

Updated September 2026

'Menu of Approaches': evidence brief and supporting resources

The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium



Once you have conducted a robust diagnosis of your socio-economically disadvantaged pupils' needs, the next step is to consider potential approaches to your Pupil Premium spending.

This planning tool introduces key findings from high quality research and signposts to evidence-informed resources related to each strand of the Department for Education's '[menu of approaches](#)'. For further support, see our Guide to the Pupil Premium.

High quality teaching

Evidence indicates that high quality teaching is the most powerful way for schools to improve pupil attainment, especially for socio-economically disadvantaged pupils.

Schools should focus on building teacher knowledge and pedagogical expertise, curriculum development, and purposeful use of assessment. This could include selection of high quality curriculum materials or use of standardised assessments.

Developing high quality teaching, assessment and a broad and balanced, knowledge-based curriculum which responds to the needs of pupils

Supporting resources:

- Our [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) and [Early Years Toolkit](#) summarise the best available evidence on a variety of teaching and learning approaches, explaining their average impact, cost, and key considerations when putting them into practice.
- Our [guidance reports](#) offer evidence-informed recommendations on how schools can improve practice across a range of areas such as literacy, maths, science, and teacher feedback.
- Cognitive science approaches offer principles that hold promise for improving the quality of teaching. Our [Cognitive Science in the Classroom: A Review of the Evidence](#) provides an accessible summary.
- Evidence Based Education's [Great Teaching Toolkit](#) summarises evidence on improving teacher effectiveness.

Professional development to support implementation of approaches, for example, training provided by a DfE validated systematic synthetic phonics programme, mastery-based approaches to teaching or feedback

Supporting continuous and sustained professional development is crucial to developing teacher practice. The content of professional development should be based on the best available evidence and should balance the need to build knowledge, motivate teachers, develop specific techniques, and embed new approaches.

Supporting resources:

- Our [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) and [Early Years Toolkit](#) summarise evidence on potential approaches that schools might choose as a focus for professional development. Our [Effective Professional Development](#) guidance report and [accompanying support tools](#) can help schools to select, design, and deliver meaningful professional development opportunities.
- Our [Promising Programmes](#) list can help schools to identify well-evidenced whole school professional development programmes.



High quality teaching

Mentoring and coaching for teachers

Mentoring and coaching can be an important source of support, particularly for early career teachers. Schools should carefully consider the core components that make these strategies effective when developing their approach.

Supporting resources:

- Our **Effective Professional Development** guidance report is accompanied by a poster, **Effective Mechanisms of Professional Development**, which outlines the mechanisms that make mentoring or coaching more likely to be effective.
- The National Institute of Teaching have published some **key takeaways** from the research on mentoring and coaching.

Supporting the recruitment and retention of teaching staff,

for example, providing cover time to undertake professional development such as National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)

Managing workload and offering effective professional development are key to retaining great teachers, which, in turn, is crucial to maintaining a high standard of teaching and learning.

Supporting resources:

- Our **accessible overview** summarises the evidence on recruiting, retaining and supporting teachers.
- Our **Effective Professional Development** guidance report can help school leaders plan a high quality professional development offer.

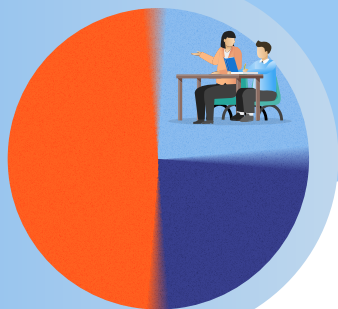
Technology and other resources that support high quality teaching,

for example software to support diagnostic assessment

To improve learning, schools should consider the specific barriers technology is addressing, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, and use technology in a way that is informed by effective pedagogy.

Supporting resources:

- Our **Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning** guidance report offers evidence-informed recommendations and practical examples around how to use technology to improve teaching and learning.



Targeted academic support

One to one and small group tuition

Intensive support—either one to one or as part of a small group—can support pupil learning if provided in addition to, and explicitly linked with, normal lessons. You should think carefully about how you implement tuition, including how you will assess learning gaps, select curriculum content, prepare staff to deliver sessions, and monitor their impact.

Supporting resources:

- Our Teaching and Learning Toolkit has strands that summarise the evidence underpinning **one to one tuition** and **small group tuition**.
- Our **Making a Difference with Effective Tutoring** guide provides advice on implementing tuition in schools.
- The **MetaSENse toolkit** summarises evidence on targeted interventions to support pupils with SEND.

Peer tutoring

Peer tutoring involves pupils working in pairs or small groups to provide each other with explicit teaching support. Such an approach is likely to require careful coordination, training, and development as well as teacher-led assessment.

Supporting resources:

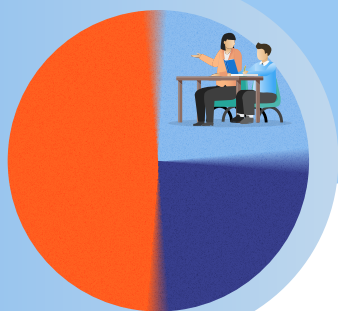
- Our Teaching and Learning Toolkit gives an overview of the evidence on **peer tutoring**.

Targeted interventions to support language development, literacy and numeracy

Targeted academic support can support pupil progress and can be employed to help boost language development, literacy, or numeracy as well as other subject areas. Interventions should be carefully linked to classroom teaching and matched to individual pupils' specific needs, while not inhibiting their access to the wider curriculum.

Supporting resources:

- Our **Teaching and Learning Toolkit** and **Early Years Toolkit** summarise evidence on the potential impact of targeted interventions on language development, literacy and numeracy.
- Our **Promising Programmes list** can help schools to identify well-evidenced programmes to support improved outcomes.
- Evaluation reports from every EEF trial can be found on our **projects page**.



Targeted academic support

Targeted interventions and resources to meet the specific needs of disadvantaged pupils with SEND

Disadvantaged pupils with SEND have the greatest need for excellent teaching. Specific approaches to support these pupils may include explicit instruction, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, scaffolding, flexible grouping, and the targeted use of technology.

Supporting resources:

- Our guidance report on [Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools](#) includes five evidence-based recommendations to support pupils with SEND.
- Our '[Five a Day](#)' poster presents well-evidenced approaches that can help raise attainment for all pupils, including those with SEND.

Teaching assistant deployment and interventions, for example, by supporting high quality provision within the classroom or delivering evidence based, structured interventions

Strategic deployment of teaching assistants is important to ensuring that priority pupils are supported. TAs should be fully prepared for their role in any given lesson or intervention and their input should complement (rather than replace) high quality provision from the class teacher.

Supporting resources:

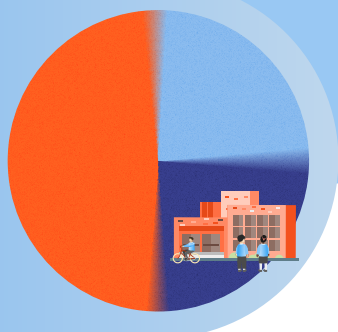
- Our [Deployment of Teaching Assistants](#) guidance report presents six recommendations, including deploying teaching assistants to deliver well-chosen, evidence based, structured interventions where appropriate.
- Our Teaching and Learning Toolkit summarises the evidence on [teaching assistant interventions](#).

Extended school time, including for summer schools

Extended school time could mean extending core teaching through targeted after-school tuition, homework, or summer school programmes. Such programmes are more likely to impact learning if they are clearly structured, linked to the curriculum, and led by well-qualified and well-trained staff. Schools should consider the cost and implications on teacher time.

Supporting resources:

- Our Teaching and Learning Toolkit provides evidence summaries on [extending school time](#), [summer schools](#), and [homework](#).



Wider strategies

Supporting pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs

Social and emotional skills support effective learning and are linked to positive outcomes later in life. Schools may consider whole-class approaches as well as targeted interventions, monitoring the impact of these choices carefully.

Supporting resources:

- Our [Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools](#) guidance report outlines five core competencies that can be taught explicitly to support pupil development.
- Our [Improving Behaviour in Schools](#) guidance report presents six recommendations on how to develop and refine your school's approach to managing behaviour.
- Our Teaching and Learning Toolkit strands on [social and emotional learning](#) and [behaviour interventions](#) present evidence and advice.

Supporting attendance

Poor attendance at school is linked to poor academic attainment across all stages. Some parental communication approaches and targeted parental engagement interventions show promise in supporting pupil attendance.

Supporting resources:

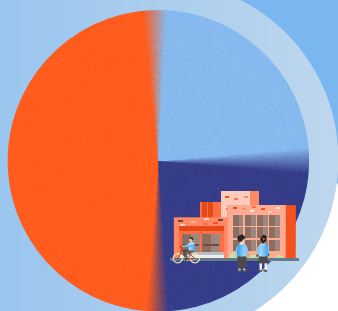
- Our [Supporting School Attendance](#) resources include a planning tool and evidence-informed guidance in relation to six themes.

Extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including sport and physical activities, outdoor and nature activities, arts participation and developing wider life skills

Extracurricular activities are an important part of education. These approaches may increase engagement in learning but it is important to consider how increased engagement will be translated into improved outcomes.

Supporting resources:

- Our Teaching and Learning Toolkit includes strands on [arts participation](#) and [physical activity](#).



Wider strategies

Breakfast clubs and meal provision

There is some evidence that providing free, universal, before-school breakfast clubs can benefit pupils by preparing them for learning or supporting behaviour and school attendance.

Supporting resources:

- Our [Evidence into Action podcast episode on breakfast clubs](#) discusses impact, implementation challenges and advice for those looking to set up breakfast club provision in their setting.
- Our [rapid evidence assessment on breakfast interventions](#) summarises findings on their potential impact.
- Our evaluation of the [Magic Breakfast programme](#) offer useful learning for school leaders, particularly in relation to implementation.

Communicating with and supporting parents

Levels of parental engagement are consistently associated with improved academic outcomes. Practical approaches, such as supporting shared book reading or tailoring positive communications about learning, can prove actionable for schools.

Supporting resources:

- Our Teaching and Learning Toolkit has a strand on [parental engagement](#).
- Our [Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning](#) guidance report offers practical approaches to communicating effectively with, and supporting, parents.



FOR FURTHER SUPPORT

See our Guide to the Pupil Premium