

SHINE★

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL IN EVERY CHILD

shinetrust.org.uk

2025
**IMPACT
REPORT**

Map data ©2025 Google.
Deprivation heatmap
created with Maply using
data from the English Index
of Multiple Deprivation.

SHINE schools

The stars represent the locations of schools involved in SHINE projects, which are overlaid onto a heatmap highlighting areas of greatest deprivation.

SHINE exists to tackle the barriers that hold back disadvantaged children and young people.

Children from low-income households have untapped potential, but they face numerous obstacles that hinder their ability to keep up academically with their peers.

This disparity, known as the attainment gap – or disadvantage gap – emerges in the early years and is measurable by age 5. If left unaddressed, it continues to widen throughout a child's education.

By the time they take their GCSEs and A-levels, this gap often results in many young people underachieving and leaving education without crucial qualifications in English, maths and science, severely restricting their future access to opportunities.



SHINE



Our Vision

There are no barriers to learning for children from low-income backgrounds in the North of England.

Our Mission

We develop and fund innovative and sustainable programmes that work to improve educational outcomes for children living in areas of deprivation in the North of England.



WHAT WE DO

Every child deserves the chance to shape their own future. Yet across the North of England, too many young people are still held back by economic disadvantage that limits their educational opportunities.

At SHINE, we're determined to change that. Our mission is to remove the barriers that stand in the way of potential and to help every child thrive.

We invest in **innovative, evidence-driven** projects that tackle the real challenges some children face, both inside and outside the classroom. By supporting new ideas that work, we're helping to close the disadvantage gap and open up brighter futures.

Together with teachers, schools, and families, we're building a fairer education system – one where every child has the opportunity to succeed, no matter where they start in life.

A lot of what we're going to do together won't just change lives, it will save lives too.

LIAM CLARKE

Principal, Thornhill Academy,
Sunderland

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

Children helped

Target: 61,688

Actual: **100,636**

Schools supported

Target: 558

Actual: **741**

Teachers backed

Target: 3,005

Actual: **5,220**

40

Projects
funded

26k

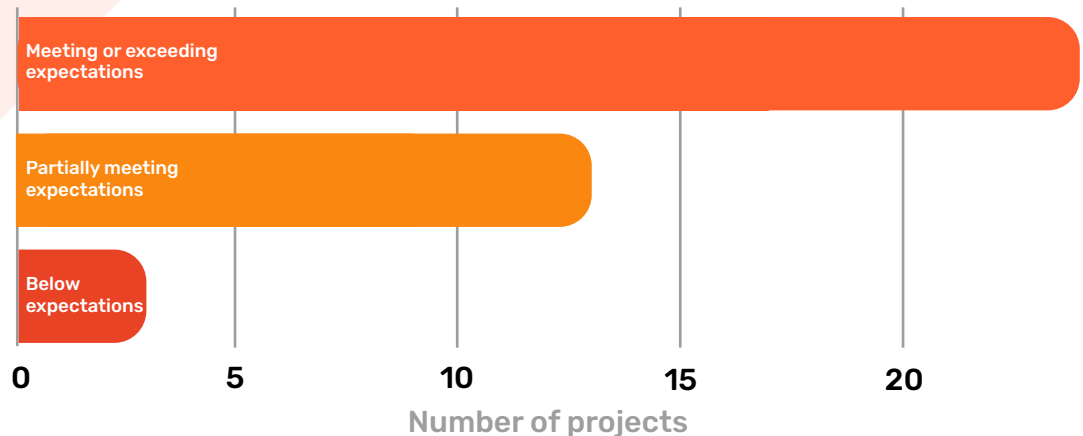
Parents
supported

Average
spend per child
£56

*Median of annual spend
across all projects*

Project performance

SHINE projects set clear, measurable goals to ensure accountability and monitor progress. This year, despite the continuing significant challenges within education, **93%** of SHINE-supported programmes achieved or exceeded their targets.



£1,726,254

INVESTED INTO SHINE PROJECTS

FLUENCY FOR ALL



Children in receipt of free school meals using Fluency for All improved their standard reading age scores by

+8.5
points

Compared to **+0.9** for a control group of children who did not access the programme.

STORY TIME MATHS

The **317** children taking part during 2024-25 had an average increase of

27%

in number and numerical pattern attainment

and **24%** in communication and language attainment.

CHATTA

70%

of reception-age children eligible for free school meals who used Chatta

met age-related expectations in writing

compared with the national average of **55%** for this group.

ARE YOU REALLY READING?

After three years using the programme,

93%

of pupils were reading at or above expected levels, compared to just **64%** at the start.

THE STORY PROJECT

Teachers using the programme report a

52.7
percentage-point

overall improvement in pupils' **ability to empathise**

NURTURING YOUNG MATHEMATICIANS



During the summer of 2025,

87%

of the 3-4-year-olds involved in the programme were assessed as being "on track to be school ready".

VOCABULOUS

This year, **9,500** students were actively using Vocabulous, completing a total of

450k

vocabulary quizzes – an increase of **almost 50%** on last year.

Are You Really Reading?

Only 62% of disadvantaged children aged 6–11 meet the expected standard for reading, compared to 80% of their better-off peers.

Are You Really Reading? (AYRR) is a highly cost-effective programme that uses 5 innovative techniques, incorporating hashtags and emojis, to help children truly understand what they are reading.

The project has grown fast and is already improving the reading skills of thousands of children across the North West. It is also helping teachers rediscover a love of teaching reading.

An independent study funded by **SHINE** this year showed consistent directional improved in children's attainment.

It is wonderful and so rewarding to know that AYRR is having a real impact in classrooms for staff and their pupils.

MADDY BARNES
Project lead

The longer pupils took part in the programme, the better they performed.

The study followed 1,588 pupils from 38 schools, grouped by how long they took part in the programme.

Evaluators stated: "These findings confirm consistent, directional improvement in student attainment."

AYRR is now being used in **156 primary schools** and **13 secondaries** across the North West, with a focus on Bolton, Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire.




So far, more than **46,100 children** have benefitted from the programme, and 2,164 staff have been trained to use it.

Looking ahead, future plans include developing an AYRR website, partnering with a university to advance research on the programme's impact, and expanding the reach of the programme beyond the North West region.

[Click here](#) to read more.

[Click here](#) to watch a film about Are You Really Reading?

Impact highlights

-  **Pupils who spent 3 years in the programme showed the most improvement in reading: the number of pupils reading below expected levels dropped from 36% to just 7%.**
-  **Those reading above expected levels increased from 16% to 39%.**
-  **Results showed statistically significant changes in all cohorts.**

Fluency for All

Reading fluency is more than just a skill – it is the gateway to accessing the curriculum, building confidence, and thriving in school. Yet too many pupils, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, enter secondary school still decoding words rather than understanding them.

The **SHINE**-funded **Fluency For All (FFA)** project, developed by Louise Quinn and the North East Learning Trust, is an evidence-based peer-tutoring programme designed to build reading confidence and fluency. Children read aloud for 20 minutes, twice a week, supported by trained tutors – older students who receive tailored instruction to guide their peers.

Participants read from bespoke anthologies of non-fiction texts, created specifically for the programme by Louise and her colleagues.

The initiative focuses on pupils who struggle with reading or lack confidence, including many from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In her end-of-year report into the effectiveness of **FFA**, Louise states: “The intervention group consistently outperformed the control group” when it came to reading improvements, adding, “This occurred across all subgroups, with the greatest improvements seen in girls (+7.6 SAS) and Pupil Premium pupils (+8.5 SAS).”

The improvements for pupils using **FFA** were described as “highly statistically significant – not



due to chance and therefore likely to be as an outcome of the **FFA** intervention”.

The programme’s impact on disadvantaged pupils is particularly encouraging.

Initial assessments showed that Pupil Premium pupils had less access to books at home and engaged in less reading overall. Yet with targeted practice through the **FFA** programme, these same pupils made the largest strides.

Impact highlights

- ★ **Pupils using FFA improved their Standard Age Scores (SAS) by +6.31 points, compared to just +1.1 points for a control group of similar children who did not access the programme.**
- ★ **Pupil Premium pupils’ reading scores improved by +8.5 points, compared with +0.9 in the control group. Of all the pupils in the study, those from disadvantaged backgrounds made the most progress**
- ★ **Words Correct Per Minute increased by +14.8 for FFA pupils, versus +11.9 for the control group. Notably, many of the pupils were ‘speed readers’ who needed to slow down their reading to an appropriate rate.**
- ★ **FFA pupils more than doubled the gains of their peers (+3.3 marks on average vs. 1.6), when assessed for reading expression, automaticity, rhythm, and smoothness.**

[Click to read more about the impact of Fluency for All](#)

SHINE BUILDING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Chatta

An independent evaluation has found that Chatta significantly enhances pupils' communication and literacy skills, particularly their confidence in speaking and self-expression.

Data also suggests the programme has a particularly positive impact on the literacy skills of children eligible for free school meals and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Chatta is an innovative teaching approach that uses interactive audio-visual storyboards to break learning into manageable chunks. It develops vocabulary, oral sentence composition, and communication skills, while boosting writing confidence, fluency, and stamina.

The evaluation of **Chatta** involved 223 children and 31 teachers from 7 schools participating in a **SHINE**-funded pilot of the programme.

The evaluation found that "across the dataset, teachers reported significant improvements in pupils' social and emotional skills, most notably their confidence in speaking and self-expression".





[Click here](#) to read more about Chatta's impact.

Children have gained so much confidence in their ability to speak in front of others and formulate sentences.

TEACHER

[Click here](#) to watch a film about Chatta.

Impact highlights

-  **70% of reception-age children eligible for free school meals who used Chatta met age-related expectations in writing, compared with the national average of 55% for this group.**
-  **87% of teachers agreed that Chatta had made them a better teacher.**
-  **Almost a third of surveyed teachers reported a reduction in workload since using Chatta. 46% of early years teachers said their workload had decreased.**
-  **Teachers using Chatta reported wellbeing 8.9% higher than the national average for primary teachers.**

The Story Project

An independent evaluation of **The Story Project** has found that the programme has a positive impact on pupil wellbeing outcomes across multiple measures. Focus group evidence also indicated that pupils had developed a greater love for reading through the programme.

The groundbreaking literacy and wellbeing programme is being used by primary schools across Bradford. The 3-year project helps children to develop stronger communication skills and emotional literacy through the power of storytelling. It provides teachers with practical, accessible tools to enhance pupil wellbeing and grow emotional resilience. The initiative has already reached **over 16,000 pupils** across **25 Bradford schools** and aims to expand into **50 schools** by the end of summer 2026.

On Bradford teacher said: "It's not an exaggeration to say that this project has ignited a love of learning and opened doors that some of our pupils never thought possible. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity and would wholeheartedly recommend this initiative to other schools. The ripple effect of storytelling has been profound – not just on academic performance, but on the confidence, resilience, and aspirations of our students."

[Click here](#) to watch a film about The Story Project.

The impact on behaviour has been incredible. Children are not only more aware of their emotions but are actively using strategies to manage them.

STORY PROJECT TEACHER
Hollingwood Primary, Bradford

Impact highlights

★ The project significantly improved pupils' emotional vocabulary: teachers rating pupils' wellbeing and emotional vocabulary as "Good" or "Excellent" rose from 28% to 86% – a 58 percentage point increase.

★ Pupils' confidence in managing wellbeing rose, with 73% knowing who to talk to or how to seek help when worried (up 12 percentage points from 61%).

★ Teachers rating pupils' empathy as "Good" or "Excellent" rose from 22% to 72% after using The Story Project – a 53 percentage point increase.

★ Teachers' understanding of how to close wellbeing knowledge gaps rose from 45% to 87% after using The Story Project.

★ Teachers' confidence in leading sensitive discussions rose by 51 points, with more feeling equipped to handle challenging wellbeing topics.

Story Time Maths

A new approach to teaching maths in the early years “has made a huge difference”, according to teachers, with school inspectors also praising its impact.

Story Time Maths (STM) has been developed by Helen Clarke, Deputy Headteacher at Dane Bank Primary School in Tameside.

At the end of the second year of the **SHINE**-funded project, it is demonstrating evidence of impact for children, families and practitioners.

Teachers have reported noticeable changes in children’s confidence and reasoning skills. One Reception teacher reflected: “Teaching maths more ‘in the moment’ and using the learning trajectories has made a huge difference. It feels like I can teach maths as part of my continuous provision, and it is enhancing the children’s attainment in the specific areas.”

Of those taking part in training, **94%** reported increased confidence in teaching early mathematics, and **91%** had already applied strategies from the training in their classrooms.

The Story Time Maths approach is giving children a rich understanding of maths and providing them with a solid foundation in the early years.

OFSTED INSPECTION

[Click here to watch a film about Story Time Maths.](#)

Impact Highlights

- ★ **There was an average increase of 27% in number and numerical pattern attainment and 24% in communication and language attainment compared to baseline.**
- ★ **Training has been delivered to 19 teaching assistants, while there has been engagement with senior leadership teams in 12 schools to support effective implementation and begin planning for sustainability into 2025–26.**
- ★ **In one school, 94% of children who had experienced Story Time Maths in Nursery went on to achieve the Early Learning Goals in number and numerical patterns at the end of Reception, compared with 79% of their peers – a 19% higher achievement rate for children who had taken part in STM.**

SHINE STRENGTHENING SCIENCE SKILLS

Revise Chemistry with Mr B

Jon Blackbourne's online practical chemistry lessons are proving hugely popular with young people.

His TikTok videos have been **viewed more than 6 million times**, while he has received **more than a quarter of a million views** on YouTube. Regular live TikTok broadcasts are receiving between 2,500 and 5,500 viewers.

Jon's videos are aimed at students who would otherwise not use traditional forms of revision, such as class notes or a revision guide. They are also designed to support disadvantaged students from whom extra, private tuition is unaffordable.

"The data I have gathered so far suggests the improved levels of engagement that I set out to achieve are also translating into raised achievement levels," Jon says.

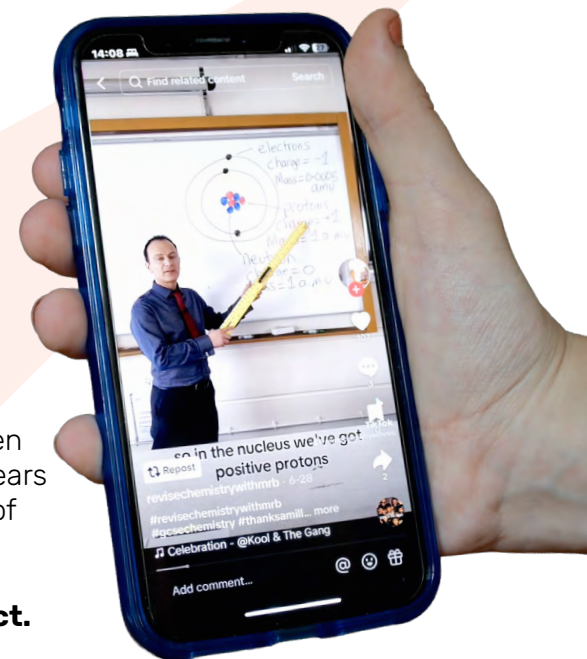
It is not only students, but also other teachers who benefit. Jon has created 195 YouTube videos covering individual concepts, full topics, and exam questions, all organised into

a coherent teaching sequence that functions as a scheme of work.

These resources support teachers who may be teaching chemistry outside their specialism – an increasing need given the shortage of science teachers – and provide new teachers with a wider range of classroom activities.

"I see this as an indirect way of reaching out to even more disadvantaged pupils by passing on my 27 years of pedagogical knowledge to the next generation of teachers," Jon said.

[Click here](#) to watch a video about Mr B's project.



**Using these videos
helped me go from getting
grade 6 and 7s to grade 9s.**

CHEMISTRY STUDENT



SUPPORTING TEACHERS

As well as directly funding teachers' work, **SHINE** helps forge meaningful connections between them, enabling shared learning and amplifying impact.

Our project leads gain enormous value from being part of wide, supportive networks – sharing good practice, challenges, and insights with others on the same journey.

In addition to the workshops and one-to-one coaching offered to **SHINE** teachers, this year we launched a peer network for grantees who are looking to grow their projects. These regular meetings provide a trusted space where project leads can connect, discuss challenges, and support one another in overcoming obstacles.

We know that the challenges in education are complex, and no single solution can transform outcomes on its own. But there is enormous power in a community of teachers driving change together.



SHINE teachers networking in York, above.
A workshop for teachers, below and right.

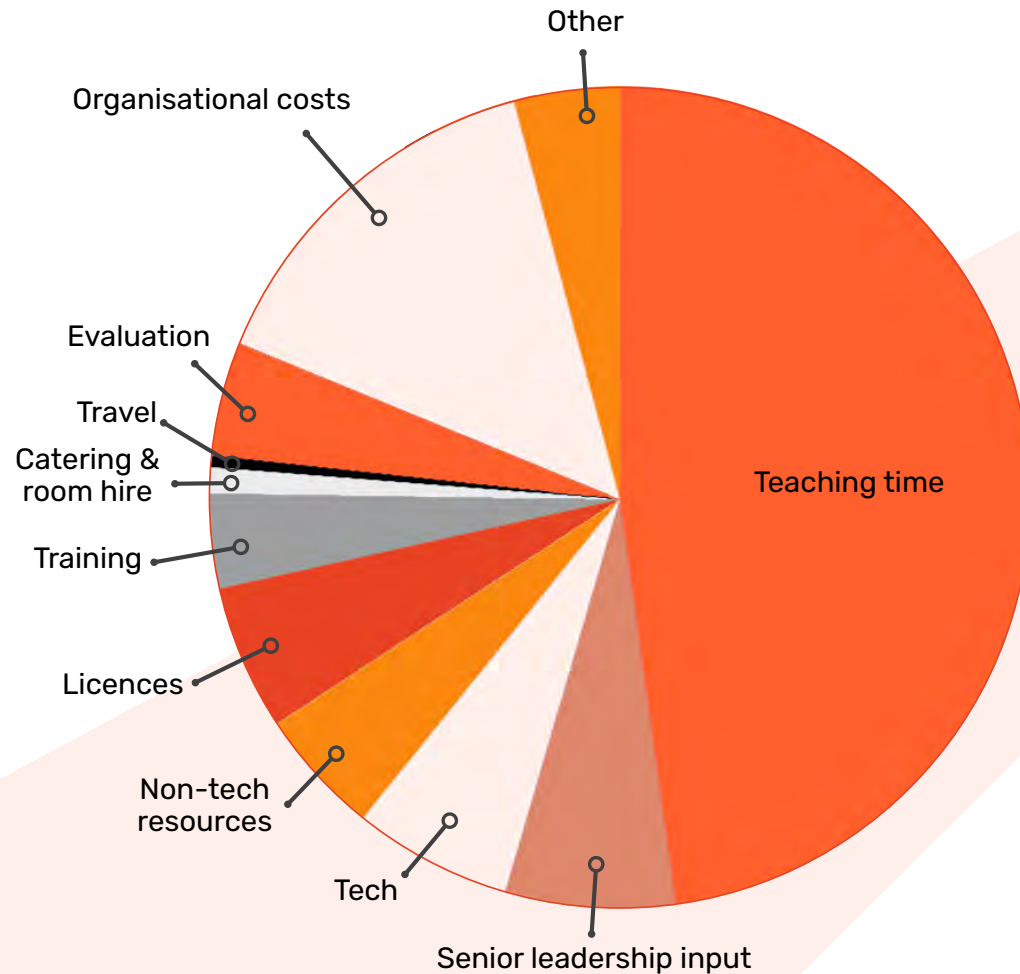
The support from SHINE is phenomenal; it is a significant factor in the success of the project. I really appreciate how SHINE has connected me with other grantees too.

SHINE TEACHER

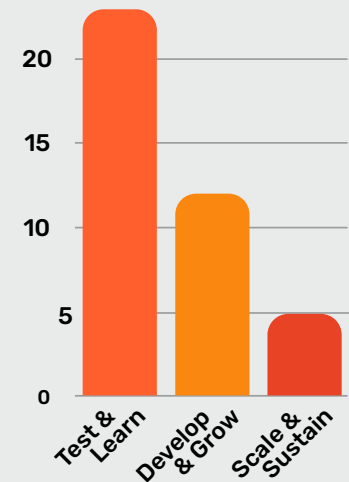


Breakdown of grants spend

This is what SHINE funding paid for:



Project stage



SHINE categorises projects into three phases of development:

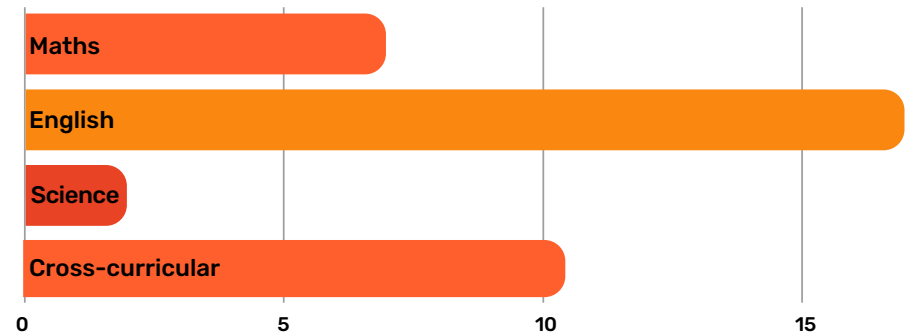
Test & Learn – SHINE helps to test the idea, initially on a small scale

Develop & Grow – The project demonstrates an impact on children and SHINE helps it expand

Scale & Sustain – The project increases in scale and no longer needs funding from SHINE

Project subject focus

SHINE prioritises projects that focus on the core subjects of English, maths and science.



A message from our Chair



This year marked a significant milestone for SHINE as we celebrated the 25th anniversary of our first projects; 25 years of supporting teachers, schools, and communities to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged children. It has been a year of both reflection and renewal, as we build on our strong foundations and look ahead to the future with confidence and purpose.

We are proud this year to launch SHINE Sunderland and Hartlepool Reads, two important new initiatives that demonstrate our continued commitment to tackling educational inequality in the communities where the need is greatest. These programmes embody SHINE's mission to work collaboratively with local partners to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential.

It has also been heartening to witness the impressive ongoing impact of our established programmes across the North of England, as highlighted throughout this report. These achievements stand as a testament to the dedication of the teachers we support, the strength of our partnerships, and the generosity of our donors. On behalf of the Board, I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who shares our vision and helps make this work possible.

While there is much to celebrate, we know that significant challenges remain. We remain steadfast in our ambition to remove barriers to learning and unlock the potential of children across the North. Together, we will continue to drive change and build a more equitable future for every child, regardless of background or circumstance.

Raksha Pattni, Chair, SHINE

