Allen (ESRC) and Yamada-Rice (ESRC)) and 1 (Levy) was a Sheffield (ESRC funded) post-doctoral Fellow. We now have a mix of experienced and established staff and emerging research talent with the former playing a key role in developing the latter. This enables robust succession planning and ensures substantial personal, professional and capacity development in the School and the discipline of education.

Staff development is a key aspect of our research strategy and is addressed through an integrated package of School and University provision. At School level, this comprises: a *Staff Development Programme* responding to identified training and development needs through whole day and shorter sessions; and *a Research Induction Programme* to initiate new staff (including contract staff) into the School's research culture and to support formulation and development of funding applications and publishing in major research journals. We also run an *Annual Staff Research Day* and regular School research seminars alongside those arranged by Research Centres.

ECRs are allocated mentors to guide their development as researchers and all research-active staff have an advisor to support production of high-quality research publications and other outputs. Funding application workshops have been held and a process of peer advice/review for research bids aims to ensure high-quality applications with success evidenced by award rates and forms of funding captured, e.g. Nutbrown, ESRC; Pahl, AHRC; Parry, HEFCE. The institution-wide annual *Staff Review and Development Scheme* requires all staff to review and formulate research, publication and impact objectives in line with the School strategy whilst meeting personal goals.

Research and writing time: Our Work Allocation Framework allocates 40% of time for research (often condensed into writing leave periods) and staff are also eligible to apply for a semester of Study Leave based on the School's strategic research aims for every 7th semester served. Twenty such periods of study leave were awarded over the period and key outputs include successful funding bids, peer reviewed journal articles and impact (as demonstrated in the impact case studies). In addition to research time, staff are supported through School and Faculty research funding totalling £160,173 since 2008 (eg Billington, £9,489 to develop an online data base of expert witnesses for the Liverpool Family Court; Webb, £11,200 to extend research on utopias and hope in education). Research time has been further enhanced by strategic appointment of teaching specialists.

Research Ethics and Integrity (REI) The University is a recognised leader in fostering REI which applies to all research active staff and students. The School contributed to shaping the content of the University's Good RE&I Practices Policy which reflects world-wide best practice.

ii Research Students

Research students are a key element in our research strategy. The School benefits from significant investment (over £6M p.a. across the institution as a whole) and an excellent infrastructure, having played a major role in gaining accreditation for the ESRC-recognised White Rose Doctoral Training Centre (in partnership with the Universities of Leeds and York). All research students enrol on the Doctoral Development Programme (DDP) which provides them with access to a balanced suite of training and all new research students complete a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) with their evolving training needs reviewed on an ongoing basis. The White Rose DTC provides training and events across the White Rose partner universities. Our research students also benefit from the *Think Ahead* framework which provides a package of career support and access to mentors. In the annual national survey our students consistently rate their experiences very highly.

The School makes a substantial contribution to the University's Doctoral Development Programme (DDP) and particularly to the University-wide online multimedia resources - the Virtual Graduate School (VGS) - enabling us to emphasise our commitment to research integrity and ethical practice (the University is the only Russell Group university to deliver compulsory REI training for all its PGR students with content tailored to cognate disciplines). In December 2012, the QAA review

praised Sheffield's provision for research students and highlighted aspects as good practice.

All staff on academic contracts make a significant contribution to PhD and EdD teaching programmes as well as supervising individuals. Doctoral students learn from, and have access to experienced researchers and well-published authors. All students have 2 supervisors and, thereby, inexperienced colleagues are supported in their development as supervisors.

Research students are integral to the School's research energy and vitality. They participate in the full programme of departmental and research centre seminars as well as having their own seminar series providing practice and support in the delivery of papers. Students are invited to join research centres and are involved in their various activities. For example, in 2013 students associated with the Literacies centre gave presentations on their work to a visiting renowned Fulbright scholar and benefitted from his advice and expertise. The first Research Student Conference was organised by doctoral students in 2013. EdD students attend 3 residential weekend study schools each year. These involve visiting expert national and international speakers and are taught (and attended) by the full range of staff from within the school. We encourage and support all students in submitting research for publication either individually or co-authored with staff and we have a policy on ethical practice on collaborative authorship.

The School currently has 235 research students (76 full time, 159 part-time); 58 are undertaking PhDs and 177 are in the research component of Professional Doctoral programmes. This large population has brought additional benefits arising from cohorts. In line with the University's internationalisation agenda we also have 8 PhD and 38 Professional Doctorate students in overseas locations, many of whom have prestigious national funding. In the period 196 doctorates have been awarded (plus two co-supervised with other departments 0.83) as set out in the table below. In addition 18 EdDs were awarded to students based in the Caribbean and 20 to Dublin based students.

Year	Professional Doctorates	PhD	Total
2008-9	25	10	35
2009-10	31	7	38
2010-11	33	13.33	46.33
2011-12	33	9	42
2012-13	32	3.5	35.5
Total	**154**	**42.83**	**196.83**

During the period PhD students (now staff members) were awarded the 2012 BERA Dissertation of the Year award (Allen), the 2010 UKLA Student Research Award (Yamada Rice), and postdoctoral Fellow, Levy, received the 2008 UKLA Post-Graduate Prize for Doctoral Research. A number of ex-doctoral students obtained appointments in academia and beyond including: 4 ECR appointments in the School of Education; 1 Readership and 5 lectureships at UK universities; 5 lectureships and 1 post-doctoral research appointment at overseas universities; Deputy Chief Education Officer, St Lucian Ministry of Education; Deputy Chief Education Officer, Barbados Ministry of Education. Many EdD students are at middle or senior management levels in their respective institutions and we aim to enhance their practice and career development.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The School's strategic approach is to secure research funding in order to support research excellence and our commitment to inter-disciplinary, -institutional and –agency research which frequently involves working with leading partners outside of the School. During the period external funding awards generated a total income of £1,215,775, with £319,482 coming from UK research councils. Significant examples (total project value shown) include: Goodley (PI, ESRC £256,000), Parry (PI, HEFCE £228,000), Marsh (Co-I, AHRC £625,111) and Pahl (Co-I, AHRC £508,800). All of these led to high quality outputs, both as returned in our submission and beyond.

The four research centres provide a focus for activities and the development of excellence by

supporting and nurturing individual and collective scholarship, research interests and agendas and the development of responses to funding opportunities, policy changes and related research opportunities. All centres include colleagues at different career stages who adopt different theoretical and methodological approaches in pursuit of their various substantive interests and cross-centre, interdisciplinary and cross-institution collaboration is supported and encouraged. Staff may belong to more than one centre reflecting the interconnected nature of much of our work. All research centres host a seminar series (frequently with renowned visiting national and international speakers) open to all members of the School and University.

The School's dedicated research office and full time secretarial team supports costing and organising research proposals; study leave committee; an external funding group to stimulate grant applications; a substantial budget to support staff and students at national and international conferences; and a research ethics panel. This has resulted in 30 staff submitting 94 bids.

From August 2013 a Business Development Manager (Research Partnerships) was appointed with a brief to grow the School's external research and consultancy income. This appointment will contribute significantly towards realising our research strategy for the next five years.

The School's Research Committee develops, implements and evaluates its research strategy. It provides information on funding opportunities, targets support for new research projects, administers a pump priming fund, plans and monitors study leave and links to the University's research infrastructure. Funding for conference attendance is available from the University Learned Societies Fund (available to students), the School's Devolved Travel Fund and also from two specific bequests for overseas travel and historical research.

The School is well supported by the University research infrastructure, and plays a leading role in the Social Sciences Research Committee and Faculty initiatives such as ICOSS (the Interdisciplinary Centre of the Social Sciences) - a £5.9m facility providing state of the art IT infrastructure, meeting rooms, exhibition space and specialised support for social science research. Staff and students have access to excellent library facilities, including the new STAR Plus search engine, specialist research libraries, the student-focused Information Commons, free transport to the British Library at Boston Spa, and a range of IT services provided by the Corporate Information and Computing Services.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

We regard Education a field of study and of practice that is frequently, inherently and inevitably inter-disciplinary and inter-agency, bringing together academics and practitioners from many disciplinary backgrounds and from a wide range of services. We therefore prioritise collaboration across disciplines, educational institutions, and various agencies in the UK and overseas, as well as with research participants and users to promote knowledge exchange, policy-practice developments and the generation of innovative perspectives on *inter alia,* research foci and questions, theoretical frames, ethical considerations, methodologies, methods, research relationships, approaches to re-presentation, reporting, dissemination and implementation. In this context, separating and differentiating between disciplines and partners and outcomes can lead to artificial, if not spurious, distinctions.

Given this approach, numerous colleagues have been involved in significant inter-disciplinary, inter-institutional and inter-agency projects. Examples include: Goodley's ESRC *Big Society* project which brings together psychologists, social policy workers, sociologists, educationalists and health practitioners, from 4 UK universities and 3 impact partners (MENCAP, Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities and Circles of Support); and Pahl's ESRC/AHRC *The Social, Democratic, Historical and Cultural Making of Civic Engagement* involving academics from the Schools of Architecture, Education, English, Geography, History and Russian and Slavonic studies and from 5 UK universities as well as local arts organisations, museum services and community groups.

Colleagues have direct influence and impact on policy and practice through research-based consultancy for government and NGOs (for instance, Wood, advising education departments in the UK, Switzerland, Australia and Eire on play and pedagogy, and Lamb advising the TDA on language teaching); advice to select committees (e.g. Nutbrown on early years provision, Sikes on investigating allegations against school teachers); and independent government commissioned review (Nutbrown, *Foundations for Quality*). Participation in such consultations also provides valuable insights that inform all aspects of our research practice.

International collaboration and networks: We participate in international collaborations and networks in order to exchange ideas, to understand better the perspectives of others, and to promote our own scholarship. This allows us to contribute to emerging strands of thought in other countries, reinforces the perception that ours is an intellectually leading school and enriches our research environment. Examples of international collaboration include: research projects (e.g. Papatsiba's ESF funded *Change in Networks, Higher Education and Knowledge Societies* multi-country investigation involving Europe, the USA and Japan; Pahl's SSHRC Canada funded *Community Arts Zone* project collaborating with academics in the USA and Canada; invitations to hold visiting lectureships overseas (Marsh, Parry, Wood, Goodley, Lamb, Sikes, Nutbrown have held 10 visiting scholar posts at various Australian universities; Sikes has been visiting scholar at the Universities of Hong Kong, Utah, Lamb at Orebo, Denmark and Goodley at the Universities of Iceland and New South Wales); visiting scholars to Sheffield including recently, Dr Wen Wu Yi, Northwest Normal University, China, and Professor Bronwyn Williams, University of Louisville (Fulbright Fellowship); 15 staff have given over 115 funded keynote presentations overseas; Sikes' involvement in drawing up the New Brunswick Declaration on *Research Ethics, Integrity and Governance*, since adopted by various institutions and professional associations in the UK, North America, New Zealand and Australia; 5 members of staff have reviewed bids for international research councils (Marsh, Hong Kong; Wood, Norway; Pahl SSH Canada, Austrian SSRC; Parry and Lamb, European Science Foundation; Lamb, Agence National de la Recherche).

Seminar series, journal editorship, conferences and research based CPD: Our staff play an important role in developing intellectual debate within our various fields. For instance, 6 members of staff (Davies, Marsh, Skelton, Payne, Lamb, Nutbrown) are currently editors of top rated international journals (e.g. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, Journal of Childhood Literacy)*, 13 are on the editorial boards of 55 international journals and 19 have reviewed for 116 international journals. Those involved in organising international conferences events include Sikes (DPR from 2008 to present), Lamb (British Council Seminar), Papatsiba, Winter and Allen (ECER seminars) and Billington (the 2013 North of England Conference). Marsh and Davies, Ecclestone, Sikes and Rosowsky have been involved in successful ESRC Seminar series bids. All of our staff regularly present at conferences both in the UK and overseas.

Many postgraduate students work in middle, senior, executive and ministerial level positions (in the UK, the Caribbean, Malta and Singapore) in the full range of educational institutions, in educational management and administration, in educational psychology and in various organisations and agencies. Because teaching is research based and assessment focuses on students' research (frequently undertaken in the students' professional setting) they are encouraged to publish their studies. In this way much of our work takes the form of research based CPD which has practical impact and also contributes to scholarship.

Contributions to professional associations and learned societies: Colleagues make a significant contribution to professional associations and organisations. Examples include Lamb (awarded the Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques for services to language education) who convenes the international Research Network in Learner Autonomy in Language Learning under the auspices of AILA (Association Internationale pour la Linguistique Appliquée); Billington who has been the chair of the British Psychological Society Autism Group; Sikes who has been an elected member of the British Educational Research Association council, and is currently the Chair of the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry Qualitative Book of the Year Award; and Wood who is a member of the European task force on Early Childhood Education. Six members of staff (Marsh, Nutbrown, Goodley, Parry, Wood, Sikes) are members of the ESRC Peer Review College and Pahl and Levy of the AHRC Peer Review College. Colleagues also review for Leverhulme (Parry), Nuffield (Parry, Goodley) and Carnegie (Parry).

PG training: The School is a major contributor to the ESRC-recognised White Rose Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) Goodley, for instance contributed to the 2020 Research Futures award winning team. During the period staff have acted as external examiners for 114 doctorates in the UK and overseas (Australia 11, USA 3, Finland 2, NZ 2, Canada 1, Ireland 1, South Africa 1).