



# Impact report 2019-20

February 2021

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## Introduction from the Chair and CEO

**As has been the case globally, 2019-20 certainly didn't pan out in the way that was initially planned. However, we are delighted to share this Impact Report, which highlights how Action Tutoring has risen to the many challenges and has adapted to continue delivering on its mission to benefit disadvantaged pupils, at a time when this support has never been more needed.**



The start of the academic year saw Action Tutoring successfully launch in its eighth city, Nottingham, partnering with three schools initially and now set to expand significantly further. The earlier part of the year also saw significant growth outside of London, something we have been keen to prioritise, recognising the increased attainment gap and needs outside of the capital.

A board strategy day in November 2019 discussed and agreed the importance of developing an online delivery option for our programme, identifying this as a key route to scale beyond our current cities. In January and February we commissioned a consultant to carry out further research into the feasibility of this.

The first school closures in March 2020 saw significant disruption, as sadly all of our face-to-face programmes ceased. However, given the work already begun looking at the feasibility of online delivery, we swiftly put plans in place for an online tutoring pilot. Following significant rapid development we delivered this with six partner schools, across three cities, in the summer term. As well as providing these pupils with crucial support we were able to learn huge amounts from this pilot. We were then ready to roll out online delivery considerably further in autumn 2020.

In addition to the practical work of online delivery, Action Tutoring became heavily involved in campaigning for catch-up support for disadvantaged pupils when they returned to the classroom. Susannah, CEO, was invited to give evidence in early June 2020 to the House of Commons Education Select Committee, on the impact of Covid-19 on pupils and specifically to share how a model like that of Action Tutoring could be implemented more widely.

Shortly after this, the Government confirmed funding for a National Tutoring Programme and we were delighted to be accepted as a Tuition Partner for this important initiative. All of this campaigning work also attracted significant media attention, including coverage on the BBC, ITV and Channel 5 on the day the National Tutoring Programme was announced and other later features on Radio 4's the PM programme and Woman's Hour. It has been very encouraging to see this prompting many new volunteer tutors to apply and new schools coming forward to partner with us.

For this 2020-21 academic year, we look forward to being part of the National Tutoring Programme and playing a vital role in supporting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve with the support of hundreds of high-quality volunteer tutors up and down the country. This goal has always been core to us, but is now needed more than ever.

**Peter Baines, Chair of Trustees, February 2021**

**Susannah Hardyman, CEO, February 2021**

# Our story

“My tutor is very calm and doesn't get upset when I get an answer wrong. She keeps working with me until I get it right. After tutoring I feel very relaxed because I've done all this hard work that I know will pay off at school in my classes and assessments.”

Year 7 pupil, London

Online tutoring delivery development underway

2020

2019

Launched in Nottingham

2018

Launched in Newcastle

2017

Launched our first primary school programmes

2016

Developed our first **Action Tutoring workbooks** structured to the curriculum

2015

Began working with **Impetus** who supported our development

2014

Received funding from **Nesta** and the **Cabinet Office** to expand beyond **London** to **Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Sheffield** and **Sussex**

2013

Action Tutoring was founded by **Susannah Hardyman**

2012

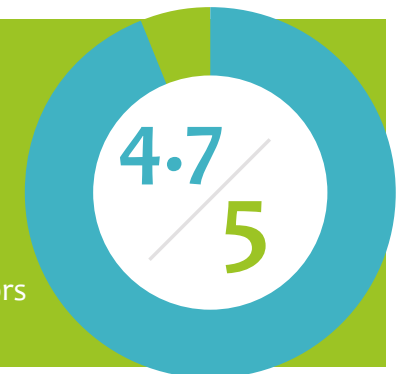
Ran two programmes in **Hackney** and **Peckham**, supported by the **Shaftesbury Partnership**

2011

Global pandemic struck, resulting in nationwide school closures




The average score for tutors rating the quality of organisation, communication and professionalism of Action Tutoring Programme Coordinators was **4.7 out of 5**





# Our reach in 2019-20

These figures were achieved through our delivery from 1st September 2019 up to 31st March 2020, when it ceased as a result of the school closures.

Pupils received over  
**21,600**  
hours of  
tutoring 



Delivered by  
**1,098**  
volunteers

We worked in  
partnership with **95**  schools

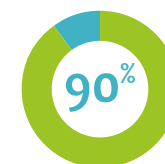
**870** 

primary school pupils received tutoring to help them with their **reading** or **maths SATs**

**1,238** 

secondary school pupils received tutoring to help them with their **English** or **maths GCSE**

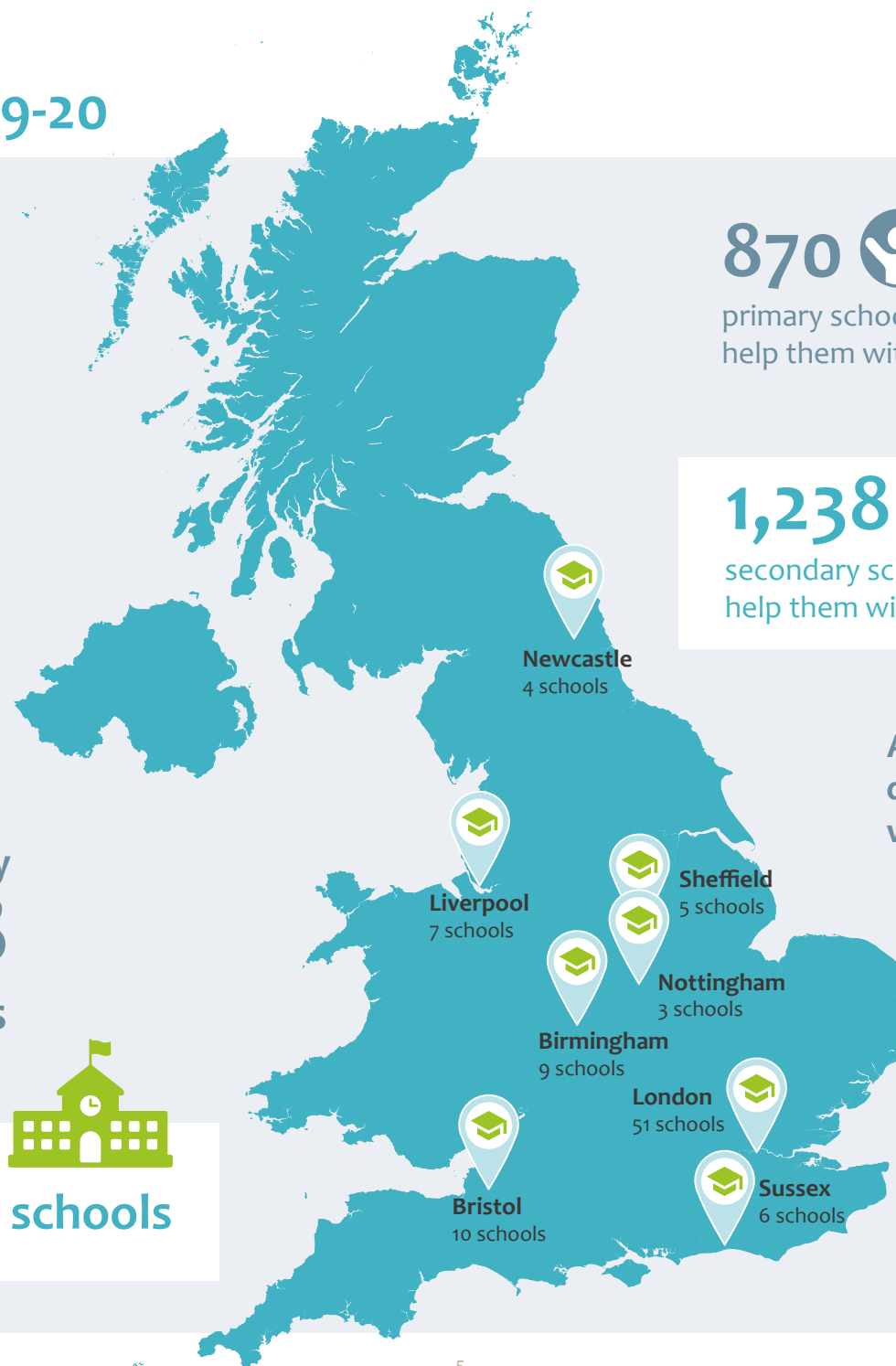
A total of **2,108**  
disadvantaged pupils  
were supported



of pupils  
supported  
were eligible for  
Pupil Premium

funding\* or met one of our  
exceptions criteria

\*a grant given by the Government to schools in England to decrease the attainment gap for the most disadvantaged children



# Our impact in 2019-20: Progress data

**Pupils sit a baseline assessment at the start of their programme and a progress check in February, roughly halfway through their time with Action Tutoring.**

The chart shows the percentage of progress made between these two assessments, comparing the results from the 2019-20 cohort against 2018-19.

Analysis shows pupils made +12% progress on average compared to their baseline assessment score. This is also an improvement on the previous academic year, which was +9% on average.

*“ My tutor helps me a lot. He helps me memorise the formulas and the things I am stuck on in class. He always helps. He can relate to us basically, and it’s like he can understand us and what we go through in school. ”*

Year 11 pupil, London

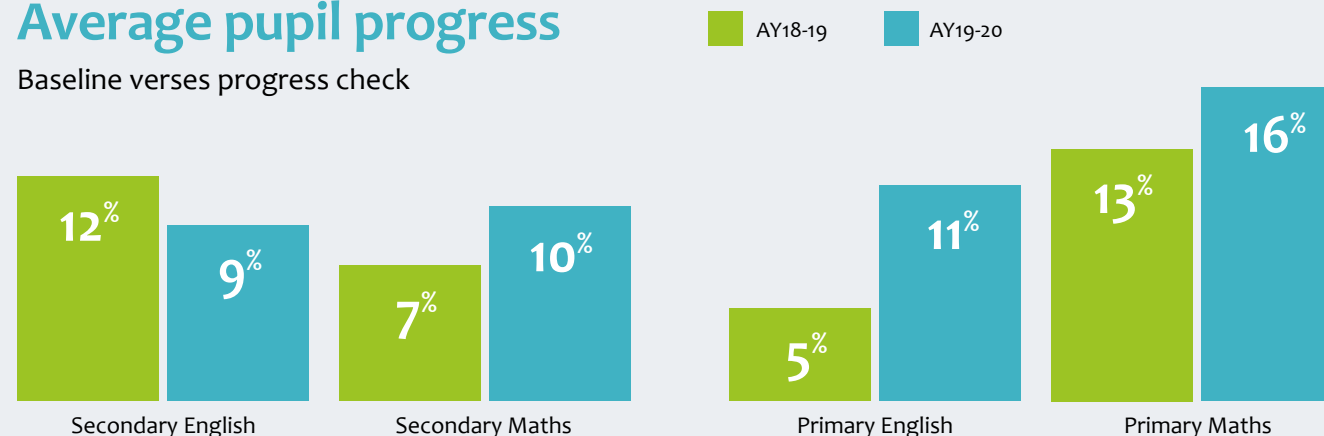


of schools would recommend Action Tutoring to another school



## Average pupil progress

Baseline verses progress check



# Our impact in 2019-20: Exam results

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 SATs for Year 6 pupils were cancelled and grades weren't awarded. As a result, Action Tutoring was unable to analyse the impact its support had on this cohort, through its primary programme.

GCSE exams were also cancelled for all pupils. Initially the Government planned to use an algorithm, developed by Ofqual to award pupils' grades. This same approach was used to determine A Level results and while overall they looked broadly in line with the previous year, some large injustices soon came to light. 40% of A Level results were downgraded by the algorithm and it was found to favour the private school set-up and put significantly larger colleges at a disadvantage.

As a result of these findings, the Government changed its decision and instead awarded pupils with their centre assessment grades (CAGs), submitted by schools and colleges, for both A Levels and GCSEs.

Although Action Tutoring reached out to schools to gather the GCSE grades of its pupils, only a small percentage of data was returned due to the disruption caused by the pandemic over this time. As a result, no analysis has been carried out. Based on the data shown on the previous page we are confident our tutoring had a positive impact on pupils in 2019-20. This would have been so valuable for supporting them academically, and also with soft skills like confidence, over the many uncertain months that followed.



# Why we matter

Education in this country isn't fair. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds aren't less able, but they have less access to the tools that support them to progress in school. This means they are not able to reach their full academic potential. (This data was collected before the pandemic struck).

**27%**

of pupils in state education are classified as disadvantaged <sup>1</sup>



Disadvantaged **51%**

Non-disadvantaged **71%**

Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to meet expected standards in reading, writing and maths at primary school <sup>2</sup>

**Only 11%**

of pupils who don't meet national standards by the end of primary school go on to secure a pass in English and maths at the end of secondary school <sup>3</sup>

Disadvantaged pupils are, on average,

**18 months behind**

their non-disadvantaged peers by the end of secondary school <sup>4</sup>

Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to achieve a grade 5 in English and maths GCSEs <sup>5</sup>

Disadvantaged **25%**

Non-disadvantaged

**50%**

When resitting, fewer than 1 in 4 pupils achieve a grade 4 or above in maths GCSE



and fewer than 1 in 3 pupils achieve this marker in English <sup>6</sup>



Pupils who do not achieve GCSEs are more likely to become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) at 16+ <sup>7</sup>

Currently there are

**757,000 young people**

who are NEET, <sup>8</sup> that's nearly 1 in 10

NEET individuals are estimated to cost the economy

**£120,000**

over the course of their lifetime <sup>9</sup>



# The impact of the pandemic on education

**The impact of school closures and the pandemic on pupils has been significant, in particular the disadvantaged pupils we support. These are the pupils who are already at risk of not achieving and the absence of classroom learning, and any other means of academic support at home, has simply pushed them further behind.**

Many families will have been able to provide their children with extra resources to continue their education at home, or pay for a private tutor, while schools were shut. For the young people we support this was simply not an option.

In addition to the barriers to learning, pupils' mental health may have worsened as a result of the instability and loss of routine caused by school closures.

These months without regular access to learning and support will have consequences for pupils at every stage, harming their future learning and the future opportunities available to them.

Recent research into the impact on primary pupils' attainment indicated those eligible for Pupil Premium showed larger average declines in attainment between summer 2019 and autumn 2020 than their peers.<sup>13</sup>

Even before the crisis, disadvantaged pupils were, on average, already 18 months behind their non-disadvantaged peers by the end of secondary school. Projections suggest school closures will widen this gap, reversing all progress made to narrow it since 2011. Studies suggest it could widen by as much as 75%.<sup>14</sup>

Sustained support is required to help disadvantaged pupils catch up. However, even once schools reopened in autumn 2020 pupils' education was still at risk due to absences and lesson disruption. In May 2020, higher-income parents were reported as being more willing for their child to go back to school.<sup>11</sup>

As well as education, the crisis has impacted families' finances meaning more young people are now facing socio-economic disadvantage. 29% of children aged eight to 17 are registered for free school meals, with 42% of these being newly registered to the scheme.<sup>15</sup> 32% of households with children have experienced a drop in income since late March 2020.<sup>15</sup>

**One in five**

**pupils spent less than an hour a day on study during the school closures<sup>10</sup> in 2020**



Children from more affluent families spent

**30% more**

time on home learning than are those from poorer backgrounds, meaning they had more than seven full school days' worth of extra learning by the end of June 2020<sup>11</sup>

**20%**



**of pupils on free school meals had no access to a computer at home. This compares with 7% for other children<sup>10</sup>**

**40%**



**of children from low-income households did not have a quiet room in which they could study<sup>12</sup> during lockdown**

# The impact of tutoring

## Tutoring works to improve grades.

The Education Endowment Foundation has calculated that an intense programme of one-to-one tuition could add as much as **five months' progress** to a young person's schooling.<sup>16</sup>

In 2014, an independent evaluator analysed the impact of Action Tutoring on the young people supported. It found a positive association between the number of Action Tutoring sessions attended and the estimated impact; suggesting that pupils who attended **at least seven sessions could make half a grade extra progress compared to their peers.**<sup>18</sup>

When pupils returned to school after the lockdown in 2020, they needed support adjusting to the change. Disadvantaged pupils in particular had been significantly impacted by the disruption.

Charities like Action Tutoring have already developed an excellent track record of helping pupils make additional progress alongside classroom learning through targeted tuition. Action Tutoring's provision helps boost pupils' confidence and engagement in the subject. It is the perfect solution to help schools make up for lost time in the classroom for their disadvantaged pupils.

*“ I come every week. I think my favourite thing is that I get extra help. My tutor explains so much more in detail. Because it's one on one it's better. I like maths more now. ”*

Year 11 pupil, London



Small-group tuition provides a **safe space for pupils with low confidence** to speak up and learn from their mistakes<sup>17</sup>

Small-group tuition works because it is **tailored to individual needs** and can address misconceptions at the source



# Action Tutoring's response to the crisis

The first school closures in March 2020 saw significant disruption and sadly all of our face-to-face programmes ceased. Instead we focused our team and resources during this time on:

- **Supporting our network** of partner schools and volunteers in other ways;
- **Collaborating** with other charities to call for government support and
- **Developing our online tutoring platform.**

Collaboration and campaigning focused on calls to the Government to deliver catch-up support for disadvantaged pupils following the pandemic.

We gave evidence to the House of Commons Education Select Committee on the impact of Covid-19 on pupils and shared how a model like that of Action Tutoring could be rolled out more widely.

Shortly after this, the Government confirmed funding for a National Tutoring Programme: an initiative to provide schools with access to subsidised, high-quality tuition from approved providers.

Our campaigning attracted significant media attention, including coverage on the BBC, ITV and Channel 5 the day the National Tutoring Programme was announced and other features on BBC One's Politics England, Radio 4's the PM programme and Woman's Hour.

Action Tutoring returned to the classroom in early October 2020, thanks to the support of its determined volunteer tutors, partner schools and staff team. We began delivering tutoring both online and in person to help disadvantaged pupils with their catch-up.



In November, Action Tutoring was confirmed as a Tuition Partner for the National Tutoring Programme. Action Tutoring has been refining its impactful tutoring model for disadvantaged pupils for nearly a decade. We welcome this national recognition of its benefits and the opportunity for these to become widely available.

This initiative and additional funding will allow Action Tutoring to scale its work to reach thousands more pupils across the country whose education has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. We believe it is our moral imperative to help as many disadvantaged pupils as possible who've been affected by the crisis, whilst ensuring the scale is achievable for a charity of our size and experience.

# Developing our online provision

**Expanding our tutoring programme to online delivery, as well as in person, was already part of our strategic plans before the crisis hit. It offered a viable route to support more pupils, beyond our existing cities. In response to the pandemic, we accelerated our development to deliver the provision much sooner.**

## April - May 2020: Research and development

Significant time was spent researching the best online platforms, before the decision was made to commission Vedamo, a diverse online platform. It was important to thoroughly review all options to ensure:

- A sustainable solution for long-term support was identified, not a short-term fix;
- Flexible functionality, so the tutoring could be as close to face-to-face delivery as possible;
- Necessary GDPR and safeguarding requirements were met.

Action Tutoring was delighted that so many funders supported the swift development of its online programme.

*“At UBS we recognise the difference that skills-sharing can make in overcoming disadvantage. That’s why we’ve supported Action Tutoring in their growth across London. We’re proud to support an organisation which strongly believes that no child’s future should be limited by their background, and which has developed a powerful programme to do something about it. Sadly, the issue looks set to be exacerbated by the consequences of the global pandemic. We’re pleased that our grant will go towards ensuring that young people who need it most will continue to receive support through Action Tutoring’s new online offering.”*

## June - July 2020: Testing phase

Action Tutoring began offering online tutoring to six partner schools, working with over 80 pupils and supported by over 60 volunteer tutors. A key learning opportunity to discover how online programmes could be most effective and how they could be scaled for future delivery.

*“[Developing an online tutoring model provides] an opportunity to try to remedy in a small way the damage done to children’s education by the Covid-19 school closures and also, if successful, in the longer term it could allow Action Tutoring to support many more disadvantaged pupils.” Sarah, an Action Tutoring tutor who volunteered in the online testing phase.*

This testing phase formed part of a wider pilot with three other tutoring organisations, looking into the wider feasibility of online tutoring. This study was evaluated by NatCen and was found to help pupils increase their confidence in their school work and benefit from the flexibility of learning at their own pace.

## October 2020 - January 2021: Scaling delivery

Online programmes were officially launched, with 20 beginning in October and another 22 in early November, in schools across the country. By the end of 2020 over 80 online programmes were underway. With the announcement of school closures in January 2021, Action Tutoring began converting its online provision to enable pupils to receive tutoring whilst at home.

Anayah received tutoring during the online testing phase and had this to say to her tutor:



*“It has been great working with you. You are a great tutor. I really wish I could have met you in person. You are very kind and helped me in English and we’ve had lots of funny moments. You are the best.”*



# How our programme works

We specifically help pupils facing socio-economic disadvantage who are at risk of leaving primary or secondary school without reaching national standards in their exams, limiting their future opportunities.

**15 to 20** pupils are supported on a programme by  
**8 to 10** volunteer tutors 

- Sessions run before, during or after the school day.
- An Action Tutoring staff member is present to oversee the delivery and enable the development of our tutors.
- Programmes run for eight to ten weeks. We aim to deliver three programmes with each school over the academic year.
- All of our pupils sit an initial baseline assessment before they begin their tutoring with us. 'Gap reports' are then produced to identify the subject areas that need the most attention.
- Halfway through their time with us, pupils will sit a progress check, to identify the progress they have made and the knowledge gaps where tutoring should be focused ahead of their exams.



Each tutoring session lasts for 1 to 1.5 hours, where pupils receive support for either maths or English, or both



## For our online programmes, we follow the same approach and:

- Pupils are set up on computers in their schools and receive tutoring from volunteers who are located anywhere across the country.
- Action Tutoring's suite of tutoring workbooks are pre-loaded onto the platform for the tutors and pupils to use.
- Teachers and an Action Tutoring staff member are present to support with any issues and monitor the quality of the tutoring being delivered in a learning environment.

We have produced a portfolio of 12 carefully structured workbooks, designed by curriculum specialists, that include activities intended to be effective in a tutoring environment. Tutor workbooks which mirror the pupil workbooks contain guidance on how to explain topics and common misconceptions.

Every year we gather the SATs and GCSE results of pupils we've supported, to measure our impact and review our programme. We also monitor the pupils we support for development of softer skills, especially their subject confidence, which can have a benefit beyond just helping them in their tutored subject.

# Our pupils

Due to the school closures and the cancellation of exams, we were unable to gather reflections from all of our pupils at the end of the academic year on their experience of Action Tutoring. But here is some feedback captured from pupils before the lockdown in spring 2020 and during our online testing phase...

“ [My tutor] is very kind and she always helps me out. Whenever we get stuck on a question she will always be able to help us out. [Tutoring] really gives you a boost at school. You feel more confident. ”

Year 6 pupil, London

“ My maths tutor listens to what I want to learn about and prepares lessons accordingly. She also brings in revision resources for me. My English tutor shows me the progress I have made from the beginning of the year which encourages me to keep improving. [Tutoring] has helped me improve my grades in both subjects and has made me more confident in topics. It gives you the headstart for your GCSEs and tips that will help you get better grades. ”

Year 11 pupil, Sheffield

“ I liked it a lot because it made maths fun to learn. It was great. ”

Herb, Year 6 pupil in London participating in the online testing phase



“ You know how normally in a classroom there are loads of people, but here there are only two or three in a group so it's a lot more personal. My tutor is kind, she helps out with the problems... she is right there so she can answer the questions... Science is my favourite subject. I want to do medicine or dentistry. ”

Year 11 pupil, London

“ I don't feel confident at maths yet but my tutor really helps. She teaches me in a really fun way so I enjoy it loads. ”

Year 6 pupil, Sussex

**95%** of pupils said they would recommend Action Tutoring sessions to other pupils in their year.



# Our schools

In 2019-20 we worked in partnership with 95 schools across eight cities: 47 primary and 48 secondary. These relationships ensure our tutoring support is reaching and benefitting the pupils who need it the most.



**Action  
Tutoring  
has been**

**working with Ambler Primary  
School since autumn 2018.**

“Action Tutoring was recommended by the network of schools who received funding from the Richard Reeves Foundation. All the schools involved in the consortium chose Action Tutoring to deliver tutoring to Year 6 pupils. Our Pupil Premium numbers have dropped over the last few years and currently 24% of the school fits this category. However we are very aware of the factors that affect our families leading to hidden deprivation - families who do not claim benefits due to a number of different circumstances. In addition we have a large number of EAL (English as an additional language) children, with over 53 languages spoken in the school. This is certainly a factor that affects attainment. Covid-19 has had a big impact on our school community with some families leaving the UK; children affected by death in the family; some families too scared to send their children into school and families

without the IT facilities or the knowledge to support children with remote learning. The first lockdown in March 2020 has impacted children academically but also mentally and emotionally. The majority of children really enjoy the opportunity to work with a tutor in pairs. The tutors work very hard to build positive relationships with the children. The data from previous years has shown the children all to make progress over the academic year. [We have] nothing but praise for Action Tutoring! The communication between myself and the lead is fantastic. They really know the children and always flag up any concerns if they see pairs of children not working well or just individuals who are not working so hard or are distracted. I think it is an extremely valuable resource and I am delighted to continue working with Action Tutoring. I value the hard work and dedication of the volunteer tutors and the fact that they are so reliable. The delivery of sessions face to face has been exemplary.”

**Sandy McNicholl, Deputy Head,  
Ambler Primary School**



**PRENDERGAST  
VALE SCHOOL**

**Action  
Tutoring  
has been**

**working with Prendergast Vale School  
since spring 2017, supporting its Year 10  
and 11 pupils with English and maths.**

“Overall the tutors that we’ve had from Action Tutoring have been really good quality. They’ve been really receptive to feedback and they’ve been really passionate about the subjects they’re tutoring and about working with the young people. I know that our pupils have benefited greatly from working with them and have had really positive things to say.

We discuss the work we’re doing in class with the tutors and Action Tutoring, so that they can link in with it through the tutoring. The pupils will also provide feedback to the tutors on the areas that they’re struggling with so that the tutoring can be tailored to their needs.

The tutors are external role models for our pupils. It’s key for them to see people from different walks of life and that’s really shown with Action Tutoring and the variety of tutors

we get. They’re all really positive about the subjects they teach and our pupils respond really well to that. If I could describe the Action Tutoring tutors in one word I would use the word ‘passionate’.

This year we’ve moved to online tutoring, for obvious reasons, and it’s been a seamless experience for our pupils. We’ve had face to face tutoring from Action Tutoring for the past few years and this year the technology and the platform that Action Tutoring use for online has worked really well. The pupils have been really positive about the online tutoring and have been really grateful that it’s still been able to happen despite the circumstances we’ve found ourselves in.

I would definitely recommend Action Tutoring to other schools. At Prendergast Vale they’ve made a massive difference to our pupils so I could not recommend them highly enough. I would definitely say that Action Tutoring represents value for money: the progress that our pupils make and the confidence that they build is definitely worth the money.”

**Mark Shaw, Interim Deputy  
Headteacher, Prendergast Vale School**

# Our volunteers

We recruit high-quality volunteer tutors, who must meet our criteria for academic achievements, skills and experience. They must also share our motivation to support disadvantaged pupils to reach their academic potential. We assess each application individually.

In 2019-20 our  
volunteers ranged  
in age from  
18 to 84 years



1,098 volunteers



These incredible volunteers delivered



8,983 tutoring sessions  
to our pupils\*

Despite only participating from September  
2019 to March 2020, as a result of the pandemic

\*Volunteers support an average of two pupils per session



“ And all of your tutors are volunteers? I think this is  
just the greatest act of kindness. ”

Link Teacher, Action Tutoring partner school

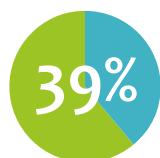
We are committed to developing our tutors through close support and training. In 2019-20 we delivered **1,419 initial induction trainings** and facilitated **313 'Bright Ideas' sessions**, which take place in the schools with the volunteers, either before or after a tutoring session, to share best practice of tutoring techniques, provide feedback and encourage wider discussions about education inequality.

96%

of tutors would volunteer with  
us again and would recommend  
us to a friend or colleague



# Who are our volunteers?



**university students**



“I was never very gifted academically and it was only when my dad started to teach me maths and physics to a deeper level that I started to make massive improvements. I felt the positive effect of one-to-one teaching and was also

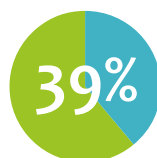
extremely lucky to have amazing teachers who really wanted to help.

The pandemic highlighted the inequality in our education system and, having had a positive experience of teaching myself, this prompted me to research a few charities that were supporting disadvantaged pupils to see how I could help. I found Action Tutoring and applied.

The best thing about tutoring is seeing the pupils make progress. I learnt early on that it's important to assess what level they're at, then take time to talk about concepts and then select exercises for them to complete at the correct level.

I would highly recommend tutoring because you're making a real difference to people's lives by helping them reach their aspirations. Whatever level you tutor at, the pupils will be extremely grateful to you for devoting some of your time to pass on your knowledge.”

**Nimantha, studying physics at the University of Bath**



**professionals  
working full or  
part time**



“A volunteer advisor introduced me to Action Tutoring. I had been looking for opportunities for some time to learn and engage with my community and work with children. Since signing up in September 2019, I have tutored two Year 6 primary pupils

in maths. I always look forward to this day of the week. My pupils arrive on time, full of enthusiasm and determination. There is nothing better than to see a child overcome their challenges and make progress.

On a personal level, volunteering has allowed me to develop new skills, be creative, meet people from different professions and backgrounds and interact with children in an educational setting. Volunteering is all about making a positive contribution to community and society, which is incredibly rewarding and is so necessary in the current climate.

There are thousands of bright young articulate children across the UK in our schools from disadvantaged regions that cannot afford the resources I was so fortunate to benefit from – I urge anyone who has an hour per week available to step forward, contribute to helping children in English, maths or reading and to reap the rewards of helping to create a positive future for others.”

**Justina, Consultant Paediatrician**



**retired individuals**

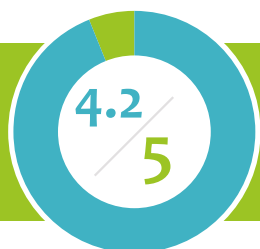


“I currently deliver English tutoring to Year 6 pupils in small groups at two schools. The beauty of online tutoring is that I can provide help to any school in the country where it is desperately needed, there is no travel involved and it can easily be built into my day.

Tuition can be a lifeline for pupils who struggle to engage in the whole-class setting. Helping pupils to close the gap at this key stage (Year 6) in their education is so important and can really boost their confidence before they transition to secondary school. I have witnessed how teaching spelling patterns can help children with dyslexia, but more importantly, how those same children can discover what brilliant creative writers they are. Tuition enables a rewarding teaching and learning relationship to develop that is harder to achieve in whole-class teaching. By Year 11, teachers may assume that pupils are secure in their knowledge of concepts taught earlier in the curriculum – for example when to use ‘there’, ‘their’ or ‘they’re’ – but this may not be the case, and a pupil lacking confidence is not going to put their hand up in front of the whole class to ask. Tuition provides a safe environment in which to address these gaps in learning.”

**Mary, a former teacher**

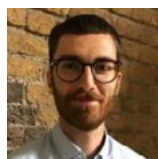
**12% of our volunteers are not currently in employment or selected ‘other’ under occupation.**



**The average score from pupils rating how well their tutor understood the subject and how well they could explain it was 4.2 out of 5**

# Our team

In 2019-20 Action Tutoring's work was delivered by a team of 32 staff. This was comprised of our frontline programme staff, crucial for our delivery; a Marketing and Communications team, to raise our profile and ensure we can recruit a sufficient number of high-quality volunteer tutors; and our Team Administrator, Curriculum and Training Manager and Data and Evaluation Manager, who ensure our team are fully equipped and supported and that we are rigorous about our quality and impact across the country. They were all overseen by a management team of six members.



“ Every day working for Action Tutoring is a joy. My role is managing the onboarding process for our diverse range of volunteers from application to training, which means my team and I are often the first people volunteers interact

with – it is essential our enthusiasm and dedication to the young people we work to support shines through. The other aspect of my role allows me to build exciting campaigns that encourage a new wave of high-quality, energetic volunteers through social media, Google, and volunteer centres. Everyone involved with the charity, from our inspiring volunteers to our fantastic senior leadership team, has the same passion and determination to help young people across the UK reach their potential – it is great to be part of! ”

Jack joined Action Tutoring in September 2020 as the Marketing and Volunteer Onboarding Manager

The average score from schools rating the quality of communications from Action Tutoring staff was 4.8 out of 5



“ Having worked previously as a primary school teacher in disadvantaged communities, I have seen firsthand how pupils' attainment is influenced by their

socio-economic background. Unfortunately, there is a huge attainment gap in this country, and the pupils we work with have limited access to the tools that enable young people to perform well academically. Providing high-quality tutoring to a disadvantaged young person can make a real difference to that pupil's exam performance and life chances. I am proud to work for an organisation that is committed to challenging educational inequality, and I continue to find our volunteers' commitment to our pupils inspiring and uplifting. As Curriculum and Training Manager, this year I have overseen the conversion of our fantastic workbooks into online resources. I have also set up our virtual compulsory training for online tutors on the e-learning platform, Looop. Seeing our online and home-based tutoring programmes launch this academic year has been incredibly exciting, and I am so grateful to all of those tutors who have joined us for these sessions! ”

Grace joined the team in 2019 as a Programme Coordinator for London, going on to become the Curriculum and Training Manager in 2020



“ In a year like no other, where the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is on course to widen due to the loss of learning during school closures, I have seen a real thirst for our support amongst schools. As a Programme Manager, I build and manage the relationships with schools in our northern regions. I am proud that I now work with twice the number of schools and we support triple the number of pupils in the North compared to last academic year. Watching our tutors develop their pupils' confidence in a subject gives me such joy, but also witnessing our amazing pupils inspire two tutors to change career path and become teachers was phenomenal. ”

Alice joined Action Tutoring in 2019 as Programme Coordinator for Sheffield. In 2020 she became the Northern Programme Manager

An employee assistance programme is available to all staff as well as free access to 'Headspace for work'. We have six trained mental health first aiders. We also offer regular training and information sessions at team days focused on wellbeing. We continued these sessions remotely during lockdown and promoted our staff wellbeing guide, summarising our internal offers of support as well as some great external services available, and our guide to remote working.

# Our values

Our six values underpin all of our work. They are integral to our approach and delivery and core to our culture

## High standards

We maintain professional standards through all of our interactions with partner schools and volunteer tutors and strive to achieve excellence in all we do.

## Evidence based

We track the progress of our pupils through data collection from schools and our own baseline tests and interim assessments, to ensure our support is having an impact. Where appropriate we work with external evaluators to regularly assess our evidence.

## Integrity

We share all pupil progress data with partner schools, even if the outcomes aren't as hoped, and make our evaluation reports widely available.



## Reflective

In addition to our impact analysis, we regularly survey pupils, teachers and tutors to help inform improvements to the programme. We are hugely proud of our impact and the programme we offer but are always looking to make it even better.

## Aspirational

We develop our training and resources to support our pupils, tutors and staff to be the best they can be.

## Collaborative

Partnerships with schools are at the heart of our model. We also regularly engage with our peer charities and organisations such as Teach First, Impetus and the Fair Education Alliance, to maintain a united force on tackling education inequality.

# Our funders

We are incredibly grateful to the following funders for the generous support they gave in 2019-20

**I**mpetus

Centerbridge

montpelier  
Foundation

The Orp Foundation

Allan Gray Orbis  
Foundation

UBS

WELLINGTON  
MANAGEMENT  
FOUNDATION  
investing in education

Hibbert Family Foundation

**BMCF**  
BETTY MESSENGER  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Camelia Botnar Foundation

THE DULVERTON TRUST

Advent International  
GLOBAL PRIVATE EQUITY

EQ foundation



“We have been impressed with Action Tutoring’s ability to adapt and develop its programmes to the changing circumstances.”

EQ Foundation

“The Betty Messenger Charitable Foundation supports education of people young and old who through no fault of their own, have fallen through gaps in our society. Action Tutoring has impressed us with its professionalism since the beginning of our relationship and by having a large network of dedicated volunteer tutors to support those who need to increase their abilities and gain confidence.”

We are also grateful to the following organisations for their additional grants, some regionally specific:

**The Danson Foundation**  
**Eleanor Rathbone Trust**  
(Liverpool)  
**Johnson Foundation** (Liverpool)

**Sussex Community Foundation**  
**KPMG donation**  
**Worshipful Company of Insurers**  
**Bedgebury Foundation** (Sussex)

**The Fore**  
**Nesta**  
**DAC Beachcroft**  
**Richard Reeves Foundation**



# Fundraising in the pandemic

Given the loss of income from cancelling summer term programmes, additional fundraising activities were undertaken from April including applying for regional grants and running individual giving campaigns. Over £50,000 was received in donations and we are incredibly grateful to all the individuals who supported us in this way.

Our operations reduced when school delivery ceased so we took the decision to furlough around two thirds of our workforce over a six-week period, to help protect our charity for the longer term. This support saved the charity nearly £20,000.

During lockdown, some of the wider staff team got involved with fundraising and focused on approaching local trusts and foundations to support the charity's work regionally. This proved successful, including receiving funding from the Bedgebury Foundation (Sussex), Eleanor Rathbone Trust (Liverpool) and Worshipful Company of Insurers (London). We are immensely thankful to the new and current funders who gave additional funding from March, to help the charity through this period of disruption and enabled us to develop our online pilot programme.

The following organisations gave additional funding, on top of their pre-existing commitment:

- **Wellington Management UK Foundation**
- **UBS**
- **Impetus**
- **Nesta**
- **Betty Messenger Charitable Foundation**

In addition, the following new funders gave support for our online tutoring development during this time:

- **The Fore**
- **Camelia Botnar Foundation**
- **The Dulverton Trust**



# Our supporters and partner work

**We really value the relationships we have built with other organisations who support us in a whole host of ways: our university and corporate partners, including DAC Beachcroft, Allen & Overy and J P Morgan, who promote our volunteering to their networks; and Teach First and Now Teach who also share our opportunities with their members and give peer support.**

In 2020 we also hugely benefited from being part of both the Fair Education Alliance's online delivery development group and their advocacy group. The advice and guidance shared supported the development of our online model and ensured a joined-up approach when campaigning for government support to counter the impact of Covid-19 on disadvantaged pupils' attainment.

Earlier in 2020 the Centre for Education and Youth and Action Tutoring brought together expert voices in a roundtable discussion. Eighteen charity and school leaders across the primary and secondary sectors discussed partnerships between charities and schools and shared best practice. We produced a joint report highlighting the key findings from the event, which provides tips for best practice in four areas: building a reputation; building strong relationships; working together and evaluating impact.

*“The significant attainment gap that exists between disadvantaged pupils and their wealthier peers has only been exacerbated by Covid-19. Having been an engaged member of the Alliance for years, we're delighted to see Action Tutoring selected as a Scaling Award Winner for 2020-22. Having grown their reach consistently to work with over 3,000 pupils, we've been impressed by the way they have rapidly adapted to take their provision online whilst retaining a laser focus on growth with impact. We will be supporting them to plan and manage the next phase of scaling their provision as they prepare for rapid scale due to the increased demand for their programmes, and to develop their internal capacity and organisation structures so that they can reach more disadvantaged pupils in the areas where support is needed the most.”*

Siwan Davies, Head of Scaling Award, Fair Education Alliance



In July, Action Tutoring was thrilled to be announced as one of seven winners of the **Fair Education Alliance Scaling Award**: a two-year accelerator programme designed to provide bespoke support for deepening charities' impact.

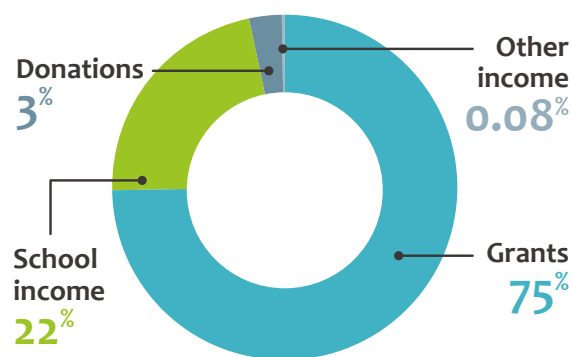


# Our finances

We have allocated the core costs of delivering our tutoring through the running of our programmes to 'direct costs', which include: programme staff; marketing and recruitment of volunteers; tutor resources; curriculum and training development. 'Support costs' include: staff training and recruitment; premises costs; insurance; audit and accountancy fees; IT costs; non-programme staff and depreciation. A full list is available in our Statement of Accounts.

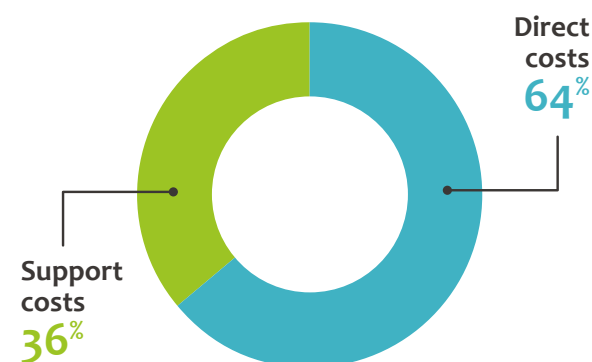
It is the policy of the charity to maintain three months of full costs or nine months of net costs (minus school income), whichever is the larger. The policy was met in 2019-20.

## Breakdown of income 2019-20



Total income in 2019-20	£1,421,911
Grants	£1,060,741
School income	£309,180
Donations	£50,823
Other income	£1,167

## Breakdown of expenditure 2019-20



Total expenditure in 2019-20	£1,197,873
Direct costs	£770,409
Support costs	£427,464

Income from schools was significantly lower than originally forecast due to programmes not being able to run during the summer term, as a result of the pandemic. Given this loss of income, additional fundraising activities were undertaken from April, including focusing on applying for regional grants and running an individual giving campaign. Additionally a number of regional funders supported us for the first time and several new and current funders supported us with additional grants to cover the costs of Covid-19 disruption and getting the online programme up and running.

## Our value

Each tutoring workbook for our pupils costs just

£3.50

to ensure the highest quality and relevant tutoring for them

It costs just

£13

for a volunteer tutor to access additional training to be an online tutor



Our pupil headphones cost



£25 each

ensuring pupils can access their tutoring without noise disruption

Just  
£50

enables us to run a face-to-face tutoring session with two pupils and one tutor



“ We have been delighted with the impact Action Tutoring has had on the progress of our Key Stage 4 pupils. We saw a marked increase in confidence and engagement from those pupils who attended the sessions. The support of tutors in a small-group setting has proved invaluable to our young people. ”

Susan Service, Headteacher, Arts and Media School Islington, London

The attainment gap grows wider at each progressive stage of education. The Education Endowment Foundation's research has shown it more than doubles between the end of primary and the end of secondary school, to 19.3 months. This shows the importance of intervening early and then of continuing to attend to the needs of disadvantaged pupils.<sup>19</sup>

Research shows only one in four of those resitting their GCSE maths or English manage to pass, which shows the importance and value of passing the first time.<sup>20</sup>

Research by Impetus has shown that if a pupil is not in education, employment or training on leaving school, they could have reduced earnings of £225,000 over a lifetime and cost the economy £56,000 per year. Therefore an investment of just over £500 to support a young person to achieve crucial grades at GCSE can have a significant long-term saving for wider society.<sup>21</sup>



# Our future

In November 2020 Action Tutoring was announced as a National Tutoring Programme (NTP) Tuition Partner. The selection process for this was rigorous and being accepted as a recognised provider is a strong indicator of the charity's experience and the quality of its provision. This government initiative was designed to support disadvantaged pupils to recover from the educational disruption caused by Covid-19. Tuition Partners will receive funding to ensure they can reach more pupils and schools can access the support at a subsidised cost.

As a result of this additional NTP support, Action Tutoring has ambitious plans during 2020-21 to double its delivery to reach nearly 5,300 pupils over the course of the year. Most of this growth will be focused in Action Tutoring's existing geographies, where there is still plenty of potential to deepen our reach.

The charity's online programme provides an opportunity to work in a wider geographical area, particularly with schools further from the city centres where it may be harder to recruit volunteers. It will also provide a means of continuing the delivery of tuition in future lockdowns. Rapidly scaling up Action Tutoring's online delivery, especially in light of Covid-19 disruptions, will be a key focus for the year.

To achieve these goals, the charity is rapidly growing its staff team. In addition to recruiting new Programme Coordinators, it has also added new roles to its Marketing Team to ensure it can recruit enough volunteer tutors, and has increased its back-office support.

The impact of the pandemic is significant. Action Tutoring's work has never been more needed as schools and pupils seek to catch up on the lost learning time from school closures. There is a long road ahead for pupils of all ages and the charity recognises that this catch-up is unlikely to be fully achieved in a year. In light of this, Action Tutoring hopes to continue working with the NTP beyond its first year so that more pupils can benefit from this vital support.



*“I volunteer because I like helping those that need it. I like the fact that Action Tutoring helps those most in need to give the children the same opportunities as their peers. It's challenging and rewarding... It has so many benefits, for the tutor as well as the pupil. In fact, I am finding out I have skills I never thought I had! ”*

Ingrid, Action Tutoring tutor

# Thank you

We are so grateful to all of our volunteers and partner schools for the support they gave in the very challenging 2019-20 academic year. Every volunteer helped us to achieve our overall impact, even though their time was cut short. A special thank you must go to our tutors who supported on the greatest number of sessions:

	Total sessions given in 2019-20	Region
Frank Plater	84	Bristol
Liz Hand	59	London
Alex Carey	56	Liverpool
Joshua Cook	40	Liverpool
Jill Grainger	40	London
Sandra Fisher	36	London
Sarah Williams	32	London
Gabriel Thompson De Wit	31	London
Patricia Weston	29	London
Sue Farwell	29	Bristol
David Mushin	28	London
John Spencer	28	London
Sally Qin Wang	28	London

These session totals were achieved between 1st September 2019 and 31st March 2020, until tutoring ceased as a result of school closures.

“ The tutors are very nice and welcoming, they listen to you, they make the session comfortable. [They are] extremely understanding, I wish we had more. ”

“ What encourages you to come to tutoring?  
“Knowing I have a tutor who will help.” ”

“ My tutor helps me to feel more confident in maths. ”



# Endnotes

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“ Our children need champions. Champions – who never give up on them, who understand the power of relationships and insist they become the best they can possibly be. That’s just what the volunteers from Action Tutoring are doing. ”

Lynne Gavin, Headteacher, Pakeman Primary School



action   
tutoring

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