Tutor Trust - Affordable Individual and Small Group Tuition (Primary)

Key Conclusions

1. Due to the study’s design and problems recruiting schools to receive tuition or participate in the evaluation, this evaluation has not provided a secure estimate of the impact of the project on pupil outcomes.

2. Participating pupils made slightly less progress in both English and mathematics than those in the matched comparison group. However, this finding was not statistically significant, meaning that it could have occurred by chance.

3. Schools involved in the qualitative interviews were positive about the tuition, keen to work with the Tutor Trust again, and largely confident that the tuition was beneficial for their pupils. All teaching staff and senior leaders interviewed believed that there was a need for more affordable, high quality tuition.

4. School staff who we spoke to believed the quality of tutors was generally high and that the quality of tutors greatly influenced the impact of the programme.

5. To ensure pupils derive maximum benefit, it is recommended that the Tutor Trust continues to put additional mechanisms in place to monitor tutor performance and conduct and that schools also implement such mechanisms. In addition, classroom teachers need to be involved in the planning and management of tuition so that it is not viewed as a ‘bolt-on’ and complements work in the classroom.

What is the impact?

On average, participating pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, made marginally less progress than pupils in the comparison group. However, the differences in outcomes were not statistically significant, meaning that they could have occurred by chance. Overall, it is not clear from this evaluation whether the approach had an impact on student learning. A large majority of tuition was delivered in small groups rather than one to one, but the evaluation was not able to assess the relative impact of different group sizes. Only pupils who received some tuition in both primary and secondary were included in the analysis.

In general, teachers in participating schools were positive about the tuition provided and a large majority of the senior leaders we interviewed were keen to work with the Tutor Trust again. Tuition was perceived to be most effective when tutors possessed strong pedagogical skills and subject knowledge, and were able to engage and interact successfully with pupils and target sessions appropriately. Other important points noted included: the value of involving English and mathematics teachers in planning sessions; the potential to use tutors as a familiar face across the transition from primary to secondary school. To increase the consistency of tutor quality more formal feedback from schools could be introduced.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>EFFECT SIZE</th>
<th>ESTIMATED MONTHS’ PROGRESS</th>
<th>EVIDENCE STRENGTH</th>
<th>COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All pupils (English)</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-1 month</td>
<td>BBBBB</td>
<td>£E££££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All pupils (maths)</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-1 month</td>
<td>BBBBB</td>
<td>£E££££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM pupils (English)</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-1 month</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£E££££</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM pupils (maths)</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-1 month</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>£E££££</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since this report was published, the conversion from effect size into months of additional progress has been slightly revised. If the results were reported using the new conversion, the results for “All pupils (maths)” and “FSM pupils (maths)” would be reported as 0 months of additional progress rather than -1.

How secure is the finding?

Overall, the findings from this evaluation have very low security. The evaluation was set up as an efficacy trial, meaning that it aimed to test the approach under ideal conditions in a moderate number of schools. However, limitations of the evaluation design, and problems with the number of participants that the Tutor Trust were able to recruit to the programme and the evaluation, means that the results should be treated with caution.

The evaluation used a quasi-experimental design, which enabled a comparison to be made between participating pupils and other pupils who were similar in terms of their demographic and socio-economic characteristics. A weakness of this design is that it does not take into account the unobservable characteristics of pupils, such as their motivation or the quality of the leadership in their schools. As a result, the findings are less secure than findings from randomised controlled trials.

It had been hoped that at least 100 pupils would receive tuition in both maths and English, and provide data for the evaluation. However, data was only received from 82 pupils for English and 59 pupils for maths. This substantially reduced the likelihood that the evaluation would be able to detect an effect with security.

The qualitative fieldwork undertaken was based on the views of 13 senior leaders; 7 classroom teachers; 21 Year 6 pupils and 16 Year 7 pupils who had received tutoring; and 10 tutors.

How much does it cost?

At the time of the evaluation the Tutor Trust would charge primary or secondary schools between £18 and £26 for an hour of tuition. Based on groups of three pupils receiving 25 tuition sessions, the total cost of the intervention is estimated at approximately £185 per pupil.

In this project primary schools paid a flat fee of £1,000 for tuition irrespective of the number of pupils tutored and secondaries were offered tuition free of charge.