Achievement for All

Achievement for All is a whole-school improvement programme that aims to improve the academic and social outcomes of primary school pupils. Trained Achievement for All coaches deliver a bespoke two-year programme to schools through monthly coaching sessions which focus on leadership, learning, parental engagement and wider outcomes, in addition to focusing on improving outcomes for a target group of children (which largely consists of the lowest 20% of attainers). The programme has cumulatively reached over 4,000 English schools.

EEF Summary

In this trial, Achievement for All resulted in negative impacts on academic outcomes for pupils, who received the programme during five terms of Years 5 and 6 (ages 9-11). Children in the treatment schools made 2 months’ less progress in Key Stage 2 reading and maths, compared to children in control schools, in which usual practice continued. The same negative impact was found for children eligible for free school meals. Target children (those children the intervention specifically aimed to support) also made 2 months’ less progress in reading, and 3 months’ less progress in maths. The co-primary outcome finding (whole-group reading, and target children reading) had a very high security rating, 5 out of 5 on the EEF padlock scale.

Given the size of the effects and the consistency of negative findings, these results are noteworthy. Of particular importance is the impact that the programme had on target children, and children eligible for free school meals.

Alongside academic outcomes, the evaluation also sought to assess Achievement for All’s impact on other measures, including the attendance at school of target children and pupils’ resilience-related outcomes. The evaluation found that the programme did not improve pupils’ self-esteem, goals and aspirations, perceptions of how supportive their families were, or target children’s attendance. However, children in Achievement for All schools were more likely to report that there was an adult in their school who cared about and supported them.

The negative findings are unlikely to be a result of schools failing to effectively implement Achievement for All. Although schools may not have delivered all elements of the programme as the delivery team had intended, the evaluators’ analysis suggests that better implementation was not associated with improved outcomes; indeed, they conclude that better implementation of some elements of the programme may even have been associated with more negative impacts.

One factor that may have contributed to the negative impact on pupils is the flexibility of the programme. While some schools commented that they found this beneficial, others would have preferred a more defined and structured approach. Several teachers also commented that they could not identify how the programme could lead to a direct impact on pupil learning. It may also have been the case that other school priorities began to compete with, and overshadow, the priorities set by the Achievement for All action plan at the outset of the programme.

Negative impact on pupils may have, in part, also been caused by the resources that schools invested in the programme, at the expense of other activities. Schools commented that certain aspects of the programme came with a number of time and logistical demands which may have financial consequences, and it may be the case
that schools in the control group, which didn’t implement Achievement for All, used their resources more effectively.

On the basis of these highly secure findings, the EEF concludes that, in this trial, AfA did not improve pupils’ academic outcomes and had a detrimental effect on learning. Schools currently delivering Achievement for All should carefully monitor and evaluate whether it is having the intended impact.

Given the reach of the programme to date, this result is likely to raise a number of questions, including whether schools should still use the programme. Here we attempt to provide some answers.
Research Results

### Impact - the size of the difference between Achievement for All pupils and other pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome/Group</th>
<th>Impact - the size of the difference between Achievement for All pupils</th>
<th>Security - how confident are we in this result?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading (whole group)</td>
<td>-2 Months’ Progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading (AfA target group)</td>
<td>-2 Months’ Progress</td>
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</tbody>
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### Were the schools in the trial similar to my school?

- There were 134 schools involved in the trial, located across the country
- 108 of the 134 schools were Ofsted-rated Good or Outstanding
- Before the intervention, the proportion of schools achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at KS2 was 80%.
- 18% of pupils in the intervention schools were eligible for FSM.

### Could I implement this in my school?

- Guidance on whether schools should deliver the programme, and other Achievement for All programmes, can be found [here](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/).
- The programme is flexible and aims to meet the needs of individual schools.
- Significant staffing time outside of normal practice is required. Schools must accommodate 12 coaching visits each academic year. During these visits, different members of teaching staff may be trained (depending on the needs of the school), either individually, or in a whole school training format.
- Schools are also expected to provide termly, up to an hour-long ‘structured conversations’ to the parents of target children.

Delivered by Teachers  
Participant group Whole School  
Intervention length 5 Terms

### How much will it cost?

The average cost of Achievement for All for one school was around £11.21 per pupil, per year, when averaged over three years. Schools are required to accommodate 12 half-day coaching visits each academic year (which may be attended by one or more teachers). Schools are also expected to conduct three ‘structured conversations’, which are up to an hour long, with the parents and carers of all target children each year.
Evaluation Conclusions

1. Children in the Achievement for All schools made two months’ less progress in reading, on average, compared to children in schools that did not receive the programme. This result has a very high security rating.

2. Target children in the Achievement for All schools (the lowest 20% of attainers or those deemed to be ‘vulnerable to underachievement’ as identified by their school) made two months’ less progress in reading, on average, compared to target children in schools that did not receive the programme. This result has a very high security rating.

3. All children and children eligible for free school meals (FSM) in the Achievement for All schools made two months’ less progress in maths, on average, compared to equivalent children in schools that did not receive the programme, while target children made three months less progress in maths, on average, compared to target children in control schools. FSM children in Achievement for All schools also made two months less progress in reading compared to FSM children in schools that did not receive the intervention.

4. The evaluation found that the programme did not improve pupils’ self-esteem, goals and aspirations, perceptions of how supportive their families were, or the attendance of target children. However, children in Achievement for All schools were more likely to report that there was an adult in their school who cared about and supported them.

5. The implementation of Achievement for All was not optimal and varied across schools. However, there was no evidence to suggest that this contributed to the negative findings. Some teachers identified significant resource demands which made implementing Achievement for All challenging.