

Maximising the impact of teaching assistants (MITA): a randomised-controlled field trial

Submission date 15/05/2017	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☐ Prospectively registered ☐ Protocol
Registration date 20/07/2017	Overall study status Completed	☐ Statistical analysis plan ☒ Results
Last Edited 25/05/2021	Condition category Other	☐ Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Teaching assistants (TAs) are used in nearly every school in England and the total costs of TAs runs into the billions of pounds. Research to-date suggests that TAs are not deployed as well as they could be, with (for example) TAs being used for behaviour management rather than taking an active part in classroom teaching. The aim of the intervention is to assess the effectiveness of a 'whole school' intervention aimed to better deploy teaching assistants (TAs) which is expected to improve pupil outcomes through: (a) better interaction between pupil and TAs; (b) improved classroom management and lesson planning; and (c) enable classroom teachers to work more with lower-achieving pupils.

Who can participate?

All Year 2 and Year 5 Primary school pupils who attend eligible schools.

What does the study involve?

Participating schools are allocated to one of two groups. Schools in the first group receive 12 hours training for SLT and three support sessions from the NLE in-school, 8 hours training for TAs and 4 hours training for teachers. These will all be delivered across one school year. Schools in the second group continue to teach as per usual practice.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Participants may benefit from improved learning outcomes. There are no notable risks involved for those participating.

Where is the study run from?

The study is being run by RAND Europe based in Cambridge and takes place in 100 schools (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

September 2017 to December 2020

Who is funding the study?

Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact?

Dr. Alex Sutherland

Contact information

Type(s)

Public

Contact name

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title

A randomised controlled trial of the 'Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants' intervention for pupils in Primary Years 2-5 in three cluster areas in the UK

Acronym

MITA

Study objectives

1. The intervention has a positive effect on pupils' attainment, specifically:
 - 1.1. Better reading outcomes (vs controls) for Year 3 pupils
 - 1.2. Better reading and mathematics outcomes (vs controls) for Year 6 pupils
2. The intervention results in improved deployment of the school TA workforce
3. The intervention results in change of practices, specifically:
 - 3.1. Practices aimed at improved interactions between TAs and pupils.
 - 3.2. Practices aimed at fostering pupil independence
4. The intervention has a positive effect on pupils' engagement

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Primary study design

Interventional

Study design

Two-arm cluster-randomised controlled trial

Study type(s)

Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Literacy and numeracy

Interventions

Participating schools are randomised to one of two groups by the evaluation team independently of the intervention team.

Control group: Schools conduct business as usual for the duration of the study.

Intervention group: Schools participate in a whole-school intervention that involves training headteachers, classroom teachers and teaching assistants on how to better use TAs as a resource. The intervention training in year 1 consists of: 12 hours training for senior leadership team and three support sessions, eight hours' training for TAs and 4 hours' training for teachers. These will all be delivered across one school year, with outcomes measured in both year 1 (intervention year) and year 2 (implementation year).

Pupils in both arms of the study will be followed up at the end of the 2018/19 academic year. Younger pupils (Year 4) will be tested with an external reading test which will be independently administered. Older pupils (Year 6) will have their Key Stage 2 national testing for Reading and Mathematics used as outcome measures.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

1. Reading (Year 3 pupils) will be assessed by an external test at baseline (before the intervention year) and at the end of implementation year
2. Maths/Reading (Year 4 pupils) will be assessed at baseline through Key Stage 1 results and at the end of implementation year through Key Stage 2 results

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Pupil engagement test will be measured by the 'Engagement vs. Disaffection with Learning: Student-report' (EvDLS)
2. Change in practice will be measured through surveys, classroom observations and 'talk data' of teacher & TA-pupil interactions

Completion date

31/12/2020

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

Schools:

1. Ideally two or three form entry primary or junior schools, but we have accepted one and four-form entry.
2. No prior engagement in MITA and/or MPTA training sessions
3. No prior action taken following recommendations from the EEF TA guidance or MITA or MPTA handbooks
4. Not in special measures
5. Not facing imminent leadership changes

All pupils included in the eligible schools will have the chance to be selected. All schools who fulfil the inclusion/exclusion criteria and who volunteer for the trial will be eligible for the intervention.

Participant type(s)

Other

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Mixed

Sex

All

Key exclusion criteria

All pupils included in the eligible schools will have the chance to be selected. All schools who fulfil the inclusion/exclusion criteria and who volunteer for the trial will be eligible for the intervention.

Date of first enrolment

07/06/2017

Date of final enrolment

07/06/2017

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

RAND Europe
Westbrook Centre
Milton Road
Cambridge
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Sponsor information

Organisation
RAND Europe

ROR
<https://ror.org/037pk1914>

Organisation
University of Cambridge

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
Education Endowment Foundation

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The data will be held by the Education Endowment Foundation. Should a mechanism for data-sharing be agreed then data would be made publically available under restricted access agreements, but we do not have further details.

IPD sharing plan summary

Not expected to be made available

Study outputs

Output type Funder report results	Details	Date created 04/02/2021	Date added 25/05/2021	Peer reviewed? No	Patient-facing? No
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