EVALUATION OF YEAR 1 OF THE TUITION PARTNERS PROGRAMME
Summary and interpretation of key findings

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This evaluation was undertaken by a consortium led by NFER

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About the evaluators

The evaluation of the first year of the Tuition Partners programme was carried by a consortium led by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), with Kantar Public and the University of Westminster (UoW).

The NFER is the leading independent provider of education research, and holds the status of Independent Research Organisation (IRO) from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Our unique position and approach delivers evidence-based insights designed to enable education policy makers and practitioners to take action to improve outcomes for children and young people. Our key topic areas are: accountability, assessment, classroom practice, education to employment, social mobility, school funding, school workforce and systems and structures. As a not-for-profit organisation, we re-invest any surplus funds into self-funded research and development to further contribute to the science and knowledge of education research **www.nfer.ac.uk**@TheNFER.

The UoW is a diverse international education institution situated in the heart of London. The university champions sustainability, social responsibility and inclusivity through its work and activities. The evaluators are affiliated to the Centre for Employment Research (CER) at the UoW, which focuses on three broad fields of research: skills, labour markets and programme evaluation; employment relations and employee voice; and equality and diversity.

Kantar Public is the leading evidence and advisory business for governments and the public sector. In the UK, we specialise in research for UK government and public sector organisations, as well as prominent academic and third sector institutions. We provide the full range of services from classical research methods to the very latest methods, techniques and innovations. We have a large team of policy and technical experts, able to deliver all types of projects, including national and international statistics, opinion polling, behavioural insight, deliberative panels and qualitative research.

Acknowledgements

About this study

In Autumn 2020 the government launched the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) to provide tuition support for pupils as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The first year of the NTP was made up of two pillars including: the Tuition Partners (TP) programme (which provided tutoring support to pupils), and the Academic Mentoring programme (in which mentors were placed in schools to work with small groups of pupils). This evaluation covers the TP programme as delivered in its first year by the EEF, from November 2020 to August 2021.

The EEF commissioned an independent evaluation of the first year of the TP programme, led by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) with Kantar Public and the University of Westminster (UoW). The evaluation aimed to quantify the overall impact of the first year of the TP programme on pupil attainment/learning outcomes, and how this varied according to type of tutoring, pupil characteristics and school characteristics. The study also evaluated the implementation of the programme including the experiences of schools, tutors and pupils, in order to improve the delivery of similar programmes in the future.

NFER and UoW also undertook an impact evaluation of the first year of the Academic Mentoring programme for Year 11 pupils, which is reported separately **here**. Teach First undertook a separate process evaluation of the Academic Mentoring programme and published a report (Teach First, 2021).

Figure 1 illustrates the NTP programme as part of the government's catch-up strategy, its pillars (in 2020/21) and the components of the evaluation.

About this volume and how it fits with other volumes in the TP evaluation series

This report volume, written by NFER as consortium lead, draws together the findings from the impact evaluation and implementation and process evaluation (IPE) of the first year of the TP programme (2020/21). It highlights the challenging context of the Covid-19 pandemic in which the programme was set up and delivered, outlines the key considerations and limitations of the study, and summarises the key learning from year 1 of the programme. Other volumes in the series are:

- **Evaluation of year 1 of the Tuition Partners Programme: Implementation and Process Evaluation** (IPE) – a volume exploring the programme's implementation, reach, perceived quality, perceived impacts and key factors that were perceived to influence outcomes, via interviews and surveys with school leaders, teachers, tutors, TP organisations and pupils.

- **Evaluation of year 1 of the Tuition Partners Programme: Impact Evaluation for Primary Schools** – a volume reporting the analysis of the impact evaluation of the first year of the TP programme (2020/21) at the primary school phase. This volume outlines the impact of TP on pupils' learning outcomes (using standardised classroom assessments) in a sample of primary schools, through a number of estimators of impact, in both English and maths.

- **Evaluation of year 1 of the Tuition Partners Programme: Impact Evaluation for Year 11** – a volume providing an exploratory analysis of the impact of the first year of the TP programme (2020/21) in Year 11, based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). This volume outlines the impact of TP on learning outcomes for Year 11 pupils, through a number of estimators of impact, in both English and maths.

The planned impact evaluation for Years 7-11 in secondary schools (using standardised classroom assessments) did not go ahead. Recruiting to evaluation samples was a challenge during the pandemic (and particularly during the period of national restrictions in spring 2021) owing to schools understandably being overstretched, and we had to drop the secondary school English and maths evaluation samples from the study as we had an insufficient number of schools. We also dropped the Year 6 analysis that would have used KS2 national assessment data, because KS2 assessments were cancelled in 2021.

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Update (December 2022)

This version provides an update with respect to the summary report published in October 2022. The previously published summary report presented the number of primary schools that had at least one pupil with relevant endpoint assessment data. This report now presents the number of primary schools that had at least one pupil with a relevant baseline **and** a relevant endpoint assessment, which was the sample upon which the analysis was conducted (see footnote 8).

Notice

This work was produced using statistical data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which is Crown Copyright. The use of this data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data. This work uses research datasets which may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates.

About the first year of the National Tutoring Programme (NTP)

In March 2020, the government asked all schools in England to close to the majority of pupils in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Re-opening for some year groups was possible during June and July 2020, but full re-opening was not possible until September 2020. Research highlighted that children were behind in their learning, with attainment gaps and issues relating to access to remote learning provision felt to be more acute in the most deprived schools (Cullinane and Montacute, 2020; EEF, 2020; Sharp *et al.*, 2020; UCL, 2020). The government launched a one-off universal **£650 million catch-up premium** for the 2020/21 academic year to support schools to provide catch-up activities to help pupils make up for lost teaching time.

The government also launched a **National Tutoring Programme (NTP)**[1] to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who needed the most help (for example, the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups that would have been affected most). The first year of the NTP (2020/21) was developed by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), Nesta, Impetus, The Sutton Trust and Teach First, with the support of the KPMG Foundation. The NTP 2020/21 was made up of a number of two pillars: The TP programme (which provided tutoring support to pupils through external tuition providers), and the Academic Mentoring programme (in which mentors were placed in schools to work with small groups of pupils).[2] The EEF was awarded £80 million for delivery of TP during the 2020/21 academic year, as the first step in the government's commitment to spend £350 million on education recovery programmes over two years.

In their review of the evidence on Covid-19 disruptions and the impact on attainment, the EEF highlighted tuition as a route for providing support – in addition to high-quality teaching and learning in the classroom (EEF, 2020). There is a large body of evidence that 1:1 tutoring (EEF, 2021a) and small-group tuition (EEF, 2021b) are effective (with average effect sizes of five months and four months respectively) – particularly where they are targeted at pupils' specific needs. Meta-analyses show positive impacts of tutoring on learning outcomes, and that tutoring can be particularly effective for disadvantaged pupils (Dietrichson *et al.*, 2017; Torgerson *et al.*, 2018).

This evaluation covers the Tuition Partners (TP) pillar (2020/21) as delivered in its first year by the EEF, from November 2020 to August 2021. **The evaluation was carried out by an independent consortium** led by NFER, with Kantar Public and the UoW.

An impact evaluation of the first year of the Academic Mentoring pillar for Year 11 pupils, conducted by NFER and UoW, is covered in a **separate report**. Teach First conducted a process evaluation of Academic Mentoring in 2020/21 (Teach First, 2021).

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[1] Information on the first year of NTP can be found on this archived site: **National Tutoring Programme | NTP (archive.org)**
[2] Note, school-led tutoring was not a feature of year 1 of the NTP.

Figure 1: The first year of the NTP: pillars and evaluation
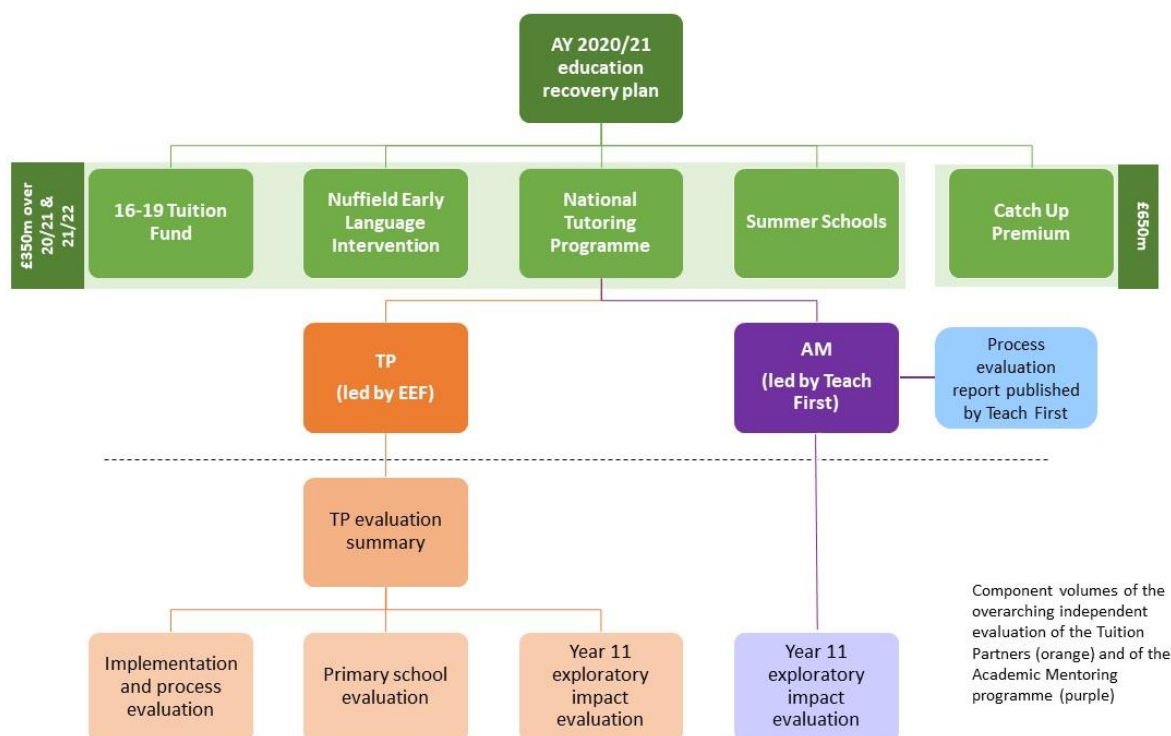
About the first year of the Tuition Partners (TP) programme

The TP pillar of year 1 of the NTP (academic year 2020/21) aimed to offer tutoring support for pupils as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and to provide a longer term contribution to closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. It aimed to encourage the take-up of tutoring, and to establish tutoring as a 'go to' choice that schools make to support pupils.

It was set up during the Covid-19 pandemic requiring rapid expansion of quality-assured tutoring, accreditation of tutoring organisations, and work to engage schools across all areas of England. The scale of the challenge and ambition in establishing and rolling out a major new education delivery programme during the Covid-19 crisis was exceptional. At the time, schools were addressing the challenges of the ongoing pandemic, including remote teaching, staff and pupil absences, staff and pupil wellbeing and mental health, as well as learning recovery. The unprecedented challenges brought about by the pandemic were also consequential for the delivery of the programme and for the conduct of the evaluation (both outlined later).

The focus of the TP programme was on supporting disadvantaged pupils, including those eligible for Pupil Premium funding (PP-eligible pupils) and/or Free School Meals (FSM) and those with an equivalent need for support. Schools had discretion to identify who they felt would benefit from tutoring. The programme aimed to reach 215,000–265,000 pupils in its first year. There were no specific participation targets for PP-eligible pupils in 2020/21 but it was anticipated that a high proportion of those taking part would be PP-eligible, based on the focus of the programme and on a pilot of online tutoring in the summer term 2020, where over 60% of pupils taking part were PP-eligible (Marshall *et al.*, 2021).[3] (Findings relating to the TP programme's reach are summarised in this report in the *Key findings and interpretation* section.)

The programme was delivered by 33 approved tutoring organisations called Tuition Partners (TPs), via 26,000+ tutors. Each operated a different model of delivery, including: different modes (online and face-to-face tuition); different

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[3] In that pilot (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/online-tuition-pilot), 79% of the primary school learners working with Action Tutoring and Tutor Trust, and 60% of the secondary school learners who worked with Action Tutoring, The Access Project and Tutor Trust were PP-eligible.

types of tutors (e.g., some were undergraduate students, others had qualified teacher status (QTS)), and specialisms (e.g., some tutoring organisations/tutors focused on supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)). Tutoring was primarily designed to be in small groups (for example 1:3), but was also available for pupils on a 1:1 basis (such as where it was more suitable for SEND pupils). Tutoring was available in English, maths, science, humanities and modern foreign languages.

The programme was designed to deliver high quality tutoring, drawing on existing evidence of best practice in tutoring (NTP, 2020) and entailing: **'dosage'** of short, regular sessions over 6–12 weeks, with the assumption that 12–15 hours would be sufficient to unlock attainment benefits – 12 or more hours of tutoring was considered a completed block; and **'focus'** of well-planned sessions that were additional to existing teaching, and linked to the curriculum and pupils' learning needs. The **'experience'** was expected to involve a positive relationship between pupil(s) and their tutor(s), good communication between the school and tutors on pupils' needs, curriculum and logistics, and suitable facilities/technology to support the sessions.

In 2020/21, tuition was provided to schools at a **75% subsidy,** with schools contributing 25% of the tuition cost.

The period of restricted attendance in schools during January–March 2021 affected the programme and its delivery. The EEF approved TPs to deliver online tuition at home during the partial school closures; however, many schools chose to wait to commence tutoring until schools reopened fully, and therefore started tutoring later than planned. More tutoring overall took place online than planned. Some TPs had to re-hire tutors as delivery shifted to later in the academic year. Delivery was also disrupted in the summer term of 2021 due to Covid-related absences of pupils and tutors, including whole class/year group absences in cases where all pupils had to self-isolate. A shift was seen in the pupils selected for tutoring, from Year 6/Year 11 to Year 5/Year 10, potentially related to the cancellation of the national assessments. To support shifted delivery, the programme allowed some weekend and half-term delivery, extended tutoring into the summer holidays, and allowed some shorter blocks of 10 sessions to be booked where schools joined later in the year.

About the evaluation of the first year of the TP programme

The evaluation aimed to explore the implementation and delivery of the programme (IPE) in 2020/21, and to quantify the overall impact of year 1 of the TP programme on pupil attainment/learning outcomes, and how this varied according to type of tutoring, pupil characteristics and school characteristics (impact evaluation). The **study plan for the TP evaluation**, which we followed for the evaluation, is published online.[4]

The IPE involved a large-scale well-sampled collection of qualitative and quantitative perceptual data, providing a rich account of the delivery and experience of TP in year 1 of the programme. It explored the programme's implementation, reach, perceived quality, perceived impact, and the factors that were perceived to influence outcomes. It involved over 280 in-depth interviews (with TPs, school leads, classroom teachers and tutors), 34 focus groups (with pupils and tutors), and five online surveys – with tutors (over 10,000 responses across two waves), school leads (over 1,800 responses across two waves), and school staff (over 800 responses).[5] It was underpinned by a logic model with five phases (design, develop, mobilise, deliver, legacy) – see Figure 2. Logic models for each of the phases can be found in the **IPE evaluation volume**. The evidence on learning outcomes in the IPE is based on large-scale responses on how pupils are perceived to have benefited, and should be seen as a valuable source of data.

Interim findings from the IPE were shared with the EEF, DfE, and TPs through feedback presentations over the course of the study. This included three feedback sessions delivered to EEF TP programme managers, two feedback sessions for the DfE, and two feedback sessions for TPs. Feedback in September 2021 was also shared with Ofsted, and with Randstad to inform the year 2 programme.

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[4] The study plan is available online: **https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/documents/pages/projects/TP_Overarching-Eval_Study-Plan_V2.pdf?v=1637742905**

[5] The IPE on the first year of the TP programme report contains further details on the methods employed, samples and respondents.

Figure 2: Tuition Partners: five programme phases
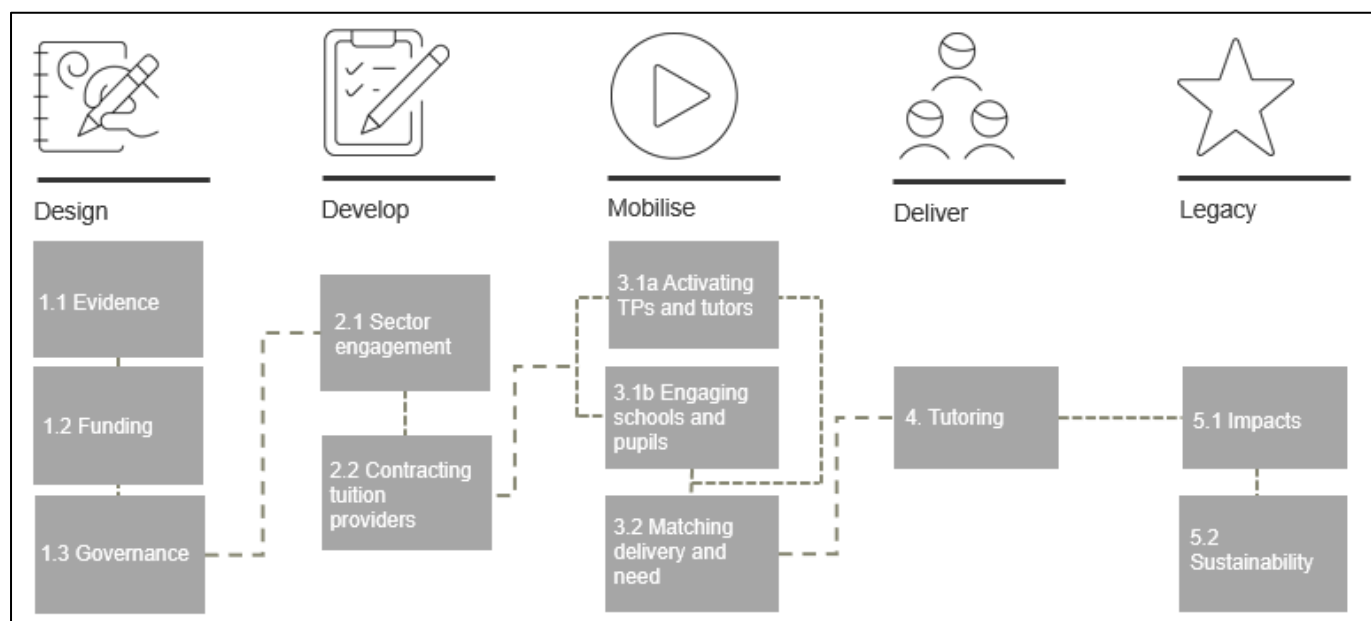
The impact evaluation was designed to compare pupils' outcomes in English and in maths in TP schools with pupils' outcomes in these subjects in comparison schools (i.e., schools with similar characteristics but not taking part in TP) using a quasi-experimental design (QED).[6] This aimed to compare groups of pupils with similar identifiable characteristics in TP and in comparison schools, namely: PP-eligible pupils (as this was anticipated to be a focus of the programme and PP-eligible pupils are identifiable in available data), all pupils in the year groups involved, and by aiming to match pupils on participant characteristics (i.e., to predict participation).[7] The original intention was to analyse the impact of TP in primary schools (using standardised classroom assessments taken in Years 1–6), in secondary schools (using standardised classroom assessments taken in Years 7–11), in Year 6 using national KS2 assessment data from the NPD; and in Year 11 using GCSE assessment data from the NPD.

However, the evaluation also contended with the challenges of the pandemic, and some of the analysis we planned could not go ahead. Recruiting to evaluation samples was a challenge during the pandemic owing to schools understandably being overstretched, and whilst we were able to recruit to primary school samples in English and in maths, we had to drop the secondary school English and maths evaluation samples from the study as we had an insufficient number of schools. The Year 6 KS2 analysis was dropped from the evaluation as KS2 national assessments were cancelled and there was no alternative assessment data for the whole year group. The usual summer exams process for Year 11 pupils could not go ahead as planned in summer 2021, and GCSEs were determined by TAGs instead. As this was a new and unique assessment practice for 2021, we ran some initial checks on the data prior to the Year 11 impact analysis, to investigate whether it would be appropriate to use them as an outcome measure for the evaluation (e.g., in terms of sensitivity and reliability). This was purely to review their suitability for this study. The Year 11 analysis conducted in this study is exploratory in nature because TAGs have not been used as a research outcome measure before.

Hence, the impact analysis for TP only includes pupils in primary schools (using data from assessments in schools), and Year 11 pupils (using TAGs from the NPD); Years 7–10 are not included in the impact analyses. The impact analysis for the primary school evaluation sample is based on 165 primary schools sampled for English with 7,073 PP-eligible pupils, and 126 primary schools sampled for maths with 5,102 PP-eligible pupils.[8] In Year 11, the impact analysis is based on 1,464 secondary schools with a total of 62,024 PP-eligible pupils.[9] The impact analysis also compares outcomes associated with different tutoring models (e.g., face-to-face or online delivery). However, this element is descriptive and therefore provides information about association, but is not necessarily causal.

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[6] It was not possible to randomise schools or pupils to receive tutoring. This was because it was deemed necessary to roll out the programme as soon as possible given the urgency of addressing missed learning related to Covid-19 disruptions in schools.
[7] The impact evaluation reports on the first year of the TP programme – for primary schools and for Year 11 – each contain further details on the QED methodologies employed.
[8] This sentence was updated in December 2022 to present the number of schools analysed.
[9] The same sample of schools was used for both maths and English.

As noted above, much of the programme delivery shifted to later in the academic year (as a result of the Jan–March 2021 school closures to most pupils). So another key change to the evaluation was to collect more detailed data on delivery dates (where possible) so that we could take into account how much tutoring schools and pupils had received. Just under one-third of tutoring sessions were delivered after mid-June. Schools and individual pupils that started tuition after their summer term assessments/TAGs submission were excluded from the TP evaluation samples.

Both the IPE and impact evaluation were based on a high volume of complex data from a range of sources including: monitoring data provided by TPs at multiple time-points about participation and delivery (for 6,000+ schools, 230,000+ pupils and 26,000+ tutors); data about pupils provided by evaluation sample schools; IPE data as outlined above; pupil-level assessment data from four different assessment providers; and data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) and other administrative data about school and pupil characteristics and national assessments. The quality and completeness of the large-scale monitoring data collected from TPs varied. (For more information see the *Study limitations* section below.)

Key findings and interpretation

This section integrates the key findings for year 1 of the TP programme from across the IPE and impact evaluation, and interprets these in the round. Further technical detail and presentation of each of the separate findings and research questions can be found in the relevant volumes on the **IPE**, the **impact evaluation in primary schools**, and the **impact evaluation for Year 11**.

> **Overall**, some of our main analyses were unable to detect if TP had an effect because of the relatively low proportion of PP-eligible pupils receiving tutoring compared to all PP-eligible pupils in analysed schools, and because schools selected pupils for tutoring based on characteristics that were unobservable in the available data. We also note the novel use of TAGs as a research outcome measure. It is therefore both prudent and important to interpret the evaluation's results in this context and to exercise caution when drawing conclusions. However, despite these challenges, we found that higher amounts of tutoring were related to better assessment scores in English in primary schools, and at a pupil level were associated with better TAGs at Year 11 in English and in maths. And where we were able to analyse outcomes in schools with higher proportions of PP-eligible pupils taking part (70% or more), the results indicated that the programme had a positive impact on Year 11 TAGs in English and in maths (however, we should note that this analysis was based on a smaller sample of schools with some different characteristics to all TP schools).

Reach and impact

- A total of 240,039 pupil-enrolments were recorded on the TP programme in the academic year 2020/21,[10] comprising 232,892 unique pupils[11] (according to monitoring data provided by TPs).

- As noted earlier, the programme was focused on supporting disadvantaged pupils, including those eligible for PP funding and/or FSM and those with an equivalent need for support. Schools had discretion to identify who they felt would benefit from tutoring. It was expected that schools would target PP-eligible pupils as per the pilot of online tutoring run in the summer term of 2020 (Marshall *et al.*, 2021) and the programme's focus on supporting disadvantaged pupils. However, fewer than half (46%) of the pupils who received tutoring were eligible for PP. The IPE found that schools used their discretion for pupil selection to prioritise pupils they considered most likely to need, engage with and benefit from tuition, rather than focusing primarily on socio-economic disadvantage (indeed, as per the programme guidance pupils could be identified within a wide definition of disadvantage, as PP was not the sole eligibility criteria). When asked in surveys what proportion of selected pupils could be defined as 'disadvantaged', 56% of school leads and 41% of school staff responding thought that all or most pupils selected were disadvantaged; however, 19% and 32%, respectively, believed that

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[10] By this we mean the academic year 2020/21 and in the summer holidays of 2021 where pupils could still be enrolled onto the programme for tuition.

[11] A small proportion of pupils (6,647 pupils; 2.9%) appeared more than once on the dataset, either because they received tuition through multiple tuition blocks/TPs or due to TPs providing multiple data entries about the same pupil.

fewer than half were disadvantaged. There was, however, *some* targeting of disadvantaged pupils as the proportion of PP-eligible pupils nationally at the time was 24%.

- Over half of pupils that received tutoring were in the upper two year groups of primary or secondary education (Years 5–6 and 10–11), and there was a shift in allocation of tutoring part way through the year from Years 6 and 11 to Years 5 and 10, likely related to the disruption of the usual national assessment process in 2021 for Year 6 and Year 11 pupils. Of all pupils selected for tutoring, 20% were those with a SEND (compared to 12% nationally). The most common subjects where tuition was provided were English (47% of pupil-enrolments were for English) and maths (43% of pupil-enrolments were for maths).

- A total of 6,082 schools signed up to the TP programme in 2020/21, of which two-thirds (67%) were primary schools, over a quarter (29%), secondary schools, and <5% were other provision such as all through schools or alternative provision. Over half of all secondary schools in England (54%) signed up for TP in 2020/21, whilst a smaller proportion of primary schools in England took part (24%). Around three-fifths (59%) of schools that signed up to the programme had 24% or more pupils eligible for PP[12] (i.e. higher than the proportion of PP-eligible pupils nationally at the time). This compares to 46% of schools nationally that had 24% or more PP-eligible pupils at the time (there were more schools in the disadvantaged reporting category taking part in TP, which might be expected).

- A main aim of the evaluation was to explore the effect of TP on PP-eligible pupils, by comparing their progress in schools participating in TP with PP-eligible pupils in schools that did not participate in TP. This was an important measure of success given the aims of the programme. On average, PP-eligible pupils in TP primary schools made similar progress in English and in maths compared to PP-eligible pupils in comparison schools (we found no evidence of an effect in English or maths). However, only around one-fifth of PP-eligible pupils in our primary school evaluation samples were selected to participate in TP (18% in maths, and 20% in English)[13], so this result is measuring outcomes for a large proportion of pupils that were not actually selected for tutoring (also referred to as dilution). This makes it hard to detect any impact that may be present. To note, it was anticipated that, due to the focus on supporting disadvantaged pupils and the guidance provided to schools, PP-eligibility would be a common characteristic of pupils selected to receive TP. This analysis was on <u>all</u> PP-eligible pupils, avoiding issues with bias relating to pupil selection and enabling us to identify a comparison group of PP-eligible pupils in schools not taking part in TP. The high dilution was driven by the extent to which PP-eligible/non-PP-eligible pupils were selected for tuition, and also by the total number of pupils selected for tuition in each school.

- Similar findings and issues were encountered in the exploratory Year 11 analysis, which used TAGs as an outcome measure. We found no evidence of an effect for Year 11 PP-eligible pupils in English or in maths; that is, we found that Year 11 PP-eligible pupils in TP schools made similar progress in English and in maths compared to Year 11 PP-eligible pupils in comparison schools. However, only around a tenth of Year 11 PP-eligible pupils were selected for tutoring; 12% of Year 11 pupils eligible for PP were selected for tutoring in maths and 9% in English. This means that the vast majority of the PP-eligible pupils included in the analysis did not receive tutoring, which dilutes the results. This means it is hard to detect any effect that may or may not be present. This needs to be borne in mind when interpreting these results.

- Although the evaluation was not able to detect an effect on PP-eligible pupils at school level (a key group of pupils that the programme was designed to support), our analysis suggests that tutoring was working for those PP-eligible pupils that received it. One of the most robust findings was an instrumental variable (IV) analysis on PP-eligible pupils in TP primary schools.[14] We found that receiving more hours of tutoring was related to better

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[12] 24% or more pupils eligible for PP is the disadvantage category that TPs and EEF reported on for the programme. 24% was the national average rate of PP pupils in the pupil population at the time, so this category represents schools with above average PP.
[13] This sentence was updated in December 2022 to reflect the analysed school level sample sizes.
[14] The IV analysis addresses the issue that schools that deliver more tutoring may have better attainment for reasons independent of tutoring. First it tested if there was a relationship between early school sign-up to the programme and amount of tutoring pupils received (using early sign-up as an *instrument* for amount of tutoring, with the assumption that early sign-up is independent from attainment). Where there was a relationship, it then tested whether amount of tutoring makes a difference to outcomes.

assessment scores in English in primary schools[15]. (Note, in maths in primary schools, and in both maths and English in Year 11, the equivalent analysis could not proceed.[16])

- In the Year 11 analysis, we had access to a larger pool of schools than in the primary school analysis. We analysed Year 11 TAGs for subsets of schools that selected a higher proportion of PP-eligible pupils for tutoring; namely 50% and 70% or more of their PP-eligible pupils. These analyses bring the group of analysed pupils closer to those that were actually selected for tuition. Each subset had a new matched comparison sample of schools. The 50% PP analysis did not reveal any statistically significant impact, but the 70% analysis found a positive and significant impact of TP for both maths and English (equivalent to 2 months' additional progress). Because we are analysing TAGs in schools where a higher proportion of PP-eligible pupils were actually selected for TP (compared to TAGs for PP-eligible pupils in a matched sample of schools), the results indicate that participation in TP has a positive impact on maths attainment and English attainment. However, it is important to recognise that these analyses were based on small samples of TP schools (191 out of 732 TP schools in the 50% sample, and 63 out of 732 TP schools in the 70% sample) and that there are differences with the rest of the TP population of schools (i.e., in the 70% sample, regionally; higher probability of being rated as 'outstanding' by OfSTED; lower percentage of students eligible to receive FSM). Whilst this analysis much reduces the issue of dilution, this finding may not necessarily be generalisable to all TP schools.

- We also aimed to measure impact by identifying the characteristics of pupils who participated in TP, so that we could create a matched sample of pupils in comparison schools with similar characteristics, and compare the outcomes across both groups of 'predicted' participants. However, we could not accurately predict which pupils participated in TP using available data and this impact analysis did not go ahead. As described above, we know from the IPE that schools were selecting pupils for tutoring based on a variety of characteristics that were not observable in the available administrative data, including their perceptions about how likely the pupil was to benefit from and engage with tutoring.

How did the number of hours of tutoring affect outcomes?

- Just over half (56%) of pupils attended 12 or more hours of tutoring (considered a completed block).[17] This means that by the end of year 1 a substantial minority of pupils (35%) did not receive the amount of tutoring felt to be beneficial for their learning according to the programme assumptions (8% of pupils had missing dosage data).

- On average at pupil level, TP pupils in the primary school analysis had received 8.8 hours of tuition in English and 8.9 hours in maths prior to their assessments; and on average at pupil level, TP pupils in the Year 11 analysis had received 7.6 hours of tuition in English and 8.4 hours of tuition in maths by the time of the TAG assessment submission date. This was short of the minimum of 12 hours that was considered a complete block (however, we should note that the data on sessions completed with dates was not always provided by TPs and there is some incomplete data here). The hours of tutoring that pupils received may also have compounded the dilution issues outlined above.

- Several factors contributed to pupils not completing their full entitlement of tuition hours. Understandably, one of the main reasons for not completing the full entitlement of hours was Covid-related absences (of pupils and tutors). Shifted delivery (noted earlier) meant, in part, that not all tuition was complete by the time of the summer term assessments/TAG submission. Other reasons, found in the IPE, for not completing/attending tutoring sessions included: lack of engagement from pupils and/or parents, poorer attendance in after-school tutoring than in school time, disruption where whole-class bubbles had to isolate, and where tutors failed to establish a good rapport with pupils. Attendance was felt to be higher where schools had the capacity to proactively monitor

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[15] That is, in the sample of TP schools, completing a 12-hour block of tutoring (compared to zero hours) was related to higher English scores amongst pupils eligible for PP that received more tutoring due to the early sign-up of the school.

[16] This is because this was an IV analysis which first required there to be a relationship between early school sign-up and amount of tutoring received. However, the analysis indicated a weak relationship here for maths in primary schools, and for both English and maths for Year 11 pupils, and so could not proceed.

[17] For pupils where any tutoring was recorded (i.e., excluding zero, missing, blank, withdrawn) (*n* = 203,374), 64% (129,876) had 12 or more hours of tutoring. Additional information from EEF: The EEF reported to the DfE that 206,855 pupils had received at least one session of tutoring through the TP programme and this figure appears in **DfE statistics**. This figure is slightly different to the figure reported here. The evaluation relied on a different source of data compared to the monitoring data collected by the EEF, and excludes pupils whose personal data was withdrawn from the evaluation.

and encourage it – this seemed easier for primary schools and smaller schools to manage, than secondary schools or larger schools.

- We explored whether the number of hours pupils received was associated with outcomes. Although not necessarily a causal estimate, we found that more hours of tuition received by primary school pupils was associated with better English (reading) scores. Similarly, Year 11 pupils who completed more sessions in English had significantly higher English TAGs, and Year 11 pupils who completed more sessions in maths had significantly higher maths TAGs, than pupils that completed fewer sessions. Whilst the number of hours pupils received in maths tutoring in primary schools was not associated with maths outcomes, a higher intensity of maths tuition (that is, receiving tutoring sessions more frequently) was associated with higher maths scores in primary schools.

To what extent was high quality tutoring delivered? And what features of tutoring were effective and associated with outcomes?

- Most schools were satisfied with the quality of tuition (80% of school leads were either very or somewhat satisfied), although this varied by mode (face-to-face was perceived to be higher quality than online) and school size and phase (smaller / primary schools were more satisfied than larger / secondary schools).

- One of the features of high quality tutoring is that it should be additional to classroom teaching (the EEF Toolkit highlights this as a key feature of effective 1:1 tuition, EEF 2021b). The extent to which this was possible varied between schools. According to the pupil monitoring data, the majority of tuition was booked to take place during lesson times only (63%), followed by outside lesson times (19%), or a mix of outside and inside lesson times (18%). Holding sessions after school meant that tutoring was additional to classroom learning, and schools also addressed this by rotating timetables to ensure that the same lesson was not missed each week. Those schools that were unable to rotate timetables tended to avoid scheduling tutoring at the same time as 'key' subjects such as English and Maths. However, school leads and staff were still concerned about the impact of missing lessons: almost two-thirds of school staff reported that reduced time spent by pupils in lessons was the most common challenge for the programme.

- Interestingly, we found that for primary English, sessions scheduled entirely in school hours were associated with better English scores than those scheduled in a combination of both during and outside school hours (the timing of delivery for maths did not make a difference to maths scores). For Year 11 pupils the picture was different. Online sessions were associated with better TAGs if scheduled outside school hours or as a combination of during and outside of school hours, than online sessions delivered within school hours; while the timing of face-to-face sessions did not appear to make a difference for Year 11s. Our findings suggest that careful management of scheduling is needed and there is still more to do to understand where additionality is important, and to help schools balance classroom learning and the extent of additionality of tutoring.

- Carefully considering the group size and mix of pupils was also important. The most common ratio for delivery was in small groups of 1:3 (as the programme intended), representing over 70% of sessions. Group dynamic and ability within the group was something that schools considered when combining pupils for tuition. Small groups were seen to have several advantages over 1:1 tuition. Schools regarded them as better value for money (with more than one pupil benefitting per session) and good opportunities for group work – although tailoring sessions to mixed abilities could be a challenge. On the other hand, schools felt that 1:1 tuition could respond to pupils' individual learning gaps, and cater for SEND pupils and pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). The EEF Toolkit reports the evidence for small group and 1:1 tutoring separately, leading to moderate and high impact respectively (EEF 2021a and EEF 2021b). The evidence collected as part of this evaluation indicates that, in primary schools, group size was not associated with pupil outcomes for maths tutoring, but for English small group tuition was associated with higher attainment than 1:1 tuition. In the exploratory Year 11 analysis, associations with group size did not differ by subject, but there were differences in group size by mode of tutoring (see below).

- School leads valued the opportunity to select the mode they felt best suited their school and pupils: face-to-face was viewed as more engaging for pupils, whilst online offered greater flexibility. Around half of all sessions were booked to be online and half were booked to be face-to-face. Attendance was easier to monitor in face-to-face sessions than in online sessions, and a higher proportion of booked face-to-face sessions were completed compared to booked online sessions (70% versus 40%) (although we note that attendance data was incomplete

and schools reported it was harder to monitor online attendance). In the exploratory Year 11 analysis, we found that face-to-face tutoring was associated with better maths TAGs if attended with other students, while online sessions were associated with higher TAGs if attended alone (in English and in maths). Overall, school leads felt that face-to-face tuition was more effective than online – due to better attendance and better perceived quality.

- Another key element of high quality tutoring is alignment with the curriculum and pupils' learning needs – an area with the widest variation in experiences in the IPE. Once pupils were selected for tutoring, the level of information schools shared with TPs about pupils varied. At the start of the programme nearly a quarter of tutors said they 'rarely' or 'never' had enough information on pupils prior to tutoring and many wanted more information to better prepare for and tailor sessions. School leads and staff noted that the resource investment required to engage with tutors and support tuition was higher than anticipated. Setting schools' expectations upfront in relation to a minimum level of engagement could help to ensure more consistent communication between schools and tutors. That said, the majority of school leads were 'somewhat satisfied' or 'very satisfied' that the tuition aligned with classroom teaching (71%), the school curriculum (76%) and pupils' learning needs (81%).

- We also explored IPE research participants' views about tutors' knowledge and skills, and whether their backgrounds were related to pupils' outcomes. In the IPE, there were mixed views amongst school leads and school staff about whether tutors always had appropriate skills and knowledge. The moderator analysis suggests that, for primary school pupils, tutors with an undergraduate degree are associated with higher performance in maths than tutors with a postgraduate degree. Having a tutor with QTS or PGCE seemed to be beneficial for English tuition at primary school (compared with other postgraduate qualifications). It may be that having specialised postgraduate qualifications (other than QTS/PGCE) may not deliver better tutoring to primary school children. On the other hand, for Year 11 pupils, tutors with a postgraduate qualification were associated with higher TAGs than tutors with a QTS in English and in maths, and than tutors with an undergraduate degree in English. These results are associations and not necessarily causal, but it may be that having specialised postgraduate qualifications (rather than undergraduate or QTS) may deliver better tutoring to Year 11 pupils. Certainly overall, the majority of school leads (83%) were satisfied with tutors' relationships with pupils, and pupils themselves typically described positive relationships with their tutors, including that their tutors listened to them, understood them, encouraged them to learn in different ways, and made sessions fun.

- The majority (74%) of surveyed school leads and school staff were 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied with the programme overall, and felt that it had met their expectations (half of school leads said the programme met their expectations to a 'very great' or 'large extent'). By the end of the programme, the majority of school leads surveyed felt that the programme had 'helped pupils catch up with their peers' (81%), although school staff were reluctant to attribute improvements in attainment solely to the programme as they also had other interventions in place to support pupils during the pandemic. They also felt the programme had improved pupils' confidence (80%), with interviewees particularly indicating this where sessions were tailored to pupils' needs and pupils were supported to engage (for example, by ensuring an appropriate environment and providing equipment and encouraging buy-in from the school and parents or carers).

Interpreting the findings in relation to the wider context and evidence on tutoring

- The findings need to be seen in the context of recovery support being provided by schools to pupils during the pandemic across all schools. Our study did not explore any learning recovery strategies in place in the comparison schools. However, we know from other studies (Nelson *et al.*, 2021; Rose *et al.*, 2021; Harland *et al.*, 2022) that schools across England were putting in place a range of recovery strategies and support, and so it is likely that all schools in the evaluation have had pupils catching up to some extent. This makes it harder to isolate the specific effect of the tutoring support, which may have been part of a mix of support that schools were putting in place (schools could also use the 'one-off universal' catch-up premium[18] for learning recovery and comparison schools may well have been using tutoring sourced from outside the NTP).

- The positive association between the number of hours of tutoring received and English assessment scores in the primary school phase is in line with the evidence on tutoring in the EEF Toolkit, which notes more evidence

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[18] In the academic year 2020/21, there was a one-off universal **£650 million catch-up premium provided** by the UK Government to support schools to provide catch-up activities to help pupils make up for lost teaching time.

is available on English (reading) tutoring at primary stage. The EEF Toolkit summarises that, based on moderate evidence, on average 1:1 tutoring has high impact (EEF, 2021a) and small-group tuition moderate impact (EEF, 2021b) on pupil outcomes (with average effect sizes of five months and four months respectively) – particularly where they are targeted at pupils' specific needs. There is less evidence in the EEF Toolkit on secondary school tutoring. However, the positive effect of TP in maths and English for Year 11 PP-eligible pupils in schools that selected a high proportion of PP-eligible pupils is consistent with the Toolkit's assertion that tutoring can be beneficial for disadvantaged pupils.

Cost

- In the first year of the TP programme, a 75% subsidy was paid by the government, and schools paid the remaining 25% of the hourly rate for tuition. In 2020/21, the cost to schools reflected a low cost (according to EEF's cost rating); we estimated it to be £199.65[19] per pupil (£7.98 × 15 hours). This included the 25% subsidy paid by schools and any additional costs incurred by the school to run the tutoring such as extra equipment and cover for staff planning time. The estimate of the market cost indicated a more moderate cost per pupil (we estimated it to be £352.43 (£23.50 × 15 hours)). This market cost included the 25% of the hourly rate paid by the school, the 75% subsidy paid by the government, the management costs of the programme and any additional costs incurred by the school to run the tutoring such as extra equipment and cover for staff planning time.

- As the subsidy reduces over the next academic years, schools will need to fund more of the market cost of the TP programme making tutoring a moderate, rather than low, cost intervention to them. As the market opens up to other forms of tutoring, including school-led tutoring, schools will particularly need to consider the costs associated with managing, planning and supervising tutoring in their schools, as well as buying tuition.

Study limitations

Our evaluation was designed to include both an impact evaluation and an IPE. Whilst the IPE largely went ahead as planned, not all of the planned impact analyses could proceed due to the cancellation and changes in national assessments in 2020/21 and the challenges of recruiting during a pandemic. So the impact evaluation focused only on the planned evaluation sample of primary schools, and Year 11 pupils.

As outlined above, this evaluation was a QED: neither schools nor pupils were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. Given the urgency of addressing lost teaching time in schools and supporting catch up and recovery, it was not considered ethical to randomise. QEDs are the next best impact evaluation tool, but they have challenges and limitations, chiefly relating to creating a suitable comparison group. However, the analysis conducted can be thought of as identifying a causal impact if the variables affecting participation in TP and the outcome variables are fully controlled for in the analysis. Although we do have useful controls (in particular for baseline test outcomes), this is still an assumption. However, recent research by Weidmann and Miratrix (2020), which compared school-level comparison groups created in this way with randomised control groups, found little trace of unobservable factors that might invalidate making causal conclusions from a QED. Although the schools in this evaluation were well balanced in terms of observable school-level characteristics, the design was not fully equipped to deal with the way schools actually selected pupils to participate in TP.

The impact evaluation was designed to include a range of impact estimators as a counter balance in the event that schools used different approaches to select pupils for tutoring (e.g., disadvantage, prior attainment, SEND), so that we would maximise our chances of detecting impact. We anticipated that, due to the focus on supporting disadvantaged pupils and the guidance provided to schools, PP-eligibility would be a common characteristic of pupils selected to receive TP. We also planned to predict which pupils would participate in TP using the data available. We anticipated that one or other of these would enable us to identify a good comparison group to capture what would have happened in the absence of TP (counterfactual). However, in the event, neither of the strategies was particularly successful due to the way pupils were selected for TP. The analysis on PP-eligible pupils estimated the impact on a group of pupils where the majority were not actually selected for tuition (four-fifths of the PP-eligible pupils in the primary school analysis and the vast majority of the PP-eligible pupils in the Year 11 analysis), seriously diluting the impact analysis. (It should be noted that

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[19] These figures are rounded to the nearest penny.

these low proportions are driven by the extent to which PP-eligible /non-PP-eligible pupils were selected for tuition, and also by the total number of pupils selected for tuition in the school.) This means that any effects will also be registering the attainment of the majority of PP-eligible pupils who were not selected for tutoring. It was not possible to identify a group of pupils based on characteristics that would participate using the data available, and so our planned predictive participation analysis did not go ahead.

We were able to mitigate the issue of dilution in our analysis on a smaller sample of schools where 70% or more of the pupils selected for tuition were eligible for PP, thereby considerably reducing the level of dilution. This analysis found a positive impact of TP on maths and English however, the sample of schools in this analysis is smaller and it had different characteristics to all the TP schools. Therefore the results from this analysis may not be generalisable to all TP schools.

The Year 11 impact analysis is exploratory in nature due to the only available outcome measure being the TAGs, for which we have no prior data to compare. As information that we would usually draw on to determine the reliability and validity of a research outcome measure was not available for the TAGs, we carried out some initial checks on the data as to its likely suitability for our purpose. This was purely to review their suitability for this study, and is not a comment or reflection on the TAGs as an assessment outcome. In the absence of any other outcome data, we felt that some exploratory analysis, as reported here, was better than not trying to estimate impact at all. The checks performed suggested that grades were, on average, slightly higher in 2021 than in previous years, in line with data published by Ofqual (2021). However, they did not point towards systematic differences in grading, including in the way schools applied TAGs, across TP and comparison schools over the exam years analysed (2021, 2020, 2019 and 2018). Whilst these checks are helpful, it is important to note that they are not able to detect with certainty whether there is any systematic bias for the purpose of the evaluation, as teachers may base their assessment on pupils' achievement prior to receiving tutoring and/or they may grade TP pupils differently because they received tutoring. Therefore, the findings need to be treated with caution. We proceeded with the Year 11 analysis on an exploratory basis.

The evidence reported here is based on programme data collected by TPs (for the whole programme, at scale), and assessment data by schools (for the primary school impact analysis). While we were able to work closely with schools to ensure the completeness and quality of the data they supplied for the evaluation with the primary school sample, the evaluation did not have the resources to follow up where monitoring data provided by TPs for the full population of TP schools was not always supplied or was incomplete. There were some gaps and inconsistencies in the monitoring dataset (particularly relating to session dates – a data request that was added part way through the evaluation, see below). This has implications for the completeness of the data about the intervention, but also in terms of how well we could match the pupil data to the National Pupil Dataset: if pupil data does not match, it drops out of the analysis.

Originally the majority of TP delivery was scheduled to take place before the main testing period in the summer term. However, the national restrictions in spring 2021 and the announcement that exams in summer 2021 could not go ahead as planned (and subsequent introduction of TAGs for 2021) influenced the pattern of delivery. Delivery shifted later in the year, and some of it moved to online delivery rather than face-to-face. This had implications for data collection: TPs were asked, part-way through delivery, to add dosage data about dates and length of sessions to the data returns so that we could capture this in the analysis, but not all were able to do this (41% of booking rows did not provide detailed dates per session). It also means that less delivery had taken place by the time of the end-point/summer assessments, which means that the intended amount of tutoring had not been met for more pupils and therefore impact may be diluted even further.

This was an evaluation of not one tutoring provider, but of a tutoring programme comprising 33 different tuition provider organisations. The providers were selected according to specific criteria, required to follow some key delivery principles (for example blocks of up to 15 hours in a single subject) and given guidance and support from the EEF, Nesta and Impetus. However, in practice there was a wide variety in delivery, and whilst the IPE and impact evaluations sought to investigate the different practices, the impact analyses are of the programme as a whole, and findings relating to the effectiveness of the different features of tutoring are associations and not necessarily causal. That said, the IPE provides a rich source of qualitative and quantitative data about participants' views and experiences of different aspects of the programme.

The TP programme was initiated at a time of great pressure for schools, when the education system had been disrupted by periods of restricted attendance in schools, and contending with ongoing widespread pupil and staff absences. The TP programme was backed by central investment and support, but it was not the only way schools chose to support their pupils, and we have not been able to account for other initiatives and practices that comparison schools (or indeed TP schools) may have been deploying to support their pupils, aside from Academic Mentoring.

Implications and concluding comments

Looking across the findings, we can draw out a number of key messages for policy and practice, and learning for evaluating recovery programmes in future.

Clearly defining who the programme is designed for is important. The first year of the TP programme (2020/21) was focused on disadvantaged pupils, but schools had the flexibility to select which pupils would receive tutoring. This discretion in pupil selection was felt by the NTP to be important for schools, particularly in the context of the ongoing pandemic where different kinds of disadvantage would be apparent to schools. That said, given only around a half of school leads and staff felt that all or most of the pupils selected were disadvantaged, more could have been done to promote awareness and ensure a unified understanding of the aims of the programme (to provide high quality tutoring targeted at disadvantaged schools and pupils, to address the increased attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers due to school closures to most pupils and the loss of teaching time due to Covid-19). In terms of accountability and ensuring funding is being spent on the target group, future programmes either need to provide clearer goals (and associated guidance) on pupil selection or acknowledge that schools may have different views (and information) about which of their pupils most need additional support and would benefit from tuition.

We know from other research (EEF, 2020; Rose *et al.*, 2021) that the disadvantage gap remains wide. Given that the EEF Toolkit indicates that tuition can work well when targeted at disadvantaged pupils, and our study here suggests that tutoring can support PP-eligible pupils in certain circumstances, **the government's ongoing strategy for learning recovery to target tuition to socio-economically disadvantaged pupils can be effective for those that receive it**. (We note that for 2021/22 there is an expectation that for TP, 65% of provision delivered in schools would be to PP-eligible pupils.)

Greater clarity of expectations for schools' role in managing tuition is important. Many school leads felt overwhelmed by their role in setting up and monitoring tuition, and had not always anticipated the resource required to support it. The speed of roll-out also meant there was limited time and capacity for schools to explore the different offers and select the tutoring most suitable to meet their pupils' needs. Furthermore, given the expansion of the tutoring market since then, including school-led tuition, guidance for schools on their role *in different forms* of tuition would be helpful.

Schools, tutoring organisations and tutors need to work together on how best to ensure tutoring is additional to classroom teaching, and to put greater focus on communication between schools and tutors including around tailoring to pupils' needs. Given the finding that the number of hours of tutoring is associated with outcomes, sharing **strategies about how to support *all* pupils who are selected for tutoring to complete the number of hours of tutoring** would seem important. EEF commissioned a small number of **trials to evaluate different strategies to encourage attendance**. One of these trials found that when some personalisation is involved (i.e., pupils and tutors received information and prompts about their tutor and tutees personal interests and hobbies), pupils' attendance was improved (i.e., a positive effect) (Tagliaferri *et al.*, 2022). The other two trials used other interventions involving personalisation to improve pupil attendance (including reminders and tutor-reflections, but not tutor–pupil similarities) – but found that these performed no better than business-as-usual (Malik *et al.*, 2022; Chadeesingh *et al.*, 2022). Given the positive effect found in one of the commissioned trials, this suggests that a wider exploration of implementation factors would be helpful.

As noted in the limitations section, no QED study could have been fully equipped to deal with the way schools actually selected pupils to participate in TP. Furthermore, this evaluation covered 33 TPs, each of which offered a different model of delivery. In order to understand and optimise the different models, **we recommend that in future years of the TP programme, efforts are made to evaluate different types of tutoring with a pupil-randomised design**, for example by varying the number of hours of tuition or how many sessions of tutoring per week are delivered to explore the optimum dosage and pattern of delivery. This would help to understand the EEF Toolkit further, which indicates that frequency (e.g., three to five sessions a week) as well as overall dosage is important (EEF, 2021a).

Given the government's stated commitment to tutoring as part of education recovery, **a programme of future evaluation** could be developed to help explore which models of tutoring are most effective for which pupils and in what circumstances. This would include both quantitative assessments of impact, for example through a range of RCTs, and through rich IPE.

Additional information

Details about ethics, data protection, and further information about the evaluation and project teams can be found in each of the accompanying IPE and impact evaluation volumes.

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