



**BACKING  
THE BEST**  
**OUR WORK WITH  
ACTION TUTORING**

**IMPETUS – THE PRIVATE EQUITY FOUNDATION (IMPETUS-PEF) TRANSFORMS THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS BY ENSURING THEY GET THE RIGHT SUPPORT TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL, IN WORK AND IN LIFE.**

We find, fund and build the most promising charities working with these young people, providing them with a unique package of support, and we influence policy and decision makers so that all young people get the support they need.

**We work shoulder-to-shoulder with our charities to:**

- make them stronger
- delivering better results year after year
- reach more disadvantaged young people.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Written by Alice O’Keeffe.  
Photographs from Action Tutoring  
Pictures are not of the case studies featured unless expressly stated.

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## WE MAKE CHARITIES STRONGER

We help develop charities' leadership, impact management and sustainability, using our bespoke outcomes framework as a guide.



## WE BACK CHARITIES TO DELIVER BETTER RESULTS

We put the building blocks of impact management in place so that our charities can deliver better results for young people.



## WE HELP CHARITIES REACH MORE YOUNG PEOPLE

We support our charities to grow, so that they are able to help more young people succeed.



**WE DO ALL THIS BY PROVIDING OUR CHARITIES WITH CORE FUNDING, THE EXPERTISE OF OUR DEDICATED INVESTMENT TEAM AND ACCESS TO OUR WORLD CLASS PRO BONO NETWORK.**



# 01

## INTRODUCING ACTION TUTORING



**Olivia is 15, and preparing for her GCSEs at the City of London Academy in North West London. Since September 2017, she's been having tuition in English and maths with Action Tutoring, a charity that pairs under-performing pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds with volunteer tutors, with the aim of enabling them to progress to further education, employment or training.**

**M**y teacher recommended me for tutoring, as I didn't have the best grades. There were some things in maths, like fractions, that I really struggled with." In her weekly tutorials, Olivia gets a chance to ask questions and get extra support on anything she's finding difficult. "It's made a lot of difference," she says. "My tutor helps with explaining things, and giving me new techniques to work with."

Olivia lives with her mum, who is delighted that her daughter is receiving such intensive support on the programme. "It made a big difference to us that we didn't have to pay for it, and that she could have the extra lessons at school."

Olivia is now aiming for grade sixes (out of the new nine point system for GCSE English and maths) in both core subjects. "If I get the grades, I'd love to go on to do A-levels in sixth form. My ambition is to study fine art at college or university."

Since 2011, Action Tutoring has been working with young people like Olivia, delivering a structured tutoring programme, in partnership with schools. The charity's aim is to help these pupils

to achieve better results. In the case of primary school pupils, this means reaching national standards in maths and English in the Standard Academic Tests (SATs) they take at age 11; at secondary level, it means passing their vital English and maths GCSEs at age 16.

"We initially chose to focus on GCSEs, as they are the gateway a young person needs to move into the adult world," says the charity's CEO, Susannah Hardyman. "Success at GCSE level is essential to taking positive next steps in life."

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are much less likely than their better-off peers to do well at school – and subsequently less likely to progress to higher levels of study and good jobs.

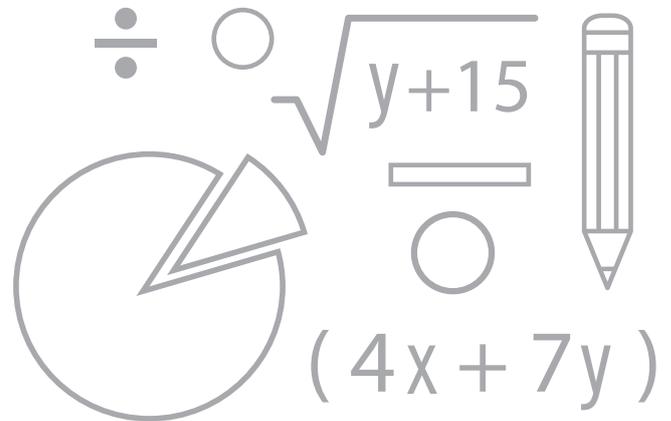
In 2011 when Susannah set up Action Tutoring, only 35% of pupils eligible for free school meals passed their English and maths GCSEs, compared to 62% of all other pupils. At the same time, the market in private tuition for pupils from higher income families was booming.



“

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Olivia



## LIFE CHANGING SUPPORT

The Sutton Trust estimates that one in four pupils nationally have a private tutor, but at £40-60 per hour, this is unaffordable for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In London, where Action Tutoring started, it's two in five pupils.

“The young people we work with are just as intelligent as their middle class peers,” says Susannah. “And they're just as determined to succeed. The difference is that they don't get access to the same opportunities – that's the huge frustration for them. Giving them access to good quality tutoring is a means of addressing that unfairness.”

Susannah began her career in the charity sector after graduating from university in 2007, and also worked as a private tutor. “The experience opened my eyes to how big an industry private tuition was – and how much parents were paying for it,” she says.

At the same time, Susannah was doing voluntary work in a youth project near her home in South East London.

“I became very aware that the children I was working with at the youth project would love to do well, but they didn't have access to private help. The experience opened my eyes to poverty and disadvantage in the UK. I wanted to level the playing field. I'd always been drawn to education and felt there was a gap in the market to set up something that could tackle the wasted potential I was seeing.”

Susannah was convinced that there must be more recent graduates like her who would be prepared to volunteer as tutors. The idea bubbled away until, in 2010, she decided to test it.

She managed to get two schools to sign up and recruited some volunteers, mainly her friends. She didn't yet know whether the pupils would keep coming back, or whether tutoring would actually make any difference. “At that point it was just a bunch of enthusiastic people wanting to try something out.

But we had a hunch that we were on to something.”

Over the course of the next three years, the pupils did keep coming back and more schools were keen to benefit from the support. And as the pupils started to do better in their exams, the positive impact of the tutoring became clear.

**“THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE WORK WITH ARE JUST AS INTELLIGENT AS THEIR MIDDLE CLASS PEERS AND THEY'RE JUST AS DETERMINED TO SUCCEED.”**

Susannah Hardyman, CEO

By 2013, the charity was working in 40 schools, had piloted a programme outside London, and attracted funding from the innovation foundation, NESTA. “That felt like a turning point,” says Susannah. “It was always part of our vision not to be London-centric.”

# 02

## OUR PARTNERSHIP



**In May 2014, following a six-month due diligence process, Impetus-PEF came on board with a grant of £100,000, to be delivered alongside support from a dedicated Investment Director.**

**T**he charity's work aligned well with Impetus-PEF's mission to eliminate the attainment gap between disadvantaged young people and their better-off peers, and it was one of the very few tutoring charities targeting its support at young people from poorer families.

"There was a strong evidence base for the effectiveness of tutoring," says Investment Director Neha Mahendru. "In fact, studies show it is one of the most effective ways of raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils."

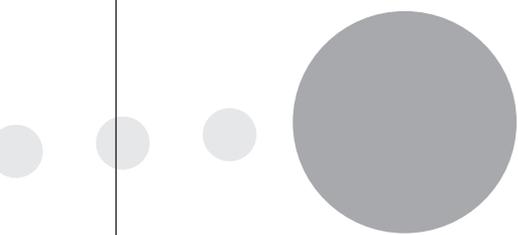
"We were also very impressed by Susannah," says Neha. "She had already achieved so much in four years, we were excited to see what we could achieve together."

For Susannah, the investment was "an amazing opportunity." The prospect of opening up the charity to greater scrutiny of its processes and outcomes was, she admits, "fairly terrifying – but if you're serious about making a difference you have to face up to those tough questions."



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OF DISADVANTAGED PUPILS.”**

Neha Mahendru, Impetus-PEF Investment Director



Next chapter: with our help,  
AT has become stronger ➤

# 03

## WITH OUR HELP ACTION TUTORING HAS BECOME STRONGER



The first stage of the partnership began with an intensive series of ‘driving impact’ workshops, designed to give the charity’s management the opportunity to take a step back and address the fundamental questions at the heart of their mission and strategy.

The aim was to help them think through questions such as which pupils they wanted to support, what outcomes those pupils should achieve, and what the programme would need to look like in order to make that happen.

This is a process guided by Impetus-PEF, but decisions are made by the charity. “We are clear that we don’t have an agenda,” explains Neha. “We can facilitate and try to ask the right questions, but ultimately the charity decides.”

Susannah describes the workshops as “an opportunity to step back and imagine: with no limitations, what would this charity look like, and what could it do?”

Topics included whether the management structure of the charity was fit for the future; which pupils their work really was targeting; and how the charity could improve its relationship with schools.

“We emerged with a much clearer sense of what our mission was – and what it wasn’t,” says Susannah. “It was a very important, if occasionally painful, process.”

### As a result of these workshops, the charity decided that it needed to:

- Set clearer eligibility criteria, to ensure they were targeting the pupils who needed help to succeed and who would benefit from tutoring. The criteria were designed to guard against ‘creaming’ students who were likely to pass their exams anyway, and enrolling those who would need more support and time than the charity was able to offer;
- Increase the length of participation in the programme, which was then offering pupils an average of five hours of tutoring per year and often for just one term;
- Improve volunteer tutor recruitment and training, and develop a structured curriculum to strengthen delivery;
- Measure progress of pupils in the short, medium and long-term, with baseline tests establishing where pupils needed help;
- Establish a stronger relationship with schools, in order to work with teachers to select the right pupils, and to drive up attendance.

“

**WE EMERGED WITH A MUCH CLEARER SENSE OF WHAT OUR MISSION WAS — AND WHAT IT WASN'T. IT WAS A VERY IMPORTANT, IF OCCASIONALLY PAINFUL, PROCESS.”**

Susannah



As a result of the workshops, Action Tutoring began to re-design their programme to see if these changes would drive up impact.

“Today we form partnerships with both primary and secondary schools to identify pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds that could benefit from our support,” says Susannah.

“We match those pupils with a high quality volunteer tutor, who will work with them for one hour a week in either English or maths, or sometimes both. We provide structure to the programme through tutor training, carefully tailored workbooks and resources, and tracking of pupil progress. Pupils now have an average of 12 tutoring sessions, up from five.”

These changes did not happen overnight, and along the way Impetus-PEF provided core funding, support and challenge.

In 2015, Impetus-PEF invested £794,000 over three years to support Action Tutoring to implement the ambitious development plan to strengthen their programme and outcomes.

One of the major changes was to the management structure. In 2014, says Susannah, the five person central team “did a bit of everything: a bit of recruitment, a bit of marketing. It was clear that the team needed to grow to achieve its ambitions and that more specialist roles were needed.”

With Impetus-PEF’s help, through a pro bono consultant, the team was completely restructured. Several new and more specialist roles were created, most importantly, the role of programme coordinator. Programme coordinators manage a caseload of partner schools and work very closely with tutors, pupils and schools, providing Action Tutoring the direct link to programme delivery that had been missing.

The workshops had highlighted how pivotal the relationship with schools was. Having a coordinator working directly with the schools, helping to identify the right pupils, linking the tutoring to classroom progress and encouraging attendance was one of the most critical changes the charity decided to make.

They also added a Data and Evaluation Manager, who leads on data collection and analysis, and a Curriculum and Training Manager. Together with the new programme coordinators, the team now numbers 25.

Impetus-PEF arranged external mentoring – drawing from its pro bono network of experienced leaders – for all the charity’s senior team, in order to help them take on the challenges of managing a bigger organisation with a more structured hierarchy.

Susannah describes her mentor as “someone you trust enough to bounce ideas off. I say things to him that I haven’t said out loud before.”

Neha, meanwhile, continues to meet with the charity’s management monthly. “Neha knows the intricate details of what we’re doing. She knows where we need to be pushed, and asks awkward questions that nobody else would ask. She has helped us to think bigger,” says Susannah.

**Next chapter:** with our help, AT is delivering better results ➤

# 04 WITH OUR HELP ACTION TUTORING IS DELIVERING BETTER RESULTS



At the beginning of the partnership in 2014, Action Tutoring had already demonstrated that it could expand; it was operating in five cities and in over 40 schools. The priority, before aiming for further growth, was to improve impact – to make a more meaningful difference to each pupil who went through the programme.

**T**he new programme coordinators took responsibility for training volunteer tutors, liaising with schools and pupils, and performance management. “In addition to the planned purpose of that role, we have found surprise benefits to it,” says Susannah.

“For example, there has been a huge jump in the retention of tutors – because they are able to build up a relationship with one consistent person.” School retention also improved, from 50% of schools choosing to re-book in 2014, to 90% of schools today.

The charity also embarked on standardising its English and maths resources. “Our tutors were always given training, but in the past they were very much left to design their own tutoring sessions,” says Susannah. “This meant a lack of consistency: some would do huge amounts of preparation, and some not so much.”

According to Neha, “it became clear that to ensure high standards across the board, they needed a curriculum, resources for tutors, and baseline testing to measure each student’s progress.”

The charity employed external consultants to draw up new materials. The new courses were then piloted in 2015–16 and progress was carefully tracked with 100 pupils – ‘the Magic 100’ – according to a plan drawn up with help from Impetus-PEF.

The pilot was designed to expose a core group of 100 pupils to as close to Action Tutoring’s ideal model as possible, to see whether this would drive up attainment. Magic 100 students were all eligible for pupil premium funding (a key marker of disadvantage), they were all taught by trained tutors using the new materials, and they all received 12 or more tutoring sessions.





**MOVING TOWARDS A MORE EVIDENCE-BASED WAY OF WORKING HAS BEEN A BIG CULTURAL SHIFT, AND IT HELPED THAT THERE WAS EXTERNAL PRESSURE ON US FROM IMPETUS-PEF.”**

Susannah



The results of the pilot exceeded everyone's expectations. In 2015-16, 70% of Magic 100 pupils passed maths, compared to 60% of all Action Tutoring pupils taking maths. This was the evidence Action Tutoring needed to begin to roll out the 'ideal' programme across all the charity's schools, while continuing to increase the numbers of hours of tutoring each pupil received.

Action Tutoring also started to assess its pupils more often, to make sure that any gaps in knowledge were caught before the pupils got to the crucial exam phase. Pupils are now assessed half-way through the year, and the management regularly review data on attendance, demographics and attainment.

Data collection itself has improved, from 25% of schools returning data when Impetus-PEF first started working with Action Tutoring, to 95% today.

“Moving towards a more evidence-based way of working has been a big cultural shift, and it helped that there was external pressure on us from Impetus-PEF,” says Susannah. “Once everyone started to see the benefits of it, the external pressure was no longer necessary. Now, it's second nature for us to talk about Key Performance Indicators.”

Susannah credits these changes with helping Action Tutoring to weather the storm of curriculum changes, as English and maths GCSEs nationally were redesigned and the system of grading them was changed. In 2014-15, 52% of Action Tutoring's pupils passed the GCSE subject they were tutored in, which rose to 60% in 2015-16 and stayed at the same level in 2016-17, despite the turbulence of the curriculum and grading changes.

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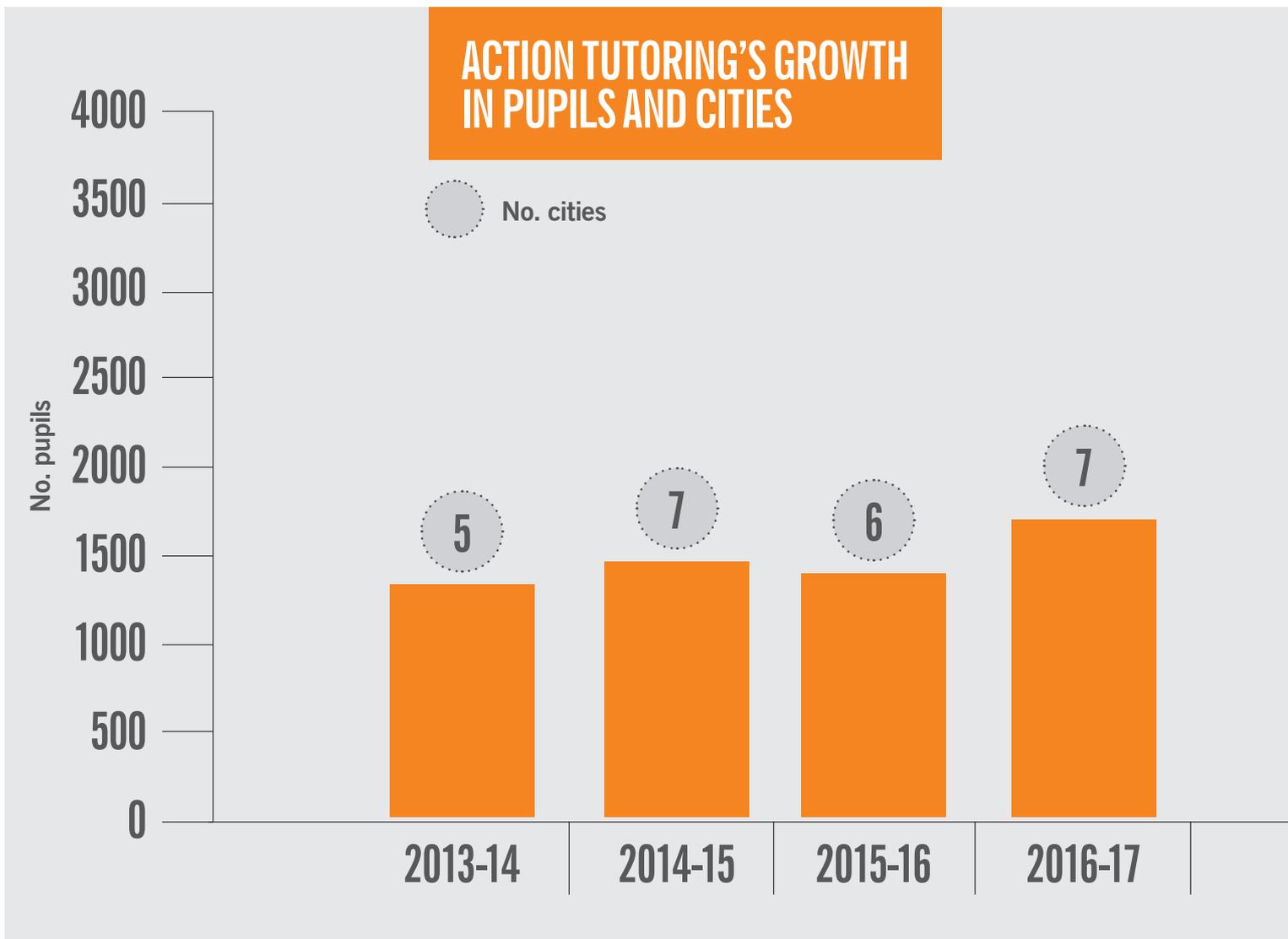
Next chapter: with our help, AT is reaching more young people ➤

# 05

## WITH OUR HELP ACTION TUTORING IS REACHING MORE YOUNG PEOPLE



While recent focus has been on impact, Action Tutoring has also been able to extend its programme to more schools, growing by an average of 20% each year throughout the course of the Impetus-PEF partnership.



**T**hey've been able to do this by putting the charity on a more sustainable footing, giving them the confidence to expand their central team and their national footprint.

The charity has made significant progress towards a more secure funding model. Action Tutoring's funding has always been a mix of grant funding and income from schools, which pay them to deliver the programme. The grant from Impetus-PEF – Action Tutoring's biggest funder – has allowed the leadership team to focus on impact and strategy, rather than being preoccupied with fundraising.

By increasing the fee charged to schools for the programme, the charity has been able to raise a greater proportion of its costs directly. This was a big step, and one that the charity could only make

after market research by one of Impetus-PEF's pro bono partners, which investigated whether higher fees were likely to reduce uptake and whether schools would be willing to pay more for the proposed changes to the programme.

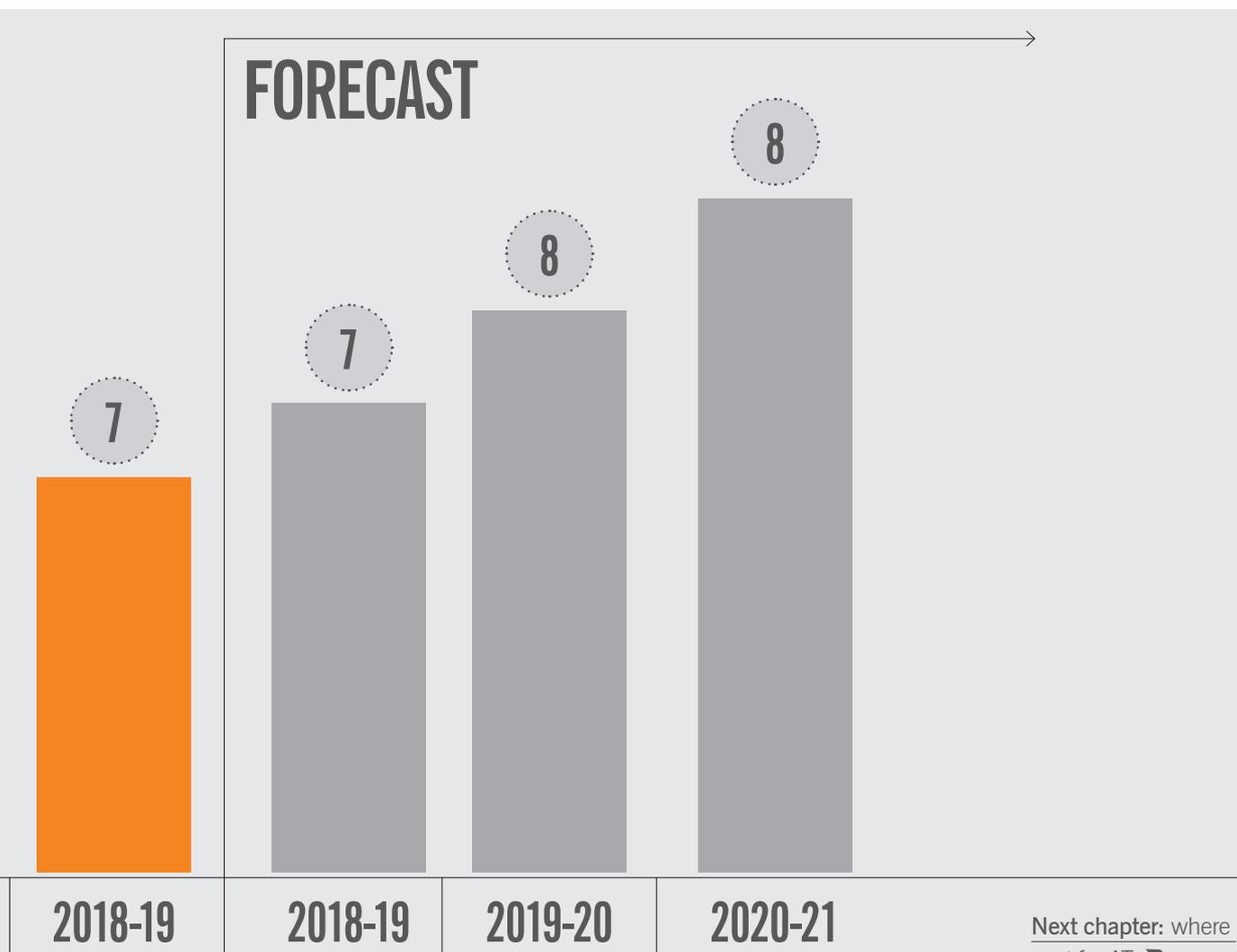
To their own surprise, Action Tutoring were able to increase the fee charged to schools while also increasing the number of schools they work in. Their growing reputation and ability to demonstrate impact played a key part in this. Since 2014, they've almost doubled the number of pupils they work with, from 1,300 to 2,100, alongside increasing the average number of sessions that each pupil receives.

Susannah says that schools understood that, despite higher fees, Action Tutoring was still delivering value for money.

"The work we've done with Impetus-PEF gave us that solid conviction that we're delivering a great programme – and the evidence to back it up. It gave us the confidence to ask for more," she says.

The charity's other grant funding has also become more reliable, and it has been able to move from applying for smaller, specific grants to multi-year general-purpose grants.

"Being in the Impetus-PEF portfolio has helped hugely with other funders. It has given them more confidence in us – it's like a kitemark of quality," says Susannah. "Also, no funder will ever need more detail than Impetus-PEF, so it helps that we have all those facts and figures at our fingertips."



# 06

## WHERE NEXT FOR ACTION TUTORING



Four years in to the relationship with Impetus-PEF, Action Tutoring are confident that they have a programme which is working, a strong leadership team ambitious for growth, and a funding model which can sustain them into their next phase.

**W**e have really ambitious plans to work with more young people,” says Susannah. “We launched in Newcastle in September 2017, and we’re in the process of identifying another city. By 2020, we’ll be working with over 3,600 pupils.”

These plans are backed by new funding. In 2018, Impetus-PEF committed to a £1 million investment in Action Tutoring over the next three years, to prepare them to scale up. In partnership with the Centerbridge Foundation and Bain & Company, we are backing Action Tutoring to deliver free, effective and high-quality GCSE tutoring to more young people. We plan to expand this collaboration over time in support of a targeted portfolio of charities that are ready to scale their impact.

As part of that co-investment deal, management consultancy Bain & Company have undertaken a major strategy review of Action Tutoring. “This has been a hugely valuable process,” says Susannah, “it has helped us to clearly identify our ambition and the challenges we have to overcome to get there – and it’s given us options.”

SUPPORTING OVER  
**3,600**  
YOUNG PEOPLE

**SCALE  
UP**



## THE NEW STRATEGY BUILDS ON THE GOOD RESULTS AND STRIVES FOR EVEN BETTER RESULTS BEING ACHIEVED BY EVEN MORE YOUNG PEOPLE.”

Neha

The main challenges Bain has helped the charity identify are how to strengthen volunteer recruitment and retention; how to strengthen the evidence base for impact; and how to grow in a financially sustainable way.

Susannah and Neha are looking forward to working through these challenges together. For both Action Tutoring and Impetus-PEF, the last four years have been a learning process.

Neha talks about bringing challenge into their meetings, and the understanding that “good intentions are a good start, but they don’t always create good results. The new strategy builds on the good results to date, and strives for even better results being achieved by even more young people.”

In turn, Susannah, says that the charity has helped Impetus-PEF understand that “what looks good on paper, and what works in schools are two very different things. It’s important to have spreadsheets, but only by visiting new schools in new locations and seeing the challenges tutors were facing has Impetus-PEF gained a real sense of the stories behind the numbers.”

The partnership has been transformative says Susannah, it’s given Action Tutoring “a strategic partner with an eye on detail and the willingness to challenge, with the aim of making us the best we can be.”

# 07

## ACTION TUTORING AND IMPETUS-PEF: FACTS AND FIGURES

The value of Impetus-PEF's  
support to Action Tutoring  
(2014 – 2017)

Investment team support:

**£413,000**

Pro bono services donated:

**£110,000\***

Grant funding:

**£774,000**

Total audited support package:

**£1,300,000**

Date entered  
portfolio:

APRIL

**2014**

Years in portfolio:

**4**



Number of pro  
bono projects:

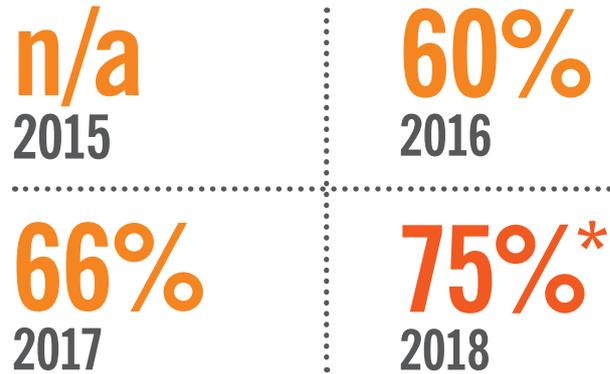
**24**

\*N.B. This does not  
include the Bain & Company  
strategy project undertaken  
in early 2018.

### Charity turnover

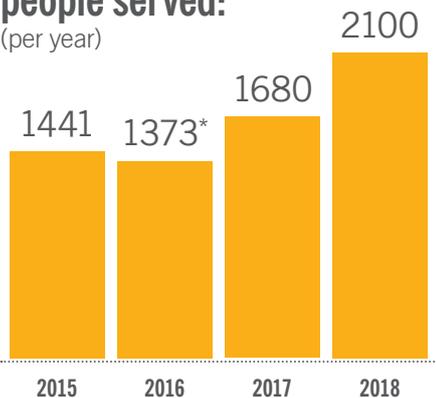


### Proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds under-performing academically:



\*Many of the remaining 25% may be from disadvantaged backgrounds but don't claim PP for reasons such as being too proud to claim or because they belong to high risk categories like having refugee status.

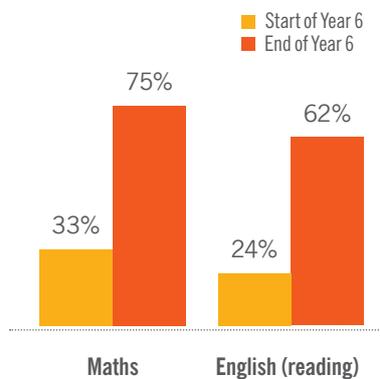
### Number of young people served: (per year)



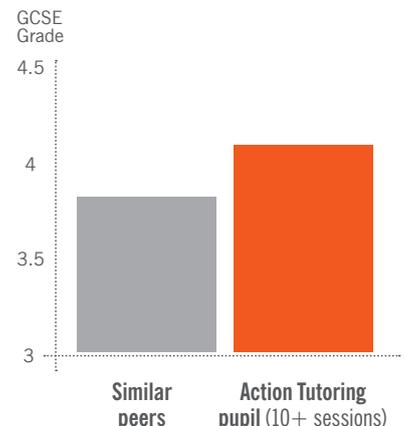
\*The Number of pupils dropped in 2015 as AT lengthened the programme to one academic year instead of taking on new pupils every term. This allowed for a greater number of sessions to be delivered per pupil.

### Impact on grades in 2017

After support from Action Tutoring, an additional 40% of primary school pupils on average were 'working at expected standard' at the end of Year 6.



Action Tutoring pupils attending ten or more sessions achieved on average a third of a grade more than similar peers at GCSE.



### Number of Geographical locations, centres or programmes

**5 cities 2014:**  
 London, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool

**7 cities 2015:**  
 London, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Bristol, Leeds

**6 cities 2016:**  
 London, Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Bristol, Brighton

**7 cities 2017:**  
 London, Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool, Bristol, Brighton, Newcastle



### Programmes (15-20 pupils per cohort):

2014: **86**  
 2015: **100**  
 2016: **120**  
 2017: **150 in secondary schools, 10 in primary schools**  
 2018: **165 in secondary schools, 90 in primary schools**



**OLIVIA PASSED HER GCSES IN ENGLISH AND MATHS. NOW STUDYING A LEVELS IN ARTS AND DESIGN, GRAPHICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE AT SIR GEORGE MONOIX COLLEGE IN WALTHAMSTOW, OLIVIA HAS SET HER SIGHTS ON STUDYING FINE ART AT OXFORD.”**





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