



**EDUCATION
MEDIA CENTRE**

**Celebrating
the first year
of making evidence
make news**

*“Without data, you are
just another person with
an opinion.”*

Andreas Schleicher
Director for Education & Skills,
OECD and patron of the
Education Media Centre





The EMC at a glance

What is the EMC?

The Education Media Centre (EMC) is the UK's first independent source of media-friendly, quality-assured research evidence on education. Through the media, we want the public to read, hear, see and understand more from education research experts and their work.

What does the EMC do?

The Education Media Centre connects the media with research to make evidence make news. It is successful because it understands journalists' needs and knows how to meet them.

Is the EMC effective?

During its first 12 months, evidence supplied by the Education Media Centre has been reported by almost every national news organisation in the UK, and some international ones too.

How is the EMC run?

The EMC's Board of Trustees is its main governing body. It sets strategic aims and makes sure funds are spent wisely and with probity. Each of our trustees has made outstanding achievements in their respective fields of education, journalism and research. Two staff members run the EMC day to day.



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Improving understanding of research

We make it easy for the media to reach research expertise on the education stories they are reporting – particularly by enabling academics to engage quickly and effectively with journalists.

We help academics avoid jargon, focus on the essential points and generally be media friendly.

Driven by the public interest

We cover all aspects of education and training – from early years to further education, skills and higher education.

Journalists report on what interests the public – so as education issues hit the news, we are searching for the evidence.



Free, independent and impartial

We are an independent charity, impartial in all our dealings and with no political, ideological or research agenda or affiliation to any other organisation.

Our services are free to the media, researchers and the public – and are funded entirely by donation.

Our first year

Inspired by the successful and longstanding Science Media Centre, the Education Media Centre was originally nurtured by the University of York. We launched in December 2013 and in our first year have had great success making evidence make news.

“Thanks to the EMC for making it easier for researchers to have access to the quality press!”

Professor Kathy Sylva
Fellow of Jesus College
Department of Education
University of Oxford

“Our thanks again for collaborating with us on the Monday press conference which got the ‘story’ to the serious press in a form they could use in spite of the inherent complexity.”

Professor Madeleine Atkins
Chief Executive
HEFCE



What does the EMC do?

The Education Media Centre connects the media with research to make evidence make news. It is successful because it understands journalists' needs and knows how to meet them.

89

breaking news reactions from evidence experts

8

live briefings to the media with

154

attendees

43

press releases

6

education research blog posts and

3

What's the evidence on...? articles published on our website

Breaking news reactions

This is our core service: commissioning timely, short and media-friendly quotations from authoritative, academic experts on the evidence behind education issues in the news.

We email these quotations directly to national education correspondents, programme-makers and newsdesks – who can use them in their reports.

We specialise in anticipating the news agenda, identifying the appropriate experts and, with them, editing their contributions to suit the media's fast pace and need for clear language.

For example

When stories about the impact of free school meals or university tuition fees were in the news, the EMC found research experts to comment on the evidence and then released the quotations to the media.

Online and social media

Our main aim is to get education research findings reported in the national news – but, after journalists have had the 'first bite', all our breaking news reactions are published on our website www.educationmediacentre.org and tweeted @EMCUK. We have over 800 followers, many active in education policy, research or teaching.

Live briefings

These are press conferences – shaped, organised and hosted by us – at which journalists hear from a panel of experts about news-making education research.

Several leading education organisations have chosen us to help them communicate their evidence to the media, including:

- OECD
- Wellcome Trust
- Education Endowment Foundation
- Higher Education Funding Council for England

Our live briefings have attracted extensive, national media attention.

For example

A live briefing on neuroscience included research plans on whether teenage brains and sleep patterns mean the school day should start later. It was covered widely by the media.

What's the evidence on ... ?

We are building a series of short, easy-to-read articles, written by academic and research experts, summarising the evidence behind an education issue that is making the news.

The articles are published on our website www.educationmediacentre.org – as are our blogs on education research.

For example

What's the evidence on class size? and What's the evidence on teaching assistants? challenge many common assumptions and intuitions about class size and teaching assistants.

Is the EMC effective?

During its first 12 months, evidence supplied by the Education Media Centre has been reported by almost every national news organisation in the UK, and some international ones too.

100+

quotations from our evidence in the national and international media

Our briefings are covered widely

We launched in December 2013 by hosting the OECD's UK publication of the PISA results. We followed with a 'myth busting' expert briefing from geneticists and an education researcher on the role of genetics and its research in education.

The OECD, Wellcome Trust, Education Endowment Foundation and Higher Education Funding Council for England have all worked with us to deliver live briefings to the media from our panel of education research experts. The briefings were covered widely in the national news and each organisation is working with us again.

"We're obviously delighted with the coverage and, like you, really pleased that it has gone beyond the projects into the scientific method and its application in education."

Dr Hilary Leever
Head of Education and Learning
Wellcome Trust

"Thanks. Great story. Thanks very much for supplying it. I hope you do more of this kind of thing."

Graeme Paton
Education Editor
The Telegraph

We are quoted In Parliament

The Shadow Education Minister, Kevin Brennan, asked us for evidence on the impact of teaching assistants ahead of a Parliamentary debate in March 2014. As part of our online *What's the evidence on ... ?* series, we had commissioned an article on teaching assistants and the Shadow Minister drew on this in his speech to Parliament, as reported in Hansard:

"In the Education Media Centre's recent article ... the following point was made: ... 'On the basis of the available evidence, it can be argued schools must fundamentally rethink how they use TAs and ensure they add value.' The conclusion that I and most honourable members here have drawn from the evidence is that we should ... get on to a debate about what works."

Our evidence sets the news agenda

In May 2014 we generated wide national media coverage, including on CBBC's *Newsround*, on the impact of a calculator ban in primary maths education and national tests.

Our press release *Calculator ban is a 'backwards step'* set out research findings from leading maths education researchers, suggesting there is no evidence the ban would raise maths standards in primary schools.

How is the EMC run ?

The EMC's Board of Trustees is its main governing body. It sets strategic aims and makes sure funds are spent wisely and with probity. Each of our trustees has made outstanding achievements in their respective fields of education, journalism and research. Two staff members run the EMC day to day.

Our funding

The Education Media Centre is a charity funded entirely by donation.

Our authority among the public, journalists and researchers derives from our independence, which is closely tied to our funding model – a variety of donors. We have no paying clients that might influence our work and taint our essential impartiality.

To underline our independence, we aim to attract donations from as diverse a range of organisations as possible. Private companies, research funding bodies, charitable trusts and foundations, unions and universities are among our sponsors.

We are extremely grateful to our funders – their motivation is a shared vision about the importance of using evidence as a way to improve education. They have no influence over the EMC and expect no favours in return for their support.

Funders in 2014

- Association of School and College Leaders
- Cambridge Assessment
- City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development
- Communications Management
- Durham University
- Economic and Social Research Council
- Edge Foundation
- Edge Hill University
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Greg Dyke
- J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust
- Learning and Skills Improvement Service
- Million+
- National Science Learning Centre / Myscience
- National Union of Teachers
- Osiris Educational
- Queen's University, Belfast
- University of Bedfordshire
- University of Lancaster



Our advisors and experts

We are served by a panel of research advisors, each experienced in a field of education. They help us identify leading experts in the evidence behind education topics in the news.

A list of advisors is on our website, www.educationmediacentre.org

Our staff and trustees

The EMC has two members of staff. Our small but effective team means we punch well above our weight, are very efficient and deliver a unique and high quality public service that is excellent value for money.

The EMC's Board of Trustees is our main governing body. It sets the charity's strategic aims and makes sure funds are spent wisely and with probity. Each of our trustees has outstanding achievements in their respective fields of education, journalism and research.

A list of trustees is on our website, www.educationmediacentre.org



Our patrons

Since its earliest stages the EMC has been supported by highly regarded Patrons.

Patrons in 2014

- Andrew Adonis
Peer and Director of the Institute for Government
- John Dunford
Chair, Whole Education and former General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders
- Greg Dyke
Chancellor, University of York and former Director-General of the BBC
- James Fothergill
Head of Education and Skills, CBI
- Estelle Morris
Peer and Chair of the Institute for Effective Education Strategy Board
- David Puttnam
Peer and Chancellor of the Open University
- Nick Pearce
Director, Institute for Public Policy Research
- Graham Stuart MP
Chair, Commons Education Select Committee
- Andreas Schleicher
Director for Education & Skills, OECD
- Gillian Shephard
Peer
- Phil Willis
Peer and former Chair of the Science and Technology Select Committee

"You are doing a great job with all this, thank you so much. I was just saying to a research colleague how easy it is working with you and really does limit the hassle factor that I have normally encountered with media issues."

Professor Anna Vignoles
Faculty of Education
Jesus College
University of Cambridge

"Glad to see things going so well and that the EMC is playing the sort of useful role we hoped for!"

Jan Hodges OBE
CEO
Edge Foundation



Contact the EMC

If you are interested in improving the understanding and use of evidence in education and would like to support the Education Media Centre, do contact us.

info@educationmediacentre.org

www.educationmediacentre.org

[twitter.com/@EMCUK](https://twitter.com/EMCUK)

