



Impact Report 2020–21

April 2022
A decade of experience

**ACTION
TUTORING**
infinite potential

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Introduction from the Chair and CEO



This report looks back at our achievements and impact in 2020–21. We're excited to be publishing it in 2022, our 10th anniversary year and have included some older reflections to celebrate the difference our dedicated team and volunteers have made since 2012. 2022 is our launchpad for the next ten years as we set our sights on reaching thousands more pupils across the country.

We began the 2020–21 academic year optimistically as we returned to the classroom following nearly seven months away, delivering face-to-face programmes and officially launching our online programmes.



We were delighted to be accepted as a National Tutoring Programme (NTP) Tuition Partner in November 2020. We welcomed this recognition of tutoring as an effective intervention and the opportunity for it to become widely available. Action Tutoring worked closely with other members of the Fair Education Alliance tuition advocacy group to ensure successful uptake of the NTP in its pilot year.

The NTP enabled Action Tutoring to scale its growth significantly, at a rate that couldn't have been achieved on our own. We were able to double in size last year and more than double our reach as a result. This included launching programmes in new areas such as Coventry and Derby.

Unfortunately, in January, with the announcement of school closures and the national lockdown we had to pivot again. Within two weeks we launched a full scale home-based tutoring programme, adapting to new safeguarding, accessibility and technology requirements. This swift response ensured pupils continued to receive tutoring support even while schools were closed. Around 7,000 hours of tutoring were delivered over this period.

Overall more than 80% of last year's delivery was online. A remarkable achievement considering the previous year we hadn't delivered a single programme in this manner. This new method opens up significant possibilities for where we can work in the future.

We were proud to play our part in helping pupils and schools through an exceptionally difficult year. We're incredibly grateful to the funders who supported us, the tutors who volunteered with us, the schools who partnered with us and the staff team who worked so hard and adapted so willingly to make the best of the year.

Looking ahead we're excited to be growing again this year and we are thrilled to be continuing as an NTP Tuition Partner. Our online delivery continues to be a key part of our offer to schools and we remain resilient to the challenges that Covid brings to education.

Peter Baines, Chair of Trustees, April 2022
Susannah Hardyman, CEO, April 2022

10 years of Action Tutoring

“ I didn't like to do English as much, but now I'm really really excited to do tutoring and in English I'm always really happy to do it. After tutoring I've been reading a lot more fluently and it's made me want to read. ”

Elizabet, Year 6 pupil



Action Tutoring was founded by Susannah Hardyman

2011

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

2012

Action Tutoring is officially registered as a charity

2013

Delivered 15 tutoring programmes benefitting 250 pupils

2014

I Impetus

Began working with Impetus who supported our development

2015

Developed our first Action Tutoring workbooks, structured to the curriculum

2016

Launched our first primary school programmes

2017

Launched in Newcastle

2018

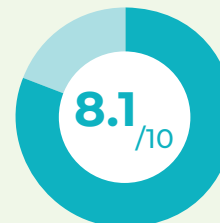
2019

Launched in Nottingham

2020

Online tutoring development accelerated due to pandemic

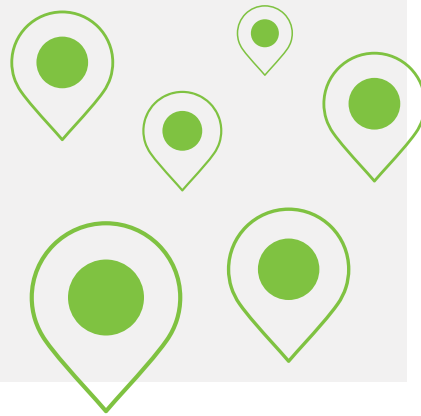
Gave evidence to the Education Select Committee



When asked if they'd recommend tutoring to a friend, pupils gave an average score of **8.1 out of 10** (where 10 is 'Yes, definitely').

A closer look at 2020-21

Expanded to new cities and areas including **Chester, Coventry, Derby, County Durham** and **Southport**.



Action Tutoring more than doubled in size in response to the ongoing pandemic. **150% increase in tutors volunteering** and **160% increase in pupils supported**.



of programmes **delivered online**, compared to 0% the year before.

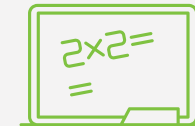


For the second year in a row, national exams were **cancelled**.

In January 2021 Action Tutoring switched to **home-based delivery**, continuing to support pupils whilst schools were closed.



Around **7,000 hours of tutoring** were delivered over this four week period.



Officially launched **online delivery** with tutors joining sessions **remotely** from across England, Scotland and Wales.



Action Tutoring was announced as a **Fair Education Alliance Scaling Award** winner in July 2020.

Our mission, vision and values

We've updated our mission statement to reflect the charity we are today...

Action Tutoring unlocks the potential of children and young people who are facing disadvantage. We are tackling the attainment gap head-on by forging partnerships with schools nationwide. Our trained volunteer tutors are empowered to enable pupils to make meaningful academic progress, opening doors to future opportunities.

Our vision as a charity is a world in which no child's life chances are limited by their socio-economic background.



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.



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.



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.



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.



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.



Aspirational

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

10 years of Action Tutoring

We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved in the last ten years.

Since 2012 we have:



Provided tutoring for over **6,700** primary school pupils and over **12,500** secondary school pupils. In 2021-22 we aim to work with a further **7,000** pupils.



Created **50 bespoke** tutoring workbooks.



Been supported by over **9,300 volunteer tutors**.



These tutors have delivered over **120,000 tutoring sessions** since September 2016*.

*When the session count was introduced in our monitoring



I have been so impressed with the work of Action Tutoring. Their tutors are so well trained and were able to forge positive working relationships in the first session. Their online platform, which we have moved to recently, is incredibly easy to use and the move from face-to-face tutoring to online has been seamless. If you are lucky enough to partner with Action Tutoring — don't ever let them go!

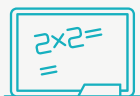
Deputy Headteacher, London



Our reach in 2020-21



Pupils received over **61,700 hours** of tutoring delivered by **2,749 volunteers**. We worked in partnership with **156 schools**.



2,655 primary school pupils received tutoring to support them with their reading or maths.



2,873 secondary school pupils received tutoring to help them with their English or maths.



A total of **5,528 disadvantaged pupils** were supported and 72% of pupils supported were eligible for Pupil Premium funding.*

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



Our headline impact in 2020-21: secondary schools

Last year GCSE results were decided by teachers (teacher-assessed grades). Of those Action Tutoring pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium, who attended at least eight tutoring sessions in their subject:



81% achieved grade 4 or above in English.

80% achieved grade 4 or above in maths.

These pupils out-performed the national GCSE results for disadvantaged pupils. Nationally **67% of disadvantaged pupils achieved a grade 4 or above in English and 62% for maths in 2020-21.**

30 schools provided GCSE results out of 49 who were asked. Fewer of our partner schools shared results with us than in previous years and so whilst being very positive, these results may not be fully reflective of the overall picture. **736 pupils were tutored from nine different cities.**

Due to Covid-19, **GCSE exams were cancelled in 2020 and 2021** and replaced by centre-assessed grades (CAG) and teacher-assessed grades (TAG) respectively. The different methods of awarding grades mean they are not comparable with previous years; however **a higher proportion of pupils earned grades 4 and above in each year relative to 2019.**

Results for Action Tutoring's pupils follow this UK-wide pattern: before the pandemic, around **50-55% of disadvantaged pupils passed their English and maths GCSEs whereas in 2020-21, more than 65% did.** From the results we have for the pupils supported by Action Tutoring, the proportion is similarly much higher than in previous years.

“ My tutor is helpful. She asks me what I want to go over, then if I'm not sure, she'll go through it. When you get to the exam you're like 'oh okay, this is what we did the other day.' ”

Hannah, Year 11 pupil



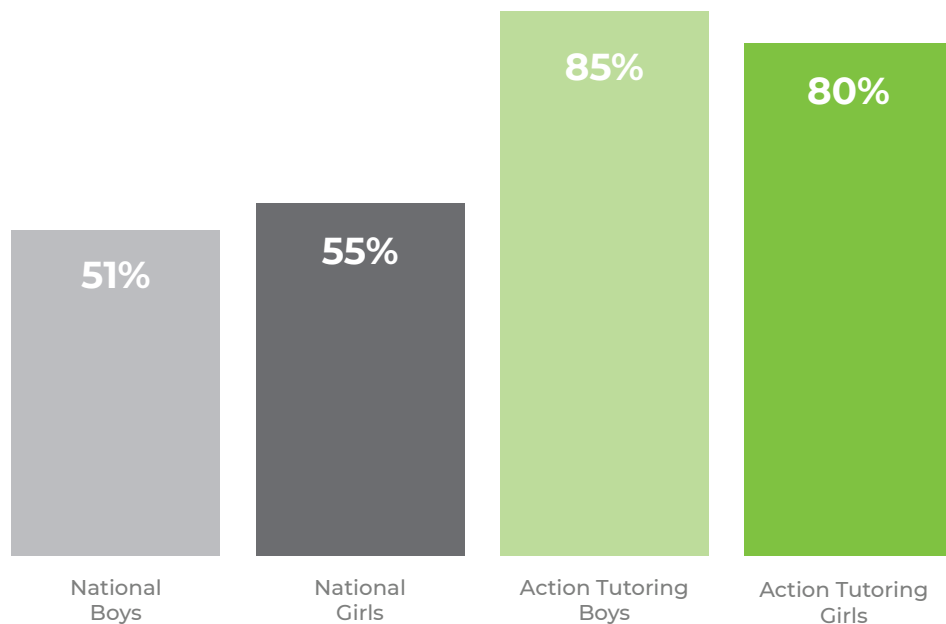
Further impact in 2020–21: secondary schools

A higher proportion of Action Tutoring male pupils compared to Action Tutoring female pupils achieved grade 4 or above in English and maths GCSEs, contrary to previous years, both within Action Tutoring and compared to the figures for disadvantaged pupils nationally.

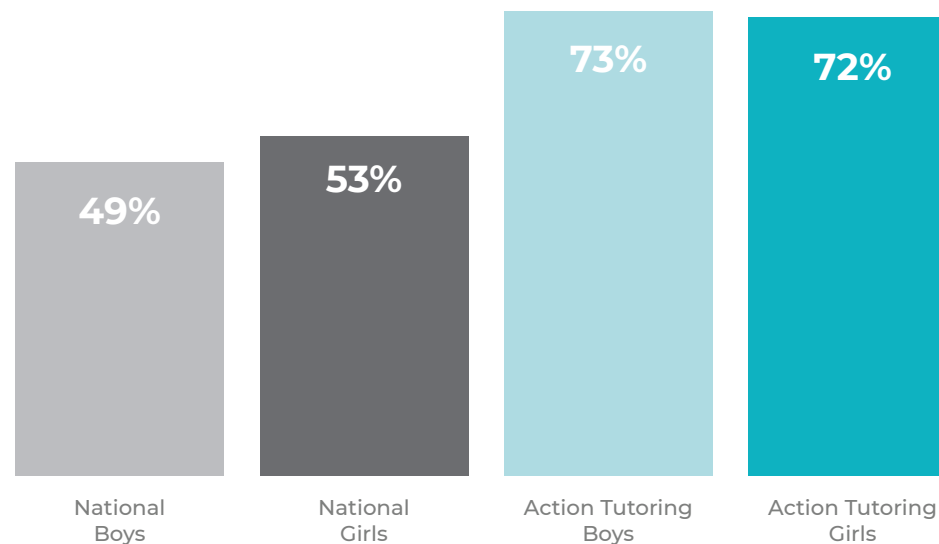
In this cohort, of those eligible for Pupil Premium, 63% are girls and 37% are boys. Neither the tutor training nor the resources used by Action Tutoring are expected to result in differing performances for boys versus girls. This result is simply presented to highlight that both boys and girls tutored by Action Tutoring performed better than their disadvantaged peers.

“Targeted pupils receive excellent support with highly qualified tutors who engage and motivate the learners. It has been the best use of our Covid catch-up funding and we are fully committed to continuing this well-researched programme to maximise the positive impact.”

Deputy Headteacher, Birmingham



English



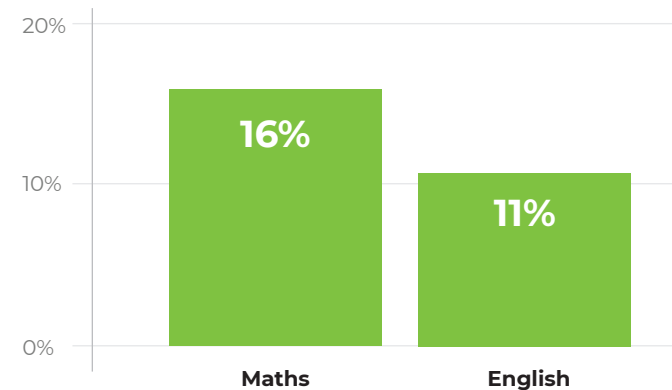
Maths

Our headline impact in 2020–21: primary schools

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. Due to the disruption caused by local and national lockdowns and the school closures, Action Tutoring ran progress assessments for just over 500 of the 2,655 Year 6 pupils it supported last year.

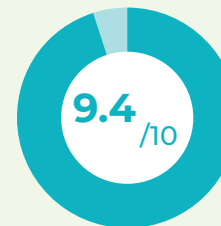
The chart on the right shows the percentage progress made between these two assessments. Positive progress was made in both subjects, matching progress made by pupils in the previous academic year (pre-pandemic).

Average progress made by pupils between their baseline assessment and progress check



“ Action Tutoring has given pupils a personalised push to their learning. Communication and organisation has been excellent. The tutors are dedicated and well-trained. We plan to continue our work with Action Tutoring for as long as possible! ”

Deputy Headteacher, London



When asked if they'd recommend tutoring to another school, teachers gave an average score of **9.4 out of 10** (where 10 is 'Yes, definitely').



Why we matter

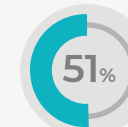
Education in this country isn't fair. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds aren't less able, but they have less access to the tools that support them to progress in school. This means they are not able to reach their full academic potential.

27% of pupils in state education are classified as disadvantaged.¹ There is an **attainment gap** between pupils facing disadvantage and their peers.

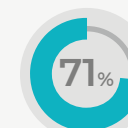


Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to meet expected standards in reading, writing and maths at primary school.²

(pre-pandemic data as assessments were cancelled in 2020 and 2021).



Disadvantaged



Non-disadvantaged

11%

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.³

Disadvantaged pupils are, on average, **18 months behind** their non-disadvantaged peers by the end of secondary school.⁴

18
months
behind

English pass rate

67% disadvantaged

87% non-disadvantaged

Maths pass rate

62% disadvantaged

84% non-disadvantaged

Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to achieve a grade 4 in English or maths GCSE.⁵



Pupils who do not achieve GCSEs are more likely to become NEET at 16+.⁶ Currently there are **692,000 young people who are NEET**,⁷ that's nearly 1 in 10. NEET individuals are estimated to cost the economy **£120,000** over the course of their lifetime.⁸

The impact of the pandemic on education

After two years of school closures and disruption to learning the impact of the pandemic on pupils has been significant, in particular for the pupils we support who are facing disadvantage. These pupils are already at risk of not achieving and the pandemic disruption has simply pushed them further behind.

Pupils returned to school in autumn 2020 after a spring and summer term impacted by school closures. Classroom time was soon disrupted again as local lockdowns came into force. In January 2021 national school closures were again announced and continued until mid March. The final term of the academic year allowed for some catch-up on progress as pupils returned to the classroom, although individual absences continued due to Covid cases.

Recent analysis by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) shows:⁹ In June 2021 losses remained substantial, but had recovered to **2.2 months of lost learning in maths** and **0.9 months in reading for pupils in primary school**. This compared to **2.6 months in maths** and **1.2 months in reading for primary pupils** facing disadvantage.

In contrast, pupils facing disadvantage in secondary schools did not recover learning and had fallen further behind by the summer. In reading, losses in the autumn term (2020) were **1.9 months for secondary disadvantaged pupils** but by the summer term (2021), they **rose to 2.4 months**.

Research carried out over the course of the pandemic with parents and teachers highlighted disparities in pupils' access to technology during the school closures and also in support received at home:

In the most deprived schools, 15% of teachers reported that **more than a third of pupils** learning from home would not have adequate access to an electronic device for learning, compared to **only 2%** in the most affluent state schools. 12% of teachers in the most deprived schools also felt that **more than a third** of their pupils would not have adequate internet access.¹⁰

School closures are likely to reverse progress made to narrow the academic attainment gap in the last decade. Predictions estimate the gap could **increase by as much as 75%**.¹¹ A recent EPI report found **the disadvantage gap at GCSE is significant**, and outcomes for the very poorest pupils in long-term poverty have failed to improve after a decade.¹²

Large-scale sustained support is needed to help pupils facing disadvantage to catch up and reduce the gap. Catch-up provision, including targeted support like tutoring, is essential to enabling this. However, high levels of pupil absences in 2021-22 academic year are stalling progress.



The impact of tutoring

Closing the attainment gap is hard and the pandemic has pushed pupils facing disadvantage even further behind.

Tutoring works to improve grades. This powerful academic tool can help level the playing field and ensure every pupil is able to catch up and succeed academically.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) 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.¹³ Small-group tuition provides a safe space for pupils with low confidence to speak up and learn from their mistakes.¹⁴

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.**¹⁵

Small-group tuition works because it is tailored to individual needs and can address misconceptions at the source. Unfortunately, due to its high cost, tutoring is often out of reach to pupils facing disadvantage. The private tutoring industry is also unregulated and can be variable in quality.

Action Tutoring uses the power of volunteer tutors to bridge the gap and ensure tuition can be accessed by every pupil who needs it, not just those who can afford it. We put in place structures and resources to ensure pupils engage and excel on the programme.

Over our ten years of operation we have developed an excellent track record of helping pupils make additional progress alongside classroom learning through targeted tuition.

Tutoring is the perfect solution to help schools make up for lost time in the classroom for their disadvantaged pupils.

Early analysis of online tutoring commissioned by the EEF found it to be an effective way to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. It reported learners benefitted from tailored support and saw improvements in their **confidence, engagement** with education and **preparedness** for the new school year.¹⁶

“ When we tell our tutor what we don't know, she always figures out what we need and gives us a lesson about it and it makes us stronger. ”
Bernice, Year 5 pupil



Action Tutoring's response to the pandemic in 2020-21

Action Tutoring was proud to be approved as a Tuition Partner for the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) in autumn 2020. We welcomed this national recognition of the benefits of tutoring and the opportunity for it to become widely available.

Through this initiative Action Tutoring was able to scale its work significantly and even though faced with multiple local lockdowns and pupil absences in autumn 2020, we supported **over 2,100 pupils**. In this time over **1,000 volunteer tutors** delivered a staggering **5,264 sessions**.

In January 2021, just a day into the new school term, schools were forced to close again due to the pandemic. Action Tutoring made the decision to continue running tutoring sessions for pupils at home by switching as many of its programmes as possible to online home-based delivery.

We responded swiftly. By introducing new safeguarding measures and working closely with parents and schools to overcome accessibility issues and technology barriers, we started supporting pupils at home after just two weeks.

Around **7,000 hours** of tutoring were delivered over this period before schools reopened in March.

In the summer term we returned to our more familiar delivery formats in schools and continued to support pupils to make up for the missed time. We delivered **21 'catch-up days'** across the country. The additional sessions helped **205 pupils** to recover from lost learning with a full or half day of tutoring.

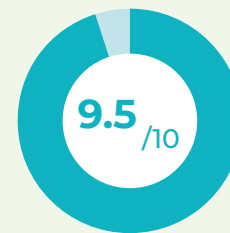
At the start of the holidays in July, we ran a summer school pilot at a secondary school in London. Tutoring was delivered in person, for **two hours a day**, for five days. **Over 30 tutors** attended and **supported 40 pupils** with their maths and English. The pupils had just left primary school, transitioning to the new secondary school in September.

Parent reflections during the spring 2021 home-based delivery:

“ We are appreciative of the initiative which has helped our son so much that his grades have improved. ”

“ My daughter has really benefited from her maths tutoring sessions every week and I cannot praise Action Tutoring and its communication enough. Her tutor put her at ease straight away and explained the learning in a way that she found a lot easier to understand. She looked forward to seeing her tutor every week. Thank you! ”

“ Our child has got a lot out of the tutoring and was very complimentary about it. He said the tutors were very good and he found it so helpful. Thank you for your hard work in setting this up and persevering every week in reminding us that it was happening! I think it has been really valuable and a boost for pupils who missed a lot of school this year! I think it helped my son knowing that you and the tutors cared about his progress. ”



When asked if Action Tutoring adapted delivery methods effectively to support pupils through the changing Covid-19 guidance, teachers gave an average score of **9.5 out of 10** (where 10 is 'Yes, definitely').

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.**

An Action Tutoring **staff member oversees the delivery** on the programme and enables the development of our tutors.



We aim to deliver up to **30 tutoring sessions**, for each year group, with the school over the academic year.

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



All of our pupils sit an **initial baseline assessment** before they begin their tutoring with us.

After **15 hours of tutoring** 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.

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 across the country.

Action Tutoring's suite of tutoring workbooks have been **adapted for online delivery** and are pre-loaded onto the platform for the tutors and pupils to use.



Teachers and an Action Tutoring staff member are on hand to support with any issues and **monitor the quality of the tutoring** being delivered in a learning environment.

We have a **portfolio of 12 carefully structured workbooks** currently in operation, 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.



Action Tutoring has done everything it said it would. They have run the programme independently from the school. Once set up, they can literally take over and solve any issues that may arise. I'd highly recommend them.



Deputy Headteacher, Newcastle

Our pupils



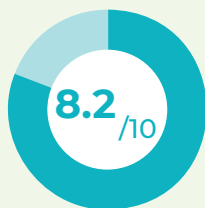
"All I can really say is it's really really good and it helps a lot, because I was not confident with maths at all and **now I'm quite confident** and I can do a lot better than I did before."

Cooper, Year 6 pupil



"[At the start of the year] I couldn't even imagine sitting an exam in maths! It's been difficult being in and out of school because of the pandemic. It means it's been harder to hold onto the things you're being taught, it's really easy to forget the skills you're learning and to lose your confidence. **Knowing you have that extra support has given me more confidence in class.** It's meant I feel safe about taking the things I didn't understand in class and talking to my tutor about them in a space outside the classroom, which has been especially helpful because we've been so in and out this year!"

Muhammad, Year 11 pupil



When asked if their tutors were able to explain the subject clearly, pupils gave an average score of **8.2 out of 10** (where 10 is 'Yes, definitely').



“ You have made such a huge impact on our children - their confidence is hugely increased and they are able to make accelerated progress as a result of your input. Thank you so much! **”**
Headteacher, London



“[My tutors are] amazing, kind and respectful. [It's helped me] with defining words and summarising in other lessons... It's a fun activity and you get to meet new people. Thank you so much [to the tutors] for doing this for me and a lot of people. **You've made our smiles a lot bigger** and you've helped us to improve on basically every lesson.”

Phoebe, Year 6 pupil



“Tutoring helps. It's normally linked to what you do in lessons so you can go in being more confident on things. It helps with getting more fixed in my head so I know what to write about when it comes to exams. Tutoring boosts you a lot, especially in exams.

Tutoring is more focused on you. You get to ask things. Sometimes you don't want to ask in class, so you can ask whatever you want and they can spend more time on your answer. My tutor is really kind.”

Bella, Year 11 pupil

Our schools

"Following the Government's announcement about catch-up funding and the National Tutoring Programme, the school leadership team ensured curriculum recovery was a key priority in the school improvement plan. This was followed by setting a clear strategy to support pupils and staff in school as well as remotely during the lockdowns.

"The Senior Leadership Team looked into the work of Action Tutoring. We **gravitated towards the values and vision the charity holds and their commitment to helping the most disadvantaged**, as it resonates with our vision and Christian ethos to raise the attainment of all the pupils we serve.

"Pupils have engaged really well with the tutors and this has led to high motivation which has contributed to the success of this programme. Action Tutoring has contributed to making sure our disadvantaged Year 6 pupils are on track to meet expected standards in English and mathematics.

"**Communication is the key to success — Action Tutoring is in regular communication** and has addressed every query raised in a highly professional manner.

"We are committed to investing in the Action Tutoring programme in years to come. **We have seen the difference it has made to improving our pupils' attainment as well as improving their study skills**; they have become more independent in their decision making. It has also prepared them for transition into Year 7."



Simrat Mavi, Deputy Headteacher,
St. Giles C of E Primary School, Walsall, West Midlands

"I initially chose Action Tutoring because of their commitment to disadvantaged pupils. I feel that they are driven by a moral imperative and this is visible in everything that they do; it is clear that **all those involved are here to support pupils first and foremost**.

"The pupils have had a really positive reaction to the provision. They have felt valued and have made good relationships, despite initially feeling nervous about the online elements. The warmth of the tutors has helped to build their confidence with this format.

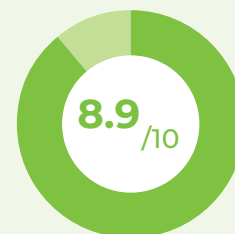
"The consistency of the tutors and the presence of our Action Tutoring Programme Coordinator has really made a difference — **this has then translated into academic progress**.

"We will absolutely continue to invest in Action Tutoring — I feel like it's incredibly worthwhile. We have worked with other providers for humanities subjects and the comparison is enormous — it highlighted the quality of the consistency, communication and delivery that we have received from Action Tutoring.

"**Overall I can't praise them enough** for their quality of liaison, delivery, organisation and quality assurance."



Nicola Pearson, Deputy Headteacher,
Park Vale Academy, Nottingham



When asked if Action Tutoring had an overall positive impact on pupils, teachers gave an average score of **8.9 out of 10** (where 10 is 'Yes, definitely').

Our volunteers

Action Tutoring is committed to ensuring that our volunteer tutors provide high-impact, effective tutoring sessions. Our evidence shows that they have a positive impact on pupils' academic progress. We have put in place quality assurance processes at every stage of the tutor journey.



Application assessment: all tutors must meet a set of academic qualification criteria and quality indicators.



Initial tutor training: all tutors attend the training delivered by staff with a background in teaching or training. Online tutors complete compulsory e-learning to ensure they tutor effectively in the virtual classroom.



Continued development: 24-hour access to our e-learning platform, providing ongoing training, to grow tutors' skills and expertise.



Quality tutoring resources: our resources are created by specialist curriculum consultants, and are aligned with national curriculum age-related expectations.



Programme Coordinators: pass feedback on pupil progress to teachers and tutors to improve learning outcomes. They may suggest teaching strategies that will help tutors to boost pupils' learning.



Formal observations: we carry out formal observations for tutor quality assurance. Our competencies checklist is used to evaluate the impact of a tutor's session and identify how the tutor could develop.



Spot-check observations: for randomly selected new tutors, to monitor quality and identify trends to inform the development of our training resources.



2,749 volunteers delivered **31,763** sessions in 2020-21



40% were employed either part time or full time



33% were undergraduate or postgraduate students



12% were retired professionals



7% were currently unemployed



8% chose not to disclose



The Programme Coordinator is excellent and very proactive in working with parents and keeping the school informed both during and after each session. The tutors are very professional and well prepared.



Assistant Headteacher, Newcastle



"I first heard about Action Tutoring at the start of the pandemic in 2020, my student union directed me to the charity, I applied and have never looked back. The best thing about tutoring is seeing the tangible effects of my efforts reflected in the increase in confidence and the progress that I see in my pupils. **It is so rewarding to be able to pass on my knowledge to other people**, seeing what a difference it makes to them makes it all worthwhile.

"Tutoring has had a profound influence on me. Seeing pupils improve and gain confidence is such a fantastic feeling and really makes me feel I personally have a positive impact on others' lives, even if it is just the few pupils I tutor. Tutoring has provided me with valuable life experience and a grounding at university."

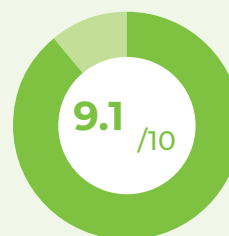
Sam, university student



"I knew I wanted to volunteer with young people and searched online for opportunities in Bristol. Action Tutoring seemed a very worthwhile and focused charity, helping pupils who need that level of support. I felt I could offer something too. The best thing about tutoring is getting to know the kids. Being asked questions I never would have been asked in the corporate world (in a good way!).

"I have learnt a great deal through volunteering, especially about methods for transferring messages to individuals. Every learner is different. As far as change goes, I have seen communication improve as you build trust with individuals. I have seen pupils' social barriers drop as they get involved in the programme. I have had pupils tell me they have seen the benefit and want to continue — that feels good."

Luke, previously worked in the energy industry but transitioned into teaching



When asked if they would recommend volunteering with Action Tutoring to a friend or colleague, tutors gave an average score of **9.1 out of 10** (where 10 is 'Yes, definitely').

"I've been tutoring English online since the start of the pandemic doing a mixture of paid and voluntary work with a few organisations. I came across Action Tutoring's website and liked the look of the programme from a teaching and learning perspective. It appeared well structured and the tutors were supported as well as pupils. **Without a doubt the best thing about tutoring is seeing the difference it makes to a pupil, 'a light bulb moment', and seeing them grow in confidence.** It's always great when you ask what a pupil liked about the lesson and they say 'everything!'.

"From a teaching perspective it was invaluable to learn new skills in delivering the lessons: in IT skills; training on the portal or delivering the material in the slides. It's an admirable programme to get involved in, you learn as much as you give. I think helping, however little or big, makes a difference to even one pupil. If a pupil goes out there standing a little taller and ready to take on a challenge, whether they get it right or not, then that's progress."

Jas, qualified teacher and professional tutor



"With the onset of lockdown I realised many children would be losing out on education. **Experience has taught me how important education is in shaping future opportunities and making or breaking lives.** So I applied to join the charity as a maths tutor. Having the opportunity to help the pupils is lovely. They all have different strengths, weaknesses and personalities. It's interesting to try to tailor teaching to the individual.

"Watching them grow in confidence and ability is very rewarding — their enthusiasm is infectious. I have noticed the pupils' skills improve, despite the inevitable disruption with Covid-19 regulations. They have got more used to the tutoring and gained confidence, so are expressing themselves better and asking questions. On the other hand I have become more confident in being able to adapt the sessions around the individuals. It is good when both 'sides' can find their common ground."

Anne, retired GP



Our team

In 2020-21 Action Tutoring's team grew significantly to help tackle the impact of Covid. Work was delivered by a team of 62 paid staff. This was comprised of our frontline programme staff, crucial for our delivery; a Marketing and Communications team, to raise our profile and recruit a sufficient number of high-quality volunteer tutors; our Operations team who ensure our team are fully equipped and supported and our Impact and Quality team who are rigorous about the quality of our training and tutoring and their impact. They were all overseen by a management team of five members.

"I joined Action Tutoring at an exciting time of growth. My team's mission is to ensure the quality of tutoring keeps pace as we expand. This year we have trained 950+ tutors on Zoom and revamped our initial tutor training. So tutors can keep upskilling themselves, we've expanded our 'Bright Ideas' tutor development library on our e-learning platform with topics ranging from group work strategies to dyslexia awareness.

"Diversity and inclusion are crucial to our high standards and I'm proud to have led on compiling our 'Bright Ideas: Managing conversations about prejudice, stereotypes and inequality' training. I've also been part of ongoing efforts to review and diversify our English tutoring resources.

"Tutor observations are also key to ensuring quality. I love seeing our dedicated tutors at work and using my teaching experience to provide feedback and support. Observations also allow my team to spot opportunities to continually improve our resources, training and tech guidance. We are always learning!"



CJ joined in December 2020 as Curriculum and Training Assistant, before moving to their current role of Training and Quality Coordinator in September 2021

"Having previously taught in global education environments, I'm a firm believer in broadening horizons for all young people, no matter their socio-economic background. As a Programme Coordinator for Sheffield, it has been a pleasure to observe the tutoring sessions. I've witnessed the pupils move from strength to strength whilst their tutors help them to navigate challenges and encourage them to push themselves further.

"I'm immensely proud not just of the academic progress that the pupils have made, but also of their ever-growing resilience and confidence. The support that their dedicated tutors offer is truly invaluable and inspiring. I'm incredibly proud to be a part of the effort to ensure no young person is left behind, and I'm excited to see our impact and reach continue to grow around the country."



Ed joined as Programme Coordinator for Sheffield in September 2021

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

"Prior to working for Action Tutoring, I worked at a walk-in centre for another children's charity. I saw firsthand how a child's socio-economic background could influence their academic attainment: from having no space to do school work, a lack of books or even enough food on the table. Schools may have stayed open this academic year, but the effects of Covid on disadvantaged pupils and their learning has continued to impact them. I have seen how they have battled with low staff and isolating pupils, demonstrating how vital it is that Action Tutoring continues to provide tutoring to bridge the gap in their learning.

"As a Programme Manager, I build and manage the school relationships in North London and Sussex, and it's been exciting that the growth of our online model has allowed us to support more disadvantaged pupils across the Sussex region.

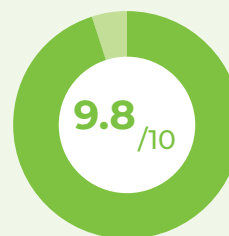
"I have worked for Action Tutoring for over five years and have loved every minute of it. I started out as a Programme Coordinator and I can honestly say that seeing that 'lightbulb moment' on a pupil's face when a tutor has helped them understand something still makes me emotional every time. I am very thankful to all of our fantastic tutors for making a difference in so many young people's lives."



Emma joined in December 2016 as Programme Coordinator for London, before becoming Programme Manager for London and Sussex

"I have been impressed by the Action Tutoring staff. They are excellent Tuition Partners to work with as they are knowledgeable, professional, friendly and deliver what they commit to."

Deputy Headteacher, London



When asked if Action Tutoring staff were well organised and professional, teachers gave an average score of **9.6 and 9.8 out of 10** (where 10 is 'Yes, definitely').



Our funders

In 2020-21 the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) grant income covered the cost of tutoring programmes for up to 15 sessions per pupil in one subject. Where possible we wanted to offer more sessions to pupils to increase the potential for impact. For pupils who exceeded 15 sessions or received support in both maths and English, additional fundraising was required to cover these costs.

We are incredibly grateful to the following funders for the generous support they gave in 2020-21:



In partnership with
THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND



We're also grateful to the following organisations for their additional regional grants:

- Rothley Trust (Newcastle)
- Sheffield Town Trust (Sheffield)
- John James Bristol Foundation (Bristol)
- Sheffield Bluecoat and Mount Pleasant Foundation (Sheffield)
- Price Parry Charitable Trust (Wirral and Liverpool)
- The Worshipful Company of Insurers (London)
- Richard Reeve's Foundation (London)

And the donations generously given by these organisations:

- The Orp Foundation
- EY Foundation
- The Harbour Foundation
- KPMG
- Guy Butler
- MyStreet app

“ Supporting groups that make a real difference in their communities sits at the heart of The Worshipful Company of Insurers' values. The work done by Action Tutoring is invaluable and their hard work and diligence through the challenges of the pandemic is impressive. The WCI is proud to be a supporter of such an energetic and impactful educational charity. ”

Action Tutoring was the Charity Partner for the Worshipful Company of Insurers in 2020-21 and again in 2021-22

Additional support

We really value the relationships we have built with a host of organisations and individuals. They support us to deliver and spread the word about our impact and the issues we're working to solve.

Action Tutoring was announced as a Fair Education Alliance Scaling Award winner in July 2020. Over the last year the charity has benefited from bespoke support to deepen its impact. The prize is a two-year accelerator programme and Action Tutoring is looking forward to the continued support and benefits into 2022.



On 2nd July 2021, [Alex Norris, MP for Nottingham North](#), attended an Action Tutoring session at Heathfield Primary School. Alex had planned to visit a school the previous year, but the pandemic meant this couldn't go ahead, making this visit all the more significant.

“Volunteer tutors can have a powerful influence on pupils’ grades — it’s important to raise the profile of their outstanding work at Heathfield Primary and the nine other schools with which they partner in Nottingham”, he said.

Less than a week later, [MP for Birmingham Yardley, Jess Phillips](#), paid her second visit to an Action Tutoring programme since 2017. Compared to her first, when tutors and pupils sat together, circumstances were quite different: this time, tutors logged in from Birmingham, Cambridgeshire, Exeter and beyond. Jess joined the final session for Year 6 at Ark Victoria Primary Academy.

“The pandemic has meant that pupils, particularly those that are disadvantaged have fallen further behind their peers, and programmes like this one are providing invaluable support to young people in Birmingham and across the country,” she said.

We were thrilled to have been supported by media outlets in 2020-21 to help us raise awareness of our work and the impact of the pandemic on pupils facing disadvantage. This included BBC Radio 4's Today programme and World at One in September and February; features in Schools Week, SecEd and TES and regional broadcasts.



(L- R) Alex Norris, MP for Nottingham North, pictured alongside Jen Fox, Deputy CEO of Action Tutoring, during his visit to Heathfield Primary School in Kersall Drive, Nottingham. Credit: Joseph Raynor/Nottingham Post

Jess Phillips, MP for Birmingham Yardley, meeting pupils at Ark Victoria Primary Academy in Birmingham

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 Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2021.

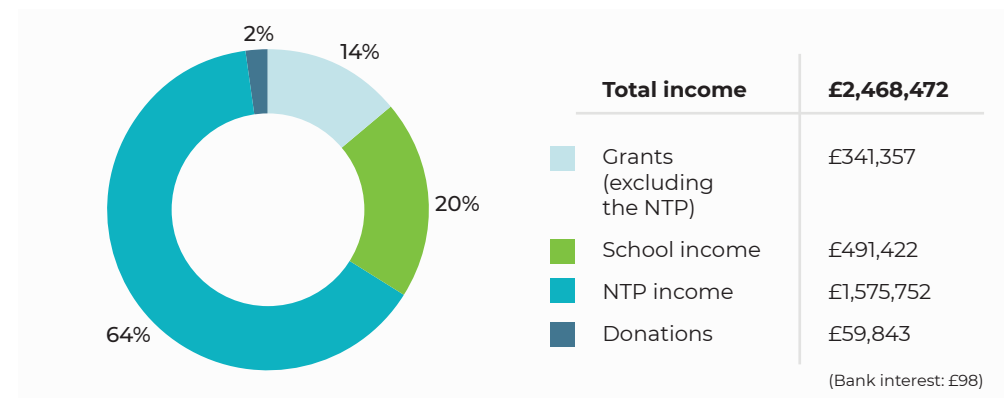
It is the policy of the charity to maintain three months of full costs or nine months of net costs (minus delivery income which currently includes school income and the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) funding), whichever is the larger. The reserves policy was met in 2020-21 and is reviewed annually.

There was a 74% increase in income on 2019-20. The income from schools covered 23% of the charity's outgoings. The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) grant income covered 75% of the cost of NTP funded programmes.

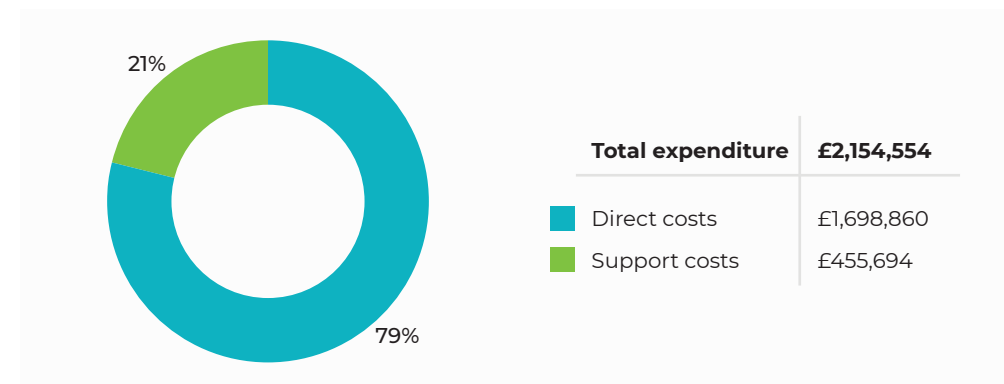
Grant income (excluding the NTP) for 2020-21 came to £341,357, a decrease of £719,384 (68%) on the previous year. This was a strategic decision as some secured funding could be deferred to future years due to the introduction of the NTP grant.



Breakdown of income (2020-21)



Breakdown of expenditure (2020-21)



Our value



Each **tutoring workbook** for our pupils costs just **£3.15**, to ensure the highest quality and relevant tutoring for them.



It costs just **£3.10** to **train a tutor** for face-to-face and online tutoring.



It costs **£2.50** to run our **online tutoring platform** for a tutoring session.



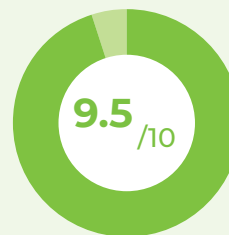
£390 provides up to a **year of face-to-face tutoring** for a pupil.

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.¹⁷

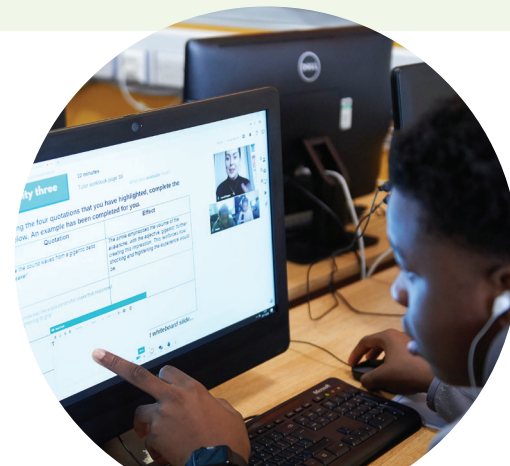
Research by Impetus has shown that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) than their peers and that three quarters of NEET young people have been NEET for **at least 12 months**.¹⁸

If a pupil is not in education, employment or training on leaving school, they could have reduced earnings of **£225,000** over a lifetime.¹⁹

Improving the attainment of pupils facing disadvantage benefits not only the individual but also society as a whole. A small investment to support a young person to achieve can have a significant long-term saving for wider society.



When asked if Action Tutoring's programme offers good value for money, teachers gave an average score of **9.5 out of 10** (where 10 is 'Yes, definitely').



Looking back, where it all started



Action Tutoring was born out of a desire to make the benefits of tutoring available to those that might not otherwise afford it. This concept has become much more mainstream thanks to the National Tutoring Programme, but was not so 10 years ago. The experiences of Susannah, founder and CEO, both as a private tutor and doing voluntary youth work in her local community in London led her to think there had to be a way to make tutoring more accessible. Support from the **Shaftesbury Partnership** to pilot a volunteer model, early days funding from the **Shine Trust** and willingness from several schools to try something new that could benefit their pupils laid the foundations for Action Tutoring to grow to the organisation it is today.

Susannah reflects,

“Two seminal moments particularly stand out. The first was a focus group held in my flat in November 2010, where the enthusiasm from would-be volunteers, teachers and those in the corporate sector that we might be onto something was palpable. The second was the very first tutoring session ever run, at the Harris Academy in Peckham in March 2011, a year before we registered as a charity.”

Once the session was set up, myself and the enthusiastic and committed link teacher looked around the room at the buzz of volunteers and pupils working away, turned to each other and said, “Wow! This is actually working!” Seeing the vision become reality in that moment was so powerful. Shortly after that, a funder came to visit the session, was willing to support a larger scale pilot and the rest is history!



“

I first became involved with Action Tutoring ten years ago because I saw a fledgling organisation with the potential to have a meaningful impact on a societal problem, with talented and purposeful leadership behind it. It was that collision of problem, solution and leadership that made me believe this was an organisation worth investing in.

I'm incredibly proud of what Action Tutoring has achieved since then and I think it's every bit as worthy of support today. The inequality and underperformance that the charity seeks to alleviate sadly persists in our society; the evidence base in support of Action Tutoring's approach has expanded; and the organisation is now gifted with many dedicated leaders who believe we can do better for underprivileged young people.”

Richard Aked, former tutor and Trustee

“

Before my teaching career, I worked as a Wealth Planning Solicitor in central London and it was during this period that I first got involved with Action Tutoring. When Susannah suggested I take part in one of the very first programmes, to get some experience of what teaching is like, I jumped at the opportunity and since then I haven't looked back. The tutoring experience made me realise for the first time that this career is more about learning than teaching. It is not a performance – more about the nitty gritty of figuring out how children learn and progress. Volunteering with Action Tutoring confirmed my decision to change career and become a teacher! I spent two years on Teach First at an excellent school in Peckham before moving down to Kent. I think the clarity of Action Tutoring's vision has been vital and the focus on ensuring that the tutoring is rigorously planned and resourced. Maintaining the quality of the pupils' experience means that I am sure the charity will go from strength to strength.”

Patrick Bidder, one of Action Tutoring's first tutors and Subject Leader for English at Tonbridge Grammar School

Looking forward, our future

Following a period of significant growth and change for Action Tutoring, accelerated by Covid, we now have the chance to consolidate our work and re-stabilise. At the time of writing, Susannah, CEO, and the Board are working towards a new strategic plan. They aim to launch the new strategy in late spring 2022.

As society, education and Action Tutoring emerge into a new environment, we will continue to make the most of the opportunities presented. Action Tutoring has been officially approved as an National Tutoring Programme (NTP) Tuition Partner until 2024 and we hope tutoring support in schools will be further embedded. We will keep collaborating with others to ensure that the NTP is a success and leaves a lasting legacy.

Now that online delivery is firmly established, we hope to further our geographic reach to more remote locations, enabling us to deliver on our mission of supporting disadvantaged pupils to reach their academic potential.

We will use our ten year anniversary as an opportunity to reflect on all that's been achieved and ensure we are on a strong footing to continue to make a meaningful difference through the next decade of delivery. We know our work is far from complete. There is still so much need for our support and we will keep a strong focus on impact, learning and improving to ensure thousands more pupils can access our support, opening doors to future opportunities.



Action Tutoring has given many of our pupils a real boost in confidence and has proven to improve their final outcomes. This is a partnership we value greatly and will continue with as a major pillar of our intervention programme.



Deputy Headteacher, London



We will absolutely continue to invest in tutoring. As we continue to respond to the effects of the pandemic, tutoring will continue to play an important part in our plans, including Action Tutoring. We have been overjoyed with the programme and the friendly and professional staff that visit the school to ensure that it runs smoothly and without problem.



Curriculum Lead for Science, West Sussex



Thank you

We are so grateful to all of our volunteers and partner schools for the support they gave in 2020-21, as the pandemic continued to disrupt education and society. Every volunteer helped us to achieve our overall impact. A special thank you must go to our tutors who supported on the greatest number of sessions:

Tutor	Total sessions delivered in 2020-21	Region
Ranjit Matharu	207	London
Frank Plater	89	Bristol
Andrew Schofield	77	Birmingham
Janet Cheney	75	London
Jill Grainger	73	London
Amanda Geary	70	Brighton and Hove
Lakshmi Nori	66	London
Andrew Rogers	63	Northumberland
George Townsend	63	Cambridgeshire
Matt Fisher	61	Cornwall
Robert Longair	61	London
Ceri Bunnage	57	Cambridgeshire
Karen Charles	52	Brighton and Hove
Sandra Richardson	51	West Yorkshire

"My tutor is very good at explaining and she makes learning fun."

Pupil

"The tutors are kind and supportive and help build my confidence in the subject."

Pupil

"You're the best tutors ever and you're making children's lives better!"

Pupil



A big thank you to all of our volunteering partners, particularly the following who sourced the most volunteers for us in 2020-21:

- DAC Beachcroft
- Civil Service
- Arup
- Deloitte
- KPMG
- Newcastle University
- University of Sheffield
- University of Nottingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Birmingham

Endnotes

1. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>
'Pupil premium allocations 2020 to 2021: national, local authority, parliamentary constituency level')
2. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/851798/KS2_Revised_publication_text_2019_v3.pdf
(2019 data, as assessments were cancelled in 2020 and 2021).
3. https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/support-for-schools/bitesize-support/EEF_Attainment_Gap_Report_2018.pdf (Page 7)
4. <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/education-in-england-annual-report-2020/>
5. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised/2020-21>
(key_stage_2_4_transition_matrices_2021_gcse_subjects_graded_9to1.xls and 2021_lad_sl_fsm_dis_data.xls)
6. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06705/SN06705.pdf> (page 16)
7. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/february2022> (October to December 2021)
8. https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/28057/3/20161221_-_V3_LCF_Young_People_Guidance.docx_-_1_-_2_.pdf
9. <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/epi-research-for-the-department-for-education-on-pupil-learning-loss/>
10. <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/covid-19-and-social-mobility-impact-brief/>
11. https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/guidance/REA_-_Impact_of_school_closures_on_the_attainment_gap_summary.pdf?v=1631215477
12. <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/disadvantage-gaps-in-england/>
13. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/peer-tutoring>
14. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/00028312019002237>
15. https://actiontutoring.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/action_tutoring_impact_evaluation.pdf
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17. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Annual_Reports/EEF_Attainment_Gap_Report_2018.pdf
18. <https://www.impetus.org.uk/policy/youth-jobs-gap>
19. <https://www.impetus.org.uk/assets/publications/Report/Youth-Jobs-Index-II-report-final.pdf>

Photo credits: Action Tutoring by Ian Tuttle and Joseph Raynor/Nottingham Post



www.actiontutoring.org.uk

hello@actiontutoring.org.uk

0203 872 5894

@ActionTutoring

The Dock, Tobacco Quay,
Wapping Lane, London E1W 2SF

Registered charity number - 1147175

Company number - 08105978