

Team Around the School evaluation summary report

June 2025

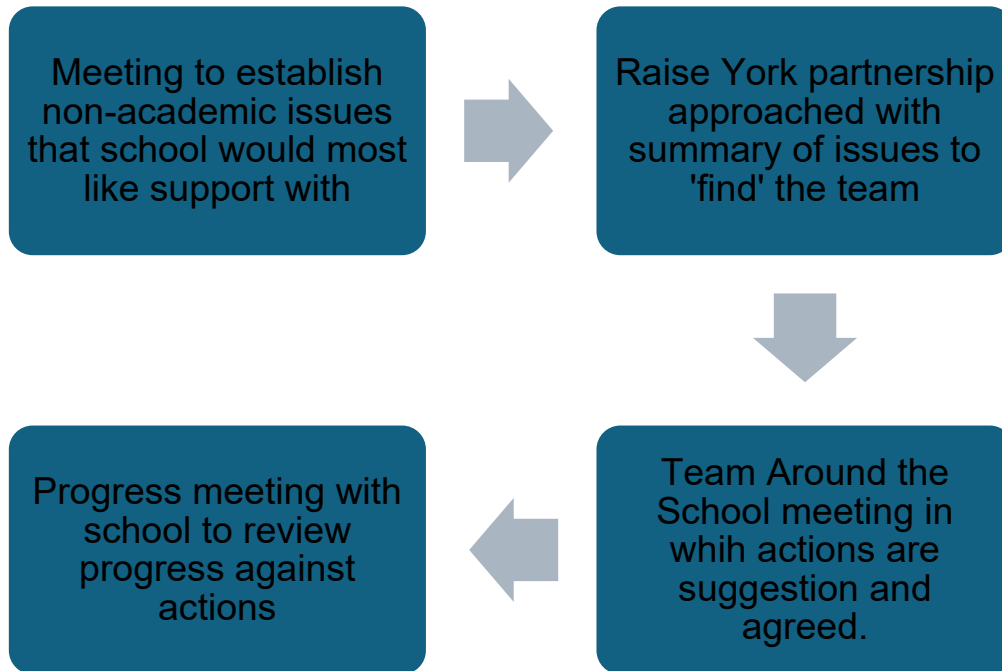
Introduction

The Team Around the School process has been a pilot project, funded and developed by the Raise York partnership. It was initially tested with Fishergate Primary School in academic year 2023 – 24 and scaled to a further seven schools during the academic year 2024 – 25, led by Tina Clarke, Headteacher of Fishergate Primary School. The approach aims to support the aims of Raise York by deliberately bringing together different parts of the partnership to work together in the best interests of children, young people and families.

Executive summary

- The Team Around the School process is being **positively received by all those involved in it**. 100% of those who responded believe that the approach should continue to be scaled.
- Following a Team Around the School process, **school leaders report feeling significantly better supported and empowered** to support families
- Following a Team Around the School process, non-school based partners report feeling **better connected to school and to each other**
- The approach is having the desired impact of **developing relationships and raising awareness** between and amongst teams (including but not limited to schools) who are working with children and families.
- There **are several themes of challenges that are common** across many of the schools involved. These are: parenting and home routines; parent-school relationships; high levels of SEND and SEMH needs; early intervention and school readiness; mental health, domestic violence and safeguarding.
- Respondents from schools and non-school based teams gave multiple examples of ways in which **families were benefiting as a result** of the Team Around the School process
- **Schools not involved in the process so far are showing an eagerness to become involved** and have taken proactive steps to find out how they could become involved.
- A very small number of non-school based respondents raised concerns about capacity to continue to engage with the model as it currently stands and suggested **a locality approach may be more feasible**. School leaders were also positive about the approach being run through a locality model, dependent on some key factors being retained.

Team Around the School process



Schools involved 2024 – 25



Data sources

This report draws upon three main data sources:

- Information and insights gathered by leadership through the implementation of the Team Around the School process
- A survey of non school based services involved in the Team Around the School approach (n = 29)
- A focus group discussion with headteachers and senior leaders from the schools involved (n = 6)

Summary of most frequent themes across schools

Theme	Number of schools who highlighted as a challenge
Support for parents with home routines	7
Lack of external agency/support	7
Parent-school relationships	6
Attendance and punctuality	6
High SEND and SEMH needs	6
Mental health	6
Domestic violence	6
School readiness	5
Anti social behaviour and community safety	4
English as an additional language and different cultural norms	3
Childcare/wraparound shortages	2

Developing connections and growing awareness

Non school based services perspectives

Before the Team Around the School process, 53% of non-school based teams reported that they felt 'not at all connected' on average (range 37% - 73%) to the individual schools involved, with a further 15% feeling 'not very connected'. After the process all of these respondents felt more connected to the schools.

All non school based respondents were able to articulate a range of benefits to them and their work from engaging with the Team Around the School process. These were particularly about growing awareness about their own services and also being more aware of other services.

My awareness of all the different agencies/teams/services we have around York has greatly increased. Some professionals I didn't even know existed.

The team gained knowledge of other services in York that we can work together to support families

There was also a theme amongst non school based services about how the Team Around the School process has given them better insights into local communities which means they plan more tailored and responsive support in the future

Helps me connect with people to get [the service] more widely known. It's helped me with my planning so I can put things on in the local area to support the needs of that area more closely

A better understanding of the needs and issues the schools are experiencing and a wider understanding of the support [the service] can provide

School leaders perspectives

Headteachers and senior leaders also reported a consensus view that the approach has helped develop connections. One headteacher said *'It felt quite overwhelming, I looked around my office [at the TAS meeting] and there were 18 people there, most of whom I had never met before'* One leader who has been working in a safeguarding and pastoral role said *'I've worked in this area for the last 8 years and I was not aware of 50% of the offers that were available'*. Another headteacher highlighted *'these agencies had not been in our school before'*. The net result has been that headteachers have felt significantly more supported as a result of the process.

This also has its limitations as the headteachers reflected that there can be 'too much support at once' with, for example 18 new connections at the same time being difficult to juggle. Headteachers were keen to impress their appreciation of all the relationships they made with partner services but a small number were repeatedly mentioned as being particularly important for many of the schools. These were: The Supporting Families team; Local Area Coordinators; the Healthy Child Service; Family Learning and the PCSOs.

Leadership and the approach

Leadership

There was a consensus in responses across both school based and non school based respondents that the leadership of the approach has been a very positive aspect. Schools leaders were particularly positive about the way in which the leader of the TAS approach had gone about doing so. *'It felt unfamiliar to really have to lay bare our school's challenges'* said one headteacher. However this was made easy by the leadership approach taken and school leaders found it easy to be open and honest about things they were grappling with. School leaders reported the following traits to be important for leadership of the TAS process:

- Humility and a good listener
- Quickly puts people at ease to be able to be honest
- Good communicator

- Clarity around timelines and prompt and efficient follow ups
- Making people feel valued; working with not done to
- Compassionate and understanding of pressures of school leadership
- Maintaining relationships through appropriate check ins

School leaders felt future leadership for the process should continue to come from the school sector but did not necessarily need to be a headteacher. The qualities outlined above were the most important.

The approach

Schools particularly valued that the approach was tailored and personalised to their unique context. Non school based partners also saw the benefit of that

One non-school based respondent observed: *Schools are often the first point of contact for families, and as a result, issues may surface there before anywhere else. School staff may feel a strong sense of responsibility to support both the child and their parents directly. This can lead to the perception that schools are the go-to place for all kinds of help. However, schools may not always have the time, resources, or expertise to effectively address every issue.*

Only 5% of non-school based respondents reported any difficulty in engaging with the process with most 73% reporting that it was ‘somewhat easy’ or ‘easy’. There was a theme amongst non-school based respondents that future iterations of the approach could take a locality, rather than individual school, approach in order to respond to capacity concerns that may arise.

Some non-school based respondents reported a sense of ‘incompleteness’ of the process from their perspective:

- Some reported that they did not know what actions had been taken after the Team Around the School meeting and that they would value having a better understanding of the impact beyond those actions that they were involved with
- A small number of respondents reported that the offers they had made to support schools had not been taken up despite agreed actions. This was also recognised by headteachers who reported that in some instances they had ‘*too much extra support at once*’ which invariably meant they had to prioritise and were not able to respond to every possible opportunity.

Examples of actions from the process

- **Workshops and Assemblies** (e.g. Operation Tornado, Soundproof Box drama group) led by police and youth justice, fostering **positive attitudes toward community safety**.
- Shared information packs, signposting, and leaflets available in schools, helping **increase awareness of support services** among families

- A wide range of **parenting programmes and workshops** (e.g. Time Out courses, Mind of Their Own, Handling Anger) delivered by Family Matters and Family Learning.
- **Early Start programmes and school readiness sessions** offered both in schools and local community venues (e.g. Marjorie Court, Hob Moor).
- Healthy Child Service delivering **monthly clinics, tooth brushing/fluoride varnish programmes**, and emotional wellbeing support.
- Schools acting as **hubs of support** – hosting courses, coffee mornings, information sessions, and being points of access for leaflets and referrals.
- **Social prescribers and Health Trainers** linking families to mental health, smoking cessation, and physical health services.
- Supporting Families and FIS enhancing understanding of Early Help and reducing stigma via **parent-friendly materials** and simplified referral support.
- **Information sharing agreements** helping schools understand which agencies are involved with families and what support is being received.
- Supporting Families offering **case-by-case advice**, EH assessment support
- IDAS will be delivering training to school teams and a clear gap in support has been taken back to their commissioning body.
- Collaboration with **local councillors and planners** ensuring schools are included in community decisions (e.g. Germany Beck development).
- Use of **ward funding** to deliver community programmes within schools during holidays and out of hours.
- Focus on **emotional regulation** and **trauma-informed approaches** (e.g. Healing Classrooms training) to support pupils and staff.

Future options and scaling Team Around the...

Every respondent, both school and non-school based reported that they felt that this process should continue to be scaled.

Using a locality model rather than individual schools

As outlined above, several non-school based respondents suggested a locality model may be a more feasible long term options

When asked about this idea, school leaders were also supportive and could see the alignment with the concurrent discussions about reinstating school clusters. School leaders talked about the potential for greater collaboration amongst schools by taking such an approach and the value of

bringing people together. However they also raised some matters that would require careful consideration:

- The danger that the process loses its ‘bespokeness’ and becomes too generic to be useful
- That communities served by schools would need to be similar enough in order to identify common challenges
- Whether people would feel empowered to be as open and honest about their challenges as they have been in this pilot
- Inequity and/or imbalance in resource allocation or priority setting

They also reiterated the importance of good leadership, with the traits described above as being an important component that should not be overlooked. It was important to school leaders that this leadership came from within the school sector but was not necessarily a role exclusively for headteachers.

Working with the secondary sector and non-school based early years settings

Non school based respondents were asked whether they would be willing and able to engage with a similar process with secondary schools and the non school based early years settings. The vast majority of respondents said ‘yes’ and described the potential benefits they could see from doing so, which aligned with the benefits seen through this pilot.

The small numbers of respondents who said ‘no’ were for two reasons:

- The service they were from did not work with one or the other age group e.g. they focused exclusively on children aged 0 – 5 and therefore wouldn’t see a place within a secondary version
- They expressed concerns about the volume of early years settings having significant capacity issues (and therefore the model would need to look different)

Conclusions and recommendations

The Team Around the School approach is a successful approach which enacts the ambitions of Raise York to develop more collaborative working amongst those working with children and families. **The approach should be continued.**

There is a shared positivity about the approach amongst those involved and the appetite to be involved has continued to grow throughout this pilot period. **The findings from this evaluation and the future plans for ‘Team Around the...’ should be shared widely.**

There are a number of recurring common themes across many schools and it is likely these exist in schools not involved in the pilot. **The Raise York partnership should consider what action could be taken to support these common themes more broadly.**

There is a shared desire to see the approach be scaled to other age groups however the current model of individual schools is unlikely to be sustainable. There may be opportunities through emerging locality models. **The Raise York partnership should consider how best to sustain momentum of the approach and plan carefully for a sustainable model. This should pay attention to the key ingredients of success from this pilot.**

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