

Introduction

The EEF’s Teaching and Learning Toolkit is designed to support teachers and school leaders who are making decisions about how to improve learning outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged children and young people. It does not make definitive claims as to what will work to improve outcomes in each school. Rather, it provides high quality information about what is likely to be beneficial based on existing evidence.




Further information about how to make effective use of the Toolkits is available [here](#).

This School Leader Reflections tool may prove to be helpful in an SLT meeting or planning session, a peer review with external colleagues, in conversations between senior leaders and, for example, the chair of governors, a school improvement partner or MAT colleagues. It can begin conversations about educational evidence in an accessible way, so that school leaders can explore ‘best bets’ for their school improvement priorities.

Key features of the Toolkit

The Teaching and Learning Toolkit is divided into 30 strands, each focused on an area of school practice. Each strand is summarised in terms of;

1. its average impact on attainment;
2. its cost; and
3. the strength of the evidence supporting it.

Impact on attainment	Cost	Strength of evidence
		
<p>The ‘Feedback’ strand shows that in the research studies included in the Toolkit, improving the quality of feedback had an average impact of 6 additional months’ progress.</p> <p>This means that pupils in the classes where feedback interventions were provided made, on average, 6 months’ more progress than similar pupils in other classes over the course of one academic year.</p>	<p>Feedback is low cost—it is unlikely to involve employing additional staff or purchasing costly intervention packages. However, there is an associated opportunity cost which should be considered.</p> <p>The cost ratings range from very low (£80 per pupil per year, or up to £2000 for a class of 25 pupils) to very high (£1200 per pupil per year, or up to £30000 for a class of 25 pupils).</p>	<p>Feedback has moderate evidence strength, meaning at least two evidence reviews which include studies with relevant outcomes, and studies with methods and analysis which enable researchers to draw moderate conclusions about impact.</p> <p>In general the ‘padlock’ rating for each strand is based on: the number and types of research studies available; the outcomes measured in those studies; the quality of the studies and whether they enable researchers to draw conclusions about impact; the consistency of the impact estimates in the different studies.</p>

The Toolkit now features an implementation section within each strand. This aims to support school leaders by offering guidance about the practical realities of introducing an approach—focusing not just on what to implement, but on how to put those new initiatives into practice.

The following questions aim to provide useful starting points for discussion to help you ensure that your policies and practices are informed by the best available evidence. The aim is to prompt reflections and encourage considerations around the specific needs of pupils, what you are doing currently that is working, as well as promoting some new thinking and ideas.

1. Are you clear on the improvement priorities for your school or Trust, particularly those likely to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils?

For example, pupils are struggling to fully access the primary school curriculum. School leaders explore specific strands attending literacy, such as **Oral language interventions**, **Phonics**, and **Reading comprehension strategies**. School leaders then reflect on what tightly defined approach may support pupils to better access the curriculum.

2. Have you looked beyond the headlines of the Toolkit and dug deeper into the challenges of implementation?

For example, you might implement **One to one tuition** for pupils struggling in maths, but have you considered how links will be made between the tutoring and timetabled lessons, and how you will support pupils and class teachers to ensure the impact is sustained once they return to classes?

3. Have you considered the cost and evidence strength of an approach, as well as potential impact?

For example, some approaches—such as One to one tuition, may be effective for pupils learning mathematics, but it may not be cost effective. Other approaches, which may have a low overall impact, such as **Small group tuition**, or **Peer tutoring**, may prove cost effective, whilst still proving a ‘best bet’ in terms of evidence strength.

4. Drawing upon your professional expertise, what is the likelihood of an approach having an impact in your specific context?

For example, on average, **Feedback** may prove a ‘best bet’, based on extensive evidence, but feedback comes with an ‘opportunity cost’ when it comes to teachers’ time spent giving written feedback. Equally, a school or Trust may have well established feedback approaches and policies, so any proposed change may prove a challenge.

5. What attendant risks are there to this approach and how can you address these risks?

For example, a school or Trust considering Extending school time has an array of implementation challenges to change such ingrained structures and habits. The Toolkit only provides evidence about what **has** worked in the past, not what **will** work in your context. To consider more fully the challenge of implementing new school improvement priorities, the EEF’s [guidance on implementation](#) can offer school leaders useful support.

6. Have you considered other EEF evidence sources and resources which can be used alongside the Toolkit?

The Toolkit is a summary of evidence from a wide range of sources that is a useful starting point for the evidence. Our array of [guidance reports](#) provide detailed recommendations for classroom practice. Additionally, for more information on how a specific programme or intervention has been applied in English schools, the EEF [completed project evaluations](#) provide detailed evidence.