

Primary Schools Membership Scheme Attainment Raising Menu





Menu of Attainment Raising Interventions
2023/24

Contents

[Introduction](#)2

[Menu of interventions](#).....3

[Intervention pen portraits](#).....4

[Next steps](#).....18

Introduction

As part of its work with local schools, Durham University hope to conduct a co-operative trial of the use of relevant research evidence. A number of North East primary schools will be offered a simple “menu” of evidence-led approaches or programmes. These have been selected because they are tested, feasible and show promise of enhancing pupil outcomes, especially for disadvantaged pupils. The idea is that schools pick a few options each, and a subset of the options that have enough schools interested will be implemented in the academic year 2023/24. We need enough schools for each approach so that we can aggregate their experiences and findings to draw firm conclusions about impact and feasibility before expanding the scheme in future years.

The table on page 4 presents a summary of nine possible approaches to improving overall attainment in literacy or numeracy in primary schools. The table on page 3 lists the following attributes of each approach:

Name or description. Some approaches are generic, while some are more specific protocols or pieces of software. The assumption is that schools will pick options that they are not already doing, or not doing systematically.

The outcome of interest. All approaches concern improving literacy, and all but one also concern improving numeracy. These could be assessed in terms of KS results, bespoke tests, and attitude or enjoyment surveys. All programmes will also involve a voluntary process “evaluation” looking at how stakeholders such as leaders, teachers, and children perceive the programme.

The year groups suggested. In general, it is more efficient to use standardised test scores as one outcome, or for a baseline figure. So, Years 2, 3 and 5 (if there is a formal KS2-based mock) or 6 are preferred. But we can also provide additional tests in literacy/numeracy for some programmes. One programme (self-affirmation) is designed to be used only with pupils who are approaching a high stakes test.

Estimate of promise. The likely impact or benefit is presented as an estimated “effect” size based on the strongest prior evaluations. In education, an “effect” size of around 0.2 is common for those programmes that do seem to make a difference. Here, we only propose ideas that are promising. Many other programmes, often promoted to schools, make no difference, and a few have been found to be harmful.









Strength of evidence. The padlock rating from 0 to 4 gives an indication of how strong the prior evidence is for each approach. 4 would mean the evidence is as strong as could be imagined in real-life, and 0 means there is no trustworthy evidence at all. This rating is independent of the likely impact of any intervention.

Cost per pupil. Some interventions are naturally free of charge. Some can be offered free as part of this menu, due to the co-operation of the developer with the Durham University Evidence Centre for Education. Others would require use of funds, perhaps via Pupil Premium or via a grant from the Widening Participation department. We have negotiated reduced costs with some of the developers.

The ideal would be to select programmes with the desired outcome (literacy/numeracy), that have the greatest impact, especially for lower attainers, backed by the strongest evidence, at the lowest cost. Schools will have to decide this based on their priorities and context.

Menu of Interventions

Please click the links in the table below to find out more about each intervention.

Intervention	Outcome	Year group(s)	Estimated impact	Evidence strength	Cost per pupil
Accelerated Reader	Literacy	1-5	0.20	3 	£10
LbQ	Literacy, numeracy	2-6	0.10	2 	0
Enhanced oral feedback	Literacy, numeracy	1-4	0.20	3 	0
Student tutoring	Literacy, numeracy	1-6	0.20	3 	0
Peer tutoring	Literacy, numeracy	1-6	0.20	3 	0
Dialogic teaching	Literacy, numeracy	1-5	0.20	3 	£10
Texting parents	Literacy, numeracy	1-6	0.10	3 	0
Self-affirmation	Literacy, numeracy	2, 5, 6	0.10	2 	0
Using evidence	Literacy, numeracy	Teachers	-	-	0

Intervention Pen Portraits

Accelerated Reader

What is Accelerated Reader?

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a widely used web-based intervention produced by Renaissance Learning Company. AR aims to improve students' independent reading abilities and foster reading for pleasure. Based on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD), it is premised on pupils practicing reading regularly in school, and using books at an appropriate reading level through pupil comprehension quizzes and providing regular feedback to teachers. AR has a web-based repository of 210,000 quizzes based on fiction and non-fiction books, which allow teachers to monitor pupils' performance and respond with appropriate rewards through the Reading Dashboard. Meanwhile, it also provides teachers with advanced training and professional development to empower them and achieve growth. See their website: <https://www.renlearn.co.uk/about-us>

How does it work?

In school, AR is implemented step by step. An adaptive online test (the STAR test) is taken by pupils to assess their current reading levels and to initially provide their ZPD score. The school or classroom library is then organised so that books are matched with AR based on students' ZPD scores. Before reading, teachers and pupils set reading goals to be achieved in independent reading time, and pupils can choose books from the recommendation list that match their reading level. After completing their reading, the pupils take an AR quiz based on the selected book. In the Dashboard, teachers can trace class-, group-, and individual-level pupil data. Educators are provided with professional services about the implementation of AR through the facilitated courses, which can be delivered face-to-face, voice-to-voice, virtually, or in a combination. The website below shows how it works:

<https://www.renaissance.com/products/accelerated-reader/explore/>

What do you need?

- adequate resources in terms of IT infrastructure
- a range of books at levels appropriate to their pupils
- teachers to guide readers on book selection within their ZPD
- teachers training in implementing AR
- reading time (recommended by AR as 25 minutes of independent reading per day)

What does it usually cost?

The costs of AR include an annual subscription to the online resources that are available on the Renaissance Learning, Inc. website. The schools buy an annual license for each pupil involved. The cost varies depending upon adding extra features to the AR programme. However, a minimum subscription rate for 50 pupils is £450, or an average of £9 per pupil per year. For this project, the cost is reduced from its original price. We envisage costs being met by schools' Pupil Premium funding.

What training is available?

- Face-to-face: On-site coaching days
- Voice-to-voice: Implementation and data coaching, virtual learning, Renaissance-U (self-paced tutorials and activities)




Pros of AR

- extensive choice in quizzes of levelled books
- appropriate challenge to develop pupils' reading skills
- regular feedback to praise students for their successes
- valuable data to monitor students' reading practice
- detailed reports provide insights into students' progress
- paired with Renaissance Star Reading track students' reading achievements aligned to state-specific learning standards

Prior evidence

There has been extensive research examining AR's impact on students' academic reading achievement. However, much of the existing research on AR lacks an appropriate research design or only consists of a small sample. Therefore, we selected three RCT evaluation studies that meet high quality standards, as summarised below.

Robust evidence of AR impact

Study	Outcomes	Year group(s)	Effect size (All pupils)	Effect size (FSM pupils)	Evidence strength
Gorard et al. (2015)	New Group Reading Test (NGRT)	7	Reading (+0.24)	Reading (+0.38)	3 
Sutherland et al. (2021)	KS2 Reading	4, 5	Reading (+0.003)	Reading (+0.02)	3 
Ross et al. (2015)	STAR reading test	3-6	Reading (+0.34, +0.15, +0.10, +0.07)	-	2 

References

- Gorard, S., Siddiqui, N., & See, B. H. (2015). Accelerated Reader: Evaluation Report and Executive Summary. Durham University. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,athens&db=eric&AN=ED581101&site=ehost-live>
- Ross, S. M., Nunnery, J., & Goldfeder, E. (2004). A randomized experiment on the effects of Accelerated Reader/Reading Renaissance in an urban school district: Final evaluation report. Center for Research in Educational Policy, The University of Memphis.
- Sutherland, A., Broeks, M., Ilie, S., Sim, M., Krapels, J., Brown, E. R., & Belanger, J. (2021). Accelerated Reader evaluation report (Research report). Education Endowment Foundation. [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Accelerated Reader - final..pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Accelerated_Reader_-_final..pdf)

Learning by Questions (LbQ)

What is LbQ?

LbQ is an online tool with curriculum-aligned Question Sets for maths, English and science. Here we propose use only for maths and/or English. Each of these questions comes with

immediate feedback. LbQ thus provides continuous formative assessment resources to give teachers insights into learning. It also provides immediate feedback to students, which is personalised to the individual student. LbQ states that it reduces teacher workload and improves student learning, with automatic marking and instant insight for effective interventions.

See their website: <https://www.lbq.org>

How does it work?

Teachers access a cloud-based repository of 60,000+ questions arranged into 1,800 structured Question Sets and organised by subject, topic and year group. Up to three Question Sets can be selected simultaneously and set as tasks. Teachers select and launch Question Sets which students work through during lessons, or by themselves.

Pupils work at their own pace and can retry questions after receiving system-generated instant feedback, hints and reminders where answers are wrong. The higher the ability, the faster LbQ moves them forward to more challenging questions so that everyone is working at an appropriate level of pace and challenge. Answers are analysed in real-time and relayed to the teacher's device where struggling pupils and challenging questions are easily identified. Teachers can intervene, teach and plan ahead without marking. LbQ has built-in tools to support adaptation of Question Sets re-teaching. Lesson data is stored automatically to aid planning and interventions.

What do you need?

- Internet connection

Pupils equipped with (almost) any internet connected device can access and work through tasks. LbQ will run on most internet connected devices such as tablets, Chromebooks, laptops, and desktops using iOS, Windows and Android operating systems. Tasks can be run in a web browser or the free LbQ App available for Apple, Android and Windows.

The video clip below shows how it works.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyo8xYIFqOU>

What does it usually cost?

The package is free for schools in this project, but the usual subscription fees are:

- £250 per teacher per year for access to all subjects and all years.
- £625 per teacher for 3-years for access to all subjects and all years.

What training is available?

- Online and telephone support is included with the subscription.
- After signing up, the school receives an administration dashboard enabling management of teacher accounts in the school.
- Teachers are able to run the product without specialist training.

Pros of LbQ

- Reduces teacher workload in terms of lesson planning and marking.
- Improves or supports feedback in real-time.

- Learning is individualised.
- Provides banks of relevant example questions.
- Allows comparisons of data about students/classes.
- Supports non-specialist teachers.
- Tracks pupil achievement and progress.
- Reporting and analysis of pupil/class performance.

Prior evidence

There is as yet little strong evidence. There have been a number of school-led evaluations of LbQ on a range of topics, many of which are small-scale and conducted by individual schools. There are two more robust studies using a randomised controlled design relevant to LbQ, one for maths and one for grammar (Sheard, Chambers and Elliott 2012, 2014). Both studies were for Year 5 pupils. The predecessor of LbQ is Questions for Learning (QfL). Note that there is a link between these evaluators and the LbQ developer, which may represent a conflict of interest.

Report	Year group	Duration	Outcome	Effect size
Sheard et al. (2012)	Year 5	12 weeks	Grammar	+0.16 But schools using the device as recommended by the developer produced better results. +0.27
			Writing	No effect on writing
Sheard & Chambers (2011)	Year 5	12 weeks	Maths	+0.39 (equivalent to perhaps an additional 3-month progress over a year)

References

Sheard, M. and Chambers, B. (2011) *Self-paced learning: Effective technology-supported formative assessment*. York: Institute for Effective Education, <https://www.lbq.org/Areas/Default/Content/Default/Document/Self-paced%20learning%208%20Aug%202011.pdf>

Sheard, M., Chambers, B. and Elliott, B. (2012) *Effects of technology-enhanced formative assessment on achievement in primary grammar*. York: Institute for Effective Education, <https://www.lbq.org/Areas/Default/Content/Default/Document/QfL%20Grammar%20Report%20Final%20Oct%2002%202012.pdf>

Enhanced oral feedback

Pupils who struggled to achieve expected literacy levels are identified and exposed to enhanced oral feedback method. Pupils are given reading passages from a recommended resource of Qualitative Reading Inventory (7th Edition) from which teachers can select appropriate reading difficulty levels for pupils. If teachers do not have access to this resource, any relevant text used in literacy can be selected for this practice. Pupils are asked to read the given passages aloud in front of a teacher or teaching assistant, and during the process teachers will support the pupil wherever they omit, mispronounce, or struggle to read fluently. Pupil will repeat reading the passage two times and after completion of each reading, the teacher will give corrective feedback. This feedback will be a short summary of the number of

words read, mistakes and which required correction. Two to three questions can be added at the end of the session to assess pupils' comprehension level.

The sessions will be conducted twice a week for 22 weeks.

There is no formal training needed. If schools choose to implement this programme, the research team will provide resources including a schedule sheet for recording the number and time for sessions with individual pupil.

Here is an example of recorded session:

[Video 34: Repeated Reading - YouTube](#)

- The session requires a reading resource room
- Teacher/Teaching Assistant to implement the session twice weekly for 22 weeks
- Ideally sessions are on an individual basis but for feasibility three to four targeted pupils can be grouped in one session
- Targeted pupils will be taken out of their usual classes for this session
- Reading passages will be selected by teachers

Cost

The programme has no direct cost. On average the session preparation time and implementation time is no more than 60 minutes. This means 100-120 minutes of teacher/teaching assistant time is required per pupil/group per week

Prior evidence

A review of the evidence shows that most common form of enhanced oral feedback are pupil individual reading aloud sessions in which teachers provide corrective feedback. These sessions are often implemented with pupils for whom English is an Additional Language. The evidence on enhanced oral feedback is only moderate as most evaluation studies do not have an appropriate comparison group for assessing the impact on attainment. The EEF toolkit suggests positive impact from oral feedback, but the details of the studies (N=155) included in this evidence pool are not provided. It is likely that these 155 studies are not RCTs or even quasi-experiments. In an EEF systematic review (Newman et al. 2021) two studies reported positive outcomes. Mostow et al. (2013) is about oral reading in which a computer programme gave feedback on the quality of reading. In Sukram and Monda-Amayay (2017) feedback was on reading fluency and comprehension. Researchers gave students reading passages to read aloud and answer the questions based on the passage. In the treatment groups, the same oral passages were given but students were provided with corrective feedback (correction of fluency, pronunciation, and omissions of words) two times during the reading process. The reported effect size was 0.21.

References

Newman, M., Kwan, I., Schucan Bird, K., Hoo, H.T. (2021), The impact of Feedback on student attainment: a systematic review, London: Education Endowment Foundation.

Sukhram, D. and Monda-Amaya, L.E. (2017). The effects of oral repeated reading with and without corrective feedback on middle school struggling readers. *British Journal of Special Education*, 44(1), pp.95–111.

Mostow, J., Nelson-Taylor, J. and Beck, J.E. (2013). Computer-Guided Oral Reading versus Independent Practice: Comparison of Sustained Silent Reading to an Automated Reading Tutor That Listens. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 49(2), pp.249–276.

Student tutoring

What is student tutoring?

Student tutoring involves trained university students providing additional academic support to pupils who are struggling in mathematics. Low-achieving students receive one-to-one or small group tuition by paid volunteers. Student tutoring assists students in academic achievement by providing tailored attention and support to address individual academic requirements and difficulties.

How does it work?

Student tutoring involves recruiting and training undergraduate students from Durham University. The program evaluates applicants' communication, interpersonal, and teaching skills and provides two full-day training sessions to tutors.

Before tutoring begins, class teachers are required to identify pupils who are working insecurely at or below age-related expectations in maths to receive tutoring. Tutors use materials provided by the class teacher or design their own session plans under the guidance of the class teacher to cater to individual needs.

Targeted pupils receive one hour tuition per week on a 1:1, 1:2, or 1:3 basis during one term, with the timing of the sessions based on the schools' requirements. Tutoring sessions are held in the participating schools' libraries, resource rooms, and other common areas. Tutors and teachers work closely together throughout the tutoring period, frequently communicating to ensure that the expected goals are met and any necessary alterations to the tutoring sessions are implemented.

Example project: Tutor Trust <https://www.thetutortrust.org/>

What do you need?

- Contextual information about the pupils (gender, Pupil Premium/FSM/LAC/EAL status, attendance).
- Baseline attainment data: KS1 attainment, mock SATs score, aim of tuition (e.g. Age-Related Expectations, ARE).

What does it usually cost?

Free for schools in the project (based on Durham paying for the volunteers), but the usual tuition fee is:

- £108 per pupil at a 1:3 basis at a block of 15 hours of tutoring in mainstream schools.
- up to a maximum of £10.80 per pupil per hour in mainstream schools.

What onboarding/training is available?



No additional training for class teachers.

Pros of student tutoring

- Affordable tutoring.
- High-quality tutors.
- Provides individualised assistance for mathematics attainment.
- Reduces workload of class teachers by improving low-achieving students.
- Bridges the achievement gap inside class.

Prior evidence

Many studies have evaluated the effectiveness of student tutoring, most of which are small scale at the school level. Two studies conducted randomised control trials where at-risk pupils randomly received tutoring or not. The first study randomised 105 primary schools in England, involving more than a thousand students from Year 6. The second study randomised 550 students from grade 4 to 8 in 12 schools. Both studies have promising results in improving mathematics achievement of low-achieving students.

Report	Year group	Duration	Outcome	Security	Effect size
Torgerson et al. (2018)	Year 6	One hour per week for 12 weeks	Mathematics	4 	+0.20 Overall +0.25 FSM
Parker et al. (2019)	Grade 4-8 (U.S.)	One hour per week for 12 weeks	STAR Mathematics	3 	+0.20 Overall +0.40 Grade 4 +0.00 Grade 5 +0.20 Grade 6

References

Torgerson, C., Bell, K., Coleman, E., Elliott, L., Fairhurst, C., Gascoine, L., ... & Torgerson, D. (2018). Tutor Trust: affordable primary tuition. Evaluation report and executive summary.

Parker, D., Nelson, P., Zaslofsky, A., Kanive, R., Foegen, A., Kaiser, P., & Heisted, D. (2019). Evaluation of a math intervention program implemented with community support. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 12(3), 391-412.

Peer tutoring

Peer tutoring is a teaching method that promotes collaboration among students during lessons. Students in the same class are divided into groups and help each other to learn by teaching and learning together. There are two types of same-age peer tutoring: fixed peer tutoring, where the same student is always the tutor, and reciprocal peer tutoring, where students take turns as the tutor and the tutee.

How does it work?

The same-age peer tutoring usually takes place in the same class group, so it does not require any special organisational actions. Teachers assign students into groups according to their judgement and implement the strategy based on the course content, typically 1-4 times a week, with each session lasting 20-40 minutes.

In fixed peer tutoring, students maintain their roles as either the tutor or the tutee for the entire programme. Pairs are matched on the basis of previous reading or mathematics attainment. The class is ordered from highest to lowest attainment in reading or mathematics. Students above the mid-point become tutors, and those below become tutees. The most able tutor is matched with the most able tutee, while the weakest tutee is helped by an average tutor.

In reciprocal tutoring, students may also be paired according to their reading or mathematics ability or personal characteristics. However, the roles of tutor and tutee are not permanent. Students switch between these roles in the midway through each session and offer each other coaching and feedback during problem-solving activities. The teacher's decision to assign pairs and skills is based on their understanding of the students' needs and abilities, and these pairs are regularly reassigned.

In both formats, the suggestion is that tutors gain as well as, and perhaps more than, tutees.

What do you need?

- Students' prior attainment record.

What does it usually cost?

No extra cost.

What onboarding/training is available?

No training necessary. But some relevant materials for teachers are available in:

Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., Mathes, P. G., & Simmons, D. C. (1997). Peer-assisted learning strategies: Making classrooms more responsive to diversity. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(1), 174-206.

Pros of peer tutoring

- Cost-effective.
- Flexible to adapt all lessons.
- Applicable in all classrooms without disrupting the original class structure.
- Reduced workload for teachers by allowing students to assist each other.

Prior evidence

Many studies have been undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of peer tutoring, however the majority of the research has been limited to small-scale experiments or lacks balanced comparison groups. The following two studies were randomised control trials to evaluate peer tutoring.

More than three thousand pupils from 125 primary schools in Scotland participated in the first study which implemented both cross-age and same-age peer tutoring during two years. 163 students received same-age peer tutoring and 240 students from the control group participated in the test at the end of the first year of implementation. The second study directly evaluated the effects of same-age peer tutoring, involving 380 students and 20 mathematics teachers from Grade 1 in the U.S.

Both studies have promising results in improving reading and mathematics achievement of low-achieving students. The second study especially states stronger effects for low-achieving students.

Report	Year group	Duration	Outcome	Security	Effect size
Topping et al. (2012)	Year 4 and Year 6	30-minute sessions, 1 or 3 times per week, for a duration of 15 weeks	Reading	3	+0.31 First Year of Implementation +0.34 Second Year of Implementation
Fuchs et al. (2002)	Year 1 (U.S.)	30-minute sessions, three times a week, for a duration of 16 weeks	Mathematics	3	+0.31 High-achieving students +0.33 Average-achieving students +0.34 Low-achieving students

References

Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., Yazdian, L., & Powell, S. R. (2002). Enhancing first-grade children's mathematical development with peer-assisted learning strategies. *School Psychology Review*, 31(4), 569-583.

Topping, K. J., Thurston, A., McGavock, K., & Conlin, N. (2012). Outcomes and process in reading tutoring. *Educational Research*, 54(3), 239-258.

Dialogic teaching

Classroom talk and discussions can provide useful opportunities for learning and the social emotional development of children. There are several approaches developed for improving the quality of classroom interaction with a specific focus on the quality of dialogue between pupils. The common aim of dialogic teaching approaches is to improve children's learning that is reflected in their academic attainment. The Education Endowment Foundation conducted evaluation studies of three well developed programmes for primary schools (Thinking, Doing Talking Science, Dialogic Teaching, and Philosophy for Children) that shared common aims and practice formats of improving children's skills of reasoning, critical thinking, and argumentation at classroom level. The evaluations were large-scale, school level randomised control trials and each of them found positive impacts on children's literacy and numeracy outcomes. On a scale of trustworthiness of results, all three studies received a rating of 3 (maximum 4).

Philosophy for Children (P4C)

P4C is a whole-class intervention which aims to stimulate classroom dialogue in response to children's own questions about shared stories, films and other stimuli. P4C sessions involve

a step-by-step discussion approach in a classroom setting. This requires both the teacher and the children to sit in a circle and agree on specific principles of turn-taking and communication. The teacher introduces a topic through a stimulus such as a picture, quotation, news item, short story or poem, and the children are encouraged to generate questions based on it. These questions are necessarily not factual but can lead to reflective and conceptual discussions. The children are prompted to use dialogic language and argumentation to justify their opinions, ask questions, critique, and elaborate on their responses and perceptions. Once the children have developed their questions, a voting process is used to select the most popular question, which becomes the focus of subsequent discussion. During the discussion, the children take turns speaking, deploying simple argumentation terms and structures that they have been taught beforehand to support their points. The teacher only intervenes if necessary to ensure that the dialogue leads to a useful and productive discussion. After the discussion, the children are asked to reflect on their final thoughts and whether they have changed their views as a result of the discussion. The session is then reviewed by all participants in the circle of inquiry to evaluate the quality of the discussion.

For observable changes in children’s classroom talk and behaviour, the programme recommends regular implementation of one-hour sessions per week for a duration of one term. There is one day of training for teachers and TAs who will implement the programme. The programme package includes access to P4C resources, and website materials that can support teachers in organising P4C session independently. The programme also has the option to sign up for support from a highly experienced trainers who can demonstrate a P4C session in a real classroom setting. The one-off cost per school is £1,200 and for two year groups of 60 pupils each this would be £10 per pupil. For this project, the cost is reduced from its original price.

The available evidence

Since our review of evidence on effective approaches for literacy and numeracy (Gorard et al. 2017), the published research on P4C has grown but the quality of new evidence mostly does not meet minimum standards of trustworthiness. Table 1 presents a summary of best evidence on P4C.

Table 1: Best evidence on P4C impact

Study	Outcomes	Year group(s)	Effect size (All pupils)	Effect size (FSM pupils)	Evidence strength
Gorard et al. (2016)	KS2 results in Maths, Reading Writing	5, 6	Maths (+0.10) Reading (+0.12) Writing (+0.03)	Maths (+0.20) Reading (+0.29) Writing (+0.17)	3
Lord et al. (2021)	KS2 results Maths, Reading	6	Maths (+0.04) Reading (+0.01)	Maths (+0.05) Reading (+0.02)	3
Fair et al. (2015)	Cognitive attainment	7, 8 (US Grades)	0.21	-	2

In the options of evidence-based programmes we have included Philosophy for Children (P4C) because the programme has been replicated and the new evidence has also shown persistent although very small improvement in children’s literacy outcomes. The P4C evaluation studies also suggest larger improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

References

Fair, F., Haas, L. E., Gardosik, C., Johnson, D. D., Price, D. P., & Leipnik, O. (2015). Socrates in the schools from Scotland to Texas: Replicating a study on the effects of a Philosophy for Children program. *Journal of Philosophy in Schools*, 2(1).

Gorard, S., Siddiqui, N., & See, B. H. (2018). Philosophy for Children: Evaluation report and executive summary. *EEF: London UK*

Lord, P., Dirie, A., Kettlewell, K., & Styles, B. (2021). Evaluation of philosophy for children: an effectiveness trial. *EEF: London, UK*.

Texting parents

What is texting parents?

Texting parents is a low-cost and low-effort parent engagement intervention to increase communication and collaboration between schools and families. Parents receive text messages on a variety of topics related to their child's attendance, schooling, and progress. All messages are sent from the school information management system (Schoolcomms or WhatsApp group) at specific time-points and intervals during the school year.

How does it work?

Five types of texts to parents are described as follows, consisting of upcoming assessments, missing homework, attendance, conversation prompts, and test results. Parents are kept up to date on a variety of topics related to their child's attendance, schooling, and progress.

Text type	Description	Text Example
Upcoming Assessment	4- and 1-day warnings of upcoming tests and important deadlines	{Name parent}, {Name student}'s finals begin {Date of assessment}. Please ask your child's teacher for a study plan.
Missing Homework	Weekly notification of missing homework	{Name parent}, according the school's record, {Name student} submitted {homework count} of {week total homework}.
Attendance	Weekly notification of attendance record	{Name parent}, according the school's record, {Name student} attended school {week attendance days} of {week total days}.
Conversation Prompt	Summary of the day's lesson so parents can discuss	{Name parent}, the reading/ mathematics lessons are about {Summary of lessons}.
Test Results	Monthly notification of test scores of reading and mathematics	{Name parent}, the reading/ mathematics scores of {Name student} are {List of student's grade} and his/her average now is {Current GPA}. The average in the class is {Average class GPA}.

What do you need?

- School Information Management System.

- Or social media group to contact parents.
- Teaching timetable or school calendar.
- Summary of lessons.

What does it usually cost?

- Schoolcomms license fee is £1,500 per annum.
- Text fee is £3.25 per child per annum (on a basis of 65 texts).

What onboarding/training is available?



- Instructions for using school information management.
- Detailed written and verbal instructions on how to implement.
- No special training necessary.

Pros of texting parents

- Stay in touch with parents consistently.
- Track of important details or instructions.
- Protect private information of students.
- Save time and effort for both parents and teachers via quick and concise communication.

Prior evidence

Many studies have evaluated the effectiveness of texting parents, most of which do not have rigorous design. The following two studies conducted large-scale randomised control. The first study randomised 72 Key Stage groups from 36 secondary schools in England, involving around twenty thousand students from Year 7, 9, and 11. The second study randomised 1,066 students from grade 4 to 8 with a medium age of 10 in Chile. Both studies have promising results for improving the reading and mathematics achievement of students.

Report	Year group	Duration	Outcome	Security	Effect size
Miller et al. (2017)	Year 7, 9, and 11 (U.K.)	12 months	Reading and Mathematics	3 	+0.034 Reading +0.067 Mathematics
Berlinski et al. (2021)	Grade 4-8 (Chile)	18 months	Reading and Mathematics	3 	+0.11 Reading +0.09 Mathematics The project states

References

Berlinski, S., Busso, M., Dinkelman, T., & Martínez, C. (2021). Reducing parent-school information gaps and improving education outcomes: Evidence from high-frequency text messages (No. w28581). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Miller, S., Davison, J., Yohanis, J., Sloan, S., Gildea, A., & Thurston, A. (2017). Texting Parents: Evaluation Report and Executive Summary. Education Endowment Foundation.

Enhancing self-esteem/ self-affirmation

Improving self-esteem is a psychological approach to overcome negative stereotyping experienced by some disadvantaged students based on self-affirmation theory. The theory suggests that some stigmatised groups, such as those from ethnic minority or poor families, are aware of the negative stereotypes people have of them regarding their academic performance. These students can become anxious during school assessments for fear that their performance will confirm this image of them, which can undermine performance. To protect their self-concept from being devalued, some students also develop a defensive mechanism where they play down the value of academic achievement. This can reduce learning and motivation. Writing positive statements about the values that are important to them when such threats are most salient can give individuals a positive sense of value, negate harmful feelings, and foster academic learning.

How does it work?

The intervention involves two or three writing activities, each lasting 10 to 15 minutes. The writing exercises are presented in booklets, placed in named envelopes and distributed to pupils individually. Teachers give a short, structured introduction to the task explaining that the task is a writing exercise focusing on pupils' own thoughts and ideas and that there are no right or wrong answers to the task. Teachers explain that it is the process of doing the activity that matters. Their writing will not be read or marked, and no feedback will be provided. This is to encourage free and open reflection. All instructions are in the booklets, so there is minimal input from the teachers on the completion of the task. All completed booklets are placed in the named envelopes. They are collected and kept by the teachers.

Important elements of the intervention

An important element of this intervention is that neither the teachers nor the pupils should know precisely what the intervention is, as there is some evidence that knowledge about the aim of the intervention can reduce its efficacy. Therefore, all efforts should be made to conceal the primary intention of the writing exercises.

There is evidence that such an approach only works for disadvantaged pupils.

The first writing exercise is supposed to be the most impactful because if a student performs/behaves better as a result of the first activity, their self-confidence may improve, and their teacher may have higher expectations of them, for example. This could lead to better performance, and the process perpetuates itself. It is therefore important that students complete the first writing exercise. The second (and third) exercises are meant to provide a boost to this process.

When and how much: Duration and dosage of the intervention

The writing exercises are to be administered three times in a year during three crucial time points: once at the beginning of the academic year before the experience of negative stereotype is established, once before a stressful event, such as before the mock Key Stage 2 SATs and once just before the actual SATs exam. To mask the real intention of the exercise, these writing tasks can be delivered during English lessons as part of the regular English class or during PSHE lesson as a whole-class activity.

We do not explain further about the intervention at this stage, for the reasons given above.

What does it cost?

The cost of running the one-year intervention is estimated at £1.89 per pupil, mainly for the printing of exercise booklets and teacher manuals.

What training is available?

Prior to administering the intervention, teachers will be given a short briefing on how to administer the writing activity. Teachers will be provided with scripts to introduce the task and also pre-prepared responses to questions that pupils are likely to ask. These scripts are in the form of FAQs.

Pros

- Easy to implement.
- Little additional workload for teachers, such as marking or preparation.
- No stigma is attached to individual pupils, as all pupils do the task.
- Negligible cost.

Prior evidence

Self-affirmation interventions have been widely evaluated, mostly in the US. The evidence suggests that self-affirmation activities can have positive and long-term results improving academic achievement, especially for ethnic minority groups (e.g. Wu et al., 2021). Some studies have also suggested that these effects persist through secondary school (Borman et al. 2021) and right up to university (Goyer et al., 2017).

Two studies conducted in England have shown that the self-affirmation approach is also effective in raising the attainment of low-SES pupils (Hadden et al., 2020; See et al. 2022). Both studies use a randomised control design. Hadden et al.'s study with 562 pupils shows that the intervention raised the attainment of low-SES pupils and reduced the attainment gap by 62%. See et al.'s (2022) involving c.11,000 pupils aged 14 to 16 in England also showed positive effects on pupils' Attainment 8 scores ($ES = +0.05$) for those eligible for FSM. This is perhaps equivalent to additional 1 month's progress compared to children who did not have the intervention.

References

Borman, G. D., Choi, Y., & Hall, G. J. (2021). The impacts of a brief middle-school self-affirmation intervention help propel African American and Latino students through high school. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 113(3), 605–620. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000570>

Goyer, J. P., Garcia, J., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Binning, K. R., Cook, J. E., Reeves, S. L., Apfel, N., Taborsky-Barba, S., Sherman, D. K., & Cohen, G. L. (2017). Self-affirmation facilitates minority middle schoolers' progress along college trajectories. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(29), 7594–7599. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1617923114>

Hadden, I. R., Easterbrook, M. J., Nieuwenhuis, M., Fox, K. J., & Dolan, P. (2020). Self-affirmation reduces the socioeconomic attainment gap in schools in England. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90(2), 517–536. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12291>

See, B.H., Morris, M., Gorard, S., Siddiqui, N., Easterbrook, M.J., Nieuwenhuis, M., Fox, K., Harris, P.R. & Banerjee, R. (2022) A conceptual replication study of a self-affirmation intervention to improve the academic achievement of low-income pupils in England, *Educational Research and Evaluation*, DOI:10.1080/13803611.2021.2022317

Wu, Z., Spreckelsen, T. F., & Cohen, G. L. (2021). A meta-analysis of the effect of values affirmation on academic achievement. *Journal of Social Issues*, 77(3), 702–750.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12415>

Teachers using evidence

We will put on two interactive workshops for teachers in participating schools, on finding, assessing and using evidence in the classroom, and on robust methods for evaluating their own interventions. We will provide ongoing support via a website and hotline for one year. This will be provided freely by those involved in the team, led by Professor Stephen Gorard.

Next steps

Your SMS contact will be in touch shortly to find out which interventions you may be interested in receiving (please note that, at this stage, we cannot guarantee what provision you will receive.) We will then put you in contact with the School of Education who will support your next steps.

If you have any queries, please send us an email at schools.membership@durham.ac.uk and a member of the team will be happy to help.

Contact

The Palatine Centre
Durham University
Stockton Road
Durham
DH1 3LE

schools.membership@durham.ac.uk

durham.ac.uk

Durham University and Durham University logo are registered Trade Marks of the University of Durham. Unless otherwise stated, all material in this publication is copyright of the University of Durham. The University makes every effort to ensure that the information contained here is accurate. This publication is intended as a general guide to University of Durham's facilities and form no part of any contract between you and the University. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the permission of the University. Please note that the University's website is the most up to date source of information and we strongly recommend that you always visit the website before making any commitments.