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SET FOR SUCCESS

Evaluation of Set for Success

Evaluation findings for the 2024-25 academic year

Report produced by the Youth Sport Trust's Research and Insight Team
August 2025

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Section 1 | Introduction

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Programme overview

Set for Success is an intensive youth leadership initiative funded by the Wimbledon Foundation in partnership with Barclays and delivered by the Youth Sport Trust (YST).

Following a successful three-year pilot (2020-23), Set for Success is currently being delivered for a further four years (2023-2027). It aims to reach another 150 schools across the UK, engaging up to 3,900 young people.

Set for Success supports young people who may be at risk of not achieving their full potential for a variety of factors. Participants develop essential life and employability skills through mentoring sessions delivered by inspirational athletes. A group of Interns also support the delivery of the programme, whilst contributing to their personal and career development. The programme is being delivered in geographical areas across England, Wales and Scotland, where a need for targeted support has been identified.

Set for Success seeks to support the following outcomes for young people:



- ✓ Increased employability skills
- ✓ Improved physical literacy
- ✓ Improved wellbeing
- ✓ Improved resilience
- ✓ Improved attitudes towards the future
- ✓ Increased motivation to learn
- ✓ Improved engagement and behaviour at school

The programme also aims to increase the competence of teachers to support young people at risk of not achieving their full potential.

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Report overview

This report sets out the findings from the evaluation of Set for Success in the 2024-25 academic year.

The evaluation aims to assess the extent to which the outcomes of the programme have been achieved. This report combines the outcomes for young people taking part in Year 1 and Year 2 of the programme during the 2024/25 academic year; data for the individual delivery years can be found in the appendix. The evaluation also aims to understand the effectiveness of the programme delivery model and processes. Set for Success is being evaluated by the YST's Research and Insight Team, and involved the following research activities:

Survey for Teachers

- ✓ **63** surveys completed at the end of Year 1 delivery
(84% response rate)
- ✓ **31** surveys completed at the end of Year 2 delivery
(78% response rate)

Survey for Young People

- ✓ **534** surveys completed at the end of Year 1 delivery
(60% response rate)
- ✓ **147** surveys completed at the end of Year 2 delivery
(38% response rate)

Teacher Interviews

- ✓ In-depth interviews with **6** teachers

Focus Groups with Young People

- ✓ **3** in-person focus groups with young people

Focus Groups with Interns

- ✓ **3** in-person focus groups with Interns

This report is supported by three additional reports produced: a summary report, an insight project about understanding young people drop out and retention, and a case study about the Intern cohort of 2024-25. These documents can be accessed in the Appendices.

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SET FOR SUCCESS

The ever-growing need for Set for Success

The current landscape continues to create a challenging world for children and young people across the UK.

High levels of deprivation



4.5 million (31%) of children are living in poverty in the UK.

Low physical activity levels



Not enough children in the UK are meeting the UK Chief Medical Officer's recommended levels of physical activity (48% in England, 18% in Wales, 72% in Scotland). Children and young people from the least affluent families are the least likely to be active.

Poor school attendance



In England, in 2023/24, the suspension rate was 11.3 per 100 pupils; a 21% increase from the previous year. In Wales, in 2022/23, the rate of fixed term exclusions for 5 days or less increased to 65.4 per 1,000 pupils, the highest value recorded. In Scotland, in 2022/23, the temporary exclusion rate was 16.6 per 1,000 pupils.

Lack of work readiness



Fewer than half (47%) of young people aged 18–24 felt ready for work when they left education, and this figure appeared to be lower among young people not in employment education or training (NEET). 76% of firms trying to recruit are struggling to find people with the right skills.

Poor future prospects



In the UK, an estimated 12.5% of young people aged 16 to 24 were not in education, employment, or training (NEET), which is an indicator that young people are at risk of not achieving their full potential. A quarter of young people (26%) believe they will fail in life; this increases to 38% amongst NEETs and 30% for those from a poorer background.

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Section 2 | Activities and Engagement

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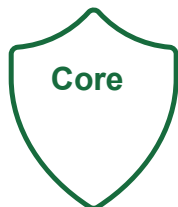
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Programme activities

The following core and optional activities make up the Set for Success programme.



Athlete Mentor Sessions

- Sessions for young people that are delivered by an Athlete Mentor.
- Focused on developing employability skills through a mix of activities and sports.

Teacher Sessions

- Sessions for young people that are led by the teacher.
- Opportunity to reflect on the skills young people are developing, plus time to work on their social action project and complete their workbook.

Social Action Project

- Student-led social action project to apply skills in practice and influence something which is important to them.
- Project focus is chosen by the young people.

Empowerment Event

- At the end of their first year, young people in their local area attend an event to share the skills they have been developing, celebrate achievements and meet local employers to help them understand their opportunities post education.



Award & Qualification

- All young people during the first year of the programme complete a workbook and work towards a Wimbledon Foundation Set for Success Professional Skills Award, accredited by the Leadership Skills Foundation.
- During the second year, all young people can turn this award into a Level 1 Qualification in developing Professional Skills or in Scotland a SCQF Level 4 Qualification in Developing Professional Skills.

The Set for Success Awards

- The Set for Success Awards celebrate young people in Year 1 and Year 2 who have been on a journey over the last 12 months, plus teachers who have contributed significantly to the successful delivery of Set for Success in their schools.

The Wimbledon Inspiration Day

- The Wimbledon Inspiration Day is an event held at the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club (AELTC) for a limited number of schools.
- This event gives attendees the opportunity to be inspired by the home of The Championships and to hear about wider careers in sport to raise their aspirations and awareness of the wide range of opportunities available.

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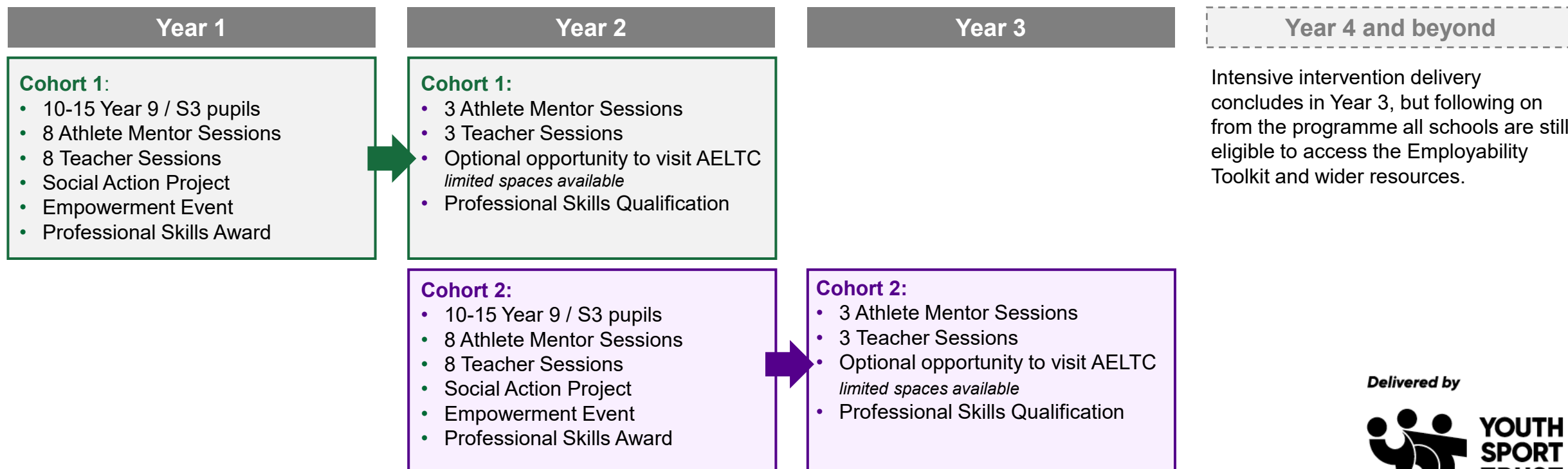
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School journey on Set for Success

Each school will have two cohorts of young people taking part in Set for Success, in a staggered delivery model. Each cohort stays with the programme for two years.



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Recruitment



Schools that are part of Set for Success are located in geographical areas that YST has identified as being in **under-served communities**. Under-served means “people who are not provided with enough help or services or not given services that are of high quality” (Cambridge dictionary). Issues that exist within these communities are not the fault of the community but are systemic failings leading to that community not being served in the same way that other communities are.

By selecting schools in these areas, YST can ensure that they are working with young people from the most under-served communities in the UK and are supporting young people where positive destination opportunities are often most limited.



The Set for Success programme works with cohorts of young people in Year 9 / S3 (aged 13-14) moving into Year 10 / S4 (aged 14-15) throughout the course of the two-year intervention. Every student identified will have been **at risk of not reaching their full potential**.

Examples of criteria used by schools to select young people are as follows:

- Low predicted grades at the end of Key Stage 4 (end of year 11) in Maths and English
- Poor attendance
- High levels of negative behaviour
- Low individual aspiration
- Low confidence
- From low-income families, defined as those young people eligible for pupil premium funding (England), pupil development grant (Wales) or pupil equity funding (Scotland)

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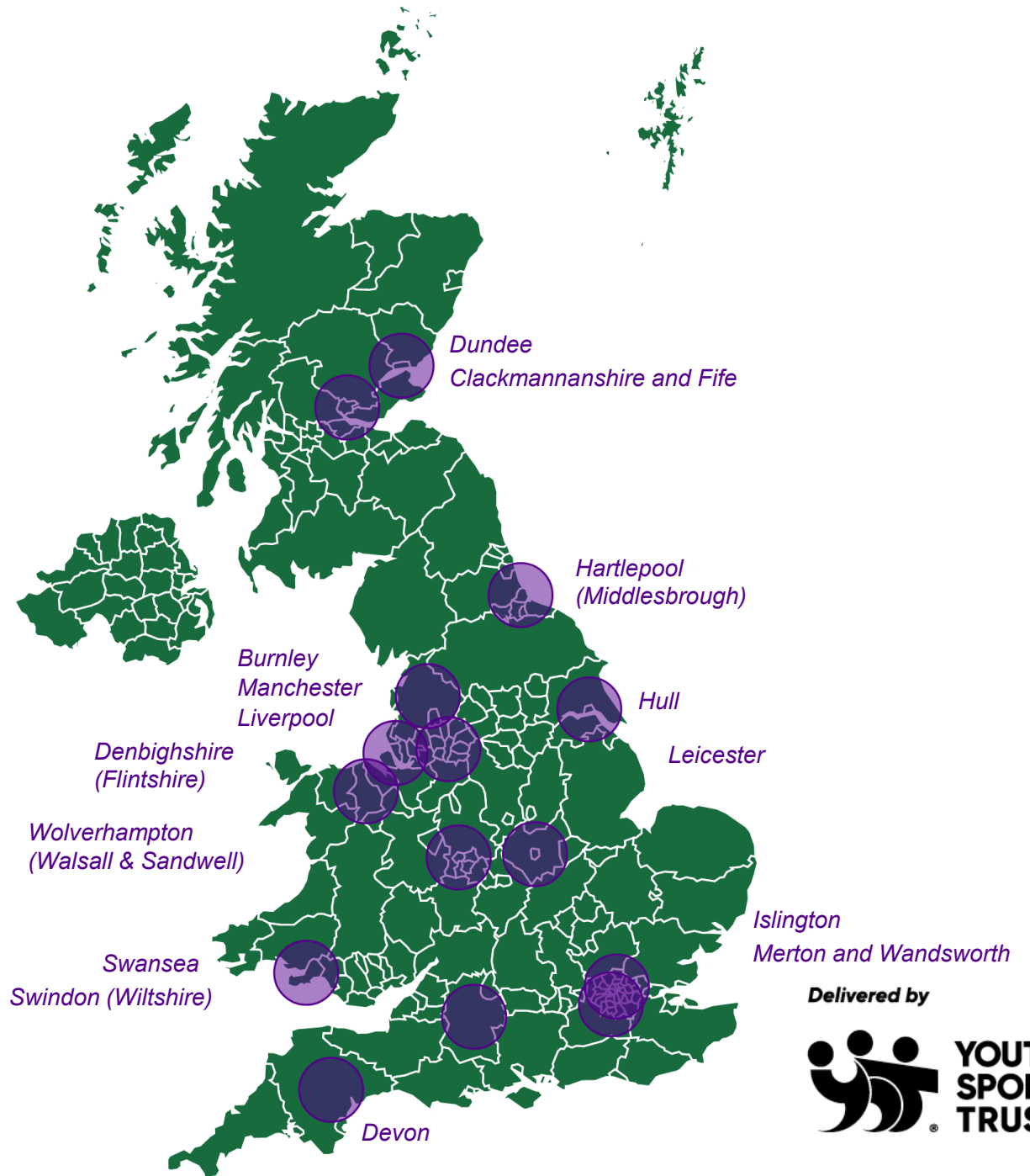
Participating schools

81 schools across 15 locations

have completed Set for Success delivery in the academic year 2024-25 in the areas highlighted in purple on the right-hand side map.

In 2024-25, of the 81 participating schools...

- **41** schools have young people taking part in their **first year** of Set for Success only
- **34** schools have young people taking part in their **first and second year** of Set for Success
- **6** schools have young people taking part in their **second year** of Set for Success only



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Demographics of young people engaged in 2024-25



Young people engaged in Year 1 and Year 2 of Set for Success



65%



35%

52%



from
low-income families

34%



with
special additional needs /
additional support needs or disability



31%

from **ethnically diverse communities**
(including Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic Groups)

Source: Follow Up Survey for Teachers in Year 1 and Year 2 (n=90). Please see Appendices for national averages.

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Engagement and delivery in 2024-25



Young people engaged
in Set for Success

1,274

884 Young people engaged in
Year 1 of Set for Success

*Average number of young
people per school: 12*

390 Young people engaged in
Year 2 of Set for Success

*Average number of young
people per school: 10*



Athlete Mentor sessions
delivered in schools

713

589 Athlete Mentor sessions
delivered for young people in
Year 1 of Set for Success

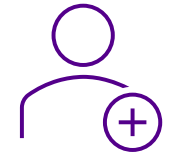
115 Athlete Mentor sessions
delivered for young people in
Year 2 of Set for Success



Schools planned / delivered
social action projects

58

*Note: This is based on data collected from
62 out of 75 schools with a Year 1 cohort.
4 schools have shared that they have not
been able to deliver the social action
project within the academic year and will
be delivering in the new academic year.*



Interns recruited to support
delivery of Set for Success

8

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Events and recognition in 2024-25



Empowerment Events

12

- 59** Schools with a Year 1 cohort attended (79% of all schools with a Year 1 cohort)
- 556** Young people attended (63% of all young people engaged in Year 1)
- 61** Speakers/local employers from different organisations (including Barclays) supported events



The Wimbledon Inspiration Day

2

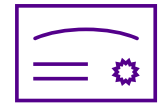
- 11** Schools attended, including schools from all home nations
- 116** Young people attended



The Set for Success Awards

68

- Award nominations received;
 - 54 nominations for the 3 awards for young people
 - 14 teachers nominated for the one teacher award
- 9** Young people shortlisted
- 3** Teachers shortlisted



The Set for Success Professional Skills Award and Qualification

952

- 884** Young people in Year 1 have achieved the Award
- 68** Young people in Year 2 are working towards a Level 1 Qualification in developing Professional Skills or in Scotland a SCQF Level 4 Qualification in Developing Professional Skills

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Section 3 | Outcomes

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Increased employability skills

The majority of young people have reported that Set for Success has increased their employability skills, in particular their teamwork and communication.

How, if at all, has Set for Success changed any of the following?

Teamwork skills



86%

A lot better / A bit better

Communication skills



82%

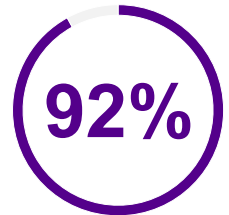
A lot better / A bit better

Leadership skills



73%

A lot better / A bit better



92% of young people have reported improvements in **at least one out of the 3** employability skills

"It has helped me with key skills I will need for my future life."
YOUNG PERSON

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Employability skills

Young people story spotlights

Jason's Story



Jason was facing challenges in school, notably poor behaviour, truancy and a poor attitude to learning. Jason had never done anything like Set for Success before and joined the programme in 2023.

Through Set for Success, Jason **developed a range of skills, including problem solving, communication, leadership and social skills, which he is now applying in his everyday life at school.**

Due to the skills he has developed, his attitude and behaviour have also improved. He is now far more willing to give things a go and he has developed into a very good leader.

"Jason has come on leaps and bounds since the beginning of Set For Success. [...] Jason has taken those skills he has learnt from Set for Success into his everyday school life and sporting activities. All the social skills, problem solving, communication and leadership activities have helped develop Jason's skill set, he should be incredibly proud of the progress he has made. We have seen a massive change in Jason."

TEACHER

Focus group with young people in Wales

As part of a focus group, young people in a school in Wales were asked what they would say to other young people if they were thinking of taking part in Set for Success. In a poster (see on the right-hand side), the young people decided to highlight the **key employability skills that the programme helped them to develop:**

- "Self-management"
- "Keep yourself organised"
- "You can't do everything without teamwork"
- "Communication"
- "Don't be afraid to speak to others"
- "Never give up, failing is not a thing - resilience"
- "Stay confident, don't let anyone get in the way"
- "Keep working your brain. You got this."



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Improved attitudes towards the future

Set for Success has helped young people to know how their skills can help them in the future. Over three-quarters feel better about their future and have more confidence that they will do well in life.

Set for Success has helped me to...

Know more about how my skills can help me in the future



82%

Strongly agree / Agree

Feel better about my future



78%

Strongly agree / Agree

Have more confidence that I will do well in life



76%

Strongly agree / Agree

"Helped me see a future."
YOUNG PERSON

"It has helped me believe in my dreams and to continue doing what I want to do."
YOUNG PERSON

"Helped me make better decisions for my future."
YOUNG PERSON

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Improved engagement and behaviour at school

The majority of teachers reported that Set for Success helped to improve young people's engagement with school and their behaviour. Young people have also noticed a change in how they feel about school.

Did Set for Success have any impact on the following areas for young people?

Engagement with school



80%

Very positive / Positive

Behaviour at school



77%

Very positive / Positive

"Made school feel easier."
YOUNG PERSON

"Set for Success has helped me with self-management as I can control myself better than before I joined Set for Success."
YOUNG PERSON

"The programme has helped me with my behaviour and concentration in lessons."
YOUNG PERSON

"It has made me feel more confident and want to come to school."
YOUNG PERSON

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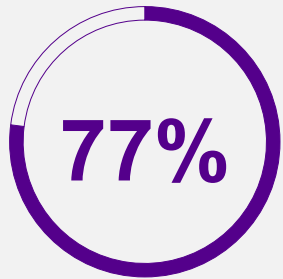
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Improved attendance at school

Over three-quarters of teachers reported that Set for Success increased young people' attendance at school.



of teachers reported that at least one young person at their school had **improved their attendance at school**, as a result of taking part in Set for Success.

Teachers reported that

403



young people improved their attendance, as a result of taking part in Set for Success

It is important to note that not all young people were recruited based on attendance issues, so not all young people needed to improve their attendance.

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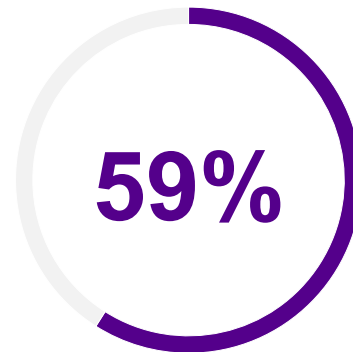


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Improved motivation to learn

Over half of young people felt that Set for Success helped them to feel more motivated about learning in school – showing that the programme's impact also affects wider school life.

How much do you agree with the following statement?



Strongly agree / Agree

"I started being good in lesson and not getting negatives."
YOUNG PERSON

"It has helped me feel more motivated to succeed in school."
YOUNG PERSON

"Made me more confident in myself in lessons to answer questions."
YOUNG PERSON

"It has helped me to listen more in lessons."
YOUNG PERSON

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Engagement, behaviour and attendance at school

Young people story spotlights

Ben's Story



Ben enjoyed playing rugby and was an enthusiastic young person, but he had an immature attitude towards his education. He often focused on trying to please his peers and his friendship group often misbehaved. This led to low level behaviour issues, along with poor punctuality and attendance at school. Ben would also often forget his PE kit so would not participate in PE lessons. Ben had never done anything like Set for Success before.

The skills Ben learnt in his two years of taking part in Set for Success, such as self-belief, self-management, organisation, and communication, have helped him to navigate school life and to make more positive choices. He has also learnt to be more responsible for his own actions and to maximise his potential. Since taking part in Set for Success, Ben's communication with staff across the school has improved, he has taken himself away from negative influences and found a more positive friendship group. He has also started to "channel his energy in the right way". In addition, he is taking his education more seriously, which includes **better attendance at school, including no late marks in 2024/25 and no PE classes missed, along with less behaviour logs.**

Olivia's Story

Olivia loved sport but she had never really enjoyed school. Her dyslexia meant that she found learning a challenge, she lacked confidence in her ability to do her school-work, and she felt that she had a poor relationship with her teachers. In Year 8, Olivia became a school refuser, which meant she avoided going to school. Olivia stayed at home for weeks on end and her attendance rate fell to 75%.

In 2023, Olivia was offered the opportunity to take part in Set for Success. The programme offered three things that would hook Olivia in: the opportunity to help people, to be involved in sport, and to learn outside a classroom. Olivia started to come back to school to be part of the programme. During Year 9, her **attendance rose to 84%, an increase of 9 percentage points compared to the previous year.** Since finishing Set for Success, her attendance has continued to be much better. Through the events and activities delivered as part of Set for Success, Olivia has also developed better relationships with school staff and her peers, which has helped to improve her experience at school.



"Set for Success definitely helped her to go to school more."
PARENT





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Improved wellbeing

Set for Success helped three-quarters of young people to feel happier and more connected to others.

How, if at all, has Set for Success changed any of the following?

Connectedness to other people



75%

A lot better / A bit better

Happiness



75%

A lot better / A bit better

"It's helped my mental health. It's made me feel like I can talk to others, and I don't have to drown in my own thoughts."
YOUNG PERSON

"I feel like I have got closer to my peers."
YOUNG PERSON

"Made me believe in myself more"
YOUNG PERSON

"Helped me make more friends from different schools."
YOUNG PERSON

"I come across confident but deep down I'm not that sociable. It gave me enough courage to smile and talk to more people, meet new people and feel confident enough to speak to them."
YOUNG PERSON

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Improved resilience

Set for Success increased young people's resilience, and their confidence to not give up in life.

How, if at all, has Set for Success changed your resilience?



75%

A lot better / A bit better

"Set for Success has made me improve my confidence to step up and be better when faced with a challenge."

YOUNG PERSON

"It has helped me with my confidence and knowing it's okay to mess up."

YOUNG PERSON

"It has made me more resilient and improved me as a person a lot."

YOUNG PERSON

"Helped me to not give up and keep on going"

YOUNG PERSON



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Wellbeing and character

Young people story spotlights

Kiaan's Story



Kiaan is 14 years old and prior to taking part in Set for Success, he had difficulties managing his emotions, which could lead to angry outbursts at school. He had additional support at school but needed positive adult relationships to help him to navigate social interactions. Outside of school, his vulnerability meant that he was at risk of being involved in gangs.

Set for Success has helped Kiaan to **form positive relationships with all the adults involved in the programme and he has improved his relationships with his peers.** For example, he learnt to support his peers through the Set for Success activities. Set for Success has also helped to give him a more positive attitude. Since taking part in Set for Success, Kiaan's behaviour at school has improved and he has had no outbursts. He is also taking more control of his life and talking positively about his future.

Charlie's Story



Charlie is 14 years old and has a strong interest in football. Prior to Set for Success, he often worked alone and struggled to manage his frustrations, especially when things didn't go his way or if tasks became challenging. Charlie found it hard to trust others and was often reluctant to participate in group activities. Academically, Charlie showed potential but had mixed attitudes towards school. He often felt disconnected from the classroom environment; he lacked motivation and self-belief and was unsure about what his future might hold.

Charlie had never taken part in anything like Set for Success before, but his teacher felt that it could be a good opportunity for him to develop his teamwork skills and confidence through sport.

Set for Success, but particularly the physical activities offered through the programme, helped Charlie to build relationships with his peers and mentors on the programme and he now works confidently in a team and supports others. He has developed resilience when faced with challenges. His frustration has been replaced with focus, and he has learned to channel his energy into something positive. **Charlie now approaches learning with a more open mindset, and he talks about his future with a sense of hope and possibility.**

"The change in Charlie has been incredible...
Charlie's journey is a true example of growth"
TEACHER

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Improved physical literacy

As a result of taking part in Set for Success, three-quarters of young people feel more confident to take part in sport and physical activity.

How, if at all, has Set for Success changed any of the following?

Confidence to take part in sport and physical activity



78%

A lot better / A bit better

Enjoyment of taking part in sport and physical activity



75%

A lot better / A bit better

"It gave me the confidence to engage in sports."
YOUNG PERSON

"Some of the students never took part in PE - now they do."
TEACHER

"Before I started this programme, I was really uncomfortable with doing PE but now I'm feeling really confident."
YOUNG PERSON

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Physical literacy

Young people story spotlights

Joy's Story



Joy loves sport but as a wheelchair user, she has struggled to get involved in sport, especially at school and during PE lessons.

Joy's Set for Success Athlete Mentor also uses a wheelchair. Set for Success has encouraged teachers to deliver more inclusive activities, which has helped Joy to become **more involved in sport and to have a more positive experience at school**. The Athlete Mentor has helped to inspire Joy and has given her more confidence in the future.

Joy would like to become a coach when she leaves school and Set for Success has given her the belief that she can achieve this.

Flo's Story



At the start of Set for Success, Flo was reluctant to take part in the sessions. She was often late to the sessions and was challenging to engage. Her favourite sport was cricket, so cricket was introduced into the Set for Success sessions.

As a result of introducing her favourite sport, Flo came out of her shell, her confidence has increased, and she **no longer felt intimidated doing sport in front of her male peers**. She was also getting **more involved in extra-curricular activities** and was participating in an athletics competition. This would not have happened without her participation in Set for Success.

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Wider outcomes

While the survey asked young people to report on specific outcomes, open-ended questions and focus groups with young people provided more in-depth insight into the wider impact of Set for Success.

The most reported benefits were as follows:

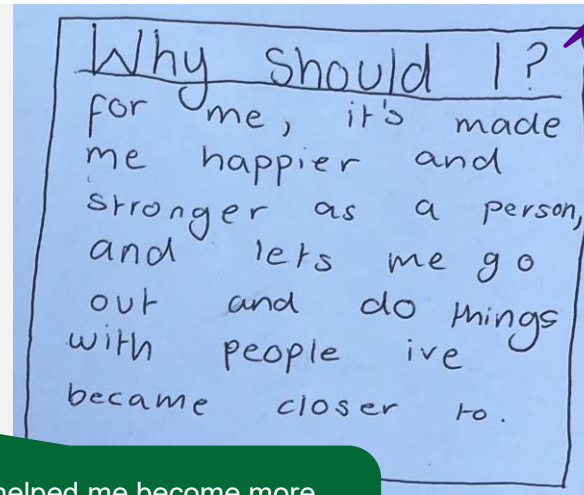
- ✓ Confidence to speak to new people and to speak in front of others
- ✓ Improved confidence and self-belief
- ✓ Improved behaviour and attitudes during lessons in school, e.g. having the confidence to ask for help, feeling more motivated to succeed at school, better concentration and focus, and increased confidence to answer questions
- ✓ Meeting new people and forming new friendships, along with strengthening existing friendships

"I never really believed in myself, if I would do one mistake in rugby I'd lose it. But now I've learnt not to take anything to heart as much."
YOUNG PERSON

"It has made me realise how much I can change."
YOUNG PERSON

"It has made me more passionate."
YOUNG PERSON

It has helped me become more confident in speaking and meeting new people, and also trying new things."
YOUNG PERSON



Why should I?
for me, it's made me happier and stronger as a person, and lets me go out and do things with people ive become closer to.

Young people in a school in England were asked to reflect on their journey on Set for Success as part of a focus group. This is a snippet from a young person who felt more comfortable writing their thoughts down.

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Young people outcomes in Year 1 vs Year 2 delivery

Positive outcomes for young people continued in Year 2 of Set for Success, particularly their employability skills, physical literacy and engagement with, and behaviour at, school.



Employability skills	Year 1	Year 2
Teamwork skills	85%	90%
Communication skills	80%	90%
Leadership skills	70%	83%



Physical literacy	Year 1	Year 2
Confidence to take part in sport and physical activity	76%	82%
Enjoyment of taking part in sport and physical activity	73%	82%



At school	Year 1	Year 2
Engagement with school	75%	93%
Behaviour at school	71%	90%



Attitudes towards the future	Year 1	Year 2
Know more about how my skills can help me in the future	81%	86%
Feel better about my future	78%	80%
Have more confidence that I will do well in life	76%	77%



Wellbeing	Year 1	Year 2
Happiness	75%	75%
Connectedness to others	74%	78%
Resilience	74%	77%

Skills highlighted in yellow show a difference of at least 5 percentage points between Year 1 and Year 2 delivery.

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Source: 'At school' outcomes were reported by teachers – all others were reported by young people



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School story

One headteacher explained how Set for Success delivered a range of benefits to young people at his school.



Increased sense of belonging:

Set for Success has brought a “real unity” in his school and given the young people an extra layer of belonging to the school community.

“When you go in for that first session, they are sitting there as 10 strangers. But when you go back in there three weeks later, a group of young people, who have never been friends before, are a team.”

“It takes away all those barriers [...] it breaks through any hierarchy, and then there’s a real equity within the group. It’s just that walk down the corridor and it’s that nod, that wink, just that they’re part of that team. [...] For me that is really important because you want young people to come to school and feel part of it.”



Increased confidence: The headteacher has reported that the young people taking part in Set for Success have increased their confidence. The headteacher highlighted that when the school opened the opportunity for pupils to be a Junior School Captain, 90% of the Set for Success group applied for the role. He feels confident that this will support them later in life, for example having the confidence to go for a job interview.

“It is empowering our young people to put themselves forward for things.”

“There is a confidence there that their voice is heard [...] They know what they bring to a team and can articulate their skillset.”



Improved behaviour and attendance at school: The young people knew that if they were not meeting expectations in terms of behaviour, they would not be able to be a part of the Set for Success group. As a result, the headteacher has seen an improvement in behaviour. In addition, there was a group of young people who would often miss one day a week at school. These young people have improved their attendance because they wanted to fully participate in Set for Success: *“the four-day week guys are now five-day week guys”*.



Future leadership pathways: The school offers sports leadership programmes for their 16- and 17-year-olds and the headteacher believes that as a result of their experience on Set for Success, the young people taking part in the programme will *“absolutely be part of that”*. They will have a pathway that will allow them to continue to develop their skills by delivering sports activities in their school, along with primary schools in the area.

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Supporting young people at risk of not achieving their full potential

Set for Success has helped teachers feel more competent to support young people at risk of not achieving their full potential. The programme helped to establish a good relationship between the teachers and young people involved.



of teachers reported that Set for Success helped them to **feel more competent in supporting young people** at risk of not achieving their full potential

Teachers have highlighted that Set for Success has **helped them to improve their relationships with young people**. In one school, the head-teacher attended one of the trips that was organised as part of the programme; this helped to strengthen the relationship between him and the young people involved. Some teachers also highlighted that the programme has given them ideas that they could use in other lessons and interventions at school.



"It gave me a positive relationship with the students. I have been able to support them in other areas of school life."

TEACHER

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Section 4 | Programme Views

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SET FOR SUCCESS

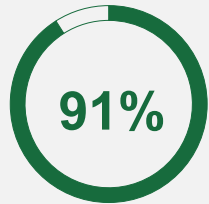
Young people's programme views

Young people rated Set for Success highly – with Year 1 delivery being rated more highly compared to Year 2 delivery. In Year 2, the Athlete Mentor visits remained the highest rated element, closely followed by the qualification.

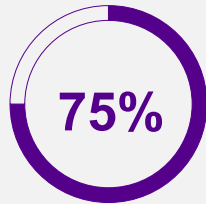
What did you think of...

Very good / Good

your first year of
Set for Success

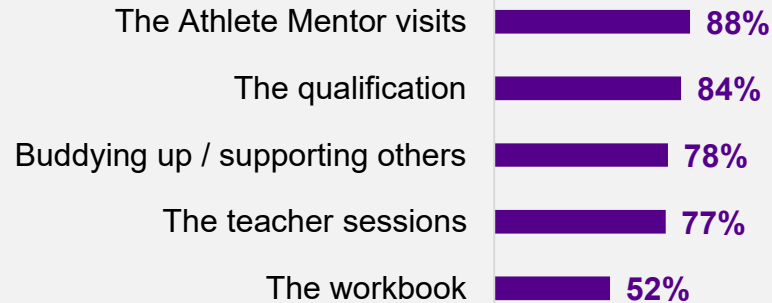


your second year
of Set for Success



How would you rate the following elements in
Year 2 of Set for Success?

Very good / good



The individual elements of Year 1 delivery were not rated in 2024/25 due to robust research findings from previous years: Athlete Mentor visits were consistently rated the highest by young people and teachers, and the workbooks the lowest. These findings stand in line with the Year 2 ratings.



While the qualification is the second most highly rated element for young people, 83% of schools delivering Year 2 of the programme did not return the necessary paperwork for the qualifications to be issued. More work needs to be done to better understand why the uptake of qualifications was so low despite young people rating this element so highly.

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Teachers' programme views

Teachers are likely to recommend Set for Success to other schools. Year 1 and 2 of delivery were rated similarly high.

To other schools, how likely are you to recommend...

on a scale of 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely)

Year 1 of Set for Success



8.2

average score

Year 2 of Set for Success



8.0

average score

The overall average score of how likely teachers are to recommend Set for Success to other schools, combining Year 1 and Year 2 of the programme, would be 8.1.

"As we mark the completion of the first year of our Set for Success journey, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible progress we've made and the positive impact it has had on our students. This initiative has been a significant step forward in supporting student engagement, motivation, and achievement.

In particular, I would like to highlight the outstanding contribution of the Athlete Mentor, whose commitment and passion have been evident in every lesson. Her ability to connect with students, create an inclusive and stimulating learning environment, and maintain high levels of engagement has been truly inspiring. The feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive, and it's clear that the Athlete Mentor's efforts have made a lasting impression and a sense of belonging among our learners. This first year has laid a strong foundation for what we hope will be a long-term, transformative programme."

TEACHER

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Views of the Athlete Mentor sessions

The Athlete Mentor sessions are the highest rated element of Set for Success by young people. Teachers also consistently report that Athlete Mentor visits are key to the success of the programme.

Key benefits of the Athlete Mentor sessions

- ✓ Practical and engaging nature which suits the cohort of young people well
- ✓ Teachers praised the relationship that the Athlete Mentors formed with the young people; they trust each other and can open up in sessions
- ✓ Athlete Mentors sharing their story and the journeys they have been on is seen as inspiring
- ✓ Athlete Mentor visits were key to maintain young people's engagement with the programme

Key considerations

- Athlete Mentors need to be relatable and suit the personalities of the young people in the school to help form a strong relationship
- A small number of young people felt like their engagement in the programme may drop when there are long / irregular breaks between Athlete Mentor sessions
- Fewer Athlete Mentor sessions in Year 2 delivery (3 sessions) may impact young people engagement in the second year of Set for Success. Some teachers emphasised that it was harder to maintain momentum, to sustain a rapport with the Athlete Mentor, and to develop key skills with fewer sessions.

"I understand Louis [Athlete Mentor] a lot more than other people. He gives us better ways to learn with him, not too much writing, it's interactive. Loved Louis. Felt like I could really open up to him about what I struggle with. He pushed my mind and said, 'don't be afraid, just say it!' [...] Louis helped the group, but he helps us individually as well."

YOUNG PERSON

"She [Athlete Mentor] understands them, she really connected with them, and they connected with her."

TEACHER

"The Athlete Mentor visits were a particular strength of the programme, as these were practical and engaging which suited these type of kids."

TEACHER

"The Athlete Mentor has been excellent in engaging with pupils. They have actively wanted to take part in the sessions due to this."

TEACHER

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Views of the social action projects

The social action projects gave young people a sense of ownership and responsibility, whilst giving something back to their school or local community.

Social action project topics

- Delivering **sports activities** for young people at their school, or nearby primary schools, often to support young people's transition from primary to secondary school (e.g. sports day, a swimming gala, an athletics event, a football tournament, a rounders festival, a gym session, and a basketball session)
- Support for **local food banks** and/or **homeless charities**
- Fundraising for **local charities**
- **Litter picking** and cleaning in local areas
- **Other themes** included: drug awareness, social media awareness (including online bullying), mental health and healthy eating, and the renovation of the school long jump pit and its surrounding area.

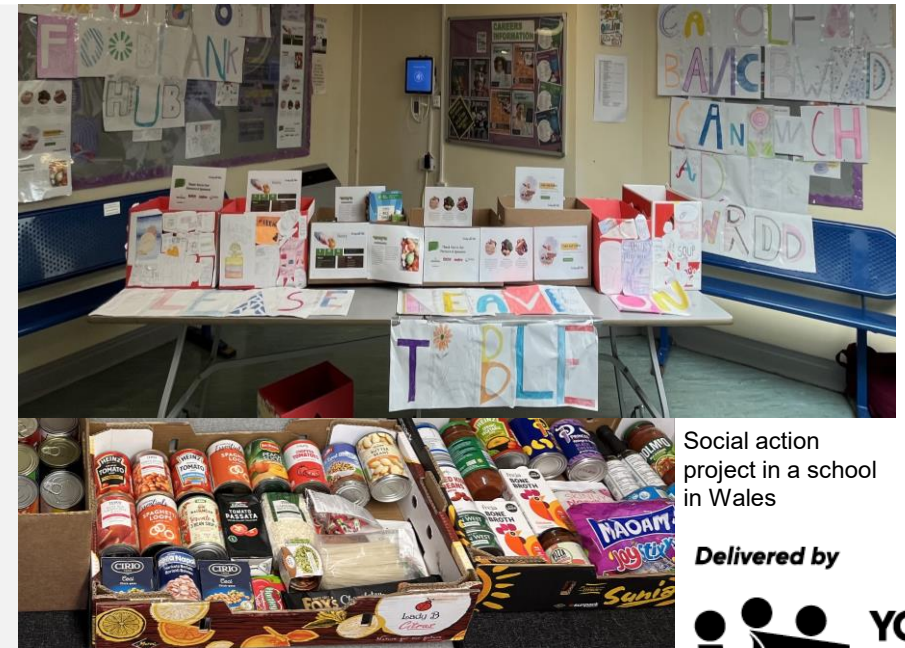
Teachers emphasised that allowing the young people to choose the topics of the social action projects gave them a **sense of ownership and responsibility**.

"The kids get really excited about it. Especially when you let them be a little bit more creative and think of some ideas."

TEACHER

"They worked really hard on it; they talk about it all the time."

TEACHER



Social action project in a school in Wales

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Source: Follow Up Survey for Teachers in Year 1 (n=41), Teacher interview, Photos were taken by the research team at a school in Wales - As part of their social action project, the young people had decorated a stand where they collected items for a local foodbank during lunchtime.



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SET FOR SUCCESS

Views of the buddy role

Young people in Year 2 of Set for Success are encouraged to buddy up and support the Year 1 students in their school. Overall, this element of the programme was rated positively.

Key benefits of the buddying up element

- ✓ An opportunity for young people to work with other pupils that they would not normally have the chance to.
- ✓ The Year 2 cohort shared their experiences and demonstrated the skills they had developed in Year 1 of Set for Success.
- ✓ The Year 2 cohort provided support and encouragement to the Year 1 cohort.
- ✓ The Year 2 cohort further developed their confidence and skills, such as communication, teamwork, resilience and problem-solving.

Key considerations

- A small number of schools struggled to implement this element of the programme due to staffing challenges, along with the academic commitments among the Year 2 cohort.

Esmee's Story



Esmee always enthusiastically participated in all aspects of the Set for Success programme and encouraged her buddy to do the same, thus helping her get the most out of the opportunities offered. Esmee consistently made her buddy feel valued and important. She was empathetic, acknowledged her contributions in group activities, celebrated her achievements (big or small), actively listened, provided practical help with learning or social situations, and was simply a reliable and consistent presence in her life at school.

This meant that **her buddy felt supported, valued, and empowered within the Set for Success programme**. In particular, Esmee's buddy sometimes struggled to control her emotions when she was frustrated or could not find a solution to tasks. Esmee worked with her buddy to support her with strategies and coping mechanisms; this resulted in **a positive change in her behaviour**.

"Students listen and take on board information from other students so much better than from an adult."

TEACHER

"It allowed them to see themselves as mentors and be in a position to help others."

TEACHER

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Views of the workbook and teacher sessions

The workbook helped young people to reflect on the skills they were developing but was challenging for some young people to complete. A small number of teachers would like more guidance to structure their teacher sessions.

Key benefits



- ✓ The workbooks help to give some teachers a structure to their teacher sessions.
- ✓ The workbooks help the young people to reflect on, and discuss, the skills they have developed.
- ✓ One school worked closely with partners in the local community to give the young people a range of additional opportunities during the teacher session, for example access to a basic coaching course, a sports science session that looked at the use of data in football, and a session on what young people needed to do to apply to a local college.

Key considerations

- Some teachers highlighted that young people struggled to complete, and engage with, the workbook. In particular, the amount of writing that was required was a challenge for some. Teachers suggested the workbooks could be made more accessible, they could be condensed to remove some repetition, and they could include more scenarios to help young people relate the skills to future employment.
- Some schools have adapted the use of the workbook to their young people's needs. Teachers have successfully explored alternative ways to log young people's achievements, such as using videos, voice recordings or PowerPoint presentations instead of written evidence.
- A small number of teachers mentioned that they would welcome more guidance on what they should cover in their sessions, along with better resources. Greater sharing of good practice between schools was also mentioned. These points have been taken on board and more support for teachers has been developed for the next academic year.

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Section 5 | Lessons and Conclusions

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Learnings



The Athlete Mentors are key to the success of the programme. The Athlete Mentors are consistently the highest rated element of Set for Success. Teachers praised the relationships that the Athlete Mentors formed with the young people, along with their ability to inspire young people and support their engagement. Young people also spoke highly of their Athlete Mentors. A small number of teachers felt that young people in Year 2 would have benefitted from more Athlete Mentor sessions.



Set for Success plays an important role in giving young people access to new opportunities that they would not normally experience. A key strength of the programme is giving young people access to opportunities that they would not normally have, including trying new sports, meeting athletes, and visiting new places. Building on this, one school highlighted that they worked closely with partners in the local community to give the young people a range of additional opportunities. Set for Success offered the young people the chance to make meaningful memories and raised awareness of opportunities they can have later in life.



The benefits of Set for Success are being sustained beyond their first year of engagement. Young people most commonly reported that Set for Success had helped to improve their skills, particularly their communication and teamwork skills. Combined with an increase in confidence and an improved understanding of how their skills can help them in the future, the programme is helping young people achieve benefits that are likely to be sustained beyond their first year of engagement in the programme. What is more, a higher proportion of young people in Year 2 cited improvements in these areas; this suggests that the programme is helping to sustain, or even amplify, these benefits in the second year of engagement.



Maximising the support networks around young people can support engagement. Some teachers highlighted the importance of young people having a network of support around them, including, for example, parents/carers, Athlete Mentors, and peers in school. Maximising the role of these support networks throughout a young person's journey on Set for Success can help to ensure that they stay committed. Some schools highlighted that they had engaged parents at the start of the year to encourage them to support their child through the programme. Other schools also highlighted how buddies from the Year 2 cohort supported the Year 1 cohort, for example by sharing experiences, and providing support and encouragement.

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Learnings



The workbook remains a challenge for some young people. The workbooks have helped the young people to reflect on the skills they have developed. However, some teachers highlighted that young people struggled to complete, and engage with, the workbook. In particular, the amount of writing that was required was a challenge for some young people. Teachers suggested the workbooks could be made more accessible, they could be condensed to remove some repetition, and they could include more scenarios to help young people relate the skills to future employment. In some schools, they have explored alternative ways to log young people's achievements.



Greater guidance could support teachers in their role. Some teachers would value greater guidance to support them in their role on the programme, including the teacher sessions. Greater sharing of good practice between schools could support this. This learning has been taken on board and more support for teachers has been developed for the next academic year. More work also needs to be done to better understand why many teachers did not return the necessary paperwork for the qualification, despite young people rating this element so highly.



Recruitment of young people needs to be carefully considered. In a minority of cases, participants struggled to engage in the programme. If a young person is regularly suspended or at risk of being excluded, or their behaviour would pose a risk to the others in the group, they may not be suitable. There is a need to strike an appropriate balance between supporting young people who are most in need whilst maximising the potential impact of the programme. The opportunity to develop new friendships has been an important benefit of the programme but the social dynamics of different friendship groups mixing during the Set for Success sessions can present some challenges. Teachers should carefully consider the group dynamics at the recruitment stage and/or consider ways in which positive group dynamics can be fostered to ensure that everyone enjoys taking part and feels comfortable during the sessions. Some schools found that a trip out of school helped to build relationships within the group (e.g. a trip to an indoor ski centre or litter picking at a local beach).



Schools need to carefully consider the timetabling of Set for Success activities. Young people taking part in Set for Success need to be able to commit the required time to the programme. Wherever possible, activities should be planned well in advance and teachers should assess any potential timetabling issues for young people at the outset. Key aspects to consider are if a young person repeatedly misses the same lesson, if they are falling behind in any specific lessons, or if sessions are delivered too close to exam periods. Some schools also cited timetable challenges associated with staff availability, plus the availability of space / facilities.



The role of the Interns could be more clearly articulated to key stakeholders. The Interns have experienced a wide range of benefits in their role, however, there appears to be a lack of clarity on their role within the programme among some stakeholders. Raising the profile of the Interns, their role, and how they can support the programme could help to maximise their contribution.

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Conclusions

The current landscape continues to create a challenging world for children and young people across the UK and **highlights the need for a programme like Set for Success** that supports young people from under-served communities. **In 2024/25, 1,274 young people from 81 schools, who were at risk of not achieving their full potential, were engaged in Set for Success across the UK.**

The evaluation of Set for Success has found **extensive and wide-ranging benefits for the young people taking part**. Young people most commonly reported that Set for Success had helped to improve their employability skills, particularly their communication and teamwork. Combined with an increase in confidence and an improved understanding of how their skills can help them in the future, the programme is **helping young people achieve benefits that are likely to be sustained beyond their first year of engagement** in the programme. What is more, a higher proportion of young people in Year 2 cited improvements in these areas, which suggests that the programme is helping to sustain, or even amplify, these benefits in the second year of engagement. The programme is also delivering benefits associated with improved wellbeing, improved relationships, and an increased sense of belonging at school. In turn, these are contributing to improvements in behaviour at school, along with improved attendance at school and engagement in lessons.

The **Athlete Mentors are key to the success of the programme**; In 2024/25, they delivered 713 sessions in schools and continue to be the most highly rated element of the programme, by both teachers and young people. The relationships that the Athlete Mentors form with the young people, along with their ability to inspire and support their engagement, are notable strengths. Another key strength of the programme is **giving young people access to opportunities** that they would not normally have.

There is a continued need to **carefully consider the recruitment of young people**; there is a need to strike an appropriate balance between supporting young people who are most in need whilst also maximising the potential impact of the programme. Notwithstanding this, the programme has a **high retention rate**. Careful consideration of timetabling programme activities, along with effectively utilising young people's support networks can support young people's engagement in Set for Success. The **workbooks continue to be the lowest rated element of the programme**. Greater support for teachers, including an understanding of any challenges in submitting the paperwork for the qualification, would also be beneficial. Positively, the programme team are continually looking to refine and improve these aspects.

In 2024/25, Set for Success was effective in engaging young people from under-served communities across the UK. The programme has successfully delivered against its aims and outcomes and made a notable difference to the lives of over 1,200 young people, who were at risk of not achieving their potential.

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Section 6 | Appendices

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SET FOR SUCCESS

The ever-growing need for Set for Success

Reference list

High levels of deprivation:

- [Child Poverty Action Group \(2025\), Poverty: facts and figures, 30 July 2025.](#)

Low physical activity levels:

- [Sport England \(2024\) Active Lives Children and Young People Survey - academic year 2023-24 report.](#)
- [Public Health Wales \(2024\) Secondary School Children's Health and Wellbeing Dashboard 2023](#)
- [The Scottish Government \(2023\) The Scottish Health Survey 2023 – Volume 1: main report.](#)

Poor school outcomes:

- [Department for Education \(2025\) Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England for the academic year 2023/24.](#)
- [Welsh Government \(2024\) Permanent and fixed term exclusions from schools: September 2022 to August 2023.](#)
- [Scottish Government \(2025\) School exclusion statistics.](#)

Lack of work readiness:

- [Norman J, Poku-Amanfo E and Morjaria A \(2025\) Towards universal opportunity for young people, IPPR and Impetus.](#)
- [British Chambers of Commerce \(2024\) Quarterly Recruitment Outlook: Fewer Firms Recruiting.](#)

Poor future prospects:

- [ONS \(2025\) Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK: May 2025.](#)
- [The King's Trust \(2024\) The King's Trust NatWest Youth Index 2024.](#)

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Demographics of young people engaged

National averages

England

- Eligibility for Pupil Premium Funding: **26.7%**
- Special educational needs: **19.6%**
- Ethnically diverse communities: **38%**

Source: [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#), [Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Wales

- Eligibility for Pupil Development Grant: **22.7%**
- Special educational needs: **9.5%**
- Ethnically diverse communities: **15.4%**

Source: [Schools' census results: January 2025 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

Scotland

- Eligibility for Pupil Equity Funding: Data unavailable
- Additional support needs: **40.5%**
- Ethnically diverse communities: **19.5%**

Source: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-for-schools-in-scotland-2024/pages/classes-and-pupils/>

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Additional research reports

To access the additional research reports, please click on the below links.

Evaluation Summary



[Evaluation summary for the 2024-25 academic year: Infographic](#)

Insight project



[Understanding young people drop out and retention: Insight for Set for Success](#)

Intern case study



[Case Study: Intern Cohort 2024-25](#)

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Young people demographics – full data breakdown

Year 1 and Year 2 Survey	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Sample (Year 1)	Sample (Year 2)	Sample (Total)
Male	65%	66%	65%	729	290	1,019
Female	35%	34%	35%	729	290	1,019
Other	0%	0%	0%	729	290	1,019
From low-income families	51%	54%	52%	729	290	1,019
With special additional needs / additional support needs or disability	34%	33%	34%	729	290	1,019
From ethnically diverse communities (including Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic Groups)	28%	38%	31%	686	281	967

Source: Follow Up Survey for Year 1 and Year 2 Students. Questions that were asked: Of the total number of young people participating, how many are...

- Female / Male / Other (including those who prefer to self-describe)
- from an Asian or Asian British background or race, from a Black, Black British, Caribbean or African background or race, a Mixed or multiple ethnic group or race, a White background or race (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British), an other White background or race, an other ethnic group or race
- With special educational / additional learning needs or disability (SEND / ALN)
- Eligible for pupil premium funding / pupil development grant / pupil equity funding

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SET FOR SUCCESS

Young people outcomes – full data breakdown

	A lot better			A bit better			No change			A bit worse			A lot worse			Sample size		
Year 1 and Year 2 Survey	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total
My happiness	23%	25%	25%	52%	50%	50%	24%	23%	23%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	527	146	673
How connected I feel to other people	21%	36%	24%	54%	42%	51%	24%	20%	23%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	512	145	657
My confidence to take part in sport and physical activity	36%	46%	38%	40%	36%	39%	23%	16%	21%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	518	147	665
My enjoyment of taking part in sport and physical activity	40%	42%	40%	33%	40%	35%	26%	16%	24%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	527	146	674
My resilience	24%	35%	26%	50%	42%	48%	25%	22%	25%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	525	147	672
My leadership skills	29%	46%	33%	41%	38%	40%	29%	14%	26%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	524	145	669
My communication skills	36%	48%	39%	44%	41%	43%	20%	10%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	525	145	670
My teamwork skills	44%	51%	45%	41%	40%	41%	14%	9%	13%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	528	146	674

Source: Follow Up Survey for Year 1 and Year 2 Students. Question that was asked: How, if at all, has Set for Success changed the following? Totals may not add up to the sum of the percentages for the individual delivery years due to rounding.





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SET FOR SUCCESS

Young people outcomes – full data breakdown

	Strongly agree			Agree			Neither agree nor disagree			Disagree			Strongly disagree			Sample size		
Year 1 and Year 2 Survey	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Feel more motivated about learning in school	15%	23%	17%	44%	38%	43%	36%	33%	35%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	524	146	670
Feel better about my future	29%	31%	30%	48%	48%	48%	20%	17%	20%	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	522	147	669
Have more confidence that I will do well in life	27%	37%	29%	48%	41%	47%	22%	19%	21%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	522	145	667
Know more about how my skills can help me in the future	30%	37%	32%	51%	49%	51%	17%	12%	16%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	522	146	668

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Source: Follow Up Survey for Year 1 and Year 2 Students. Question that was asked: How much do you agree, if at all, with the following statements? Set for Success has helped me to... Totals may not add up to the sum of the percentages for the individual delivery years due to rounding.



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Young people views – full data breakdown

Year 1 Survey only	Very good	Good	Ok	Poor	Very poor	Sample size
What did you think of Set for Success?	54%	37%	8%	0%	0%	522

Year 2 Survey only	Very good	Good	Ok	Poor	Very poor	Sample size
What did you think of your second year of taking part in Set for Success?	32%	43%	24%	1%	1%	146

Year 2 Survey only	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	Don't know	Sample size
The Athlete Mentor visits	53%	35%	10%	0%	1%	1%	141
The teacher sessions	32%	45%	18%	3%	2%	0%	141
The qualification	45%	39%	11%	1%	1%	4%	141
Buddying up / supporting others	43%	35%	16%	1%	2%	4%	141
The workbook	20%	33%	35%	7%	4%	2%	141

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Source: Follow Up Survey for Year 1 and Year 2 Students. Question that was asked: How would you rate the following?



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SET FOR SUCCESS

Teacher reported outcomes – full data breakdown

	Very positive			Positive			No change			Negative			Very negative			Don't know			Sample size		
Year 1 and Year 2 Survey	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Engagement with school	16%	24%	18%	59%	69%	62%	22%	3%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%	3%	63	29	92
Behaviour at school	13%	24%	16%	59%	66%	61%	25%	7%	20%	2%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%	2%	63	29	92

Year 1 Survey only	Helped a lot	Helped a little	Didn't help	Sample size
How much has Set for Success helped you to feel more competent in supporting young people at risk of not achieving their full potential?	50%	45%	5%	62

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Source: Follow Up Survey for Teachers in Year 1 and Year 2. Question that was asked: Did Set for Success have any impact on the following areas for young people? Totals may not add up to the sum of the percentages for the individual delivery years due to rounding.



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SET FOR SUCCESS

Teacher views – full data breakdown

Year 1 Survey only	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Sample size
How likely are you to recommend Year 1 of Set for Success to other schools? From 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely)	35%	13%	27%	6%	3%	10%	2%	2%	0%	2%	0%	62

Year 2 Survey only	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Sample size
How likely are you to recommend Year 2 of Set for Success to other schools? From 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely)	31%	17%	24%	7%	3%	10%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	29

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Source: Follow Up Survey for Teachers. Question that was asked: How would you rate the following elements of Set for Success?



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SPORT
TRUST**