

<p><b>Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Unit of Assessment: C25 Education</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>Our non-academic users and beneficiaries include teachers, school leaders and other senior professionals; parents, children and young people; early years, youth and community workers; local, national and international policymakers including charities and agencies such as curriculum authorities and examining boards. Educational research is based in the Education and Social Research Institute (ESRI) in the Faculty of Education at MMU. The Faculty is one of the largest teacher education providers in the UK, working with a 1000+ schools and colleges in NW England. It is rated by OFSTED as ‘Outstanding’ for primary and secondary teacher education; 1000+ new teachers graduate from our degree and PGCE courses each year. We move to a new purpose-built city-centre campus in 2014. Extensive community engagement activities are underway in the new location (Hulme/Moss Side) including homework clubs for local schools. The Faculty houses ‘STEM Education North West’, formerly the DfE-funded Science Learning Centre North West which delivers 2000+ CPD days annually. The Faculty leads the Early Years Professional Northern Alliance, a consortium of nine providers, training 520 Early Years Professionals annually. The Faculty includes the Centre for Urban Education, set up with the Local Authority as part of the Manchester Knowledge Capital initiative to raise educational standards and FE/HE participation in the city; and the Community Audit and Evaluation Centre – a research and development resource for groups working on youth engagement and community development issues. These links indicate our immediate local user groups and beneficiaries. More widely we engage with other agencies and national policy through a portfolio of funded research, and seek to lead debate, nationally and internationally, on the nature and future of education and educational research.</p> <hr/> <p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>Achieving impact is neither linear nor certain. It is enabled through multiple mechanisms and long-term engagement with research participants and users. It derives in numerous ways from many different initiatives, contacts and activities. It involves knowledge production, accumulation and mediation in addition to direct engagement with sponsors and users over particular problems and issues. We actively contribute to debates about the role of research in policy and practice, as well as seeking to secure specific impacts on specific issues through working directly with research participants and users. Thus we seek to influence the field of educational research and the ‘context of impact’ in addition to seeking impact itself. This is achieved through developing a mix of theoretical, applied, evaluative and practitioner research, including co-production with key stakeholders; various forms of media engagement; and direct engagement with and reporting to research funders, participants and user groups over research questions, methods and findings.</p> <p><i>Theoretical and empirical research – contributing to the discipline and to the debate about the relationship of research to policy and practice:</i> this is largely reported in REF 2 and REF 5, but additionally, for example, several significant Handbooks and multi-volume Major Works have been produced (Somekh &amp; Noffke 2009, Torrance 2010, 2012). Torrance held two ESRC consultancies reviewing ESRC’s investment in educational research (2007-08 and 2008-09), contributing a report to the Strategic Forum for Research in Education (2008). We led 2 ESRC seminar series in period (RES-451-26-0744 &amp; RES-451-26-0948) including policy makers, and contributed 3 reviews to the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander et. al. 2009). An AHRC grant was secured to support an artist-in-residency in an early years classroom (The Secret Life of Objects, 2009-10, AH/H008403/1), along with ESRC Follow-on Funding (RES-189-25-0122; 2010) to develop novel impact strategies. The Follow-on-Funding resulted in the production of an innovative film for professionals working with children (see (d) below, CS1). ESRC funding was also secured to develop a Third Sector Capacity Building Cluster (RES-595-24-0010 with Lincoln and Goldsmiths 2008-2013). The Cluster involves working with local charities and community groups to develop research informed and evidence-based responses to key issues in the voluntary sector. It includes three ESRC CASE studentships. We have secured two further ESRC CASE awards involving links with a Housing Association and the Museum of Science and Industry.</p> <p><i>Applied and evaluative research:</i> our portfolio of applied research and evaluation long predates the current focus on impact in the current REF. It includes links with government departments and agencies, local authorities, charities, businesses and international institutions</p>
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including the EU and World Bank. Major sponsors include BECTA (four grants in period see (d) CS3); Manchester and Stockport Sure Start consortia (four grants in period plus other related projects, see (d) CS1); Action-for Children (study of a mother-and-baby unit at a local women's prison, see (d) CS1); Barclays 'Spaces for Sport' evaluation; the EU (six grants in period see (d) CS3). Other projects have been funded by the BBC, the RSA, Learning and Skills Councils and charities including NESTA, the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation and Esmee Fairbairn (see (d) CS1). Such projects exemplify the reach and significance of the range of research users with which we routinely engage. Most recently, the Faculty have funded the *Building Research in Teacher Education (BRiTE)* research group, from residual 'Knowledge Exchange' income, to investigate School Direct, both to provide intelligence for internal program development and to inform national policy.

*Practitioner research:* we support a wide range of practitioner research through funded projects and senior professionals working within our EdD and PhD programmes. For example, The Effectiveness of Medical CPD, funded by the College of Emergency Medicine included consultants researching their own practice. The report (Schostak et. al 2009) was widely circulated and is on the GMC website. One participant won an NHS award for his thesis *Conceptions of knowledge in emergency medicine* (MMU 2011) and is now a clinical director of acute and emergency services. Other alumni include senior personnel in universities (including overseas), schools, Local Authorities, charities, HMI and the National College for School Leadership. We continue to work closely with many of them. We host the Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN) an international network supporting practitioner research and most recently have set up a Collaborative Action Research Platform, an interactive electronic 'clearing house' to summarise and disseminate research activities and research findings across collaborating schools. This is supported by a research studentship part-funded by the Co-operative College to investigate and develop alternative curriculum and accountability arrangements across the network of Co-operative College Academies. Other joint initiatives with the Co-operative College include a major international conference celebrating the UN year of the cooperative 2012 and a national conference (2013) exploring the rapid development of the UK co-operative schools movement.

*Dissemination, media engagement and staff development:* A variety of means are used to reach beneficiaries, influence opinion and support staff impact activity beyond individual research project engagement and reporting. These include: depositing outputs in MMU Open Access repository; Professorial Lecture series - public lectures to showcase new research and professorial views on current issues; ESRI research brochure, website, blog and twitter feed including many freely available electronic research resources such as the Professorial lectures and film resource cited in REF 3b CS1; individual staff blogs (e.g. Allen, Daza); Faculty Partnership newsletter; provision of evidence to Select Committees, government inquiries and other policy commissions (e.g. Torrance cited in the Bew Report on KS2 testing and in UCET submission to NAHT Commission on Assessment; see also Lewin and Piper in (d) CS2 and CS3 below); extensive professional publications and media links (e.g. Holmes and Piper in *Nursery World*, see (d) CS2, CS3; Piper regularly contributes to 'Spiked on-line' and the 'Battle of Ideas', CS2); letters to newspapers (including, for example, staff being signatories to *The Independent* 'Gove National Curriculum letter' (19 March 2013) provoking his 'marxist' response. Such interventions exemplify that impact can (and on occasions should) critique and disrupt policy in addition to influencing and informing it - see ESRI blog 25 March 2013; see also *The Times* 1 October 2013). We work closely with the MMU publicity department to create press releases and MMU features Education impact case studies on its main research website. Individual staff also have extensive links to individuals and agencies in their field of research (e.g. Torrance: Cambridge Assessment). Staff are also members of school governing bodies, children's centre advisory boards, etc. Staff are supported to engage in these activities by regular 'bag lunch' discussions of impact activities and blog contents. A research assistant appointed to support research impact and knowledge exchange organises these activities, provides impact data (website hits, report citations, etc) and produces on-line campaigns (e.g. Inspired2Greatness, CS2).

### c. Strategy and plans

Long-term engagement with research participants and users is essential. Some relationships end with changes of personnel or are interrupted by changes of policy. A commitment to replacing/reproducing similar links to those described above will be maintained, especially regionally, where our networks are strong, substantial and enduring, and internationally with respect to EU funding and policy development (see (d) below). All of the above activities

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associated with our approach to impact will continue and are embedded in research designs. Research impact strategies are written into all proposals. Thus for example we have an enduring relationship over ten years with European Schoolnet, an organisation representing 30 Ministries of Education. Lewin is currently leading the evaluation workpackage in the flagship EU FP7-funded iTEC project and has recently been appointed as an evaluation framework contractor for the period 2013-2015. Co-production of research questions, methods and activities is being further developed through a Greater Manchester Early Years Research Network including schools, Local Authorities and Museum/Gallery Education departments; through the development of the Collaborative Action Research Platform (above); and through collaboratively sponsored research studentships. MMU provides internal funding to support Knowledge Exchange activities and we have secured such funding to support the development of the Early Years Research Network and the Action Research Platform. MMU Graduate School policy is similarly to develop co-funded externally partnered research studentships and such studentships have been secured with Manchester Art Gallery and Manchester Communications Academy (linked to BT), in addition to the Co-operative College studentship reported above. Thus the city art gallery, the Co-operative College and a local media academy are co-funding research studentships 2013-16. Research links with the Co-operative College will also contribute to a joint masters' degree in Educational Management and Leadership. MMU Research and Knowledge Exchange policy is to support inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional research, including with relevant public service and commercial partners, and this will become even more significant in the Unit's development and overall portfolio of research projects and impact activities. Similarly further development of the MMU Open Access repository will support wider access to research outputs.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

Case studies reported in REF3b are: 'Changing Early Childhood Education: Policy, Practice and Perceptions (CS1)', 'Changing policy and practice regarding 'no-touch' and similar risk-averse interactions between children, teachers, and other professionals' (CS2), 'Changing policy and practice in the use of educational technology in schools – informing national and international policy' (CS3). They demonstrate the reach and significance of the impact of our research, and exemplify the multi-faceted approach to impact described above. They have emerged iteratively as our strategy has developed and have been produced as a result of our long term commitment to engagement with participants and users.

CS1 (Holmes, Jones, MacLure et. al.) reports a 10+ year program of applied and theoretical research directly influencing national policy but also significantly impacting on how the culture of early childhood is produced and understood. It has attracted substantial grants from government, charities, ESRC and AHRC, positioning the work as theoretically significant in addition to having direct impact on policy and practice.

CS2 (Piper et. al.) reports a 10 year program of theoretical and empirical research influencing opinion and changing national policy with respect to 'risk' in professional-child relationships; it includes direct engagement with schools and individuals facing legal issues. Some of the research is funded by ESRC and has impacted on the nature of the debate nationally and internationally; some is unfunded and includes direct consultancy with law firms, providing expert testimony to legal process. Impact extends beyond educational settings to include risk management in other settings (e.g. American Veterinary Society on violence towards animals). Extensive media engagement is a key element of the impact strategy of this case study, influencing the climate of opinion in which both policy and individual cases are addressed.

CS3 (Lewin, Whitton et. al.) reports a similarly lengthy program of applied and evaluative research investigating the diffusion and operation of ICT in educational settings. Funded by government departments (DfE), agencies (e.g. BECTA, GTCE) and the EU, the research has impacted on key investment decisions (e.g. use of Interactive Whiteboards in schools) and has supported practitioner research in schools about the effective use of ICT in individual classrooms. The research has been increasingly funded by and is becoming increasingly influential in Europe, further developing the partnerships and networks of influence that the research has helped to produce.