

**Institution:** The University of Leeds

**Unit of Assessment:** 25

**a. Context**

Educational research at Leeds is rooted in policy, practice and thinking nationally and internationally, in a reciprocal and recursive relationship. Impact is thus an integral component of our work. Our researchers have co-productive relations with research users that facilitate knowledge exchange, enable research access and ensure the relevance of our work to practitioners and policy-makers. This is evidenced at regional, national and international levels. For example, at the **regional** level, we have worked with local schools and colleges, Education Leeds, Bradford Local Authority, and the Bradford, Leeds and Airedale NHS Trusts. At **national** level, we have worked with the DfES/ DfE, where we have contributed to policy initiatives such as *Every Child Matters*, *Skills for Life* and the *14-19 Pathfinder Initiative*, and to initiatives in the NHS, the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, and the Teaching Agency/ TDA. We have also worked with organizations such as the British Council, and the Education and Employers Taskforce, and examination bodies, including the GCSE Exam Boards, and Cambridge's *English for Speakers of Other Languages* and *IELTS* boards. We have worked with and advised national professional groups and associations such as the organizations for English as an Additional Language teachers NALDIC and NATECLA, the National Institute for Continuing Education, NASEN (the national organization for the development of children with special educational needs) and the Dyspraxia Foundation. **Internationally**, examples of our influence on thinking, policy and practice include work at government level with the Oman Ministry of Education, the Kenyan Ministry of Education and the Guangzhou Education Department, China. Our research on educational leadership informs leadership and management training for the Chinese, including head teacher training in partnership with the British Council and the Beijing Institute of Education. Our work has also impacted on the wider general public nationally and internationally; for example in our contribution to standards for the identification of dyspraxia (Impact Case Study 1).

Our research has impact across various domains. Examples include:

**Health and welfare:** T. Roberts and Homer investigated the use of workplace-based trainee assessment in a collaborative project with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. This strand of their work has led to a number of publications and events for professionals in the field, and is cited in GMC guidelines for assessing medical undergraduates.

**Practitioners and professional services:** Research by Ryder, Banner and Homer has contributed to school science education reform (Impact Case Study 4); Swanwick's work on deaf education has influenced practice and policy nationally; Wedell's research into the management of change on teacher education is used by the British Council.

**Public policy, law and services:** Anning's research evaluating the SureStart program (Impact Case Study 3) has had a major and long lasting influence on U.K. government policy. Pearson's research influences the development and implementation of policy on inclusive education, as part of which she has sustained involvement with the Regional Quality Standards for Inclusion; Dyer works with the Swedish Committee on Afghanistan (the largest NGO working in the country) on their nomadic education strategy, and has worked with the Kenyan government on designing education by radio for mobile pastoralists.

**Creativity, culture and society:** Parry's research into young people's relationship with popular culture, and their film and text production is one development of her previous professional work in schools and the media industry, and has been disseminated to teachers and media professionals through publications and funded events; Hayward and Farnworth's work has challenged and shaped discourse around young people described as NEET.

Leeds staff have typically come to educational research after periods as practitioners, giving them a privileged insider relationship with the fields in which they research. Examples are Monaghan's work in secondary mathematics teaching, Chambers' experience in modern foreign language teaching, Wilson's school management experience, Conteh's work as a teacher and teacher educator overseas and with multilingual primary teachers locally, Swanwick's work in deaf education, and T. Roberts' medical training and research, all of which have generated research arising from and feeding back into these end-user groups. Engagement with policy communities is also longstanding, in part through our Centre for Policy Studies in Education (CPSE), which holds

regular seminars, attracting senior education professionals and policy makers from the region and further afield.

### **b. Approach to impact**

Impact is embedded across the research life cycle at all stages, from initial engagement with organizations and other users, joint development of research ideas and questions, to the conduct and dissemination of research. Examples include those listed above, and additionally: Baynham's ongoing work with NHS Bradford Airedale and Leeds to conceptualize and develop research into the effective working of the Individual Funding Requests commissioning group, Simpson's collaboration with Education Leeds and RETAS to research the Adult ESOL provision and needs in Harehills, and M. Pike's work with local schools to develop projects researching school ethos, leadership and values. We believe that this embedding is intrinsic to meaningful research in education, and in our work it predates the current REF period; historical examples are the research in health and education, 14-19 policy, HE policy, and Science Education referenced in our RAE2008 submission.

Leeds has a University-wide emphasis on research-led teaching, bringing us the benefit of almost daily dialogue around pedagogic research with practitioners. Through our taught masters courses and PGR students we work alongside experienced education professionals, many of whom are at the forefront of thinking in their various contexts, from around the world. Our Initial Teacher Education courses involve frequent contact with a large number of schools in the region, and in-depth understanding of education policy. Benefits of this are realised across the UoA as follows:

The **Science and Maths Education** team's engagement with practitioners locally, nationally and internationally has enabled it to make major contributions to policy and practice in the national education system through re-thinking the teaching and assessment of these core subjects.

The **Language Education team** and Dyer from **Political Science and International Studies** engage with TESOL/ ESOL organizations and practitioners on an ongoing basis, ensuring the relevance and impact of their contribution to curriculum, policy critique and practice nationally. Researchers have contributed to teaching projects internationally, leading to opportunities for contextually-relevant research that, in turn, has impact on future projects.

The **Childhood and Inclusive Education** team also engage in ongoing dialogue with end users, including specialist teachers, clinicians, and the general public, ensuring that their research is relevant, topical and has impact. This approach has resulted in influential contributions to policy and practice in inclusive education, and internationally to developmental assessment practices.

Research by **Learning Leadership and Policy** is grounded in detailed knowledge and understanding of 14-19, post compulsory, professional and workplace education, and for the **Leeds Institute for Medical Education**, especially in clinical and medical education. As for the other teams, dialogue with people who work and learn at all levels in these sectors has contributed to relevant, important, widely recognised research with impact.

We not only contribute to but lead research agendas, our most senior researchers having the national and international standing that enable them to do this. Examples are Borg's contributions to setting the research agendas for the International TESOL organization, the British Council and IATEFL as well as the Ministry of Education in Oman, and Ryder and colleagues' ongoing high-level interaction with science education leaders within the Nuffield Foundation and Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

### **c. Strategy and plans**

In RAE2008, we cited 'increasing the impact on policy and practice' as one of our criteria for giving financial and workload hours support to networks within the UoA. Since 2008, we have continued with and consolidated this commitment. Internally, we promote research with impact by:

1. Giving impact a consistently high profile in internal workshops and conferences. For instance, the theme of our 2011 Research Conference was 'Impact in Research'. To this end as well, the REF Impact Case Studies then under development were presented to all staff at our 2012 Research Conference.
2. Embedding impact related activity in our workload calculation and our Research Investment Funding (RIF). Staff are invited to bid on a regular basis for RIF to support impact activities at every stage of research projects, from design through to dissemination.

**Impact (REF3a)**

3. Raising awareness among staff on how to communicate their research to the media, drawing on inputs from the Press Office. An example of this is the prominent THES coverage of Evans's research into academic leadership and the professoriate (THES 20th Dec 2012).

Externally, we ensure that our research is planned for relevance and impact by:

1. Maintaining and strengthening existing relationships with our user communities and consolidating new ones: examples are cited above and also include Higham and Farnsworth's work with schools locally, and Sugden's work with medical charities and clinicians.
2. Creating opportunities for dialogue with end users to identify issues in need of research, through the use of the CPSE and other fora to develop public debate. This also includes learning from the contact with education professionals afforded us by our teaching.
3. Organizing events for practitioners and policy makers, such as the HEIF-funded showcase event on educational research at Leeds held in 2012 for PGCE partners and Higham's work on the steering group of the North of England Education Conference held in Leeds in 2012.

A major strategy for communicating our research is direct engagement with professionals, for example, through invitations to speak at the conferences of professional bodies and to publish in professional journals that communicate directly with practitioners. For example, Baynham has spoken of his narrative and identity research to audiences of teachers in a number of countries; Simpson manages a listserv for ESOL practitioners (ESOL-Research, JISC), with over 750 subscribers; Conteh hosted a meeting of NALDIC at Leeds in 2012; Pearson and others have made numerous contributions to NASEN conferences and publications, and Kilminster has presented her research findings about transition points in doctors' careers to clinicians. Such contributions go beyond dissemination: communication with professionals is two-way and feeds back into our future research plans, ensuring these are relevant.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

Our four case studies demonstrate rigorous and theoretically significant research, developed in partnership with stakeholders outside academia who are involved at every stage.

- Sugden's case study (1) reports on work that has had both national and international influence, illustrating the national and international dimensions along which education research at Leeds has impact.
- Two of the case studies, 2 and 4, represent the work of our Science and Mathematics Education academic team, which has a track record of research that is both world leading theoretically and of central relevance to practitioners from teachers to policy makers at national level.
- Anning's case study on the National Evaluation of Sure Start (3) is indicative of her pre-eminence nationally in early childhood studies research. The impact of this research is still being felt after a change of government and accompanying change in approach to social provision, suggesting that its findings are robust even in a changed policy landscape.

These demonstrate the impact of established lines of research undertaken at Leeds. Alongside our internationally known areas of strength, which have the momentum of established and recursive links between research and practice, we are also developing new areas, leading to future research with impact. These are generated (1) by real world developments, (2) by building new collaborative networks with other HEIs and user groups, and (3) by the research strengths of our new cohort of ECRs and other recent appointments. Examples of (1) are our developing research on mobile phone technology in India by Simpson and colleagues, and Walker's work on digital technologies in education and in young people's lives more widely. These are both grounded in dialogue with stakeholders, and promise topical impact in the near future. An example of (2) is Baynham and Simpson's work with Kings College London and a national network of ESOL providers. (3) is exemplified by the Reading Rhizome project on deafness and reading for meaning (Clarke and others), and by the work of our recently recruited Professor of Childhood Studies, (Christensen) whose work on children's perceptions of their environment has fed into debate about the shape of communities locally and nationally. We will develop this strand of work, with several of our recent appointments (for example, J Pike, S Roberts) forming a team under Professor Christensen. We plan that these more newly emergent areas will, over time, be equally if not more significant to the wider community beyond academia as those contributing to our four case studies.