

## Guide for secondary schools

Raising attainment of disadvantaged pupils in English and maths through volunteer tutoring



## Who we are

Action Tutoring supports young people facing socio-economic disadvantage to achieve a meaningful level of academic attainment.

## What we do

We are an education charity that partners with schools to deliver tutoring programmes for pupils in years 7, 10 and 11. We work specifically with pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding and at risk of missing out on a grade 4 in their GCSEs.



We also work with primary schools supporting pupils to reach national standards in their Key Stage 2 SATs.

We select and train high-quality volunteer tutors who use our specially designed resources to deliver impactful tutoring. We keep in regular contact with our teachers to ensure tutoring remains focused on priority areas.

## Our Programmes

We offer face-to-face tutoring where tutors come into school or online tutoring where pupils are able to connect with their tutors via our online platform, using computers in your school.

The set-up and structure of online and face-to-face programmes follow the same format and volunteer tutors are assessed by the same criteria. A member of our staff team oversees the sessions each week to support the pupils, teachers and tutors.

On our online programmes our tutoring workbooks are uploaded to the platform for pupils and tutors to work through.



*"Action Tutoring has achieved significant progress in closing the attainment gap for pupils by believing that no child's chances should be limited by their socio-economic background and are working tirelessly to provide real solutions to disadvantaged children."*

UK's Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, speaking at Action Tutoring's anniversary event

# Who we work with

## Schools

We work with non-selective state secondary schools in England where a higher than average percentage of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

## Pupils

Within those schools we look to work with pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding and need additional support to secure a grade 4 in the subject they would receive tutoring in.

Action Tutoring's resources have been designed for the curriculum introduced in 2014, aimed at pupils working from grades 3 to 5.

## Year 7 catch-up programme

Action Tutoring is aware of the huge impact on pupils of all ages caused by Covid-19 and school closures, and in particular the effect on those eligible for the Pupil Premium. Our Year 7 catch-up programme is designed to support Pupil Premium pupils who did not reach the expected standard in Year 6, so they can make the additional progress they need while facing the challenging transition up to secondary school.



## Our Impact

Only 25% of disadvantaged pupils achieve a grade 5 or above in GCSE maths and English, compared with 50% of their non-disadvantaged peers.<sup>1</sup>



Pupils who do not achieve GCSEs are more likely to become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) after turning 16.<sup>2</sup>

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



72%

72% of disadvantaged pupils passed their maths GCSE after attending at least 10 tutoring sessions with us, compared with the 53% pass rate of disadvantaged pupils nationally. Read more about [our impact](#).

As only a minority of our English pupils attended 10 sessions or more last year, and GCSE results are not available for every pupil, the sample for analysis is too small and unlikely to represent the impact achieved for our English pupils in general. For this reason, we don't believe it would be meaningful to draw conclusions from such a small dataset or to publish analysis of our 2021–22 GCSE English programmes.

## How our programmes work



Tutoring sessions take place as a group on the school site once a week before, during or after school hours and last for **1 hour**. Typically we work with **18–20 pupils** at any one time, with an average ratio of one tutor to three pupils. Programmes run for **10–20 weeks**, and we aim to deliver **two programmes** over the academic year.

### Our provision includes:

5 to 8 high-quality, DBS-checked and trained volunteer tutors.

Structured pupil workbooks, developed by curriculum specialists specifically for tutoring sessions.

Tutor workbooks containing guidance on how to explain topics and common misconceptions.

A Programme Coordinator to engage pupils, support tutors and manage the school partnership.

Progress analysis and reporting for schools.

Full enrolment, induction and engagement support for pupils.

We seek to work closely with subject teachers to ensure that tutoring complements classroom teaching. All pupils enrolled on our programmes sit a baseline assessment, which is used to develop personalised learning plans. Our tutors use these plans to support their pupils' progress in key topic areas and with subject-specific skills. Pupils are then re-assessed to measure progress and map impact made, identifying gaps in knowledge.

## Cost

Our tutoring programmes are subsidised. Schools can fund 50% of the cost of the programme from their NTP grant in 2023-24. We also fundraise a large portion of the cost of the tuition to limit the impact on tight school budgets.

The cost to your school for 10-20 weeks of tutoring for 18-20 pupils would be £1,643. **This works out as less than £6 per pupil per session.**

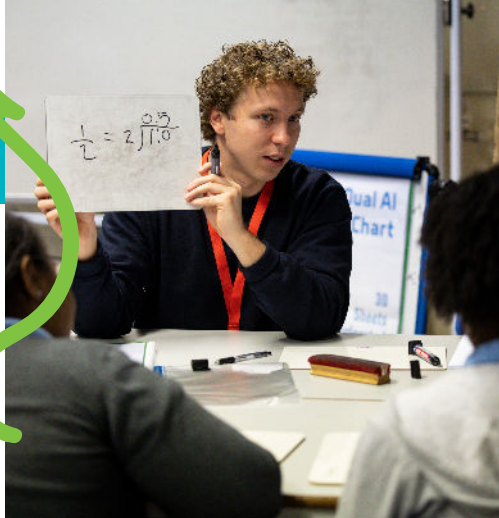
Your school can sign up to multiple programmes to support different age groups or successive programmes to support the same pupils over the whole year.

Please get in touch for more detail on costs.



## Why tutoring?

Research by the Education Endowment Foundation has found that a year-long programme of small-group tuition could add as much as **five months' progress** to a young person's schooling.

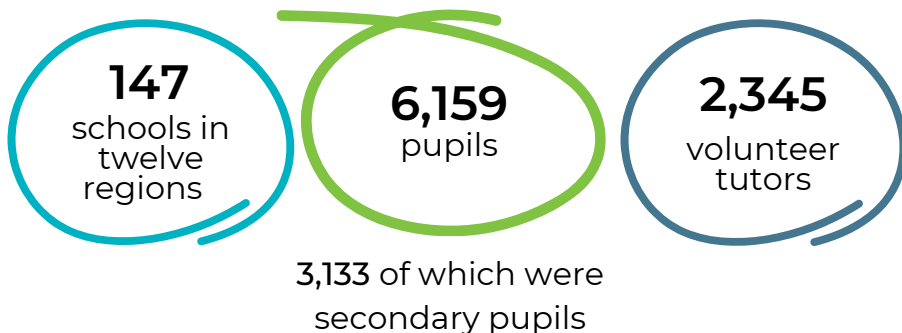


They found that *"small-group tuition offers an opportunity for greater levels of interaction and feedback compared to whole-class teaching which can support pupils to overcome barriers to learning."*<sup>3</sup>

The main barrier for schools wanting to use tutoring is cost. The average cost of a private tutor is £25–30 per hour.<sup>4</sup>

An external evaluation of Action Tutoring's GCSE results showed that pupils attending seven to eight sessions made up to half a grade more progress than their non-tutored peers.<sup>5</sup>

In 2021–22, we worked with:





*"The resources provided have plugged gaps in learning and have been an effective revision aid. Pupils have openly informed the school that they felt more confident going into the examinations and the strategies that tutors covered with them significantly reduced stress levels before going into their exams. Pupils' self esteem throughout the year has increased significantly and the relationship that they form with their tutors is a huge part of this. Pupil mindsets changing from 'I can't do this' to 'let's do my very best' is something that the programme scaffolds pupils with fantastically."*

**Ross Scherer**

Year 11 Assistant Principal for Achievement,  
Kenton School, Newcastle

**Tutoring can benefit your pupils by:**

- Improving their academic attainment in the subject.
- Boosting confidence through individual attention.
- Helping them to develop independent study skills.
- Building on their communications skills by interacting with new adults, helping them prepare for further education, training or employment.

## Who are our volunteers?

All of our volunteers go through a strict selection process which focuses on their academic credentials (degree-educated or equivalent, or studying for a degree, and at least a B at A Level in the subject they wish to tutor) and core tutoring competencies. We also complete DBS checks for them.

Volunteers receive an initial two-hour training session. This covers core tutoring skills, safeguarding training, the time commitment and our expectations. Once they have started a programme, they receive ongoing developmental support through our online CPD modules and access to all the training and materials in our tutor resources library.




15% of our volunteers are not currently in employment or selected 'other' under occupation.

*“Before I started I was a bit apprehensive but once I got here, my Programme Coordinator put me at ease. I think the best thing about volunteering is the fulfilment, just seeing that they’ve clocked the particular concept that they wouldn’t have got in class, but I’ve been able to break through the barriers and teach it to them – that’s quite satisfying.”*

Chike, an Action Tutoring volunteer

## Sources cited

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*"It's dedicated time where you can talk to someone about your learning and where you need help. Knowing you have that extra support has given me more confidence in class."*

— A secondary pupil in London

Email [hello@actiontutoring.org.uk](mailto:hello@actiontutoring.org.uk)  
Or call 0300 102 0094  
[www.actiontutoring.org.uk](http://www.actiontutoring.org.uk)  
@ActionTutoring

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