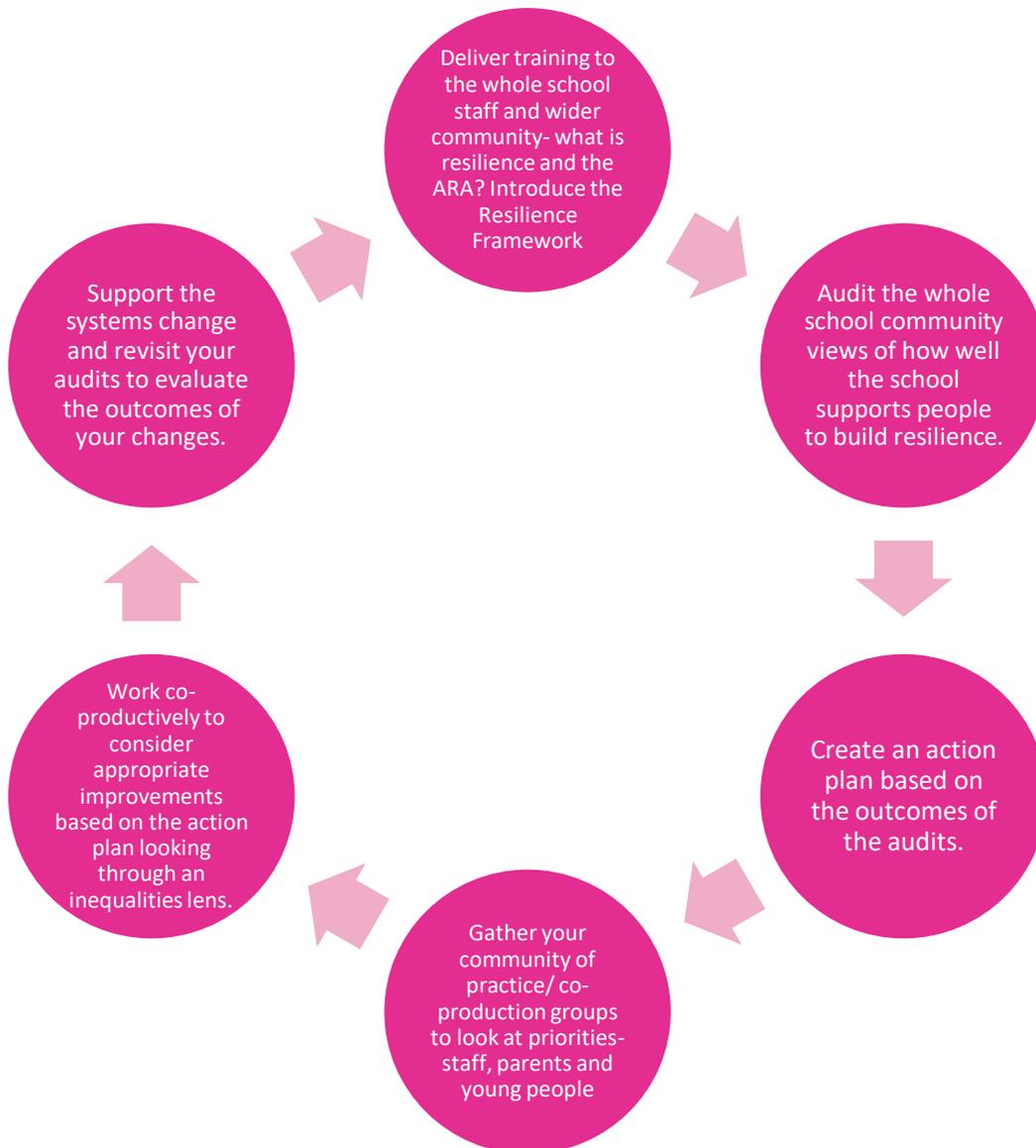


## **HeadStart Blackpool - Academic Resilience Approach**

[HeadStart Blackpool](#) adopt a whole school and college-based approach to improving the resilience of children and young people. The [Academic Resilience Approach](#) is based on the work of Professor Angie Hart and Lisa Williams from the [BoingBoing](#) Community and the University of Brighton, and promotes equal opportunities for success in school for all pupils. Key elements of the Academic Resilience model include:

- Students achieving good educational outcomes despite adversity
- Strategic planning and detailed practice that involves the whole school community
- Helping disadvantaged young people to increase their academic attainment and improve their behaviour ([BoingBoing, 2017](#))

The Academic Resilience Approach recognises the complexity of a school system; how the culture and values of a school, its leadership, and the way that staff communicate, influence pupils' capacity for resilience ([University of Brighton](#)). Schools and colleges are supported to build and embed a resilient culture through training in the use of the Resilience Framework, which helps schools and their pupils to co-create their own ideas and strategies to promoting and sustaining a resilient environment for everyone within it. The Academic Resilience Approach promotes the co-production of systems change in schools by supporting them along six steps, shown on the next page.



Through the development of pupil resilience committees that work alongside Senior Leadership Teams, schools have co-produced a range of ideas, projects, clubs and schemes that promote resilience in Blackpool's schools. These include:

- Innovation funding bids, which have helped schools set up systems to help with basics for their pupils, such as food, clothing and transport.
- Creating quiet spaces to provide pupils with a place to retreat from school life when needed
- Providing equal access to activities, hobbies and sports for disadvantaged students
- Mapping out hopes and aspirations with pupils and helping them develop the life skills needed to make them a reality
- Embedding resilience into the curriculum and providing staff, pupils and parents to learn about resilience

All school staff are offered training in the Academic Resilience Approach, irrespective of their roles. HeadStart Blackpool partnered with BoingBoing and parents, carers and young people to co-deliver training, attend co-production meetings and create resources which promote academic resilience across Blackpool's schools.

***'I gained insight into systems change regarding the whole school as well as the individuals'*** – Pastoral staff training attendee

Training comprises of bespoke sessions delivered either online or face-to-face to schools and other organisations working with children and young people in Blackpool. The Academic Resilience Approach training sessions in schools are delivered by the HeadStart Blackpool Schools' Team, which includes a young sessional worker who became employed by the programme following her engagement who has been employed following her engagement with the programme as a young person. The programme introduces the Academic Resilience Approach and has trained all new trainee teachers in Blackpool.

### **Co-production**

Co-production is central to the Academic Resilience Approach. All participating schools have a Resilience Committee to complete co-production activities around building resilience. Resilience Committees are groups of young people identified by schools to

undertake coproduction activities based on outcomes of the whole school audits, and to audit schools as they develop and implement whole school approaches. Young people from the Resilience Committees make changes within their own schools, and many go on to be involved in the wider activities offered by HeadStart and Boing Boing.

The use of co-production has been so successful that HeadStart have set up a group focussing on education. Originally, the Resilience Revolution Education Voices group was a task and finish exercise to complete the 'Trust' document- a co-produced guide to supporting young people to return to school following the pandemic. The group has continued and is currently developing the Inclusion not Exclusion training for schools. This is a co-produced piece of work with parents, carers, young people, HeadStart staff, education and school staff to reduce the number of young people experiencing exclusion from school.

### **Impact**

Since 2017, HeadStart Blackpool have been working within all 45 of Blackpool's schools to support them to become more resilient places; over 2,600 staff members have been trained in resilience across these schools, which teach almost 19,000 pupils. 470 staff meetings have been held to support schools to embed bespoke approaches to resilience-building, 29 action plans have been written by schools and over 120 young people from 21 resilience committees have dedicated their time to making their schools more resilient places. The self-reported confidence scores of staff have increased, on average, from 55% to 87.5% from the beginning to the end of Academic Resilience training sessions, and between 95% and 97% of all staff have agreed that the training met its aims, was well-presented and provided them with a better understanding of systems change and whole school approaches. Young people involved in their school's Resilience Committee fed back that the experience improved their resilience, confidence and communication skills, and other young people stated that they found working with and helping others to be a rewarding experience.

Practical recommendations made by school communities (Resilience Committees, parents, carers, teachers and wider staff working together) in secondary and primary schools across Blackpool to promote whole school resilience approaches, have included pupil-led assemblies, communication events, peer mentors, in-school resilience courses for parents and university and college taster days. Schools have also been provided



with the opportunity to apply for funds to help implement action plans, which are reviewed by a panel of young people. Successful funding applications have included training school staff to improve communication with and between pupils in SEND provision, and the training of 23 staff members in speech, language and communication needs.