What does good quality research look like and does it matter?
Sarah Maughan, Director of Research
Changing Education Context

- Standardisation and increasing use of assessment (and other data)
- High stakes accountability framework, with high autonomy (where earned)
- Gradual reduction in testing, and removal of levels, focus of remaining testing on core academic skills
- Increased focus on use of research evidence and ‘what works’
Shift in Research Culture

From
• ‘How do we make this intervention as good as it can be?’

To
• ‘Is this intervention the right one?’
Good research ...

Provides evidence that:

- There will be an improvement in **academic** achievement
- Allows different interventions to be compared, i.e. the results can be put on the same scale
- Demonstrates how an intervention should be implemented with fidelity
- Shows how much an intervention will cost to implement
‘Gold standard’ Research

- Randomised control trials
  - Traditionally used in medical research
  - Being used much more widely in education

- Pupil premium toolkit

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit
Other ‘Good’ Research

- NFER Evaluation Policy
  
  - https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/99943/99943.pdf

- Include a wide research methods repertoire
  
  - Stage of development, e.g. start with a small scale trial
  
  - Nature of implementation, e.g. for national roll out an RCT is not possible

  - Proxy measures, e.g. attitude data
What works is not enough

• In what sense(s) does it ‘work’?
• What works for whom, under what circumstances?
• How does it work?
• To what extent have the aims been achieved?
• Should we invest resource in this intervention?
What Influences Teacher Behaviour?

- Research evidence?
- National Centre for Social Research Bristol
- Recruitment, training and continuing professional development
- Leadership, peer influence and school policies
- Inspection and guidance
Some do

- Gaining a greater profile through Royal College of Teaching
- Professionalisation of teaching
- More useful and accessible research evidence

And

- Still what is appropriate in their context
- What is recommended by people they respect
- What ties in with their ethos and values
Conclusion

• Good research evidence should be available
• ...but it is not enough

• Need a professional workforce
• Who can select appropriate evidence
• And use it effectively in their context
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