

Action Tutoring programme

Evaluation of award-winning, low-cost maths tuition for key stages 3 and 4

School information sheet

Overview

Action Tutoring provides **cost-effective, evidence-based tutoring in maths** to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Action Tutoring is partnering with the Education Endowment Foundation ([EEF](#)) and **two sector-leading research organisations**—the National Foundation for Educational Research ([NFER](#)) and the Behavioural Insights Team ([BIT](#))—to evaluate the impact of the Action Tutoring programme on young people's attainment in, and attitude towards, maths.

Through a **randomised controlled trial**, the evaluation will explore Action Tutoring's effectiveness at promoting maths attainment through a 20-week tutoring programme for Year 11 pupils. The trial will also explore the impact of tutoring programmes of different lengths for pupils in Year 7 and Year 10, with the Year 7 provision aiming in particular to support pupils' transition from key stage 2 to 3.

As a participating school, you will access maths tuition for **pupils in Years 7, 10 and 11** in the 2025–26 academic year, for approximately **8% of the actual cost**.

Who is running the project?

[Action Tutoring](#) is an **award-winning education charity** transforming lives through high-quality volunteer tutoring. It has developed its maths programme over nearly 13 years of delivery in partnership with more than 150 secondary schools in England. Action Tutoring will work in partnership with schools to deliver the project. NFER, a leading independent provider of education research and insights, will be evaluating the programme in collaboration with BIT, a global research and innovation consultancy.

What does the programme involve?

Selected pupils in Years 7, 10 and 11 will receive small-group tuition at your school, delivered by a team of trained volunteer tutors. Tutors deliver a bespoke scheme of work **developed by curriculum experts** for small-group tuition. Your school will be assigned a **dedicated Action Tutoring Programme Coordinator** to oversee tuition—maximising impact while minimising input needed from your school.

In the first half of the year, **Year 10 and 11 pupils** receive **weekly one-hour tuition** for 15 or 20 weeks, to increase their chances of **passing GCSE maths**. Up to 20 pupils per year group take part.

In the second half of the year, up to 20 **Year 7 pupils** receive tuition for either ten or 15 weeks.

In [Action Tutoring hubs](#), tutors may attend the school to deliver the tutoring in person or may deliver it online in a virtual classroom. In other locations, tuition is always delivered online. Pupils always receive tutoring at the school site, under supervision.

Is my school eligible?

To be eligible to participate in the trial, your school must:

- Be a state-maintained, mainstream secondary school in England with pupils in Year 7, 10 and 11.

- Have a school-wide Pupil Premium eligibility rate of at least 18%.
- **Not** have partnered with Action Tutoring or any other external tutoring provider in 2024–25.
- **Not** be taking part in another maths-focused EEF trial for the same year groups in 2025-26.

Which pupils can take part?

Action Tutoring's mission is to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who are at risk of not achieving at least a grade 4 in maths at GCSE.

At least 65% of pupils selected by your school to take part in the trial must be **eligible for the Pupil Premium grant** and all pupils must meet the following **maths attainment criteria**:

- Year 11 pupils must start the year working at grades 3–5.
- Year 10 pupils must start the year working at grades 2–5.
- Year 7 pupils must have narrowly achieved or missed the expected standard in their maths SATs.

All pupils must meet the attainment criteria, but your school can offer up to 35% of places to pupils who are not eligible for the Pupil Premium, if you confirm the pupils would not otherwise access private tuition. Up to 15% of places may be offered to any pupils meeting the maths attainment criteria.

Are there any costs involved?

Schools will **contribute £2,250**, which is just **8% of the total cost** of tuition, benefiting three year groups. Part of this contribution will be refunded, via a payment of £500, once you have submitted all the data required for the evaluation. This makes the **final cost to you £1,750**.

What are the benefits or risks of my school participating in this trial?

We do not anticipate any risks or harm to the schools, staff or pupils participating in this study.

- Access innovative, easily implemented provision for up to 60 pupils at a 92% discount.
- Receive a thank-you payment of £500 upon completing all trial-related activities.
- Case study schools will also receive a thank-you payment of £150.

How does the trial work?

Schools select between 26 and 40 eligible pupils from each participating year group to take part. After completing an initial survey and maths assessment (called a baseline), selected pupils will be randomly allocated to either the **control group** (supported by your school as normal, without Action Tutoring) or the **intervention group** (who will take part in tuition). Year 11 pupils in the intervention group are guaranteed to receive tuition for 20 weeks, while the length of tutoring for Years 10 and 7 will be determined randomly (either 15 weeks for both cohorts, or 20 and 10 weeks respectively).

Schools will be required to nominate a **link teacher** for each year group, who will support the success of the programme by sharing pupil data with Action Tutoring, distributing information to parents, and communicating with the Action Tutoring Programme Coordinator each week.

Collecting data about pupil outcomes

Before tutoring begins, schools will be required to provide data about the pupils selected to take part, and distribute information sheets to parents. All selected pupils will then complete the Action Tutoring **maths baseline assessment** and a short **maths attitude survey** (both administered by Action Tutoring).

When tutoring ends, all pupils will be required to complete another maths attitude survey. The evaluation will use **maths GCSE scores** as the main outcome measure for Year 11s, and schools will be asked to share these scores with NFER in August 2026. The evaluation will use **Hodder's Access**

Mathematics assessment as the main outcome measure for pupils in Year 7 and Year 10, administered by NFER Test Administrators.

To learn more about what data will be collected for this project and why, see the section below titled **How will data be used**. A detailed **project timeline** is included at the end of this sheet, showing when pupil assessments and surveys will take place and who will administer them.

Link teachers nominated by schools will be asked to complete a short online survey at the start and end of the programme, to understand different aspects of their role in, and approach to, delivering the intervention, along with questions about usual practice at the school. Maths teachers of participating pupils will also be asked to complete an online survey after tutoring ends.

Contributing to a case study

Eight schools will be invited to be part of a case study. **Participating as a case study school is optional** and not a requirement for taking part in the trial. At these schools, NFER will interview a link teacher, up to two maths teachers, and up to two volunteer tutors. NFER will also carry out up to two focus groups with pupils at each school. Case study schools will be asked to complete an online proforma to inform a cost analysis of the programme, and will receive a **£150 thank-you payment** for their contribution.

Nimble trial: testing strategies that increase impact

The trial may test some strategies to enhance the impact of the tutoring, for example by testing promising methods for improving pupil engagement in the intervention. This evaluation approach is called a nimble trial and, if implemented, should not change or add to what's required from your school.

How will data be used?

The organisations delivering this project will collect some information about the pupils taking part in order to:

- effectively coordinate the delivery of the programme,
- meet safeguarding responsibilities,
- show that the programme reaches the pupils who are eligible to take part, and
- enable the evaluation of the trial.

A data sharing agreement will support the transfer of data between Action Tutoring, NFER and BIT. All data sharing between Action Tutoring, NFER, and BIT will be via a secure data portal.

NFER and Action Tutoring will be data controllers for the evaluation. The data controllers will decide what personal data is used and how, according to the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the study objectives set by the EEF. NFER and Action Tutoring will treat all data in the strictest confidence.

For more information about what data will be collected, and how it will be shared and used, please see the relevant privacy notices from [Action Tutoring](#), [NFER](#), [BIT](#), and [EEF](#).

Learn more, and register your interest today

[Learn more](#)[Ask a question](#)[Register interest](#)

Contact EEFtrial@actiontutoring.org.uk with questions related to the programme.

Contact ATEvaluation@NFER.ac.uk with questions related to the evaluation.

Detailed project timeline

What happens next?	When?
Join a webinar to learn more. Express your interest and have an initial conversation with Action Tutoring's School Partnership Lead.	Now until 30 June (early expressions of interest are most likely to secure a place)
Your school's senior leadership team will then sign a Memorandum of Understanding, committing to taking part in the trial.	
Your school shares letters (provided by Action Tutoring) with parents of the pupils you intend to select for the trial (eligible pupils currently in Year 9 and 10).	July
Your school shares data for participating pupils with Action Tutoring (to learn more about data sharing, please see Action Tutoring's privacy notice for trial schools).	
Year 10 and 11 pupils complete a baseline assessment and maths attitude survey (both administered by Action Tutoring) before being randomly sorted into intervention and control groups by NFER.	September and October 2025
The length of tutoring programme for Year 7 and Year 10 pupils at your school will be decided through randomisation (Year 11s are guaranteed 20 weeks of tuition).	
Link teachers will be asked to complete an initial survey.	
Weekly tutoring begins for Years 10 and 11.	October and November 2025
Your school shares letters with parents of Year 7 pupils you intend to select to take part in the trial. You share Year 7 pupil data with Action Tutoring.	November and December 2025
Year 7s complete a maths attitude survey before being randomly sorted into intervention and control groups	January and February 2026
If your Year 7 and Year 10 pupils are receiving 15 weeks of tuition each, tutoring will now end for Year 10s and begin for Year 7s.	February 2026
Pupils who have dropped out of sessions will be asked to complete a proforma.	
Tutoring ends for Year 11s, who then complete an end-point maths attitude survey.	April 2026
If your Year 10 pupils are receiving 20 weeks of tuition, the programme will now end for Year 10s and begin for Year 7s.	
Year 10 pupils complete an end-point maths attitude survey and the Access <i>Mathematics</i> end-point assessment (both administered by NFER).	
If your school is contributing to a case study, NFER will visit your school to collect information and carry out interviews.	May to July 2026
Year 7s will finish tutoring and complete an end-point maths attitude survey and end-point Access <i>Mathematics</i> assessment (both administered by NFER).	July 2026
Some teaching staff at your school will be asked to complete a survey, and a proforma about business-as-usual practice.	
Your school provides GCSE raw scores for Year 11s and attendance data for all year groups. Your school will receive a thank-you payment of £500 once all evaluation activities are completed.	August 2026
Evaluation results are published on the EEF website and shared with your school.	Summer 2027