



National Foundation for Educational Research

Evaluation of SHINE on Saturdays

Executive Summary

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Introduction

The overarching aim of the SHINE¹ on Saturday programme is to enable schools or other educational organisations to create and run a SHINE on Saturday school with clear learning outcomes and to improve the educational achievement of underachieving children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The programme provides 150 hours of additional and creative learning every year for students who are underachieving in relation to their peers or compared to what they could achieve if they were stretched. The majority are based in schools. Each one runs for 30 Saturdays a year, working with 60 underachieving students at primary or secondary level (8 to 12 years old). The SHINE on Saturday model emphasises the creative curriculum and is based on alternative and accelerated learning concepts, which set it apart from traditional Saturday school provision. It recognises that each learner has an individual learning style and is designed to emphasise excitement, enrichment and activity-based, investigative learning.

SHINE, a charitable trust, makes grants available for the set up and delivery of SHINE on Saturday programmes and provides support and guidance materials for those delivering the programme. Since 2001, SHINE has approved grants for twenty one SHINE on Saturday programmes to support over 5,000 children from 70 schools in London. Currently SHINE is funding fifteen SHINE on Saturday programmes for over 900 students from 60 schools in Brent, Hackney, Haringey, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Lambeth, Merton, Southwark and Waltham Forest.

The National Foundation for Educational Research provided an evaluation of the SHINE on Saturday programme and the effectiveness of SHINE in supporting its delivery. It should be of interest to policy-makers working on **closing the attainment gap** between richer and poorer children, those involved in the strategic leadership and delivery of **out-of-hours education**, and those considering investment in educational support for children from **disadvantaged backgrounds**.

¹ SHINE: Support and Help in Education

Key findings

Impact of SHINE on Saturday

The evidence from our evaluation and the evidence provided by SHINE suggest that the SHINE on Saturday programme is having a positive impact on the lives of students in terms of learning, social and emotional outcomes as well as on teaching staff, schools, parents and the wider community.

Quantitative evidence showed that on average the attainment of SHINE on Saturday students – who have been identified as underachieving and from disadvantaged backgrounds, as evidenced by free school meals (FSM), special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL) data – had progressed in line with national expectations at Key Stage 2.

There was also a great deal of qualitative evidence gathered from SHINE students which showed increased confidence, self-esteem and better attitudes to learning. We know from the wider literature on study support that attainment is linked to these characteristics (MacBeath *et al.*, 2001; Sharp *et al.*, 2002; White *et al.*, 2007). The qualitative data also identified several examples where SHINE on Saturdays was recognised as improving particular children's attainment. It was also evident from the interviews that the programme is helping students to develop a positive attitude towards learning and this was reported to have had a knock-on effect on widening participation in post-compulsory education and training, as students' aspirations for the future also improved.

SHINE on Saturday provision

Our evaluation has shown that the individuals in the case-study projects predominantly believed in the effectiveness of the SHINE on Saturday model and adhered to it in terms of the pedagogical approaches, curriculum content ideas, resourcing levels and staffing quotas. Only one project, which is part-funded by SHINE, decided not to implement some of the core features of the model.

Support to grantees

SHINE on Saturday staff felt that SHINE staff offered an excellent support service to them, in respect to the application, project set-up, implementation and monitoring and evaluation processes. The *Making it Work* manual was said to be invaluable, particularly

during project-set up. The rigorous application process was respected by applicants but may well prevent schools in very challenging circumstances from engaging with SHINE, due to the level of engagement required.

Recommendations

Taking SHINE on Saturday forward

It is evident that SHINE on Saturday is valued by students, parents and staff and is reported to be achieving an impact on students' behaviour, attitudes and attainment. There is good evidence that SHINE on Saturday is meeting its aim to enable schools or other educational organisations to create and run a SHINE on Saturday school with clear learning outcomes for underachieving children from disadvantaged backgrounds. There are also examples of the programme improving educational outcomes for particular students within the qualitative evidence. **We therefore recommend that SHINE continues to fund the SHINE on Saturday programme.** In order to achieve even greater impact in the future, we recommend that SHINE should:

- Continue with aspects of the SHINE on Saturday model that work well – this includes the number of sessions (30), the length of sessions (5 hours) and the student to staff ratio which provides small class sizes (20 students per class). It also includes the investigative cross-curricular approach to contextualised learning and the provision of enrichment activities
- Continue to focus on offering something different from mainstream school.
- Encourage greater liaison with Monday to Friday school, including sharing innovative approaches for teaching and learning with school staff, encouraging students to share their skills and informing class teachers of individual students' progress and achievements during SHINE on Saturday sessions (see Elliott *et al.*, 2004 for further information)
- Guide practitioners on how to get the best value from visiting experts and educational trips
- Take account of the local community context by recruiting representative staff and mentors who can build links to all sections of the community and avoiding scheduling sessions during religious holidays
- Ensure each school in cluster projects has a key contact person to provide baseline data in a consistent format
- Consider extending SHINE on Saturday to Year 3 pupils.

Measuring success

The impact of the SHINE on Saturday programme, as with many intervention programmes, is difficult to measure, given the range of influences affecting students' development. SHINE is committed to the collection, analysis and use of monitoring and evaluation data. Monitoring activities allow SHINE to build up a profile of the student cohort for each year, track individual students' progress over the academic year and report on the success of the programme to SHINE's Board of Trustees. To improve programme monitoring we recommend that SHINE:

- Commission statistical analysis and modelling to enable estimation of the impact of SHINE on Saturday on pupil attainment and quantification of the value of that impact compared to the cost of delivering the programme
- Expand the range of student contextual data that schools are asked to provide, to include Gifted and Talented students and those from asylum-seeking, refugee and Gypsy Romany traveller families
- Consider gathering data and reporting on the programme's impact on schools and communities, as part of standard programme monitoring
- Clarify the type of pupil attainment and attendance data and level of detail required, to ensure consistency across projects and to enable comparisons to be made
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation data tool and provide improved guidance and exemplars for the data gathering process and the end of year reports
- Explore ways in which monitoring data could be used formatively by grantees as well as summatively by SHINE
- Monitor projects' programme fidelity, as this is a key element in the quality of the experience for students, including assessing plans for delivery of projects as they go beyond the main period of funding
- Consider adopting the Quality in Study Support self-evaluation process (Wilson *et al.*, 2004) and promoting its use to SHINE on Saturday grantees.

Supporting success

We recommend that SHINE should continue to offer its excellent service to grantees. In order to develop the support provided, we recommend that the Trust should:

- Continue to use the *Making it Work* manual as the foundation of its support to Project Managers
- Encourage schools to embed SHINE on Saturday's curriculum approach within Monday to Friday school as a route to sustainability
- Facilitate more knowledge sharing between different SHINE on Saturday projects
- Review its application process to streamline it for applicants, in order to make it easier for schools to apply to become SHINE schools and so enable SHINE to reach

more children in need of support. It is important to note that streamlining the process does not mean lowering the standards expected of SHINE schools

- Improve its guidance on funding and consider providing sample budgets to assist decision-making, encourage best use of resources and ensure that funding for core elements of the SHINE model is safeguarded. Asking schools to suggest their own funding requirements may not be the best way to achieve value for money
- Explore more ways to recruit target pupils, so that schools do not need to go outside of the core target group to fill places
- Consider how experienced SHINE on Saturday providers could be encouraged to share their knowledge, for example by becoming ‘critical friends’ to new entrants.