

Better assessment needed to get the most out of tutoring

The reviews find that most schools prioritised English and maths tuition, while further education providers offered English and maths alongside a range of other subjects. Teaching staff and pupils were positive about their tutoring programmes. However, the quality of tuition varied greatly depending on the school or provider, and most teachers did not know the extent to which tutoring was having an impact.

[Ofsted was commissioned by the Department of Education](#) to look at the overall quality of tutoring provided, how it was integrated into schools' curriculum planning and delivery, and the likelihood that it will help pupils catch up.

The reviews draw evidence from visits to 63 schools and 21 further education and skills providers.

Ofsted Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said:

Tuition is an expensive intervention, but used well it can help pupils who fall behind. The government's tutoring programme is potentially an important part of helping pupils catch up after the pandemic. There is evidence of tuition working effectively, but most schools and colleges lack a system to assess it properly and so do not know if that's the case.

I hope these reviews help the government develop its tuition programme and help school leaders implement tutoring better.

Schools

Most leaders in the 63 schools visited had chosen to use existing staff to tutor pupils through a school-led route, rather than external tutors or academic mentors, because this gave them greater control and oversight of quality.

Schools that had strong tutoring in place used assessments, supplemented by teachers' knowledge, to identify the pupils who could benefit most from tuition. Ofsted found that sessions taught by qualified teachers tended to be of higher quality than those taught by other types of tutors.

Nevertheless, inspectors saw that tutoring cannot really work without a well-considered and constructed curriculum in place. In the stronger schools, teachers and tutors were able to use the curriculum to identify the core knowledge that pupils had either missed, or did not fully understand, and made sure this could be covered in tutoring sessions. Tutors and class teachers collaborated to keep one another informed of a pupil's progress.

In a minority of schools, the tuition provided was haphazard and poorly planned. These schools had not understood the purpose of having small tutoring groups and frequent sessions. Most schools had not yet found a good way to assess pupils' progress and to decide when to stop tuition for individual pupils.

Some leaders found it difficult to extend the school day for tutoring, leading to many providing tutoring during school hours. Some schools had mitigations in place to minimise the impact of tuition on other lessons and extra-curricular activities. However, leaders in one fifth of the schools visited had not thought through the risks of disrupting children's learning by taking them out of regular classes.

Despite some of the issues, leaders, staff and pupils were positive about the tutoring provided, and overall, the national tutoring programme, particularly the school-led tutoring route, has been well received by schools.

Further education and skills

The review found that 16 to 19 providers used the funding differently and had interpreted 'tuition' activities in a variety of ways.

In the stronger examples, tutors used regular assessment to understand learners' progress and identify specific subject areas where they needed further assistance. Collaboration between teachers and tutors was strong.

Tutors were often recruited from existing teaching staff, which meant they already knew and taught the curriculum well. Sometimes there were challenges in recruiting specialist teachers, with some providers commissioning industry experts to deliver vocational tutoring sessions.

Learner groups were too large in some cases, which limited the ability of the tutor to tailor sessions to specific learners' needs.

In a minority of cases, tutors did not set clear goals for learners, there was poor collaboration between tutors and teachers, and tutors did not refer back to the core knowledge in the course curriculum. This meant they did not always address an individual's learning gaps.

Overall, leaders, staff and learners saw the value in the tutoring provided. Many suggested that tuition had re-engaged learners, increased their confidence and resilience, and changed their attitudes to learning. However, many providers acknowledged that they had not fully developed arrangements for overseeing and monitoring tuition.