



**Evidence for
Excellence in
Education**

Report

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation Impact Assessment: Year 4

January 2018



The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation Impact Assessment: Year 4

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Contents

Executive summary	i
1 About The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation	i
2 About the evaluation	ii
3 Key findings	iii
3.1 How effective is the support provided to pupils?	iii
3.2 How have pupils adapted to boarding school?	iv
3.3 What impacts are being realised?	v
3.4 How effective is SpringBoard?	viii
4 Conclusions	viii
1 The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation	1
1.1 Background to SpringBoard	1
1.2 Recruitment and selection of pupils	2
1.3 Intended impacts of SpringBoard	3
2 The evaluation	4
2.1 Research with SpringBoard pupils	4
2.2 Research with staff in member schools	5
3 What support is provided to pupils and how effective is it?	7
3.1 How are pupils being prepared and supported?	7
3.2 How effective is support from partners?	9
3.3 How effective is support from member schools?	12
3.4 Key factors for pupils' successful transition and integration	12
4 How have pupils adapted to boarding school?	14
4.1 How have pupils settled at boarding school?	14
4.2 What difficulties have pupils faced?	18
5 Impacts on pupils	23
5.1 Overview of impacts	23
5.2 Improved academic progress and attainment	24
5.3 Raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects	28
5.4 Improved social skills and interactions and increased awareness of social diversity	34
5.5 Increased confidence and well-being	39
6 Impacts on schools, families and home communities	44
6.1 Impacts on school staff	44
6.2 Impacts on SpringBoard pupils' peers	45
6.3 Impacts on families and carers	46
6.4 Impacts on pupils' home communities	47
6.5 Further examples of the 'ripple' effect	48
7 Effectiveness of SpringBoard	50
7.1 Staff and pupils' views on effectiveness	50
7.2 Suggestions for improvements	53

8	Conclusions	57
	References	58
	Appendix 1: SpringBoard member schools and partners during evaluation	59
	Appendix 2: Support provided to pupils	62
	Appendix 3: SpringBoard's consultation with partners	66

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 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 and receive high-quality help and support, all year round. SpringBoard is currently working with 16 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 78 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 online pupil and parent portals; 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 working with STEER on a pioneering project which will increase the expertise of SpringBoard, its partners and member schools in assessing the mental well-being of pupils and providing early and focused pastoral care. This project began in 2017 and draws on the use of 'AS Tracking'. This is a process which enables schools to be proactive, targeted and evidence-based in their pastoral care.

A total of 264 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, 62 pupils started at 29 boarding schools in September 2015, 67 pupils started at 33 boarding schools in September 2016 and 74 pupils started at 43 schools in September 2017. The evaluation focused on the first three cohorts of pupils.

It is worth noting that Springboard merged with The Royal National Children's Foundation on 30th June 2017. The merged charity is named The Royal National Children's SpringBoard Foundation and all trustees and staff of Springboard have joined the merged charity. SpringBoard's Chief Executive Officer is now Chief Executive Officer of the merged charity. The merged charity brings together extensive experience in supporting the boarding education of numerous disadvantaged children and intends to draw on the best principles, policies and practices of both legacy charities in order to give fuller support to more children in future. However, as this evaluation was commissioned and primarily undertaken prior to

the merger, the previous name of SpringBoard is used throughout the report, as well as descriptions of SpringBoard’s operations during the time of the evaluation.

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 fourth report based on consultations with SpringBoard pupils and member schools. A final report is planned for December 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 across the three cohorts has included:

- a baseline survey on joining their new school (between October and December)
- follow-up surveys at the end of their first and second year at boarding school (during June and July)
- eight to ten telephone interviews in summer 2014, 2015 and 2016 (during June and July)
- the analysis of attainment and progression data using the National Pupil Database (NPD)¹ – a pilot assessment was undertaken in autumn 2016 with a full assessment to be reported in autumn 2018.

Table 1 below provides details on the number of Cohort 1, 2 and 3 pupils completing the surveys. All SpringBoard pupils have completed the baseline survey and all but one have completed the first and second follow-up surveys. Where numbers at follow-up are lower, this is due to pupils completing or leaving the programme.

Table 1 Pupils completing the baseline and follow-up surveys

	Baseline survey (on starting boarding school)	First follow-up (at end of first year at boarding school)	Second follow-up (at end of second year at boarding school)
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	59	54
Started Sept 2015	Autumn 2015	Summer 2016	Summer 2017
Totals	123	118	111

In addition, 25 pupil telephone interviews have been completed.

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.

The impact assessment has also included research with staff from member schools who were asked to complete an online qualitative proforma at the end of the 2014, 2015 and 2016 academic years. Table 2 below provides details on school and teacher participation in the evaluation.

Table 2 Staff completing the annual proforma

	Completed first proforma	Completed follow-up proforma	Completed second 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	7 staff from 6 schools Summer 2016
Cohort 2 start schools: 12 schools Started Sept 2014	14 staff from 11 schools Summer 2015	18 staff from 12 schools Summer 2016	
Cohort 3 start schools: 13 schools Started Sept 2015	8 staff from 7 schools Summer 2016		
Total schools participating	26	20	6

The number of pupils placed by SpringBoard into boarding schools has increased year-on-year and the number of completed pupil surveys is now over 100. Although this enables us to report percentages and more robust evidence, the total number of pupils placed by SpringBoard remains relatively small and the findings in this report must still be treated with some caution.

The final evaluation report will include the analysis of NPD data comparing SpringBoard pupils' GCSE and A-level examination results to those of pupils from their original schools.

3 Key findings

3.1 How effective is the support provided to pupils?

The tripartite and ongoing support from partners, member schools and SpringBoard itself is central to the success of the programme. This includes support for pupils prior to being placed at boarding school through to ongoing support provided during the school year and holiday periods. Key factors for pupils' successful transition to, and integration in, boarding school include:

- **school buy-in and expertise** including: senior management commitment; staff skills and expertise in working with SpringBoard pupils; collaboration and information sharing
- **preparation of pupils prior to starting school** including: support during the application process; taster visits with boarding experience; clear information on what to expect academically and socially; matching pupils to schools that can meet their needs; meetings/information sharing between pupils' previous schools, boarding schools, partners, pupils and parents/carers, and with other agencies as required; prior academic assessment and support

- **ongoing and targeted support at school** including: induction; regular meetings with an assigned key worker/mentor; link to a 'buddy'; academic support, as needed; support from the partner organisation and SpringBoard, as needed
- **support for the family** including regular meetings and information sharing
- **close collaboration** between partner organisations, schools and SpringBoard.

3.2 How have pupils adapted to boarding school?

Pupils have settled very well into their new schools. At the end of their first year at boarding school, the vast majority of pupils (around 90 per cent) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that: they liked boarding school; they felt happy at school; there were people at school who cared about them; they felt comfortable at school; and they felt part of their school community. Similarly positive responses were received at second follow-up, with comments from staff consultees echoing pupils' reports.

Again, the vast majority of pupils were very positive about what boarding school was providing them with, with four-fifths or more of pupils surveyed responding 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to the following statements about boarding school at the end of their first year:

- is helping me to get better qualifications
- is giving me more opportunities to meet people from different backgrounds
- is giving me a better chance of getting a good job
- is giving me more extra-curricular opportunities
- is helping me to achieve what I am capable of
- is giving me greater confidence that I will succeed in life
- is giving me more chances to excel in something I am good at.

At the end of the second year of boarding school, pupils were still highly positive. The proportion of pupils responding 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to these statements remained the same or reduced slightly but was still three-quarters or more.

Adjusting to boarding school has, though, not been without its challenges - both socially and academically - for some pupils. Around a fifth of pupils at first follow-up reported missing home/their family and missing their friends at home 'a lot' with more than half reporting missing family and friends 'sometimes'. At second follow-up, the combined total proportion of pupils reporting that they missed their friends at home and family 'a lot' and 'sometimes' was similar to the first follow-up. However, the proportion responding 'a lot' had reduced slightly which is not surprising considering that we would expect pupils to be more settled at boarding school after two years. In addition, just over a third of pupils at both first and second follow-up reported experiencing negative reactions from other pupils at boarding school 'a lot' or 'sometimes'. However, the proportion responding 'a lot' was small and decreasing (eight per cent and two per cent at first and second follow-up respectively). It is also worth noting that pupils reported positive changes in their confidence and well-being as a result of attending boarding school which are detailed towards the end of section 3.3.1 below.

Adjusting to the academic level and challenge has also been difficult for some pupils, at least initially. At first follow-up, although less than one in ten reported struggling with prep or struggling in class 'a lot', over a half reported struggling with these areas 'sometimes'. Pupils gave similar responses at second follow-up which suggests that, even during their second year at boarding school, many pupils will struggle with these areas at some point. The pupil interviews and teacher consultations suggest that most pupils experience difficulties when they start boarding school and that the jump from GCSE to A-level study can also be challenging. However, by the end of their first year at boarding school, most pupils have made firm friends and are starting to adjust to the academic level, with support from their school. In general, only a minority of pupils experience ongoing more serious challenges which require intensive support from mentors and key workers.

3.3 What impacts are being realised?

The evaluation data collected suggests that the SpringBoard programme is resulting in a range of impacts for its target groups, as detailed below.

3.3.1 Impacts on pupils

Impacts on pupils have been realised in four key areas:

- academic progress and attainment
- raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects
- improved social skills and interactions and increased awareness of social diversity
- increased confidence and well-being.

At the end of their first year at boarding school, **the vast majority of pupils surveyed (92 per cent) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they were challenged at school**, which was a 35 percentage point increase from the baseline. Similarly, **almost all pupils (97 per cent), reported that they were working hard at school** which showed a small increase (12 per cent) from the baseline. Pupils provided similar responses at second follow-up which suggests that they continue to be challenged and work hard as they progress in boarding school.

In addition, three-quarters of pupils at both first and second follow-up (76 per cent and 75 per cent respectively) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they were doing well at school but this was slightly less than the proportion at baseline (81 per cent). Interviews with pupils and staff suggest that this can be explained by pupils being more challenged at boarding school leading some to feel they are not doing so well.

In the interviews, pupils reported that they were pushed and supported at school and were now more motivated to succeed. They commented that the small class sizes, individual support, being surrounded by highly motivated peers, high expectations from staff, and structured prep were all contributing to their increased motivation to succeed. However, staff reported that a small number of pupils were still struggling with the academic demands of boarding school after their first year.

Many pupils already had high aspirations prior to applying for boarding school - which was partly why they were selected - but, for most of those who did not, **boarding school has**

raised their aspirations. At both first and second follow-up, **almost all pupils surveyed (98 per cent and 97 per cent respectively) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they were keen to get good qualifications** (compared to 91 per cent at baseline).

At the end of their first and second year of boarding school, more than **two-thirds of pupils reported that they had lifelong goals** (69 and 68 per cent respectively) which saw an increase of ten percentage points from the baseline of 58 per cent when they joined their new school. Linked to this, the **vast majority of pupils at first and second follow-up (89 per cent and 90 per cent respectively) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that attending boarding school had opened up opportunities that they would not have had before**, with a half reporting that boarding school had changed their career aspirations.

Pupils reported that **their aspirations had been raised by being in an environment of ambitious and competitive individuals and where high expectations were the norm, being made aware of the vast array of opportunities open to them through careers activities, and by making connections with people** who would help them succeed in life.

The vast majority of pupils were considering university study before attending boarding school and continued with this aspiration (87 per cent and 91 per cent at first and second follow-up and 89 per cent at baseline) and were aspiring to professional careers such as medicine, law, engineering, business and finance. Staff reported that a small number of pupils had low aspirations or unrealistic aspirations and that these pupils were being provided with careers support. A key barrier to pupils achieving their aspirations was finance (which around a third reported was a barrier at all survey stages). Some pupils also required further information and support to consider their options.

Pupils also reported positive developments in their social skills and interactions. The **vast majority of pupils at first and second follow-up (95 and 98 per cent respectively) reported that they had made friends** at boarding school. In addition **the vast majority (91 per cent and 89 per cent at first and second follow-up respectively) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that it was important to participate in extra-curricular activities** which was a more than 20 percentage point increase from the baseline. In addition, **90 per cent and 88 per cent of pupils at first and second follow-up respectively 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they were more confident in social situations**, which saw a nine and seven percentage point increase respectively from the baseline.

In the interviews, pupils reported making firm friendships with pupils in their year group as well as across the school, often via their participation in extra-curricular activities. This included pupils from a wide range of backgrounds which increased their awareness of social diversity. In general, pupils have integrated well at school where many pupils are more privileged than themselves. However, some pupils have struggled to fit into their new school and have required more ongoing support from staff.

Finally, **there have been important positive changes in pupils' confidence and well-being** as a result of attending boarding school. In particular, at the end of their first and second year at boarding school, 82 and 81 per cent of pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they were positive about their future (an increase of more than 20 percentage points from the baseline). In addition, more pupils were positive about themselves (86 per cent and 88 per cent at first and second follow-up compared to 72 per cent at baseline). The vast majority of pupils **(90 and 87 per cent of pupils at first and second follow-up**

respectively) also ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that they were happy at school (an increase of 15 or more percentage points from the baseline). Part of the change was related to pupils feeling more valued by their teachers.

Alongside increases in confidence are **increases in pupils’ independence and resilience** reported in the pupil interviews and staff consultations. Pupils have recognised growth in these areas as a result of having to adapt to a new environment and academic standards and to do many more things for themselves. However, confidence can fluctuate throughout the year (e.g. it can be lower during exam periods) and can be impacted by what is happening in pupils’ home environment.

3.3.2 Impacts on school staff

Staff reported the following impacts as a result of their involvement in the SpringBoard programme:

- the development of knowledge and skills as a tutor, mentor or key worker and in supporting looked after children
- bringing more sensitivity to their work with all pupils due to their developing awareness of pupils' potential difficulties and challenges
- enhanced communication skills through liaising with parents whose first language is not English
- increased cultural awareness and adopting more creative means of pastoral and academic support, drawing on the expertise of their partner organisations
- personal satisfaction gained from supporting pupils from deprived backgrounds
- gaining additional profile and recognition in school for taking on the SpringBoard responsibility
- increased collaboration through sharing information on bursary pupils
- the impetus to look at the wider bursary provision in school.

3.3.3 Impacts on SpringBoard pupils’ peers

Staff frequently reported that SpringBoard pupils were well liked and that many acted as positive role models. A number of pupils have significantly contributed to school life - both academically and through extra-curricular activities - and have positively affected others by their enthusiasm, warmth and intellectual inquisitiveness.

Most staff reported that their schools already had a diverse pupil population but, where this was not the case, taking SpringBoard pupils has 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.

3.3.4 Impacts on families, carers and home communities

Families/carers and friends at home were reported to react 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?

School staff were generally very positive about their experience with SpringBoard, with the majority 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 SpringBoard personnel 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 commented that SpringBoard was unique in its focus on looked after children.

In the surveys and interviews, pupils were consistently positive about their experiences of SpringBoard and in their recommendation of the programme 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.

In every year of the evaluation, staff and pupils were asked for their suggestions for enhancements to the SpringBoard scheme 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 and SpringBoard staff have demonstrated commitment to continuously improving the programme by actively considering and actioning these areas for development.

4 Conclusions

The findings from the evaluation of SpringBoard are extremely positive, with pupils and staff reporting a wide range of impacts as a result of pupils moving to boarding schools, and remarkably few negative consequences.

Even though SpringBoard has expanded significantly during the evaluation period - working with more partners and schools and supporting an increasing number of pupils - effective working relationships have been developed and have continued to grow between partner organisations, original and member schools, pupils and their families/carers. The unique and comprehensive network of support that the SpringBoard model provides is central to its success and enables pupils to settle quickly in their new school as well as thrive in the longer-term.

A range of impacts have been realised for pupils including: improved academic progress and attainment; raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects; improved social skills and interactions and increased awareness of social diversity; and

increased confidence and well-being. 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/carers. 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.

Throughout the course of the evaluation, SpringBoard has shown itself to be a learning organisation which seeks to continually improve and strives to offer the best possible programme. It has responded to recommendations for improvements from pupils and staff as well as developed new partnerships – for example with STEER - to further enhance provision. As SpringBoard moves forward with its merger, it should seek to continue to actively listen to its range of partners and bursary pupils in its mission to transform the lives of some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in the country.

1 The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation

1.1 Background to SpringBoard

The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation ('SpringBoard') was established in 2012. It is a 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 (NFER'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 78 member schools and 16 partner organisations. The evaluation included consultations with schools who became affiliated with SpringBoard between 2013 and 2015. This included 35 member schools and 14 partner organisations. Partner organisations included: 'mentoring' organisations, many of which were educational charities working with disadvantaged pupils; maintained schools, academies and free schools; and Local Authority Virtual Schools. A full list of the SpringBoard schools and partners involved in the evaluation 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.

It is worth noting that Springboard merged with The Royal National Children’s Foundation on 30th June 2017. The merged charity is named The Royal National Children’s SpringBoard Foundation and all trustees and staff of Springboard have joined the merged charity. SpringBoard’s Chief Executive Officer is now Chief Executive Officer of the merged charity. The merged charity brings together extensive experience in supporting the boarding education of numerous disadvantaged children and intends to draw on the best principles, policies and practices of both legacy charities in order to give fuller support to more children in future. However, as this evaluation was commissioned and primarily undertaken prior to the merger, the previous name of SpringBoard is used throughout the report, as well as descriptions of SpringBoard’s operations during the time of the evaluation.

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 joined the scheme during the evaluation period. Pupils can join the scheme from age 11, with the largest proportion joining aged 16+. Table 1 below provides an overview of the total number 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+
Cohort 1: 2013	25	10	10	3		7	15
Cohort 2: 2014	36	29	20	1	1	12	22
Cohort 3: 2015	62	45	29	11	1	13	37

Source: *The SpringBoard Bursary Foundation, 2015.*

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) to explore the effectiveness and impacts of SpringBoard bursaries. In terms of impacts, the primary focus of the evaluation has been on SpringBoard pupils but impacts on other pupils and staff within boarding schools, families and home communities have also been explored.

Three previous annual reports have been published (Buchanan *et al.*, 2014; Straw, 2015; Straw *et al.*, 2016). This is the fourth evaluation report which integrates research findings from the previous reports with data from the 2016/17 data collection phase. A final report is planned for December 2018.

There are two key strands to the external evaluation – research with SpringBoard pupils and research with staff in member schools (details are provided in section 2.1 below). In addition to the external NFER evaluation, SpringBoard undertook a small-scale qualitative consultation with parents during summer 2015. The consultation was undertaken using the online survey tool SurveyMonkey and a total of 14 parents took part. The findings strongly echo those of the external evaluation and selected quotations are included in this report. In addition, SpringBoard has been gathering examples of the ‘ripple effect’ of its work and, again, this report draws on examples from this work.

2.1 Research with SpringBoard pupils

Three cohorts of pupils were involved in the evaluation: Cohort 1 pupils who joined member schools in September 2013; Cohort 2 pupils who joined in September 2014; and Cohort 3 pupils joined in September 2015.

The evaluation with pupils across the three cohorts included:

- a baseline survey on joining their new school (between October and December)
- follow-up surveys at the end of their first and second year at boarding school (during June and July)
- eight to ten telephone interviews in summer 2014, 2015 and 2016 (during June and July)
- the analysis of attainment and progression data using the National Pupil Database (NPD)¹ – a pilot assessment was undertaken in autumn 2016 with a full assessment to be reported in autumn 2018.

Table 2 over the page provides details on the number of Cohort 1, 2 and 3 pupils completing the surveys. All SpringBoard pupils completed the baseline surveys and all but one completed the first and second follow-up surveys. Where numbers at follow-up are lower, this is due to pupils completing or leaving the programme.

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.

Table 2 Pupils completing the baseline and follow-up surveys

	Baseline survey (on starting boarding school)	First follow-up (at end of first year at boarding school)	Second follow-up (at end of second year at boarding school)
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	59	54
Started Sept 2015	Autumn 2015	Summer 2016	Summer 2017
Totals	123	118	111

Nine telephone interviews with Cohort 1 pupils from nine different schools were undertaken in summer 2014, the first year of the evaluation. 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 the second year of the study (summer 2015), eight telephone interviews were undertaken with a mixture of Cohort 1 and 2 pupils 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 9, one was in Year 10 and three were in Year 12. In the third year of the evaluation (summer 2016), eight telephone interviews were undertaken with a mixture of Cohort 2 and 3 pupils from eight different schools. This included three pupils from Cohort 2 and five from Cohort 3. The pupils included four boys and four girls: one pupil was in Year 8, two were in Year 9, two were in Year 10, two were in Year 12 and one was in Year 13.

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 they had realised.

The NPD analysis will compare the attainment of SpringBoard pupils at GCSE and A-level with a matched comparison group of pupils from their previous 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 full analysis will be available in December 2018.

The number of pupils placed by SpringBoard into boarding schools has increased year-on-year and the number of completed pupil surveys is now over 100. Although this enables us to report percentages and more robust evidence, the total number of pupils placed by SpringBoard remains relatively small and the findings in this report must still be treated with some caution.

2.2 Research with staff in member schools

The impact assessment also included research with staff in member schools who were asked to complete an online qualitative proforma at the end of the 2014, 2015 and 2016 academic years. Table 3 provides details on participation in this element of the evaluation.

Table 3 Staff completing the annual proforma

	Completed first proforma	Completed follow-up proforma	Completed second 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	7 staff from 6 schools ² Summer 2016
Cohort 2 start schools: 12 schools Started Sept 2014	14 staff from 11 schools Summer 2015	18 staff from 12 schools Summer 2016	
Cohort 3 start schools: 13 schools Started Sept 2015	8 staff from 7 schools Summer 2016		
Total schools participating	26	20	6

The proforma was administered with staff in member schools who had a specific responsibility for the SpringBoard programme. It explored 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 any improvements required.

This report contains the following sections:

- Section 3: What support is provided to pupils and how effective is it?
- Section 4: How have pupils adapted to boarding school?
- Section 5: Impacts on pupils
- Section 6: Impacts on schools, families and home communities
- Section 7: Effectiveness of SpringBoard
- Section 8: Conclusions.

² Only eight of the schools starting in Cohort 1 were invited to take part in the survey as the other two schools did not take Cohort 2 or 3 pupils and their Cohort 1 pupils had left.

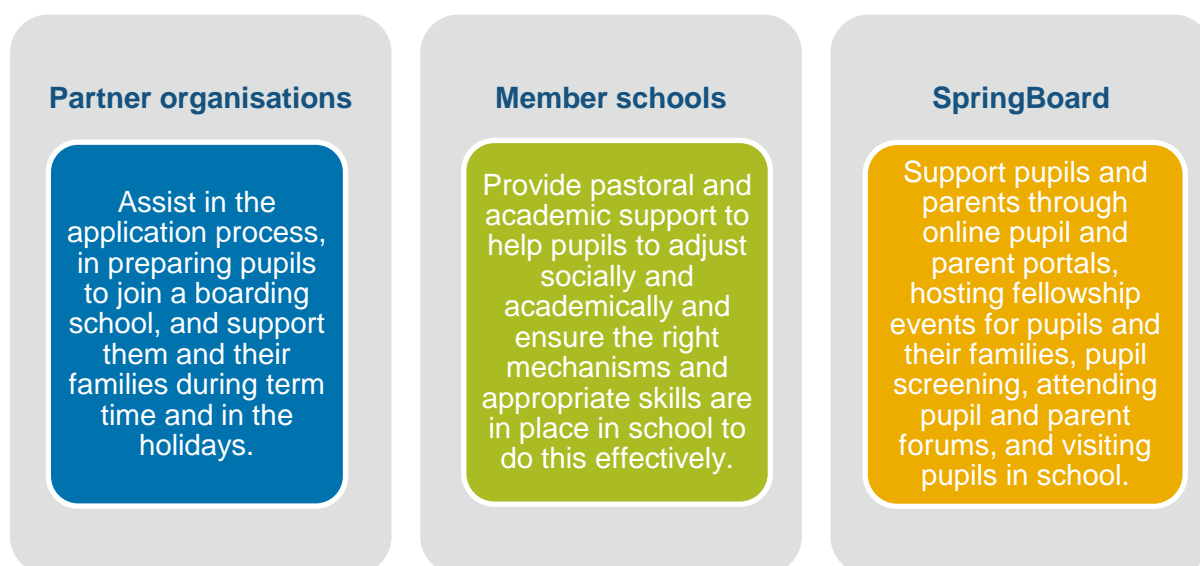
3 What support is provided to pupils and how effective is it?

This section describes the support provided to SpringBoard pupils by member boarding schools and partner organisations and pupils' views on this support. It also presents the views of member schools on the key factors for pupils' successful integration in boarding school. More details on the support provided can be found in Appendix 2.

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 to provide support for pupils all year round. Figure 1 outlines the tripartite support provided.

Figure 1 Tripartite support provided to SpringBoard pupils



3.1.1 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.

3.1.2 Support provided by member schools

Member schools provide a range of support to ensure that pupils settle well at school.

Before joining the school, this includes activities such as:

- sending school booklets and information to the pupils' home or original school
- visiting pupils in their original school or undertaking home visits
- staff visiting partner organisations or attending meetings about the prospective pupil (such as Personal Education Plan meetings or Looked After Children reviews)
- the organisation of taster visits, welcome days and school tours in which pupils meet with staff and other pupils and which can include an experience of boarding.

Once at school, support provided to pupils includes:

- 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 the support available
- 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
- a formalised buddy system, in which pupils are assigned a welcoming buddy or mentor from within their house
- regular meetings and/or mentoring with an assigned tutor/key worker and ongoing review of progress both academically and personally
- academic tutoring (e.g. in mathematics) to support pupils to get up to speed with their peers in class
- ongoing communication with pupils' parents.

3.1.3 Support provided by SpringBoard

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

- hosting a pupil portal that contains information on boarding school life from the perspective of SpringBoard pupils
- hosting a portal for SpringBoard pupils' parents providing information, advice and guidance on bursary provision for both parents interested in SpringBoard and parents of SpringBoard pupils
- 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 and celebrate achievements
- 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

- with member schools and partners, supporting pupils who are experiencing particular difficulties and/or require additional or ongoing support.

SpringBoard is also working with STEER on a pioneering project to increase the expertise of SpringBoard, its partners and member schools in assessing the mental well-being of pupils and providing early and focused pastoral care. This project began in 2017 and draws on the use of 'AS Tracking' which enables schools to be proactive, targeted and evidence-based in their pastoral care. The pilot is progressing very well. All SpringBoard staff and partners were trained on AS Tracking by the STEER founders in July 2017 and 42 SpringBoard schools (those taking the September 2017 starters) have either been trained by STEER or are in the process of completing the training. In addition, all September 2017 entry pupils have so far completed two AS Tracking assessments – the first one in the summer holidays before starting boarding school and the second in October/November 2017 after their first two to three months at boarding school. The data gathered so far suggests that the pupils have made excellent transitions to their boarding school and are being well supported by their schools and partner organisations. The third and final AS Tracking assessment for the pilot year will take place in April 2018 after which SpringBoard will review the pilot and further build their model accordingly.

Pupils were not directly asked about the support provided by SpringBoard. However, they were asked if they would recommend SpringBoard to other pupils considering joining the scheme. In addition, staff in member schools were consulted on the effectiveness of SpringBoard. Findings from these questions are presented at the end of the report in section 7.

3.2 How effective is support from partners?

Within the surveys, pupils were asked about the effectiveness of the support of their partner organisation in helping them to apply to SpringBoard, preparing them for boarding school, and in helping them during term time and in the holidays. The results are presented in Chart 1 below.

Pupils were the most positive about the support that they had received from their partner organisations in helping them to apply to SpringBoard, with more than three-quarters (77 per cent) reporting that it was 'Very helpful' and 16 per cent reporting that it was 'Quite helpful' in the baseline survey.

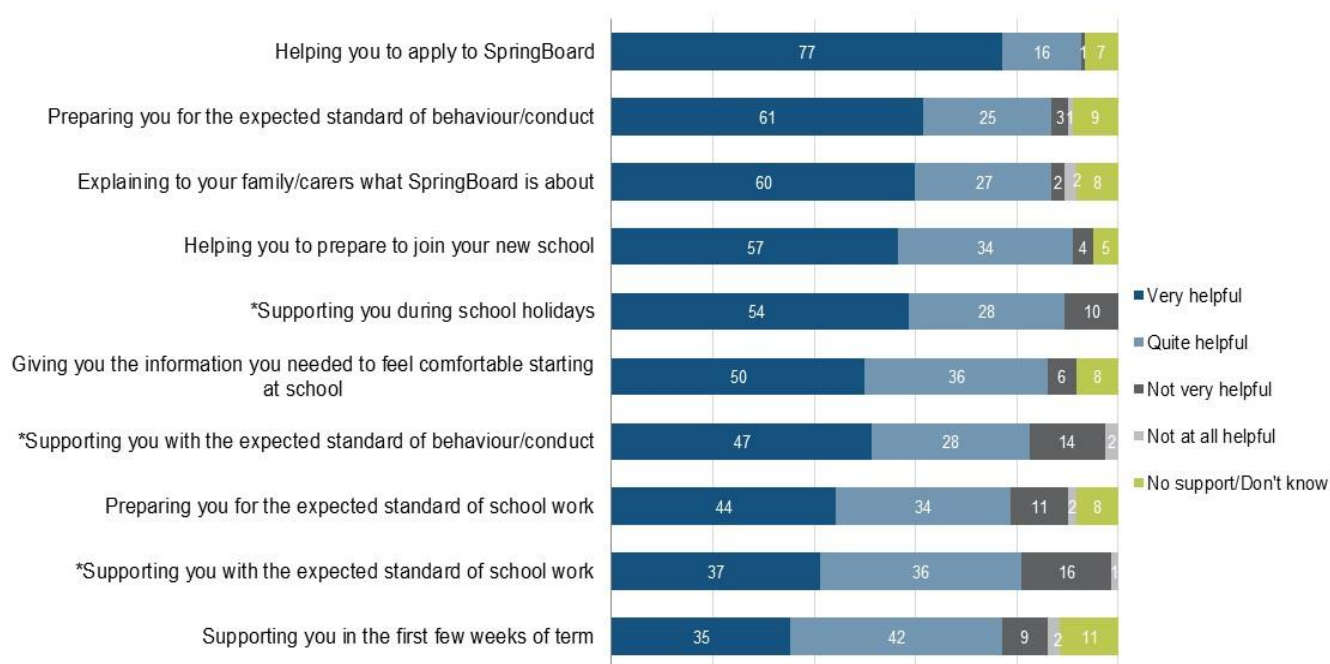
In addition, the vast majority of pupils (between 82 and 91 per cent) reported the following types of partner support to be 'Very helpful' or 'Quite helpful' in the baseline or first follow-up survey, with over half reporting that they were 'Very helpful':

- preparation for the expected standard of behaviour/conduct (i.e. before they joined boarding school)
- provision of information to their family/carers on what SpringBoard is and does
- help to prepare for their new school
- support during the school holidays
- provision of information prior to starting at school.

Still very positive, around three-quarters of pupils rated the following support as ‘Very helpful’ and ‘Quite helpful’ in the baseline or first follow-up survey, with between a third and a half reporting it to be ‘Very helpful’:

- support with the expected standard of behaviour/conduct (i.e. during term time)
- preparation for the expected standard of school work (i.e. before they started boarding school)
- support with the expected standard of school work (i.e. during term time)
- support in the first few weeks of term.

Chart 1 Effectiveness of partner organisation



Source: SpringBoard pupil survey 2013-17, N=123 baseline.

*N=118 first follow-up.

Not all participants answered all questions.

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

Percentage

When followed up at the end of their second year at boarding school, pupils were again asked about the effectiveness of their partner organisation in supporting them with the expected standard of school work, in supporting them with the expected standard of conduct, and in providing support during the school holidays. Pupils’ responses for the first two questions closely reflected those provided at the end of the first year. However, pupils were a little less positive about support received during the school holidays with around a third (35 per cent) reporting this support to be ‘Very helpful’ and another third (32 per cent) as ‘Quite helpful’. In addition, just less than a quarter reported that they did not know or had not received any support. These responses may reflect the growing independence of pupils alongside a decreasing need for support. Pupils were also asked about the support they had received from their partner organisation during their second school year. Over a third (37 per cent) described this as ‘Very helpful’ and around a half (49 per cent) as ‘Quite helpful’ with

just one in ten (11 per cent) reporting that they did not know or had not received support. SpringBoard is continuing to work with partner organisations to ensure they provide wrap-around and tailored support for pupils and their families. Another SpringBoard Partners' Forum is scheduled for spring 2018.

The data from the pupil and staff interviews provided further context to these findings.

Pupils interviewed across the three cohorts corroborated the survey responses. Most were very positive about the support they had received from their partner organisations in preparing them for school and about the support received during the school term and holidays.

Pupils 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 met with their partner organisations several times during the application process.

In relation to **the first term**, most pupils felt that they had received all the support they needed, as illustrated by this quotation:

[Name of partner organisation] constantly called to check how I was and how I was doing and to see if there was anything they could do to help. Half way through the term one of the staff came to visit me and had a little discussion with me. It was helpful. There wasn't much more that they could have done to settle me in. Having someone to talk to was enough.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

However, **a small number of pupils reported that they did not hear from their partner organisation until the end of the first term and would have benefitted from more support** at an earlier stage: 'What could they have done better? Keep in contact within the first term...that's the hardest term, it's scary'. In addition, one pupil who had been in email contact with her partner organisation during the first term reported that she would have preferred face-to-face contact. Some pupils reported that they did not receive any support from their partner organisation during the school year but they did not need any additional support as the support provided by their school was more than sufficient.

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 was like, including the different routines, extra-curricular activities and social events.

Some pupils reported that they had attended events organised by partners during the school holidays. This included meetings or reunions in which pupils got together to talk about their experiences, met pupils who had been at boarding school longer who could provide advice and tips, and attended talks on motivation. Some had met with partners to discuss their progress and gain support with areas of difficulty, such as mathematics. A number of pupils had also 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 reported that it would have been useful.

3.3 How effective is support from member schools?

Most of the pupils across the three cohorts who took part in interviews agreed that the type and amount of support on offer to help them settle into their new schools was about right. However, some commented that they had not accessed any additional support other than that which was available to all students. This was because they had not experienced any particular issues or difficulties that warranted additional help. However, they were aware of what was available should they need support in the future. Others mentioned a range of support such as: inductions for SpringBoard pupils; being allocated a buddy or being supported by other pupils in the same house or by prefects/older pupils; being allocated a tutor or staff mentor; receiving support from the matron or house master/mistress, the SpringBoard staff member or graduate assistants; and being able to draw on counselling or the medical centre.

When asked to respond to the survey question 'I know who to talk to at school if I have a problem', the vast majority of pupils at first and second follow-up (92 and 88 per cent respectively) responded 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to this statement, with 42 per cent at both timepoints responding 'strongly agree'. This suggests that SpringBoard pupils are being effectively supported by their schools. In addition, only five and four per cent of pupils at first and second follow-up respectively reported 'a lot' in relation to 'not knowing who to talk to if I have a problem' and a quarter (25 per cent) and 19 per cent respectively reported 'sometimes'. It seems that the longer pupils are at boarding school the more they feel supported and have someone to turn to if they have a problem.

Please see section 4 for more information on how pupils have settled at school.

3.4 Key factors for pupils' successful transition and integration

Staff were asked what they considered to be the key factors for successfully integrating SpringBoard pupils into their boarding school. Comments most frequently related to preparing pupils before they joined the school, support provided in the first few weeks/months, and having staff in place who were willing and appropriately skilled to support pupils from different backgrounds. Staff also stressed the need for a 'joined up' approach between the member school, partner organisation and SpringBoard.

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 is important to treat SpringBoard pupils in a similar way to 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 and integration

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 they may face.
- Regular collaboration of staff with the designated SpringBoard lead in school.
- Open sharing of information on pupils' progress, difficulties and plans for support.

Prior to pupil starting school

- Support from partners during the 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.
- Matching of pupils to member schools, placing pupils in an environment with the right support and where they can flourish.
- Meetings between boarding school staff and key staff from previous schools to discuss expectations and the individual pupil's characteristics/needs and plan support accordingly.
- Meetings between pupils, parents/carers and key boarding school staff (including staff visits to pupils' homes/previous schools) so that all are aware of expectations (particularly academic standards) and school ethos, ensuring 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.
- Prior academic preparation/coaching for pupils to help them adjust to changing levels and standards.
- Designated staff member(s) being available for pupils from the first contact.
- Taster visits, ideally with a boarding experience and opportunities to meet with existing bursary pupils.
- Support with uniform and equipment (e.g. laptops), as needed.
- Careful consideration of choice of room mate(s).

Once pupils have started school

- Providing intensive (e.g. two days) induction programmes and time for pupils to 'find their feet'.
- Assigning pupils a key worker/mentor who develops a support programme which is customised to the pupil's needs and issues. This includes convening regular meetings and review sessions and providing positive reinforcement, guidance, coaching and other support. Flexibility is needed to allow for more intensive support for certain pupils e.g. looked after children, pupils with difficult home situations and those struggling academically.
- Ensuring appropriate academic support and tutoring and time management coaching is in place, as needed.
- Providing opportunities for new pupils to meet with existing SpringBoard pupils (where applicable).
- Assigning an older pupil as a mentor or 'buddy'.
- Relaxing rules (e.g. on uniform) to accommodate different cultures/religions (e.g. Muslim).
- Monitoring and support from partner organisations, particularly in the first term but also at key transition points and times of greater need.
- Support from partner organisations during holidays.
- Having a sufficient number of bursary pupils to remove the pressure from pupils, both socially and in terms of staff expectations.
- Reviewing and adapting the support offered to ensure it continues to meet the needs of individual pupils.

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.

Collaboration between schools and partner organisations

- Open, honest and close relationships between schools and partner organisations.
- Regular communication between schools and partner organisations (both face-to-face and by phone/email) and the desire to make it work.

Pupil characteristics

- The individual character and motivations of the pupil can affect how well they settle at school. Schools stress the importance of effective interviewing to assess resilience and the ability to socialise, alongside academic potential, thereby selecting the 'right' pupil.

4 How have pupils adapted to boarding school?

4.1 How have pupils settled at boarding school?

Despite some initial concerns and anxieties prior to joining member schools, **pupils reported that they had generally settled very well into their new schools.**

When asked to use three words to describe their experiences over the past year, the words shown below were the most commonly used words in the summer 2017 follow-up survey completed by pupils in Cohort 3 (their second follow-up). The most frequently mentioned are shown in a larger and bolder font.

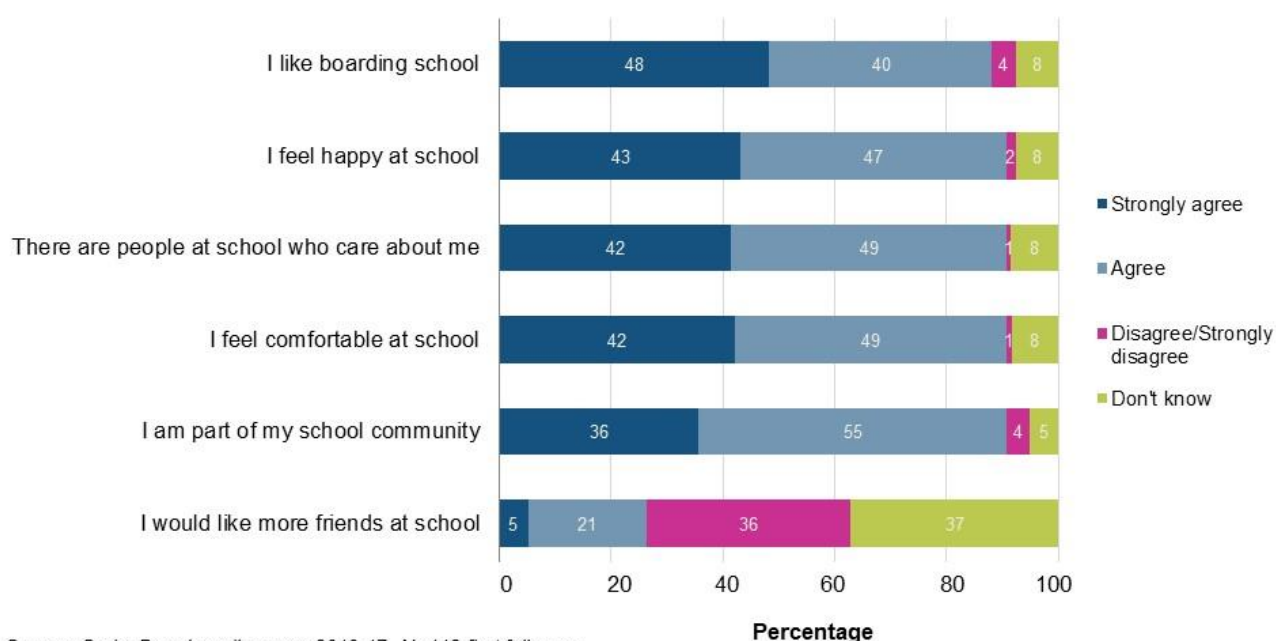
Intense Exiting Interesting Beneficial Exciting
Eye Opening **Fun** Stressful Challenging Busy
Amazing Difficult Memorable

Pupils used similar words in the summer 2016 follow-up survey completed by pupils in Cohort 2 (their second follow-up) and Cohort 3 (their first follow-up), as shown below.

Independent Inspiring Experience Tough
Amazing Adventurous Enjoyable Rewarding
Exciting Life Fun Tiring Challenging
Life-changing Interesting Funny Eye Opening
Unexpected Educational Enlightening

In addition, as shown in Chart 2 below, when surveyed at the end of their first year, the vast majority of pupils (around 90 per cent) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that: they liked boarding school; they felt happy at school; there were people at school who cared about them; they felt comfortable at school; and they felt part of their school community. Pupils were a little less positive about having sufficient friends at school with just over a quarter (26 per cent) responding that they 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they would like more friends at school.

Chart 2 Settling in at boarding school



Source: SpringBoard pupil survey 2013-17, N=118 first follow-up.
 Not all participants answered all questions.
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

At second follow-up, pupils were still very positive and generally gave similar responses. However, an even higher proportion of pupils 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' (96 per cent as opposed to 91 per cent at first follow-up) to the statement 'There are people at school who care about me'. In addition, a lower proportion (19 per cent as opposed to 26 per cent at first follow-up) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to the statement 'I would like more friends at school'.

Still high proportions of pupils - but slightly lower proportions than at first follow-up - 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to the statements 'I am happy at school' and 'I am part of my school community'. Eighty-five per cent 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to both of these statements at second follow-up compared to 90 per cent and 91 per cent respectively at first follow-up. Similar responses were provided for the remaining statements.

Pupil interview data echoed the survey findings, with **most pupils across the three cohorts reporting that they settled into their new school very quickly** and felt part of the school community and/or well integrated into their house. Some reported having initial fears that the staff at boarding school would be excessively 'strict' compared to staff from their previous schools. However, they soon found boarding school staff to be 'warm and welcoming', which helped them to relax into their new environment. In addition, despite worrying about how they would 'fit in', SpringBoard pupils reported quickly feeling accepted, and realising that other pupils were not as different to them as they first imagined. Most interviewees commented that their fellow pupils were friendly and approachable, which had made settling in much easier.

Settling into boarding school: pupil perspectives

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)

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)

You kind of have an image of what boarding school is like and you expect the kids to be snobby, and some are, but the majority are so lovely and they don't really care, they take you for you.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

I wanted to see if I would fit in. It's a different environment and different people [from my previous school] and it's been an experience I will never forget. It was less scary than I thought it would be.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

I didn't think I'd be able to adjust as easily as I did. Everyone here was much kinder and easier to get on with than I expected.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

I thought they [other pupils] would be a lot different to me because I was brought up in a different area, they would speak differently or act differently because they went to a boarding school but we're the same.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

I feel even more part of the school community than I did at my old school. I have a good group of friends and there is always lots of things to do to keep busy.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

Pupils were positive in terms of what boarding school was providing them compared to their previous school, with four-fifths or more responding 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to the following statements at the end of their first year at boarding school (see Chart 3 below):

- is helping me to get better qualifications (92 per cent)
- is giving me more opportunities to meet people from different backgrounds (89 per cent)
- is giving me a better chance of getting a good job (88 per cent)
- is giving me more extra-curricular opportunities (88 per cent)
- is helping me to achieve what I am capable of (84 per cent)
- is giving me greater confidence that I will succeed in life (81 per cent)
- is giving me more chances to excel in something I am good at (80 per cent).

At second follow-up, although still highly positive, the proportions of pupils responding 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to a number of these statements had reduced slightly:

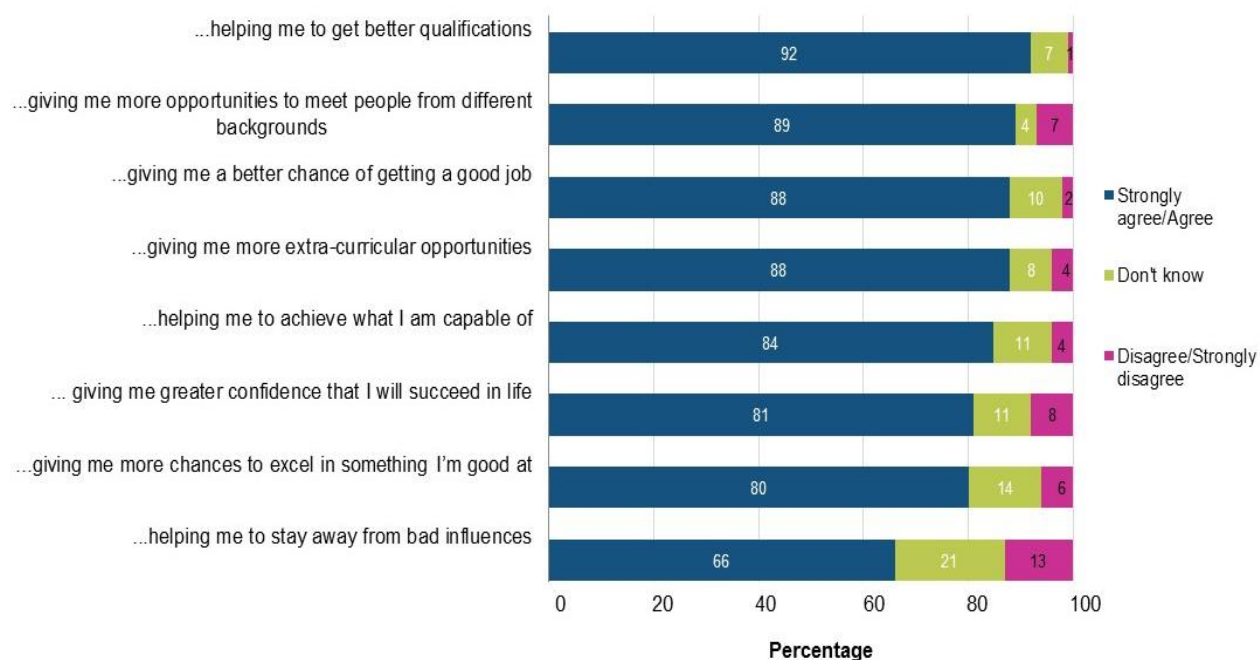
- is helping me to get better qualifications (92 per cent to 83 per cent)
- is giving me a better chance of getting a good job (88 per cent to 79 per cent)

- is helping me to achieve what I am capable of (84 per cent to 79 per cent)
- is giving me greater confidence that I will succeed in life (81 per cent to 74 per cent).

Similar responses were provided for the remaining three statements.

At both first and second follow-up, two-thirds of SpringBoard pupils (66 and 64 per cent respectively) also ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that school was helping them to stay away from bad influences. Some pupil consultees came from secure and safe homes and schools which may explain why the proportion agreeing to this statement is lower than the others. However, some pupils came from difficult family backgrounds and/or lived in deprived areas where there were negative influences within their local community. These pupils commented that the structure and routine of boarding school, as well as the support and guidance provided, had been beneficial in engaging them in more positive behaviours and activities. As two pupils 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...’ and ‘I reckon if I hadn’t joined my boarding school I would have fallen under bad influences and not tried at all at school’. More detail on how these opportunities and support have translated into impacts on pupils is provided in section 5.

Chart 3 Boarding school is.....



Source: SpringBoard pupil survey 2013-17, N=118 first follow-up.
 Not all participants answered all questions.
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

The majority of staff consultees echoed pupils’ views by reporting that SpringBoard pupils had generally settled in very well. They reported that pupils had ‘embraced’ school life, including quickly making new friendships, building positive relationships with staff, actively participating in extra-curricular activities and contributing to the life of the school, as the following comments illustrate:

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)

They have adjusted well, in fact very well and have made a wide circle of friends.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

Staff and parents also reported that pupils from difficult family backgrounds particularly benefitted from school routines, clear boundaries and consistency of expectations, as well as the stable relationships they developed with staff. This often led to pupils' increased resilience in coping with ongoing challenges. As one parent commented: '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'. However, staff reported that some pupils could take a backward step when they returned home for extended school holidays.

4.2 What difficulties have pupils faced?

In general, pupils reported that they had not experienced any significant difficulties or challenges in adapting to boarding school. However, **for some pupils, moving to boarding school life had been a 'culture shock'**, leaving them feeling nervous, lacking in confidence and concerned about their ability to mix with others from different backgrounds. The key issues that some pupils have faced can be split into two main categories:

- adjusting to being away from home - missing home, family and friends
- adjusting to boarding school life – including the routines, the academic level and pace and standards, and making new friends.

4.2.1 Adjusting to being away from home

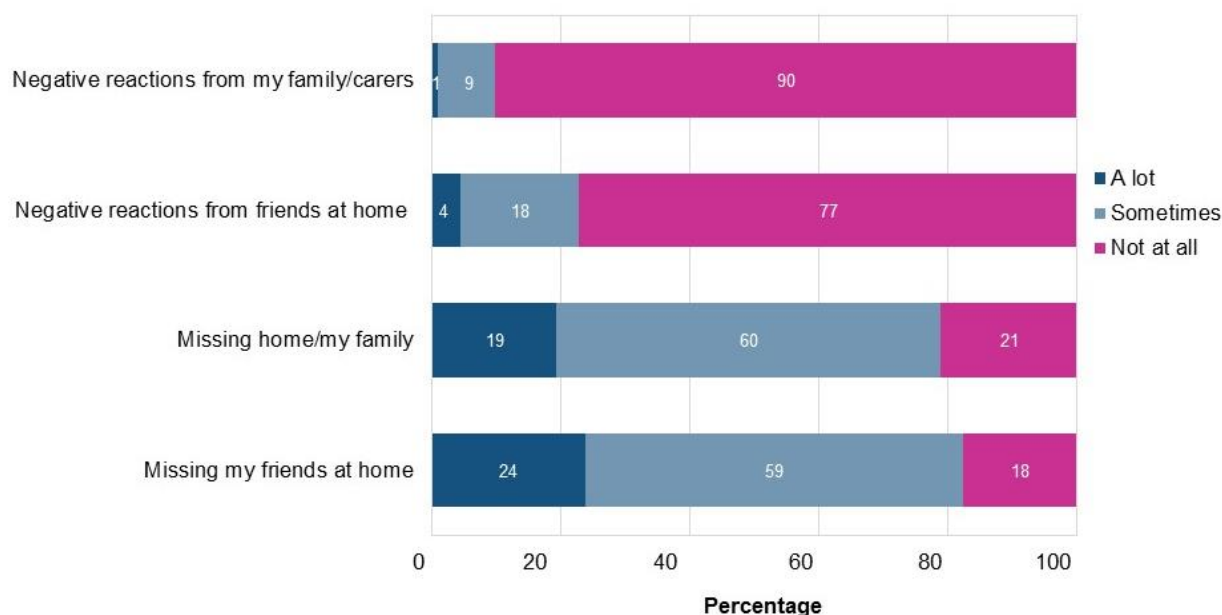
At first follow-up, the vast majority of pupils (91 per cent) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they were part of their home community. At second follow-up the proportion of pupils who 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with this statement reduced slightly to 85 per cent, which suggests that over time some pupils grow away from their home communities.

Very few pupils reported that they had encountered negative reactions from their family/carers or friends from home. As shown in Chart 4, at first follow-up only four per cent of pupils reported experiencing negative reactions from their friends at home 'a lot' and the response to this question was only one per cent in relation to their family/carers. Around a fifth of pupils (18 per cent) reported experiencing negative reactions from their friends 'sometimes' and the figure was nine per cent in relation to their family/carers. Responses were similar at second follow-up

As might be expected, **large proportions of pupils reported missing their friends from home and their home/family 'a lot' or 'sometimes'**. At first follow-up, around a quarter of pupils (24 per cent) reported missing their friends at home 'a lot' and 59 per cent 'sometimes'. In addition, a fifth (19 per cent) reported missing home/family 'a lot' and 60 per cent 'sometimes'. At second follow-up, similar proportions of pupils reported missing their friends at home and home/family 'a lot' and 'sometimes' combined but the proportion reporting that they missed them 'a lot' decreased by 6 and 5 percentage points respectively

from the first follow-up. This is not surprising considering that you would expect pupils to be more settled at boarding school at the end of two years.

Chart 4 Adjusting to being away from home



Source: SpringBoard pupil survey 2013-17, N=118 first follow-up.
 Not all participants answered all questions.
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

In the interviews, pupils from all three cohorts reported **missing family/carers and friends at home** at different times. In general, this became easier the longer they were at school, although some commented that it could be difficult to readjust to school life after periods of time at home, for example after holidays. A change in family circumstance could also increase a pupil’s feelings of missing home. For example, a small number of pupils reported that they had experienced upheavals and family tragedies which had made them much more unsettled at school.

However, most pupils reported that they fitted back into their home lives easily during holidays and that they were equally happy at school or at home. However, some commented that they initially found it strange to go home to a completely different routine and slower pace of life. Some pupils also noted that they had drifted apart from friends at home but most were not too concerned about this as illustrated by these comments:

At home I’ve lost touch with some friends; I have less friends there than I do here. When I’m at school I find myself saying that I want to go home, but when you go home you find yourself saying I want to go back to school.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

It is quite tricky sometimes because when you go home you do sound different and you’re not the same as you used to be before you came here. I still have some friends that I keep in contact with but I just feel like the people at home, you realise that you were only friends with them because you went to that school, so you realise who your best friends are now.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

4.2.2 Adjusting to boarding school life

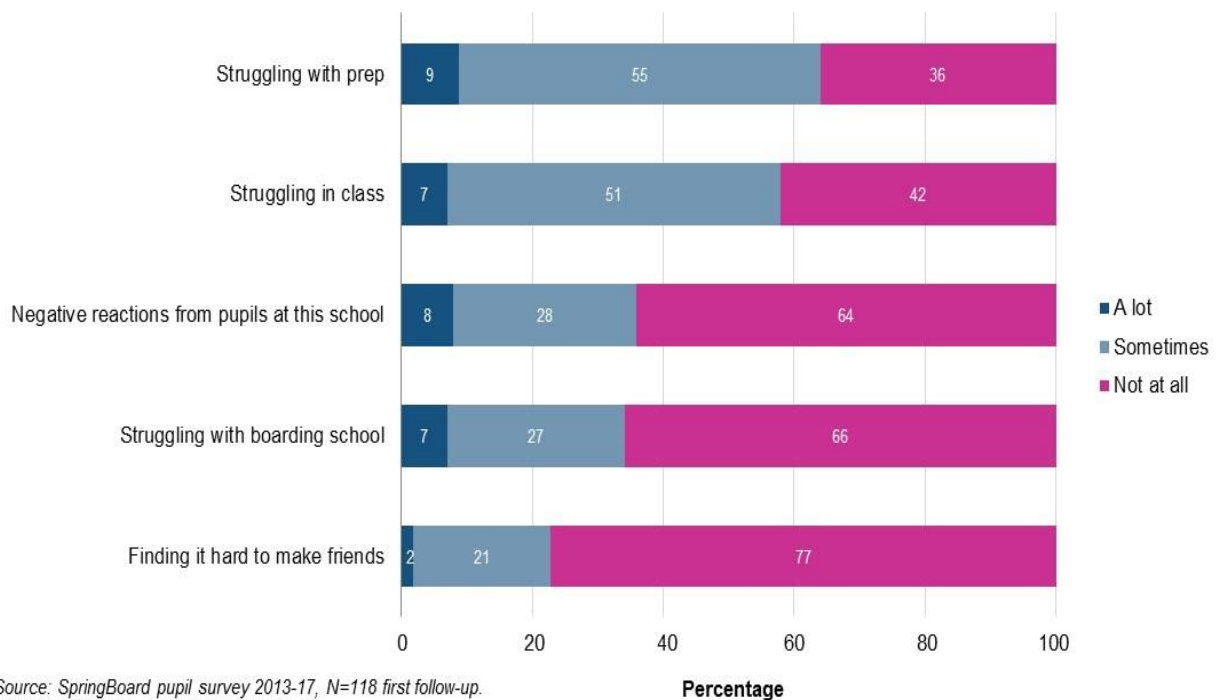
In terms of adjusting to boarding school life, the areas that pupils found the most difficult were undertaking prep and learning in class.

As shown in Chart 5 below, at first follow-up, nine per cent and seven per cent of pupils respectively reported ‘struggling with prep’ and ‘struggling in class’ ‘a lot’, with an additional 55 per cent and 51 per cent respectively reporting that they struggled with these areas ‘sometimes’. Similar responses were provided at second follow-up which suggests that, even during their second year at boarding school, many pupils will struggle with these areas at some point.

In terms of relationships with other pupils, at first follow-up, small proportions of pupils reported having experienced negative reactions from other pupils or finding it difficult to make friends ‘a lot’, eight per cent and two per cent respectively. However, over a fifth reported experiencing these issues ‘sometimes’. At second follow-up, slightly lower proportions of pupils reported difficulties in these areas which suggests that, over time, they become more secure in their friendships and more fully part of the school community.

Smaller proportions of pupils reported struggling with being at boarding school more generally ‘a lot’ (7 per cent) or ‘sometimes’ (27 per cent). Responses at second follow-up were similar to those provided at first follow-up.

Chart 5 Adjusting to boarding school



Pupils interviewed across all cohorts reported finding **the academic work at boarding school ‘tough’ initially**, with the standard of work being higher than at their previous school. Some pupils commented, for example, that they had moved into a lower set for a

particular subject or that they initially received lower grades in their assessments. They also commented on the need to be more independent learners than they had been used to. However, most pupils reported that they had quickly become aware of the need to increase the amount of effort they put into studying at boarding school and of the need to 'knuckle down' and 'up their game' in order to succeed academically.

Echoing pupils, staff consultees reported that SpringBoard pupils often faced initial challenges related to: the increased pace of learning and level of workload; differing requirements for the presentation of work; issues with organisational and time-management skills (including management of private study time and meeting deadlines); difficulties completing 'prep' work and assessments; and adjusting to a system in which they were encouraged to develop a constructive relationship with staff and more actively seek support when they needed it.

Pupils and staff also reported the academic challenges for pupils joining member schools in Year 12. As one staff consultee noted: 'They have to make the simultaneous jump to A-levels and to a new school'. This comment was echoed by pupils: 'the standard of work has gone up a notch...and I have been questioning if I am doing alright'. Another staff member highlighted issues as a result of pupils having chosen unsuitable A-level subjects due to lack of guidance at their previous schools. However, member schools have put in place a range of, often intensive, support for pupils facing these academic challenges – such as tutoring or one-to-one mentoring and pupils have reported recognising the need to put in additional effort to adjust to the academic expectations. Pupil and staff perspectives on the adjustments required are presented in the box below.

Adjusting to the academic level and pace and standards of conduct: pupil and staff perspectives

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)

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)

I knew it would be a lot harder and after the first term I started to get used to it and knew that I needed to put in more effort than I did at my old school.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

When I first started here I found it a lot more academically challenging than I did at my old school. In maths I started in set three and I knew I needed to step up my game and now I'm in set one because they really helped me to be better.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

I am much more organised with my time and productive – more efficient with time.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

[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)

One pupil has struggled with a particular subject and we have done as much as we can to support her and she has been able to tell us that actually she feels that she would like to change a subject next year without fear of feeling she is failing.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

A small number of staff reported *ongoing* difficulties for individual pupils. This included pupils' challenges meeting academic demands and social and emotional difficulties as a result of pupils' challenging backgrounds and circumstances (including the specific needs and issues of looked after children). They also reported isolated issues in relation to pupils' behaviour and low-level disciplinary offences. However, it should be noted that some staff also noted that these issues were not unique to SpringBoard pupils. Staff reported that they were providing a range of additional in-school support to tackle these challenges, including intensive mentoring and pastoral support, as well as sometimes drawing on external support involving partner organisations, local authority staff (e.g. social workers, staff from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Local Inclusion Forum Teams) and parents and carers. Where a number of staff and agencies were involved, schools had developed a tight reporting network.

A small number of pupils reported **initial difficulties in making friends at boarding school and encountering negative reactions**. One pupil, for example, reported that some of their peers were 'selfish and snobby' and another had experienced 'racial discrimination' from his fellow pupils. Staff consultees also reported that there were individual pupils who had experienced difficulties 'fitting in', with some feeling like 'a fish out of water' in their new school environment. This included examples of a pupil with social and emotional issues who had experienced difficulties interacting with teachers and other pupils, and another pupil who had made poor decisions with regards to friendship groups which led to some initial problems. However, the vast majority of staff reported that pupils had not experienced any issues with other pupils at school; they had made friends quickly and were accepted from the outset.

Reflecting on their experiences, some pupils commented that **the earlier a SpringBoard pupil transfers to boarding school, the easier it is to make new friends and integrate**. For example, joining at the start of Year 9, which is a key transition stage for boarding school pupils that sees them move from preparatory school (for pupils aged 8-13 years) to upper school (for pupils aged 13-18 years), was viewed as particularly beneficial. This is because, at this time, all pupils are moving into a new system and possibly a new living environment and they appear more open to developing new friendship groups as a result. As one pupil explained:

In the beginning, it wasn't as easy because people knew each other from prep schools, but they were quite ready to get to know more people. Because everyone started in Year 9 they weren't already in groups, they still wanted to know people from different schools.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

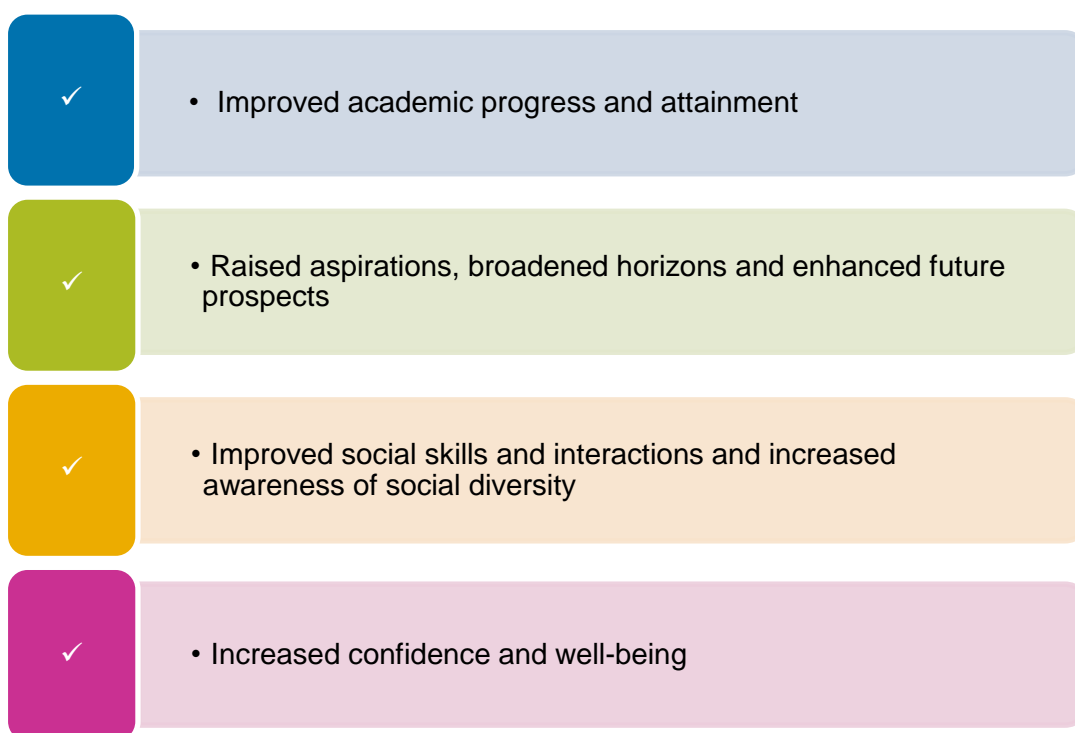
5 Impacts on pupils

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 boarding school experience to what their experience would have been at their previous 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 detailed in the following sections.

5.1 Overview of impacts

SpringBoard pupils were very positive about the impact of joining SpringBoard on their lives. At first and second follow-up, **the vast majority of pupils (92 per cent and 88 per cent respectively) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the statement 'Having this opportunity at boarding school has changed my life for the better'**. In addition, more than two-thirds (67 per cent) reported that their experience over the past year would have been 'worse' if they had not joined their boarding school. Around a quarter responded that it would have been 'about the same' (23 per cent) and a small proportion (nine per cent) felt that it would have been 'better'.

Pupils reported impacts in four key areas as shown in the diagram below.



These are explored in further detail in the sections below.

5.2 Improved academic progress and attainment

In the survey, pupils were asked a range of questions about their academic progress at boarding school and were asked to make comparisons to their previous school. The responses given showed that boarding school is making a difference in terms of how hard pupils are working, the level of academic challenge and how well they are doing.

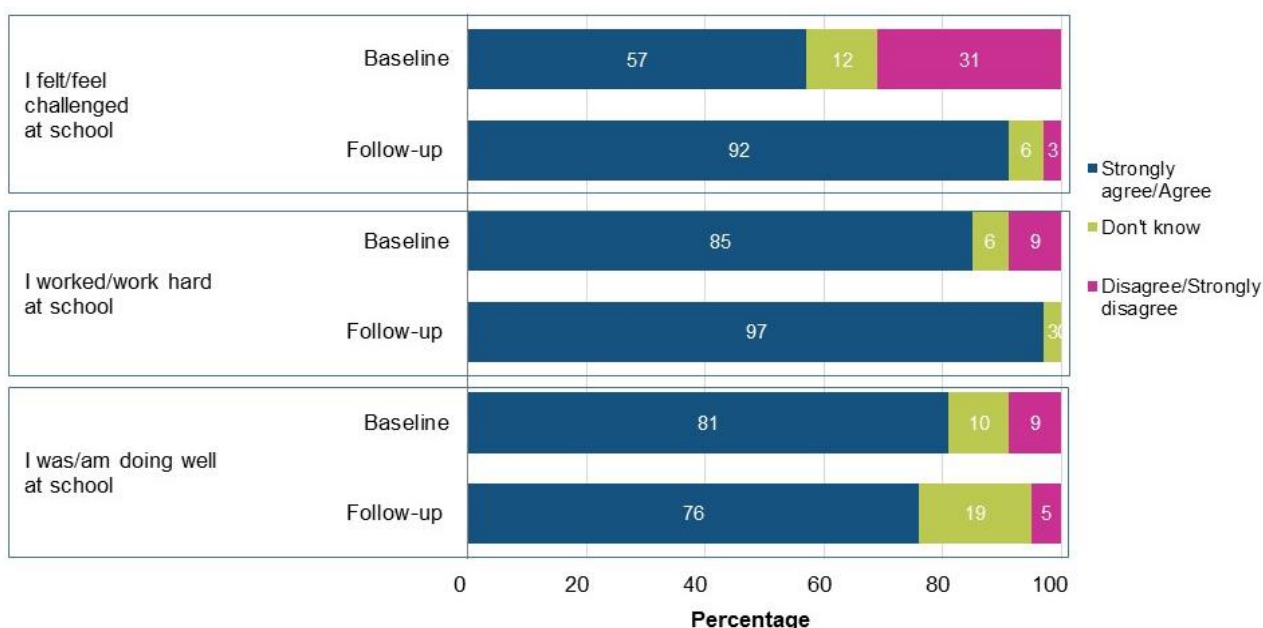
The vast majority of pupils (92 per cent) ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ to the statement ‘I feel challenged at school’ at the end of their first year at boarding school. As shown in Chart 6, this was a large (35 percentage point) increase from baseline when 57 per cent of pupils ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that they felt challenged at their original school. At second follow-up, an even higher proportion of pupils (95 per cent) ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that they felt challenged at school which is perhaps not surprising as academic challenge increases as pupils move up the school

In addition, at first follow-up **almost all pupils (97 per cent) ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ to the statement ‘I work hard at school’.** This was a 12 percentage point increase from the baseline. A similar proportion of pupils ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with this statement at second follow-up.

In terms of how well they were doing at school, a slightly larger proportion of pupils (81 per cent) reported that they were doing well at their original school than at the end of their first and second year at boarding school (76 per cent and 75 per cent respectively.

The interviews provided more insight into these findings – for example pupils reported that they were being stretched more at boarding school which had led to some feeling that they were not doing so well.

Chart 6 How well are you doing now compared to your previous school?



Source: SpringBoard pupil survey 2013-17, N=123 baseline, N=118 first follow-up.
 Not all participants answered all questions.
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

Most pupils interviewed across the three cohorts reported that, by the end of their first year at boarding school, they were doing well and had learnt more than at their previous school. However, many added that they did not perform well initially, as expectations were higher and the level and pace of work was more challenging. In addition, in some cases, where pupils changed school in Years 10 and 11, they had to change GCSE syllabus which caused initial setbacks. Similarly, as mentioned previously, the jump from GCSE to A-level caused issues for some pupils. However, pupils reported a range of provision and support available to them at boarding school (which was not generally provided at their previous school), which had enabled them to quickly adapt to their new educational environment and progress academically. 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 helped them to keep up with their homework
- positive and encouraging staff with high academic expectations for all pupils
- being surrounded by highly motivated peers
- better technology/science facilities, which allowed more focus on practical work
- opportunities to study new subjects (e.g. German, French, Latin, economics and philosophy)
- learning around subjects, which encouraged further interest in them
- academic-focussed school trips.

Feedback from pupils yielded a range of insights into their academic progress and attainment which are presented in the box below.

Improved academic progress and attainment: pupil perspectives

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)

I wouldn't have had as good A-level [results] as I feel like I've got. At boarding school there isn't the distractions, the structure is there for you to get on with the work. At home, I feel like I would have been massively distracted by my friends.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

I think you are pushed a lot harder at this school. I wouldn't really try last year because in my state school I just thought I would be bottom set because nobody pushed me. They try to get the best out of you here and see how smart you really are. They show you the areas where you can improve. We also have this thing called supportive study where you can go to get extra academic support to push yourself harder and I have been doing that for certain lessons.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

At the end of the school day you get 'prep', which is an hour and 30 minutes long and you get to do your homework. That set time helps you to get on with your work and to adapt to the changes in levels I guess. It is supervised by a teacher so if you don't understand they come along and help you.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

The teachers here really want you to do well and at my old school not as many people cared as much about their academic life; it is easier here because people want to learn to get a good grade, so it motivates you more.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

The preparation for A-levels was fantastic, the teaching staff and just everyone around the school getting you prepared. So I was able to fulfil my potential in terms of getting the best grades I could.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

Feedback from staff on the academic performance and attainment of SpringBoard pupils generally echoed the positive picture provided by pupils. However, some staff also gave examples of pupils struggling academically.

Staff consultees reported that, during their time at boarding school, many SpringBoard pupils had increased their motivation for learning and desire to succeed academically. Pupils were demonstrating an improved work ethic and increased academic curiosity. Staff provided examples of pupils making good progress and improving their levels of attainment over the course of the school year and throughout their time at boarding school, with evidence of success being demonstrated by performance in national tests. In some cases, improvement was linked to pupils' increased confidence in asking for help and acting on advice given, 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 other pupils who were highly ambitious, and individualised support had helped them to progress.

A number of staff, however, highlighted the steep learning curve that some SpringBoard pupils had faced in moving to boarding school reporting that, for some, it was 'overwhelming'. In such cases, significant academic improvement had been less evident and

pupils' performance was described as 'steady', 'reasonable' or 'satisfactory'. As noted previously, a particularly difficult time for some pupils is the transition from GCSE to A-level.

In a small number of cases, staff noted concerns about individual pupils who were struggling on an ongoing basis with the academic demands of boarding school. One staff member gave the example of a pupil struggling academically due to attendance problems and difficulties applying themselves to homework. Some staff also reported that supporting pupils who are struggling with their academic challenges was 'work in progress', with some having 'a long way to go'. Staff and parent perspectives on SpringBoard pupils' improved academic progress and attainment are presented in the box below.

Improved academic progress and attainment: staff and parent perspectives

[Name of pupil] is undoubtedly more ambitious for himself academically and understands and appreciates fully the correlation between work put in and results/success achieved. He is conscientious in the completion of his academic work and actively seeks support and advice on how best to improve his performance.

(Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2016)

[Name of pupil] has continued to make good steady academic progress. She has applied herself consistently well throughout the year and approaches all her work with a conscientious and studious demeanour.

(Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2016)

Most of our SpringBoard pupils are doing well on the academic front. They are at Russell Group universities or heading to them.

(Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2016)

[Name of pupil] found the leap from GCSE to A-level difficult at first but soon got to grips with the tasks in hand and has made steady progress throughout her time here...

(Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2016)

There is a long way to go in order to improve academic progress but there is a lot of support in place and this will improve drastically.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

[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, summer 2015)

5.3 Raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects

5.3.1 Raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects

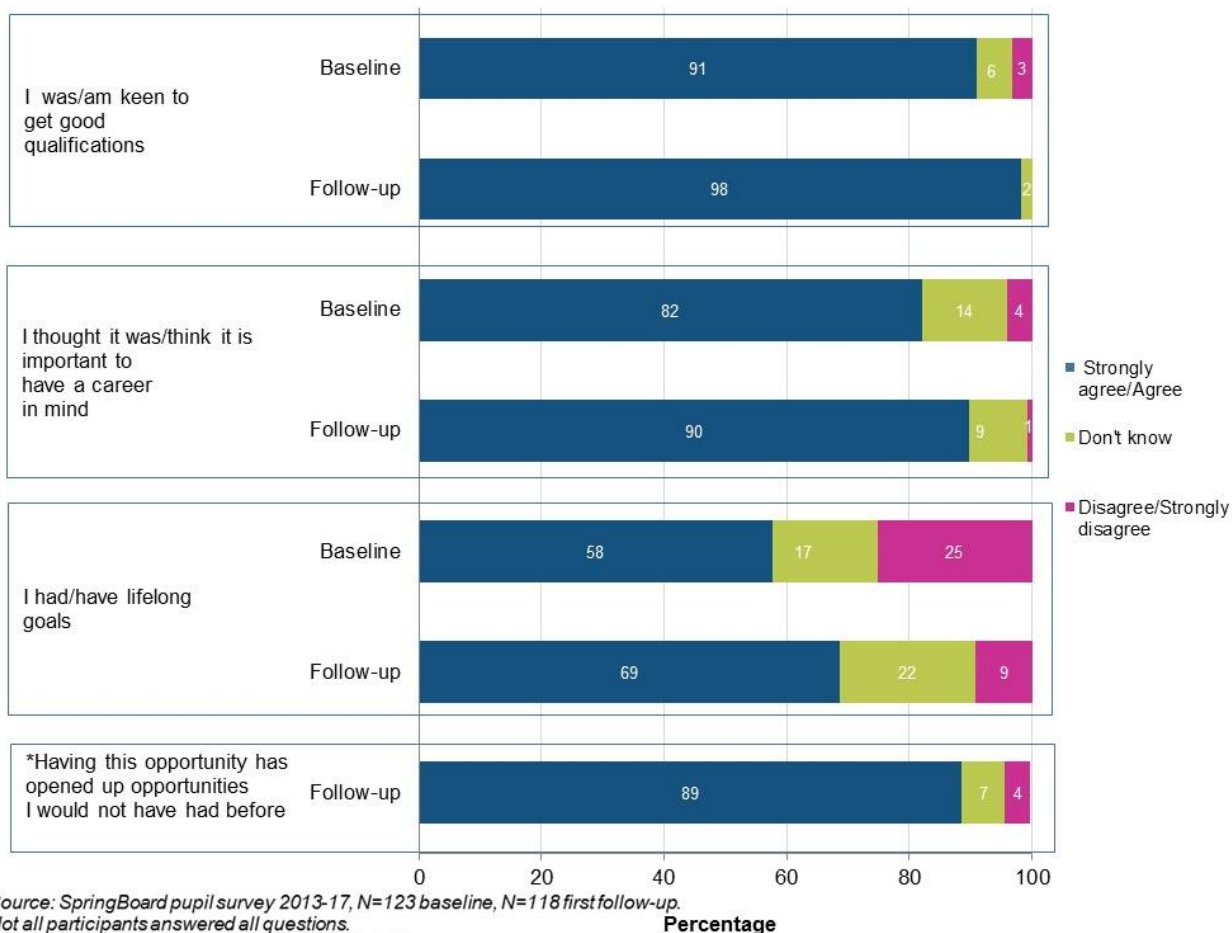
In the follow-up surveys at the end of their first and second years at boarding school, pupils were asked a range of questions to explore their study and career aspirations and views on what difference boarding school had made to the opportunities available to them. As shown in Chart 7 below, many pupils already had high aspirations before they changed schools – and this was partly why they were selected – but, for most of those who did not, boarding school had raised their aspirations.

At both the first and second follow-up, almost all pupils surveyed (98 and 97 per cent respectively) ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that they were keen to get good qualifications. However, a similarly high, but slightly lower proportion (91 per cent) reported feeling the same at their original school. In addition, at first follow-up, a high proportion of pupils (90 per cent) ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ to the statement **‘I think it is important to have a career in mind’**, with 82 per cent reporting that they felt this at their original school. However, at second follow-up, although still high, the proportion responding ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ to this statement had reduced to 80 per cent, just below the baseline figure.

Two-thirds of pupils reported that they had lifelong goals (10+ years) at the end of their first and second year of boarding school (69 and 68 per cent respectively). This was a ten percentage point increase from the baseline.

Boarding school has played an important part in terms of raising pupils’ aspirations: the vast majority of pupils at both first and second follow-up (89 and 90 per cent respectively) ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that attending boarding school had opened up opportunities that they would not have had before.

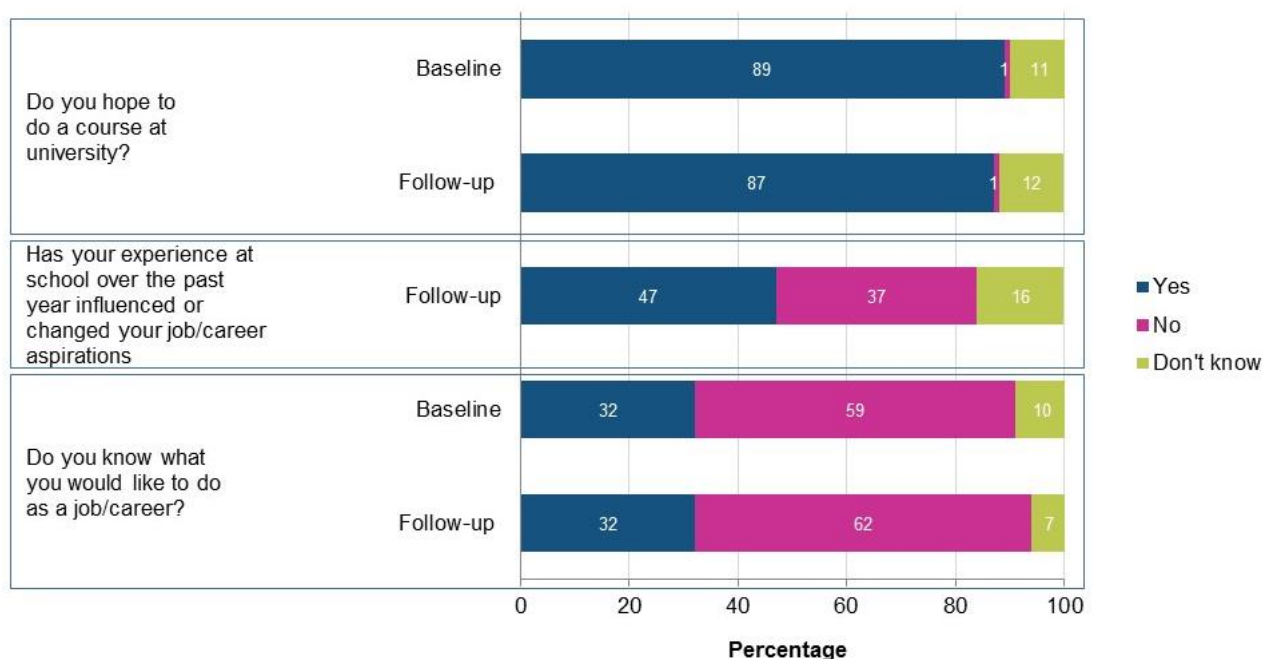
Chart 7 Future aspirations



When asked what they were considering doing in the future, pupils’ ambitions had not changed since moving school. However, they were already aiming high prior to starting boarding school. As shown in Chart 8 below, a large proportion of pupils at both baseline and first follow-up were hoping to go to university (89 per cent and 87 per cent respectively). And, at second follow-up a similarly high proportion (91 per cent) were aiming for university.

However, the majority of pupils remained uncertain about what career they wanted to pursue, with just a third of pupils at all survey stages reporting that they knew what they would like to do as a career (32 per cent at baseline and first follow-up and 35 per cent at second follow-up). Almost half of SpringBoard pupils at first and second follow-up (47 per cent and 42 per cent respectively) did, though, report that attending boarding school had influenced or changed their job/career aspirations.

Chart 8 Future aspirations and broadened horizons



Source: SpringBoard pupil survey 2013-17, N=123 baseline, N=118 first follow-up.
 Not all participants answered all questions.
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

The data from pupil interviews provided more insight on their aspirations. Pupils across the cohorts reported that, as a result of attending boarding school, they were now aiming higher and felt more certain that they would like to go to university. However, in some cases, they had changed their 'overly optimistic' career aspirations to something that was more realistic and achievable. When asked what had brought about this change, pupils mentioned a range of activities and influences such as:

- being more confident in themselves, what they were achieving and could achieve in the future
- being in an environment of ambitious and competitive individuals and in a school which encouraged pupils to aim high and be highly motivated
- boarding school having opened up an array of opportunities, inspired different careers and introduced new and interesting subjects
- speakers from business and ex-pupils talking about their experiences as well as visits to universities
- work-experience, career aptitude tests, careers information days/fairs and careers guidance and support with university applications – which both encouraged pupils to aim high or to be realistic about what was achievable
- realising that they were adaptable and independent and could cope with being away from home which they would need to do if they went to university.

Pupils also mentioned the new friendships and connections they had made who could help them succeed in life, as encapsulated in this pupil's observation: 'Through boarding, I've

created a network of lifelong friends who are always willing to [provide] help themselves or connections to help me reach my goals’.

In some cases, pupils’ raised aspirations had led to concrete results in the second and third year of their bursary. Some had been offered university places at Russell Group universities³ in subjects including medicine, engineering, geography, anthropology, biology and biomedical sciences.

More pupil perspectives on their raised aspirations are presented in the box below.

Raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects: pupil perspectives

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)

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...meaning I have made my offer from St Andrews to read medicine! [This is a]... life-changing opportunity you provided me with; I have not only received a top class education, but grown as a person and made lifelong friends along the way. Two years ago I could only dream of being in the position I'm in today.

(Cohort 1 pupil, summer 2014)

Not knowing what I wanted to do I joined a few societies, including the medical society and thought that I wanted to be involved in medicine. The benefit of going to boarding school is that they have great contacts and through the school links I got a very good work placement at a hospital.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

We start young thinking about what we would like to be and they [school staff] help us to aim for what is achievable and if it's not they will steer us into a more appropriate career. We have careers meetings and we look at what lessons we are best in and we do a careers test and see what career comes up from the things we are good in and I've got law and stock broking.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

Before I wasn't sure I would have even gone to university, none of my family has before. I've never had that push to go before but here everyone does. For me, I realised I can achieve a lot more.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

I feel my eyes have been opened to a world of endless possibilities. I believe, if it wasn't for my peers, I wouldn't have dreamt of some of the jobs which I have seen first-hand.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

³ For example, one of the UK's top 24 universities.

It has given me an abundance of information that I need in order to make my decision for future career aspirations. The careers department is a very helpful resource...

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

Moving school was a much-welcomed fresh start. I was able to define myself in my own terms and figure out what mattered to me, in an academic and personal sense. This was greatly helped by the accepting atmosphere the school has - with people from all backgrounds you can find like-minded folk. The facilities and support available make it possible to test every limit I thought I had and figure out which ones were valid, which has been massively motivating and will no doubt benefit me greatly going forward.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

Staff agreed that pupils' aspirations had been raised and their horizons broadened as a result of being in an environment where high expectations were 'the norm'. They reported that pupils were now more aware of their own potential, as well as their academic strengths and weaknesses. Pupils also possessed an increased understanding of possible career pathways and what they could achieve with a good education. However, a minority of staff consultees reported that a small number of pupils had low aspirations or had not yet grasped the full range of opportunities available to them. As illustrated by the staff comments presented in the box below, some staff also commented on the unrealistic aspirations of a small number of pupils and the high expectations placed on them by their families and that, for these pupils, progress was ongoing.

Raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects: staff and parent perspectives

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)

Some of the students' aspirations do not take into account that they have to be proactive at working towards their goal, an expectation that, as they are here, they will achieve is simply not sufficient.

(Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2016)

[SpringBoard pupils have] ...dramatically raised aspirations, not only by general standards and expectations but also general knowledge and awareness of a bigger world and that they have their part in it.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

Their aspirations have not necessarily risen but they have been able to see better where their strengths lie and are finding career pathways that suit their academic strengths more.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

A more honed and realistic approach, taking advantage of in-house careers provision.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

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)

5.3.2 Careers pupils are aspiring to

When asked what careers they were considering now, pupils provided a wide variety of examples. However, some careers were mentioned time and time again and these are shown in the word cloud below. The most commonly mentioned in the 2016 follow-up survey of Cohort 2 and 3 are shown in a larger and bolder font.



5.3.3 Barriers to achieving aspirations

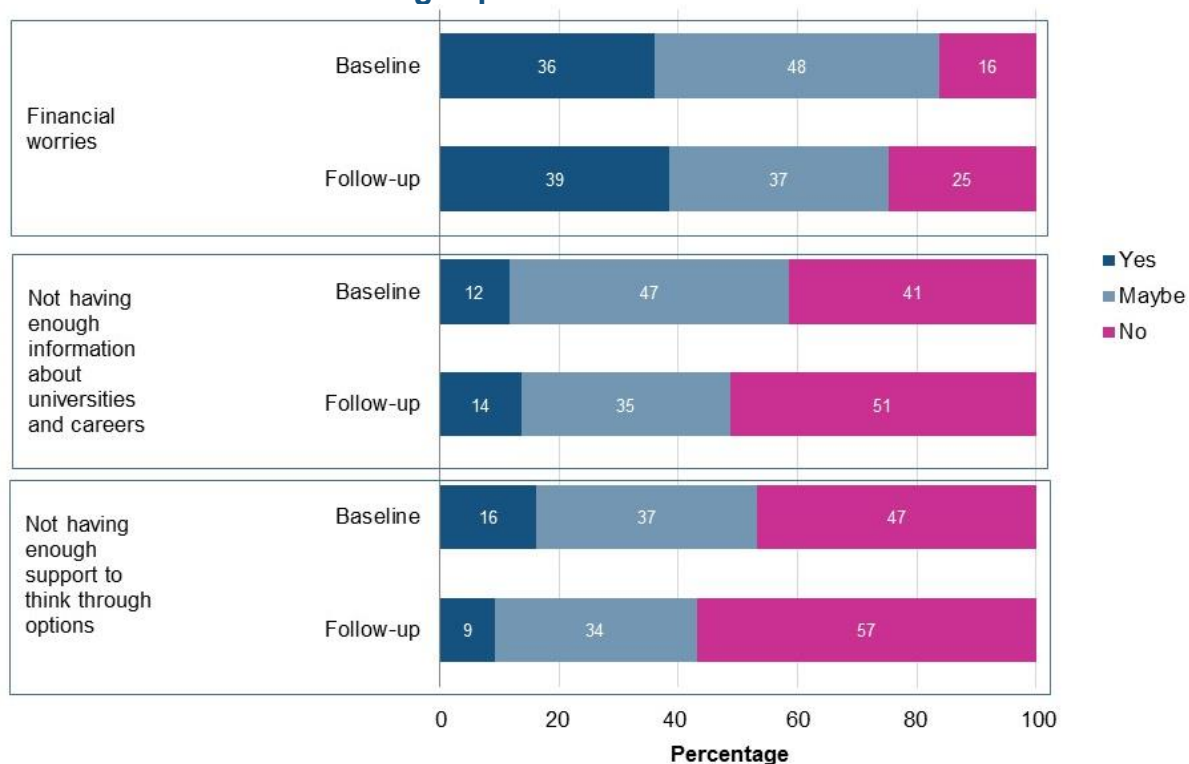
In the first and second follow-up surveys, pupils were asked what barriers they thought they might face in realising their aspirations. **The three key barriers noted were financial worries, not having enough information about universities and careers and not having enough support to think through options.**

As shown in Chart 9 below, at first follow-up, pupils perceived finance to be a key barrier to university, with just over three-quarters of pupils (76 per cent) agreeing that it was a barrier or might be a barrier. Of these, nearly two-fifths of pupils (39 per cent) responded with a positive 'Yes' and 37 per cent with a 'maybe'. As one pupil commented: 'Being able to pay

for university would be a massive barrier for me, being able to afford it'. At baseline, a slightly higher proportion of pupils (84 per cent) responded 'Yes' or 'maybe', suggesting that some pupils at first follow-up were less worried than they had been about financing university. At second follow-up a similar proportion of pupils to the first follow-up (74 per cent) felt that finance was a definite or possible barrier, with a third (32 per cent) reporting that it was a definite barrier.

In addition, at first follow-up, just less than half of the surveyed pupils (49 per cent) responded 'Yes' or 'maybe' to the potential barrier of 'Not having enough information about universities and careers' and 43 per cent responded in this way in relation to 'Not having enough support to think through options'. These barriers remained at second follow-up when similar responses were provided. Although the proportion of pupils reporting both of these barriers at first and second follow-up decreased from the start of boarding school, these remain two areas in which SpringBoard pupils require ongoing support.

Chart 9 Barriers to achieving aspirations



Source: SpringBoard pupil survey 2013-17, N=123 baseline, N=118 first follow-up.
 Not all participants answered all questions.
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

5.4 Improved social skills and interactions and increased awareness of social diversity

5.4.1 Improved social skills and interactions

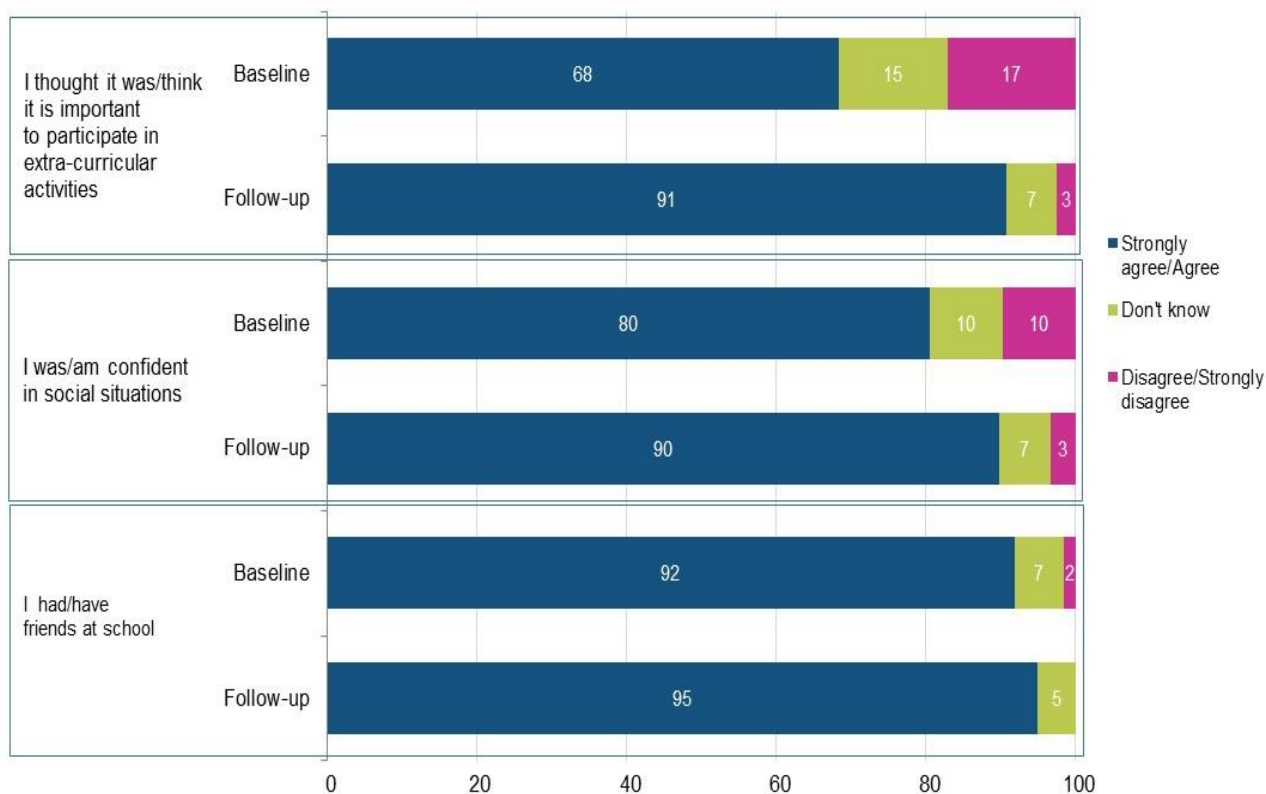
In the baseline and follow-up surveys, pupils were asked about their friends at school, their confidence in social situations and their participation in extra-curricular activities. See Chart 10 below.

After a year at boarding school:

- **91 per cent of pupils compared to 68 per cent at baseline (a 23 percentage point increase) ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that they thought participating in extra-curricular activities was important**
- **90 per cent of pupils compared to 80 per cent at baseline (a ten percentage point increase) ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that they were confident in social situations.**
- in terms of friendships, **similar proportions of pupils ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that they had friends at school at baseline and follow-up (92 per cent and 95 per cent respectively).** This is very encouraging considering pupils had only been at boarding school for a year.

When followed up at the end of their second year of boarding school, pupils provided similar responses to those they gave at the end of their first year.

Chart 10 Social skills and interactions



Source: SpringBoard pupil survey 2013-17, N=123 baseline, N=118 first follow-up.

Not all participants answered all questions.

Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

Most pupils interviewed across the different cohorts reported that they were more confident in social situations at their new school than they were at their previous school, and that they had made friends without any difficulty. Sometimes, this had been made easier by schools facilitating team-building exercises at the beginning of term or through whole-school activities (such as weekly visits to chapel) and social events. Some pupils had also developed their confidence in social situations by speaking about their experiences at events facilities by partner organisations.

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

Many pupil interviewees also reported that at boarding school they had access to a greater quantity and broader range of extra-curricular opportunities than was available at their previous school, as well as better facilities. This had provided them with the opportunities to take part in, and develop, new and varied interests, as well extend existing interests further. It had also provided a helpful way of meeting new friends from across the school as the pupil comments presented in the box below illustrate.

Improved social skills and interactions: pupil perspectives

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)

We have partner organisations where we can talk to people who are interested and get them interested in it [boarding school]. It was really scary to talk about boarding school in front of other people because at my last school I would never have done that but I have grown in confidence so much.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

It's given me better social skills, meeting people from a diverse range of backgrounds and has also made it possible to be connected to people who have similar career ambitions...

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

I am a little bit more sociable and I can hold a conversation whereas before I would ignore people. I wouldn't know what to say to them. I am slowly talking to people. I think it was shyness and I could sometimes not be bothered about talking.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

I've made friends a lot quicker at this school than I did at my last school. It's confidence, they push a lot on confidence here and at my last school they weren't that bothered about it.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

Sporting activities really helped me because my name got round the school and people knew me from the off. I'd be speaking to them and they'd say 'oh I've heard things about you' because of the sport I play. Sport also helps to get your mind off things at first.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

Some say life is not about what you know, but who you know. And the people you get to know are incredible. They're inspirational and build your network to heights that just cannot be achieved under normal circumstances.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

Echoing pupils' reports, staff reported the development of SpringBoard pupils' social skills. They commented that pupils had quickly developed a good circle of friends and that they had seen friendships 'deepen' over time. Staff reported that the majority of pupils had fully involved themselves in school life through, for example: taking on the role of a prefect or head boy/girl; sitting on the house council and engaging in other house activities; 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; joining different societies; participating in the school choir, in arts, music and drama activities; taking part in debates; cookery classes; horse-riding lessons; going on weekend, field and year group trips in the UK and abroad; learning new languages; volunteering in the community; and fund raising for charities.

Staff also provided examples of pupils improving their communication and social skills by engaging positively with staff members and welcoming visitors to the school. However, they also reported a small number of examples where pupils, mostly boys, struggled socially. Although these pupils appeared to interact with others fairly well, some were not developing particularly deep or meaningful friendships with other pupils, as the comments presented in the box below illustrate.

Improved social skills and interactions: staff and parent perspectives

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)

[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 are both beautifully behaved and are a credit to the school. They were able, very early on, to be used as guides and ambassadors for the school - that is excellent.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

[Name of pupil] still has some way to go... is very private and is also very good at saying and doing all the right things but this hides true feelings and emotional stumbling blocks. Although [name of pupil] is very happy and has developed very good friendships and is well liked, there are still issues that need to be handled.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

They were a bit apprehensive during the first term but joined activities like climbing and music lessons during the second term. Great to see them stretching themselves out of their comfort zone and gaining confidence.

(Cohort 2 start school staff member, summer 2016)

The art and sport opportunities that have been provided by the school are allowing the SpringBoard pupil to explore untapped potential and she is showing huge potential in these areas.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

... she also has a greater understanding of the world around her and how to interact with people.

(Parent, SpringBoard Parent Consultation, July/August 2015)

5.4.2 Increased awareness of social diversity

In the survey, pupils were asked to what extent their boarding school and previous school had given them opportunities to meet people from different backgrounds.

A larger proportion of pupils reported meeting people from different backgrounds at their previous school compared to boarding school. Ninety-eight per cent 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that their previous school had given them opportunities to meet people from different backgrounds whereas, at first and second follow-up, 89 per cent and 90 per cent of pupils respectively responded 'strongly agree' or 'agree' when asked this question in relation to their boarding school. **However, the interviews indicated that pupils had developed friendships with peers from a range of different backgrounds which had increased their awareness of social diversity.** Pupils reported that they had been exposed to different lifestyles and cultures to their own, both at school and through visiting friends' homes in the holidays.

Staff also reported that some 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, from varied ethnic origins, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. One staff member commented that 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 made a 'socially diverse group of friends' which had 'strengthened their understanding of others' and 'enhanced their thoughtfulness and tolerance'. As one staff member commented:

[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)

A number of staff reported that, where SpringBoard pupils were surrounded by pupils more financially privileged than themselves, they did not appear to be inhibited or uncomfortable with this: 'She takes it completely in her stride'. However, one staff member was concerned about the wealth differential and others reported that it was 'daunting/challenging' for pupils in some cases. Staff also recognised that the integration of SpringBoard pupils into the life of the school had a mutual benefit, and that all pupils gained increased understanding of society as a result (see section 6.2 for impacts on SpringBoard pupils' peers). Pupil perspectives on the social diversity at their school are captured in the box below.

Pupils' increased awareness of social diversity: pupil perspectives

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)

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)

Going to boarding school makes you more open to different personalities and more accepting of them. At my old school a lot of people were the same but at boarding school there are a lot of individual people – there are no sheep, they're all their own people. You have to be more accepting and more open to people.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

I've met a lot of different people who will be able to help me at different points in my life. These people are from different backgrounds from me and in the future it gives you a lot of connections to be able to do things that you might not be able to do without them, like job interviews or places to get a job or anything really. You never know.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

At my old school everyone was pretty much English and lived in the area locally and coming here and meeting people from across the world is pretty incredible.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

There are several different nationalities and cultures within the community, which is great because I have made lifelong friends and it has also provided me with future connections...

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

5.5 Increased confidence and well-being

Although pupils selected for SpringBoard already have a certain degree of self-confidence, as this is an attribute looked for, pupils' confidence has increased since joining boarding school.

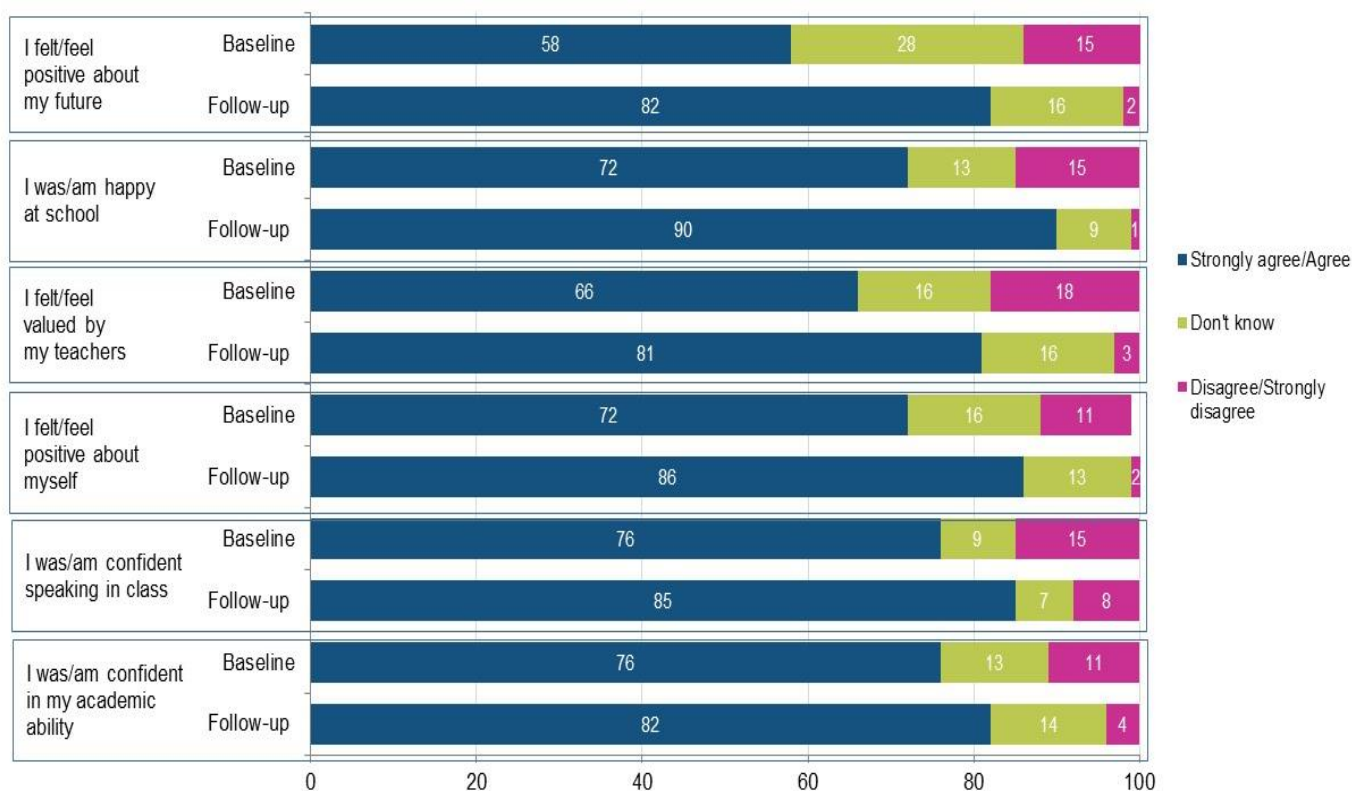
Pupils surveyed were asked a number of questions related to their confidence and well-being at boarding school, and were asked to make comparisons to their previous school (see Chart 11 below). **For all of the questions relating to confidence and well-being, positive impacts had been realised:** After a year at boarding school, compared to their previous school:

- there was a 24 percentage point increase in pupils 'strongly agreeing' or 'agreeing' that they felt positive about their future (82 per cent compared to 58 per cent)
- there was an 18 percentage point increase in pupils 'strongly agreeing' or 'agreeing' that they were happy at school (90 per cent compared to 72 per cent)

- there was a 15 percentage point increase in pupils ‘strongly agreeing’ or ‘agreeing’ that they felt valued by their teachers (81 per cent compared to 66 per cent)
- there was a 14 percentage point increase in pupils ‘strongly agreeing’ or ‘agreeing’ that they felt positive about themselves (86 per cent compared to 72 per cent)
- there was a nine percentage point increase in pupils ‘strongly agreeing’ or ‘agreeing’ that they were confident speaking in class (85 per cent compared to 76 per cent)
- there was a six percentage point increase in pupils ‘strongly agreeing’ or ‘agreeing’ that they were confident in their academic ability (82 per cent compared to 76 per cent).

At the end of their second year at boarding school pupils provided similar responses to those provided at the end of their first year.

Chart 11 Confidence and well-being



Source: SpringBoard pupil survey 2013-17, N=123 baseline, N=118 first follow-up. **Percentage**
 Not all participants answered all questions.
 Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100.

Pupils interviewed across the cohorts frequently reported gradual and ongoing increases in their confidence. Younger pupils, in particular, perceived themselves as having changed more in this aspect, having initially been shy and nervous when meeting new people. Taking on responsibilities such as prefect, house monitor and head girl/boy contributed to pupils’ increases in confidence. Teachers and other support staff were also credited by pupils for helping to develop their self-confidence.

Pupils also reported that they had increased their independence and personal responsibility 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 engaging 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 as overcoming challenges academically or in social situations. Pupils' comments presented in the box below illustrate these findings.

Increased confidence and independence: pupil perspectives

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'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 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)

We have sport and I do netball and athletics which I really enjoy and that has helped build confidence by working as a team...

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

The opportunity to attend [name of boarding school] has definitely changed me for the better in numerous ways. For example, before I came to [name of boarding school] I was shy and didn't have a good set of communication skills... I have dramatically grown in confidence. To add to this, my work ethic, grades and attitude have changed for the better. If I hadn't been selected, my future would not be as bright as it can be now.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

A number of staff commented that pupils were already confident, resilient and independent when they joined the school as these attributes were specifically looked for in the selection process. However, having said this, the vast majority of staff consultees reported that SpringBoard pupils had become more confident in their first year at school and continued to grow in confidence as they moved up the school. This increased confidence was related to their academic work and abilities, as well as their social confidence – demonstrated by speaking in class and in front of their house, in their interactions with staff and other pupils and through their active involvement in extra-curricular activities. In some cases, pupils' confidence and self-esteem had been raised by them doing exceptionally well in sport and representing the county.

Staff also reported that, for many pupils, linked to confidence was an increase in resilience and strength of character in dealing with challenges in their school work. This included both improving their school work on an ongoing basis and dealing with the continuing increase in standards. Staff commented that pupils had generally adapted well to their new environment and the requirement for increased independence, both in terms of living away from home and self-directed study. They were becoming better able to solve their own problems, organise themselves, travel independently and meet academic expectations. Several staff also noted pupils' growth in leadership skills, for example, as a result of taking on a role as a prefect or head girl/boy, sitting on the house council or chairing a society.

Staff also recognised that, despite initial increases in pupil confidence and self-esteem, confidence could fluctuate and was affected by ongoing personal issues, or the stress of examinations. For some pupils in their first year at boarding school, staff noted that it was 'early days' and there was still some way to go in terms of their confidence. Staff comments are presented alongside parents' perspectives in the box below.

Increased confidence, independence and resilience: staff and parent perspectives

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)

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)

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)

SpringBoard pupils have become calmer and more measured and considered when facing difficulties. They have become more resilient as the year has gone on and less explosive in their reaction to their environment.

(Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2016)

Her confidence did increase a little through being here and being exposed to so many different people and experiences. However, the problems she was struggling with, which had been present before she started here, impacted on everything.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

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)

6 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; parents/carers; the wider family; and SpringBoard pupils' home communities. The evaluation design did not include direct consultation with SpringBoard pupils' families or home communities, or with pupils in member schools, as this was beyond the scope of the study. However, SpringBoard pupils and staff in schools were asked about their perceptions of impacts on the following groups:

- staff in member schools
- SpringBoard pupils' peers
- families and carers of SpringBoard pupils
- SpringBoard pupils' home communities.

Sections 6.1 to 6.4 below set out the impacts that they reported.

In addition, SpringBoard staff also collected examples of the 'ripple' effect of pupils being placed at boarding school. These are described in section 6.5.

6.1 Impacts on school staff

The majority of staff reported that their work in supporting SpringBoard pupils was positive, rewarding and fulfilling. As one staff member commented: 'I absolutely love to work with our SpringBoard pupils and they enrich my and pupils' lives'. Most staff did not refer to any particular impacts on themselves as a result of taking on this new role. This was because SpringBoard pupils acted, and were treated, the same as all other pupils in school and, in some cases, because the school already had experience of working with pupils on bursaries.

However, the impacts that a number of staff identified as a result of working with SpringBoard pupils included:

- the development of knowledge and skills as a tutor, mentor or key worker, for example, in dealing with a wider range of pastoral challenges and different pupil backgrounds and cultures (in one school, training was provided to increase staff awareness of some of the social issues faced by SpringBoard pupils and another referred to the development of staff skills and a whole school strategy on well-being)
- the development of staff experience and expertise in supporting looked-after children (in one school 'attachment' training was provided for a member of staff to support the needs of a looked-after child)
- staff bringing more sensitivity to their work with all pupils due to their developing awareness of pupils' potential difficulties and challenges

- enhanced communication skills through liaising with parents whose first language was not English
- an increased cultural awareness gained through close working with their partner organisation
- adopting more creative means of pastoral and academic support, drawing on the expertise of their partner organisation
- personal satisfaction gained through supporting pupils from deprived backgrounds
- gaining additional profile and recognition in school for taking on the SpringBoard responsibility
- staff working more collaboratively within school as a result of information being shared on pupils receiving bursaries
- the impetus to look at the wider bursary provision in school, for example by increasing the schools' focus on selecting pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

A small number of staff noted the, sometimes significant, impact on their time as a result of their responsibility for supporting SpringBoard pupils alongside the additional administration involved. Some staff reported that they spent a disproportionate amount of time with SpringBoard pupils compared to other pupils in the school, noting the frequency of one-to-one meetings in particular. However, this was generally not seen as a negative, as they had volunteered for the role and considered it 'well worth it'.

Another 'slight negative' impact from a staff perspective was 'taking flak' when a bursary pupil did something wrong. As a staff consultee commented: 'Other staff sometimes expect the same thing of a SpringBoard pupil as they might from an academic scholar'. However, in contrast, another staff member commented that the perception of bursary pupils in general had improved amongst staff in their school as a result of SpringBoard 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.

6.2 Impacts on SpringBoard pupils' peers

Staff reported that the vast majority of other pupils in school had been 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) joined at the same time as others, SpringBoard pupils' peers were not aware that they were receiving a bursary. As a result, SpringBoard pupils were not seen as being different to anyone else at school. In some cases, pupils had openly shared information about themselves with their peers who were interested in their different life experiences.

Staff reported primarily positive impacts for pupils within school as a result of taking in SpringBoard pupils. They frequently commented that SpringBoard pupils were well liked and significantly contributed to school life and affected others by their enthusiasm: 'a breath of fresh air', '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'.

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 tolerant ethos of member schools.

When asked if having SpringBoard pupils at school had raised awareness of social diversity amongst pupils, staff commonly reported that their student population in school was already diverse. Some staff reported that their intake included pupils from across the world and that a number of existing 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. They highlighted the advantages of this in 'preparing pupils for the world beyond boarding school' and instilling 'attitudes of striving and gratitude rather than entitlement'. Staff also reported that SpringBoard pupils had 'definitely broken down barriers, prejudice or ignorance' and 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'. Staff commented that some SpringBoard pupils' peers had become more aware of their privileged situation and had developed a greater sensitivity towards others from less affluent backgrounds. Staff also reported that pupils in their school had developed a greater awareness of geography, other cities and regional accents. They felt that this diversity of pupils was very positive and some schools were actively seeking to 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 had made more work for other pupils and had resulted in 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. In another school, a member of staff highlighted the difficulties for other pupils as a result of the challenging (violent and aggressive) behaviour displayed by the SpringBoard pupil in their boarding house, which left pupils feeling 'quite scared' although relationships were being rebuilt.

6.3 Impacts on families and carers

Pupils described their families' positive reactions and support when they were offered a place at boarding school. 'They've all been really happy and supportive' was a typical comment. Perhaps unsurprisingly, pupils reported that their families or carers had expressed feelings of pride as well as gratitude to SpringBoard, its partners and partner schools. Mixed feelings, though, were often apparent because children were moving away from 'their roots'. However, this was often considered to be positive, particularly where their roots involved risk of gang violence, for example. Some family members were reported to feel sad as they missed their child but were, at the same time, very happy and proud of what they were achieving and their future prospects.

Pupils reported that their families were generally aware of their school life and kept well informed by the school. Most pupils mentioned regular telephone contact with their families and reports of their progress being sent home. 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 ('They think it's like what they see in films'). 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 impacts on SpringBoard pupils' families and home communities. However, where they were, they typically focused on parents growing in confidence in engaging with the school and speaking to school staff and being happy with their child's progress. In terms of the former, one school had set up a parent buddy programme which had increased the involvement of SpringBoard parents in the school.

Regarding their child moving to boarding school, some parents found it hard to 'let go' and missed seeing their child from day-to-day but were being supported by the school. In a 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. Examples were also provided of family members previously absent engaging more with their child as a result of them gaining a place at boarding school.

6.4 Impacts on pupils' home communities

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 have impacted on others has depended on the opportunities facilitated by their partner organisation.

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. Examples are presented in the box below.

Examples of pupils' activities in their home communities and their impacts: pupil perspectives

I was quite excited to be honest, certainly for them [potential SpringBoard applicants]. 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've had a couple of opportunities [to talk to other young people in my home community]. I came back home and I was invited back into my old school to give them an overview of my experience and what's happened. I feel like it helped them decide to apply [for a Springboard bursary].

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

During the holidays, I was asked to speak to students about my experience in school, both the good and the bad, as well as giving them tips to survive at boarding school...we taught some of the classes, by providing the key skills they need such as team work and communicating. We also helped them with any struggles they have in their subjects.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

I have had multiple opportunities to tell other people, around my age and younger, of my experiences through [name of partner organisation] that helped me attend [name of boarding school]. These opportunities have been during many different occasions from a back to school service at my local church to a leavers' meeting at the [name of partner organisation] hall.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

In the surveys, pupils were asked if their partner organisation was providing them with opportunities to motivate/encourage young people in their home area. At first follow-up, just less than two-thirds of pupils (64 per cent) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that their partner organisation was doing this. Echoing the survey findings, a number of pupils consulted early on reported that they would like to have more formal opportunities to motivate young people in their local area. As a result, one of the recommendations of the evaluation was that partners could do more to facilitate SpringBoard pupils' engagement with their local community. At second follow-up, the proportion of pupils responding 'strongly agree' or 'agree' had increased to 71 per cent which indicated that this recommendation had been actioned.

6.5 Further examples of the 'ripple' effect

During the course of the evaluation, SpringBoard staff collected examples of the 'ripple' effect of pupils being placed at boarding school. In the main, these echo those already reported above. Examples include:

- the raised aspirations of SpringBoard pupils' friends, families and peers at their previous 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
- younger children being steered onto a more positive path and away from negative influences (such as membership of gangs that family or friends were part of) as a result of being inspired by learning about SpringBoard pupils' experiences and progress at boarding school
- state feeder schools benefitting from pupils' increased aspirations – for example the headmaster of a feeder school working closely with SpringBoard credits the school and partner's work with SpringBoard as a contributory factor to the school's Ofsted grading increasing from 'good' to 'outstanding' in their most recent inspection
- partners identifying children for sixth form bursaries at the start of Year 7 so that they can have five years to work towards the possibility of securing a bursary. This has had a profound impact on school communities where SpringBoard is 'talked about widely' and is something the pupils are aiming for

- one SpringBoard pupil being told that he had secured a SpringBoard bursary in front of the whole school at an assembly – the news was received with a standing ovation from the pupil’s peers and staff
- the support of wider communities for SpringBoard pupils going to boarding school – for example lining the streets to wave them off when they left for the first time
- families in communities sending their children to local feeder schools where there might be a chance of applying to boarding school
- 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.

Examples have also been collected of closer links being forged between SpringBoard’s partner organisations, boarding schools, state schools and tutoring organisations. This included 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
- a partner organisation running sessions on culture for boarding schools – ten sessions have been run to date
- a number of tutoring organisations working with partner organisations to provide free tuition to SpringBoard pupils prior to them joining boarding school and during the school holidays
- a boarding school hosting an annual Child in Care Awards and working closely with children in care, not just those attending the school on a bursary (e.g. through inviting children to the school to undertake activities and the Looked After Children Coordinator in the boarding school sitting on the board of a Virtual 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, 2015)

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, 2015)

7 Effectiveness of SpringBoard

This section sets out the views of staff from member schools and SpringBoard pupils on the effectiveness of SpringBoard's operations. It also includes some parent quotations gathered via SpringBoard's internal evaluation activity.

It is also worth noting that, in April 2016, SpringBoard conducted an internal consultation with partners and the results were overall very positive. There were, however, a number of recommendations for improvement which SpringBoard actioned. Further details on this consultation are provided in Appendix 3.

7.1 Staff and pupils' views on effectiveness

7.1.1 Views of staff

The views of school staff in relation to SpringBoard were mostly very positive, with the majority of staff 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 SpringBoard personnel 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 provided and particularly valued opportunities to meet with other schools to share good practice.

Staff comments are provided in the box below.

Member schools' staff views of SpringBoard

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 is open to supporting looked after children when no other national charity has done, sets it 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)

[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)

Excellent. We have an open, productive and supportive partnership with SpringBoard.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

Very positive; they have been on hand to answer all of our questions and offer advice as and when required.

(Cohort 3 start school staff member, summer 2016)

Very positive - we have an open and honest relationship, whereby I can give constructive feedback, and it is welcomed and acted upon.

(Cohort 1 start school staff member, summer 2016)

7.1.2 Views of pupils and parents

In the surveys and interviews, pupils were consistently positive about their experiences with the vast majority recommending SpringBoard 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 allowed you not only to excel academically but also to make connections with people who could help you achieve your aspirations. Parents, too, were extremely complimentary about their and their child's experiences when consulted by SpringBoard in summer 2015.

A range of pupils' and parents' views is provided in the box below.

Pupils' and parents' views of SpringBoard

Definitely do it! It is a little hard at the beginning but because the community feeling is so strong, it becomes a lot easier. This opportunity also opens up lots of doors in the future and is an eye opener of things you can achieve either academically or even socially. It makes you actually want to go and do amazing things in your life.

(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...the school that you get matched to aims to help you thrive and flourish.

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2015)

The possibilities are endless and the greatest thing about going is that you find out who you are...not who society deems you are...you go through a journey to discover yourself and your ambitions.

(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)

Don't hesitate. It is extremely difficult and will be the biggest challenge and worry of your life...but in order for a better life that you could only dream of it is 110% worth the struggle.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

To be aware of the responsibility that comes with it. It is an amazing opportunity and an amazing experience but the shift from GCSE to A-level is hard enough and schools such as the one I attend push you even further, to your absolute limit and you have to be aware that you're expected to put all your effort into these two years...If you are a determined person...you will be fine.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

Transformative – it is a life-changing experience going to boarding school because this scheme is for those who don't have the financial support and don't go to the best schools but who are the bright stars. So, to go from an area that I'm from to a place where education is one of the best in the world it changes you...it opens your eyes to what the world has to offer.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2016)

DO IT! Have no regrets as it is a life-changing opportunity for the better, you will gain lifelong friends and skills as well as having done so many new things you may not get to do at home, Be yourself and you can't fail. The best thing I have ever done without a doubt!!

(Cohort 2 pupil, summer 2016)

They should go for it and take advantage of every opportunity they get. You meet loads of different people from lots of different backgrounds and cultures. You will discover talents that you did not know you had.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

You should definitely apply. It was the best decision I have ever made. Boarding school is hard and you have to push but the friends you meet, the people you get to know and the experience you take away is all worth it in the end. SpringBoard are great, they see potential in everyone and help to push people in the direction they wish to go...and they are always there for you, wishing to help you progress.

(Cohort 3 pupil, summer 2017)

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)

7.2 Suggestions for improvements

In every year of the evaluation, staff and pupils were asked for their suggestions for how SpringBoard's scheme could be enhanced or improved. Most struggled to identify anything, reporting that the scheme already worked very effectively. However, a small number of consultees highlighted minor modifications that could be made. These suggestions are detailed in Table 4 below alongside the actions that SpringBoard took in response to them.

Table 4: Improvements suggested by pupils and school staff during the evaluation and actions undertaken by SpringBoard

Improvements suggested	Actions undertaken by SpringBoard
Selection process: from staff within member schools	
<p>Pass more information on to member schools about students' individual background and experiences (from SpringBoard/the partner organisation) so that pupils can be fully supported from the outset and questions do not have to be asked again.</p>	<p>SpringBoard has evaluated and revised its Pupil Profile documentation so that it includes more detail on pupils' backgrounds and experiences. It provides a comprehensive social, financial, pastoral and academic profile of the pupil and is checked and updated once the place has been offered.</p> <p>SpringBoard actively encourages partners and schools to meet and/or talk through the pupils' needs in the summer before they join their SpringBoard school. From then on, the relationship between partner and school comes into its own and SpringBoard facilitates communication in order that relevant information regarding pupil and family circumstances can be shared in the transition period and when the pupil is at school.</p>
<p>Increase the focus on academic and psychometric testing so that appropriate support can be put in place at the outset.</p>	<p>SpringBoard is piloting a project with STEER, an organisation which has been set up to improve steering cognition in education. All new pupils starting at SpringBoard schools in September 2017 have been assessed with STEER's AS Tracking Tool so that SpringBoard can monitor pupils' mental well-being and put in place action plans for pupils who need them. All SpringBoard partners and schools supporting the new pupils, along with SpringBoard staff, have been trained by STEER. The STEER assessment is also enabling SpringBoard to evaluate the impact of boarding on the SpringBoard pupils as well as trends in pupil well-being and mental health in comparison to other non-SpringBoard pupils of the same age.</p>
<p>Consider giving more focus to placing pupils with less stable backgrounds and greater pastoral needs where schools have the necessary infrastructure in place and suitably experienced/skilled staff to support them.</p>	<p>Over 30 Local Authority Virtual Schools have actively engaged with SpringBoard since it was founded over five years ago. As a result, SpringBoard places a greater number of looked after children, one of the most vulnerable groups of children, each year. Local Authorities develop strong partnerships with member schools and offer</p>

	training around attachment and trauma-related issues. In addition, one of SpringBoard's long-standing partners, Eastside Young Leaders' Academy, offers training to member schools on managing cultural differences within boarding school.
Include more group activities in the interviews so that pupils' interaction with others can be assessed.	Partners now include group activities in their assessment of how pupils interact with each other as part of their pupil selection process.
Provide pupils with some preparatory academic work ahead of starting school (particularly for Year 12 pupils).	SpringBoard is seeking to develop partnerships with tutoring agencies to help pupils better manage the academic transition.
Selection process: from pupils	
Shorten the application process to reduce the stress of waiting to hear.	SpringBoard has brought forward the pupil interviews to reduce the waiting time for pupils during the application process.
Offer interview practice.	Partners are encouraged to prepare pupils for their interviews with boarding schools.
Encourage current SpringBoard pupils to share their experience with applicants.	SpringBoard continues to encourage partners to facilitate sessions in the local community for current pupils to share their experiences with potential new applicants.
Consider placing pupils at a younger age i.e. prior to Year 12 when settling can be more difficult with the increased academic challenge of A-levels.	A greater number of younger pupils were recommended to SpringBoard in the 2016-2017 academic year as a result of their work with partners.
Provide pupils with an experience of boarding during selection.	All SpringBoard candidates are given the opportunity to visit a member school for a 'taster visit' during the selection period. Some schools are able to offer an overnight stay where possible, but it depends on beds being available.
Provide more information on an average day at boarding school.	The SpringBoard Pupil Portal includes information on an average day at boarding school, written by the SpringBoard pupils themselves. Partners and pupils are actively encouraged by SpringBoard to access this resource.
Work with member schools: from staff within member schools	
Provide ongoing opportunities for SpringBoard leads in member schools to meet and share learning and effective practice.	Training days for member schools are organised on an annual basis. Due to pressures of the merger, the training day in 2017 was cancelled. However, new schools were paired with current schools and supported to share learning and effective practice.
Provide more support/guidance to new schools on the systems and processes that need to be in place	SpringBoard has developed a Partner Pack which provides step-by-step advice and guidance around how partners can best support SpringBoard pupils

prior to taking SpringBoard pupils, as well as the knowledge and skills that staff need - draw on the expertise of schools which have been involved for longer.	and work with member schools. It includes timelines, advice and guidance from pre-admission, 'through care' and support in the holidays. It also includes a timeline for parents showing their child's journey to boarding school as well as a map of where member schools are located and a summary of each of the member schools. The Partner Pack has been sent to member schools and SpringBoard are also in the process of developing a similar Schools Pack.
Organise a training day for staff with pastoral responsibilities so that they can better understand the social, economic and cultural issues that pupils face. Provide more specialist training, for example on mental health and well-being and attachment issues.	SpringBoard is considering either gearing the whole Schools' Training Day towards this aim or holding smaller regional cluster group meetings, where pastoral staff can meet more easily to share experiences and benefit from specific sessions from, for example, STEER, Eastside Young Leaders' Academy and Local Authority training around attachment and trauma-related issues.
Facilitate meetings of schools new to SpringBoard with their linked partner organisation.	SpringBoard encourages all schools and particularly new ones to build a strong relationship with their matched partner and to visit if appropriate. In addition, it encourages partner organisations to meet with member schools. Many partners visit member schools during the spring term on the new pupils' first visit to the SpringBoard school.
Institute more regular communication with schools where pupils with more challenges and issues have been placed.	Once the place has been offered, the relationship between partner and school comes into its own. SpringBoard facilitates communication in order that relevant information regarding pupil and family circumstances can be shared in the transition period and while the pupil is at the school.
Devise a review form/questionnaire for schools to complete with pupils after their first term to explore how they are settling in and whether any improvements can be made.	SpringBoard are reviewing this suggestion but are mindful that they do not want to overburden schools.
Work with member schools: from evaluator	
Encourage staff in member schools and partner organisations to discuss any negative reactions that pupils may be facing from their peers. This is particularly key in the first year.	SpringBoard continues to deliver training to partners at regular Partners' Forums in which they share the recommendations from the NFER reports such as, for example, ensuring partners are aware of any negative reactions pupils may face at boarding school.
Support/encourage member schools to provide further careers information, advice and guidance to SpringBoard pupils on financing university study and on university and careers options.	SpringBoard are reviewing this suggestion.

Support for pupils at school and home: from pupils and staff within member schools

Encourage schools to organise group sessions for pupils starting school each year – not just SpringBoard pupils – so they can get to know each other, share experiences and understand each other's background.	Most member schools offer summer term 'induction' sessions where SpringBoard pupils can meet other pupils, not just the SpringBoard pupils.
Ensure partners are tailoring their support to pupils' needs.	See information on Partner Pack above.
Increase support from partners during the first term and at key transition or pressure points.	See information on Partner Pack above.
Continue to encourage partners to facilitate more opportunities for pupils to share their experiences with other young people in their home communities.	SpringBoard continues to encourage partners to facilitate sessions in the local community for current pupils to share their experiences.

Further evaluation work: from evaluator

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 in assessing SpringBoard's progress towards its broader aim of raising aspirations in SpringBoard pupils' home communities.	SpringBoard continues to measure the impact of the 'ripple effect' within pupils' home communities.
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8 Conclusions

The findings from the evaluation of SpringBoard are extremely positive, with pupils and staff reporting a wide range of impacts as a result of pupils moving to boarding schools, and remarkably few negative consequences.

Even though SpringBoard has expanded significantly during the evaluation period - working with more partners and schools and supporting an increasing number of pupils - effective working relationships have been developed and have continued to grow between partner organisations, original and member schools, pupils and their families/carers. The unique and comprehensive network of support that the SpringBoard model provides is central to its success and enables pupils to settle quickly in their new school as well as thrive in the longer-term.

A range of impacts have been realised for pupils including: improved academic progress and attainment; raised aspirations, broadened horizons and enhanced future prospects; improved social skills and interactions and increased awareness of social diversity; and increased confidence and well-being. 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/carers. 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.

Throughout the course of the evaluation, SpringBoard has shown itself to be a learning organisation which seeks to continually improve and strives to offer the best possible programme. It has responded to recommendations for improvements from pupils and staff as well as developed new partnerships – for example with STEER - to further enhance provision. As SpringBoard moves forward with its merger, it should seek to continue to actively listen to its range of partners and bursary pupils in its mission to transform the lives of some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in the country.

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Appendix 1: SpringBoard member schools and partners during evaluation

8.1.1 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
Wyndham 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

8.1.2 Partners

The partner organisations italicised below are currently working with SpringBoard but did not take part in the evaluation as they have been involved from Cohorts 4 onwards.

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)

The Clarion Education Foundation

Hope in Tottenham – new for Cohort 4

SIEVEMK Gateway – new for Cohort 4

Maintained Schools, Academies and Free Schools (referrals for these schools / academies are now managed by **Into**University)

The Boxing Academy

Westside School

Djanogly City Academy – new for Cohort 4

Virtual Schools

Brighton & Hove Virtual School

East Sussex Virtual School

Gloucestershire Virtual School

Hammersmith & Fulham Virtual School

Suffolk Virtual School

Haringey Virtual School – new for Cohort 4

Staffordshire Virtual School – new for Cohort 4

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 which was developed with SpringBoard pupils, some of whom have contributed to the content. It is open access and contains information on boarding school life from the perspective of SpringBoard pupils and includes articles, guidance notes, frequently asked questions, videos, SpringBoard's tweets, news, photographs and useful links. It is aimed at both prospective pupils considering applying to SpringBoard and current pupils. In terms of current pupils, it seeks to encourage a sense of group identity and of belonging together within the SpringBoard network
- hosting a parent portal which was developed with the support of a number of SpringBoard parents who contributed to the content and advised on what should be included. It is an open-access information centre providing information, advice and guidance on bursary provision for both parents interested in SpringBoard and parents 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, three events have been held in August 2014, August 2015 and August 2016.
- 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.

SpringBoard is also working with STEER on a pioneering project to inform SpringBoard, its partners and member schools more about assessing and supporting the mental well-being of the pupils. This project began in 2017 and draws on the use of 'AS Tracking'. This is a process which enables schools to be proactive, targeted and evidence-based in their pastoral care. It:

- identifies pupils with an increased risk of developing difficulties BEFORE a problem becomes serious
- targets the strategic areas of need for a specific pupil, or across a year group, making the pastoral care more efficient and effective
- monitors and develops the 'school road' to ensure it is always best supporting pupils' ability to make wise, prosocial, emotionally healthy choices
- provides evidence that support has made a difference by tracking the impact on pupils over time.

AS Tracking enables schools to reduce the number of children who may, otherwise, go on to require higher levels of mental health care by early intervention and effective, individual action planning.

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 promote the educational attainment of young people in care. 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 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 were asked about the support they were providing to SpringBoard pupils. In some cases, staff reported that SpringBoard pupils were not differentiated from other pupils and received the same type of support that was available to all new pupils joining the school. However, more than half of the staff consulted reported that a range of additional support was 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 (including Personal Education Plan meetings or Looked After Children reviews for children in care)
- 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
- a formalised buddy system, in which pupils are assigned a welcoming buddy or mentor from within their house. This is often a key factor in helping pupils to make new friends, become familiar with their new environment and the systems and process of the school
- opportunities to bring new and existing SpringBoard pupils together, either as buddies or for specific activities and events. This facilitates connections with peers from similar backgrounds who have an understanding of what it is like to join the school as a new SpringBoard pupil.
- 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 both academically and personally
- academic tutoring (e.g. in mathematics) to support pupils to get up to speed with their peers in class
- 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 and the range of sporting and other extra-curricular activities which enable pupils to mix with a wide range of students. These activities help SpringBoard pupils recognise that there are often more similarities than differences between them and their peers and to feel at ease in their new environment,

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.

Over the course of the evaluation, member schools have reviewed and adapted their support offer based on the specific requirements and characteristics of pupils joining the school, or as a result of feedback from SpringBoard pupils on how existing support could be improved. Where needed, this has led to tweaks in provision to ensure that pupils have the right expectations on joining the school and that their individual needs – both personal and academic - are met once there. In particular, schools have provided more intensive mentoring programmes and developed a tighter pastoral care network, in addition to a more focused induction around the school expectations and ethos.

Appendix 3: SpringBoard's consultation with partners

In April 2016, SpringBoard conducted its first internal consultation with partners using the online survey software, SurveyMonkey. The consultation included mentoring organisations and educational charities as well as maintained schools, academies and free schools. The consultation did not include virtual schools as SpringBoard's partnership model for these schools is different and therefore the consultation was not relevant for them. Ten out of the eleven partners invited to take part in the consultation provided a response and the key findings are provided below.

Working with SpringBoard

- All partners felt that their role as a SpringBoard partner was working well and rated their experience as 8.7 out of 10 where 1 was 'not at all good' and 10 was 'very good'. SpringBoard staff availability, guidance and support as well as the Partners' Forums were cited as particularly helpful.
- The majority of partners did not report any challenges in undertaking their role. However, where challenges were mentioned, these included the administrative time required and staffing and funding to run the SpringBoard programme.
- All partners would recommend becoming a SpringBoard partner to other organisations.

The box below includes a selection of partners' quotes regarding their relationship with SpringBoard.

Quotes from partners regarding their relationship with SpringBoard

I love being a partner and am looking forward to the challenge of placing our students and changing lives.

My experience has been very good working with SpringBoard. We have been enabled and encouraged to provide outstanding opportunities for many young people from under-privileged areas with limited aspirations. I feel proud to have been involved in this.

I have found the direct contact with SpringBoard team very helpful, I have found the team exceptionally approachable if I have any queries or concerns. I also enjoy the Partners' Forums and find them interesting and insightful hearing other partner's experiences.

It is incredibly rewarding; SpringBoard provides access to more schools than we would be able to source on our own so we can help transform more lives. And they assess the schools for us to ensure high standards in pastoral care etc.

Working with schools

- Partners felt that, in general, communication with schools was working well but this depended on the school. Some partners voiced their desire for SpringBoard support in stewarding their partnerships with schools and highlighting the importance of communication between schools and partners.

Selecting and supporting pupils

- All partners, except one, felt confident in identifying the most suitable candidates for a bursary. Overall, partners rated their confidence as 7.9 out of 10 where 1 was 'not at all confident' and 10 was 'very confident'. Some partners commented on the fact that, even though they might feel the pupil selected was 'right for boarding', sometimes issues arose within the boarding environment that were not foreseen in the comfort and familiarity of the pupil's home community. They reported that assessment of resilience and varying family circumstances could be challenging.
- All partners, except one, generally felt confident in preparing the pupils for boarding and rated their confidence in this area as 7.1 out of 10 where 1 was 'not at all confident' and 10 was 'very confident'. Some partners suggested that a recommended programme/curriculum and sharing resources amongst partners would be helpful.
- All but one partner felt confident that, if a serious issue were to arise with a pupil/parent (e.g. a suspension/expulsion), they would be able to help to resolve it. They rated their confidence in helping to resolve issues as 8.25 out of 10 where 1 was 'not at all confident' and 10 was 'very confident'.
- Most partners communicated regularly with the pupils during term-time, with the method and frequency of contact depending on the needs of the pupils. A minority of partners were aware that they needed to provide more term-time support and were working on this.
- All partners reported that they saw SpringBoard pupils during the holidays and provided differing levels of support depending on the pupil/situation.
- All partners, except one, generally felt confident in supporting parents with their needs/queries. They rated their confidence in supporting parents as 7.3 out of 10 where 1 was 'not at all confident' and 10 was 'very confident'.

Recommendations for improvements and actions taken to date

SpringBoard have shared the findings and recommendations from the partner consultation with the SpringBoard team and partners. In addition, they have begun acting on a range of recommendations made by partners, as shown in the table below.

Recommendation	Action
All partners felt that a short SpringBoard film and a Partner Pack to include practical advice, guidance and top tips, to complement the Partners' Handbook, would be beneficial.	SpringBoard is in the process of putting together a Partner Pack and a proposal for a short SpringBoard film.
All partners felt, in general, that a mentoring scheme between partners set up by SpringBoard would be beneficial as long as the partners were matched correctly (i.e. that organisations matched together were similar). Other suggestions included shadowing each other's programmes, sharing email contact, Partner-only Forums and sharing resources and curricula particularly in the preparation for the boarding phase.	SpringBoard is in the process of putting together a proposal for a mentoring scheme between partners. Partners have now set up their own Partner-only Forums and have shared email contacts and resources.
Some partners suggested that SpringBoard could support partners in the development of their partnerships with schools and highlight the importance of communication between schools and partners.	SpringBoard are sharing contact details of schools with partners earlier and will continue to encourage closer collaboration so that issues with pupils can be identified proactively and prevented.
Some partners felt a recommended programme/curriculum in preparing pupils for boarding and sharing resources amongst partners would be helpful	SpringBoard has included 'preparation for boarding' as the main topic of their next Partners' Forum in November 2016 in order to share partner resources, experience and expertise. Two of SpringBoard's longest standing partners are leading this session.
Partners reported that that the assessment of resilience and varying family circumstances could be challenging and this could be an area for SpringBoard to support	SpringBoard is continuing research into resources relating to the assessment of character, resilience and emotional intelligence/emotional quotient.

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