

Top Set Tutoring

Supported by Sir Walter St John Charity

Impact Report



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Top Set Tutoring

Top Set Tutoring was launched in December 2018 by The Tutorfair Foundation and Sir Walter St John Charity with the aim of improving outcomes and attitudes to learning amongst selected Year 11 students at Evelyn Grace Academy. 57% of the academy's student population speak English as a second language, more than 70% qualify for pupil premium funding and the current Progress 8 score is well below average – putting Evelyn Grace Academy in the bottom 13% of the country when it comes to student progress at GCSE-level. The aim of the programme was to provide top quality tutors to the school free of charge to support students with their English and Maths GCSEs.

The first tutor was recruited in December of 2018 and began work at the school in January 2019 after which 4 more tutors were recruited across a range of subjects. Tutors were expected to deliver a minimum of 10 hours voluntary tuition as part of their placement. On average, tutors contributed 48 hours of voluntary hours to the project. This is far higher than expected and is a key success of the programme. Tutors reported very positively about their experience of the programme and several are keen to return in the coming year. On average, teaching staff rated our tutors as 4.6 out of 5 stars.

The programme was originally expected to support students in English and Maths GCSE, but due to a lack of responsiveness in the English department and a high level of interest and engagement in the Science department, the project quickly became focused on Science and Maths support. Students taking the three separate science subjects were identified as an area of need at GCSE and significant experience of the maths volunteer meant that the maths support was almost exclusively used to support A-Level students rather than GCSE students. We're delighted that the tutors were used to support learners across 94 examinations in 5 subjects and will be happy to extend support to the English department again in the future.

Initially, 15 students had been selected to take part in the programme, but this number quickly rose as the subjects supported grew to include the sciences and A-Level Maths. 5 GCSE Maths students were supported, but 26 students were taking three sciences and 11 were taking A-Level Maths, making up the vast majority of support provided. Mostly, tutors were used to support a full class at a time alongside the classroom teacher. If a smaller number of students had been included in the programme, there may have been more opportunities to one-to-one and small-group interventions, but we are happy that so many students ended up benefitting from the support.

The target for the project was set at 300 hours of support. This was made very difficult by the project starting later than anticipated and the first tutor only being placed in January. However, we are delighted by the contributions made by our volunteers which has meant we were able to deliver 80% of the target hours in just two terms. In the future we will maintain an approach that keeps a number of key volunteers invested in the programme in order to replicate this pattern of large contributions made by a smaller number of tutors.

5

Tutors

5

Subjects

42

Students

239

Hours

Key findings

1. **Target GCSE students performed better against their predicted grades in Chemistry than in any other subjects.** This was also the subject in which the delivery of the intervention was most diverse, including after-school sessions and Saturday sessions.
2. **Target GCSE students were more likely to score an 8 or a 9 in subjects that were supported by a Tutorfair Volunteer than in their other subjects.** This is a particularly positive outcome given that grades in tutored subjects were, on average, lower than in other subjects. The discrepancy in average is introduced as target students were more likely to score 6s and 7s in other core subjects than in the sciences.
3. **Only one student in the year group scored a 9 in a GCSE subject.** That student scored two 9s and both were in subjects in which they were supported by a Tutorfair volunteer.
4. **GCSE Students with a 'borderline' predicted grade (3 or 4) were more likely to pass in subjects that were supported by a Tutorfair Volunteer than in other subjects.** This includes students from across the year group in all core subjects.
5. **All students tutored in A-Level Maths achieved a passing grade.** This is a particularly positive outcome given that the cohort's average performance was down compared to previous years, when there were failing outcomes.
6. **Teaching staff reported improved attitude and engagement from students.** Staff have also reported being very happy with the support and requested that the programme returns in the coming year.
7. **Tutoring whole cohorts makes grade analysis more difficult.** Without non-tutored students taking the same exam as tutoring students, straightforward evidence of increased progression is harder to come by.

“

Our students loved the programme very much. Every 5 minutes, the tutors were being approached – even during their breaks!

”

Maths Teacher
Evelyn Grace Academy

“

The change in students' attitudes were noticeable by members of the department. We appreciate the great work of the Tutorfair Foundation and we hope to see you in the next academic year, too. Thank you.

”

Jean Isaacs-Clarke
Head of Science, Evelyn Grace Academy

Areas for improvement

1. **SLT and teaching staff should be encouraged to allow the intervention to be delivered outside of the classroom more often.** Where after school and Saturday sessions were used (particularly in GCSE Chemistry) we noticed the greatest impact on performance versus predicted grades. This recommendation is supported by research behind one-to-one and small-group tuition.
2. **Where out-of-classroom intervention is used, attendance should be improved.** The fact that attendance for after school sessions was low meant the school didn't feel confident consistently relying on this approach. Extractions during timetabled lessons can be used to optimise support without risking poor attendance.
3. **The choice of students selected for the intervention can be better focused.** Now that The Foundation has better ties with senior leaders and teachers at the academy, we can work more carefully to determine a selected cohort of students to participate before the programme begins. This will allow us to more closely deliver what we set out to deliver, better promote diversity in delivery methods, improve attendance and track impact more accurately.

Delivery

Subject	Number of students	Average Outcome (to nearest)
GCSE Triple Science	26	5
GCSE Maths	5	3
A-Level Maths	11	D

Tutors	Subject	Hours
Sara	GCSE Biology	8.0
Ksenia	GCSE Chemistry	50.1
Anthony	GCSE Physics	82.3
Ritchard	GCSE Maths	10.0
Amir	A-Level Maths	89.0
Total		239.4

Throughout Top Set Tutoring, 5 tutors delivered 239.4 hours of support to 42 students across 5 subjects.

59% of tuition supported the 26 students sitting separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics GCSEs, with 140.4 hours delivered by 3 tutors. Students were supported during timetabled lessons in all subjects, but Chemistry and Physics tuition was also delivered through regular after-school sessions. In addition, 9 hours of Chemistry tuition was delivered over 3 Saturday sessions through the project.

37% of tuition supported the 11 students sitting A-Level Maths, with 89 hours delivered by 1 tutor. These students were exclusively supported during timetabled lessons. This support went beyond the usual expectations of a volunteer tutor, as our A-Level Maths specialist, Amir, also prepared and delivered lessons to the whole cohort and contributed to teacher training.

I am unsure if you know what diamonds you have in your fleet of tutors! They are incredible!

Lazaros Vastavos
Head of Maths, Evelyn Grace Academy

The remaining 4% of tuition supported 5 students sitting GCSE Maths, with 10 hours delivered by 1 tutor. This was delivered as in-class support, with the students in question identified as a priority for the tutor's focus whilst in the room. These 5 students were awarded 4, 4, 3, 2 and 2 respectively. No analysis of these outcomes is included in this report due to the low number of data points.

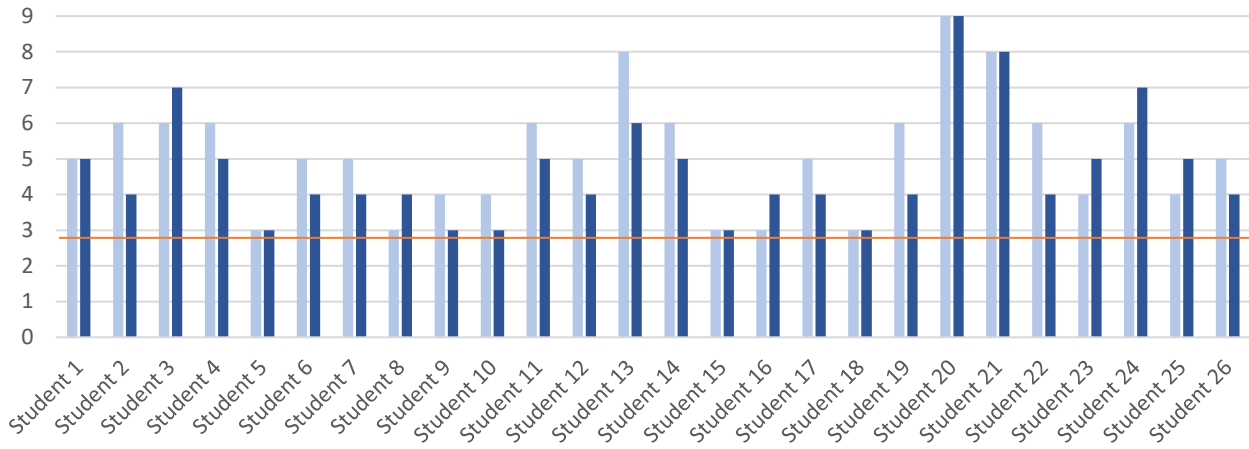
Limitations of the Data

Evelyn Grace Academy has provided The Tutorfair Foundation with anonymised records of attained and predicted grades for Maths, English Language, English Literature and Sciences at GCSE as well as attained and predicted grades for A-Level subjects in 2019 and attained grades in Maths from 2018.

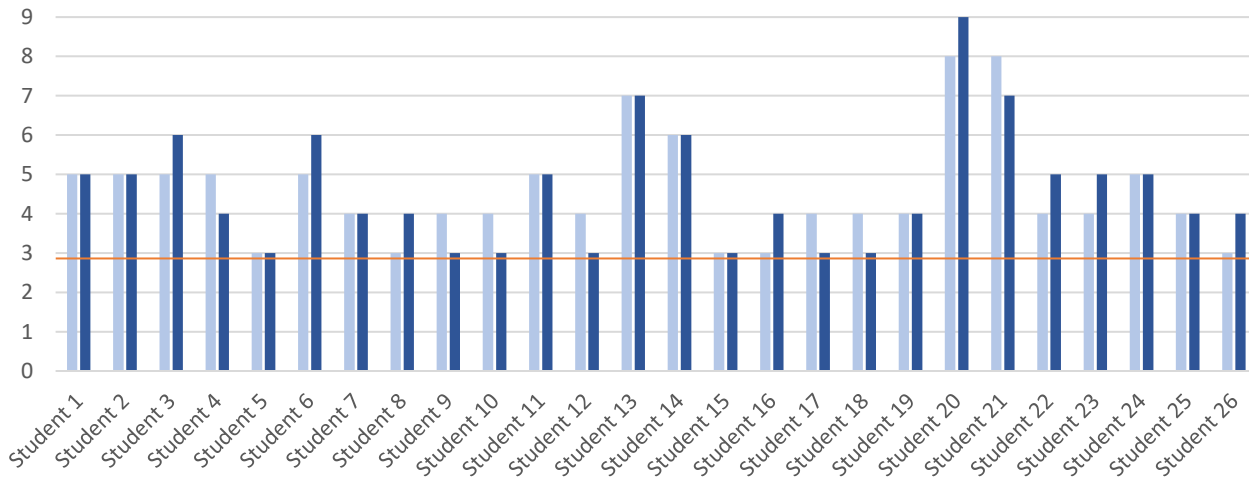
For A-Level Maths and GCSE Triple Science, the students who benefitted from the support programme constitute the entire cohort sitting these exams. This means there is limited capacity for persuasive comparative analysis, but this report outlines what we have found from analysing the data provided.

■ Predicted ■ Attained — Average Science Grade for Rest of Year (N=228)

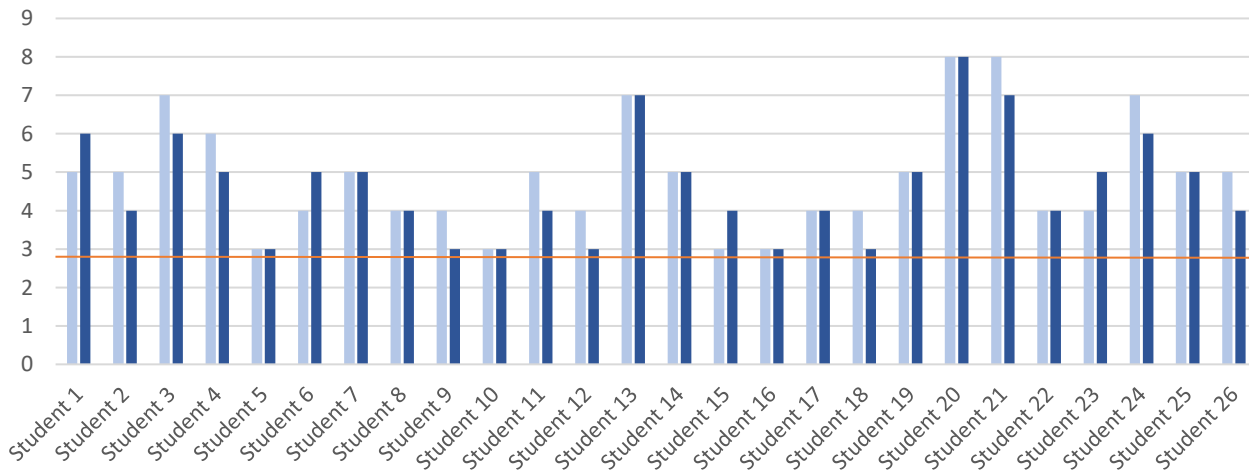
Biology GCSE Predicted and Attained Grades



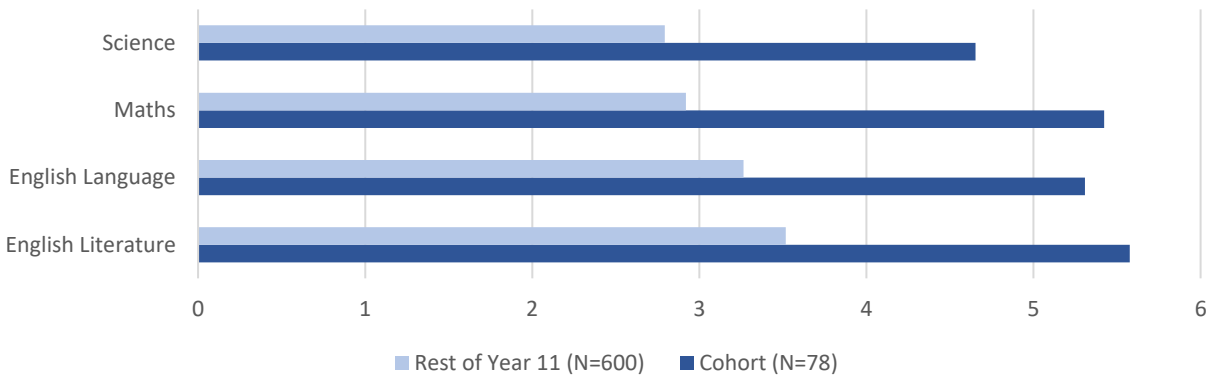
Chemistry GCSE Predicted and Attained Grades



Physics GCSE Predicted and Attained Grades



Average Performance Across Year Group



On average, the target cohort performed much higher than the rest of the school but attained a lower grade in their Science subjects than in the other 3 core subjects. This is also true of the performance of the rest of the year, so is more likely to reflect Science outcomes at the academy generally this year, rather than reflect the efficacy of the intervention. Elsewhere, we can see evidence that the cohort benefitted from the support provided.

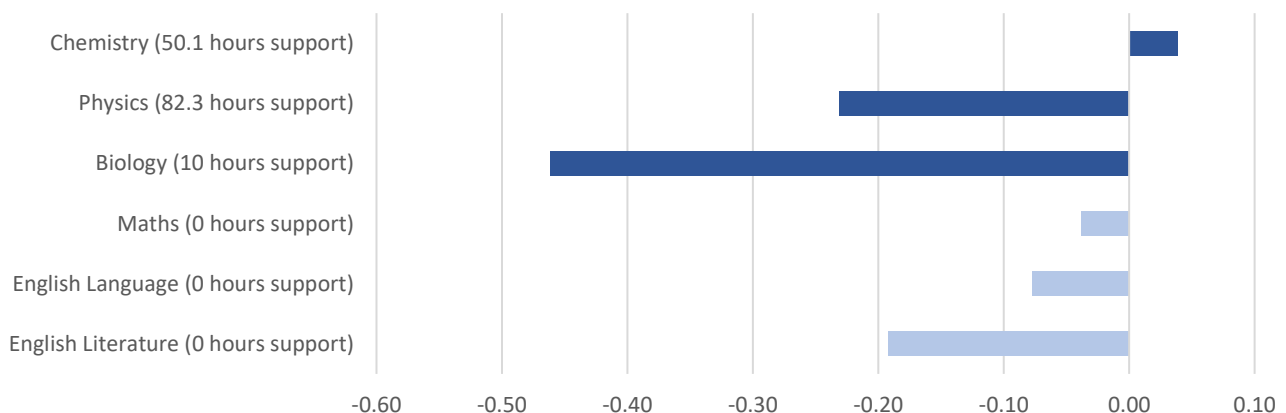
As shown below, Chemistry was the only core subject in which targeted students outperformed their predicted grades. This was the subject where the tuition had the most diverse delivery, with after-school sessions as well as Saturday sessions making up part of the intervention.

In Biology, where the only 8 hours of in-class support was provided, we can see that students performed less well against their target grades than in Physics and Chemistry where, in total, 132.4 hours of support was delivered. Although 8 hours of Biology support may well have influenced individual students' outcomes, it is unlikely to have had a significant effect on the average performance of the 26 students in the cohort. Therefore, the higher performance against predicted grades in Chemistry and Physics suggests that the interventions there had a significant effect on outcomes.

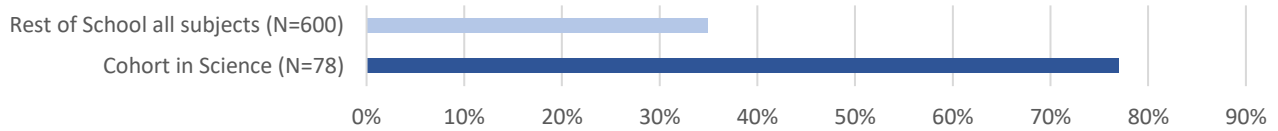
“
Students love the idea of being taught by someone else. They were looking forward to the tutoring sessions and were eager to ask questions.
 ”

Peter Kirby
 Science Teacher, Evelyn Grace Academy

Average Difference: Cohort Attained vs. Predicted (N=26)



Overall Pass Rate

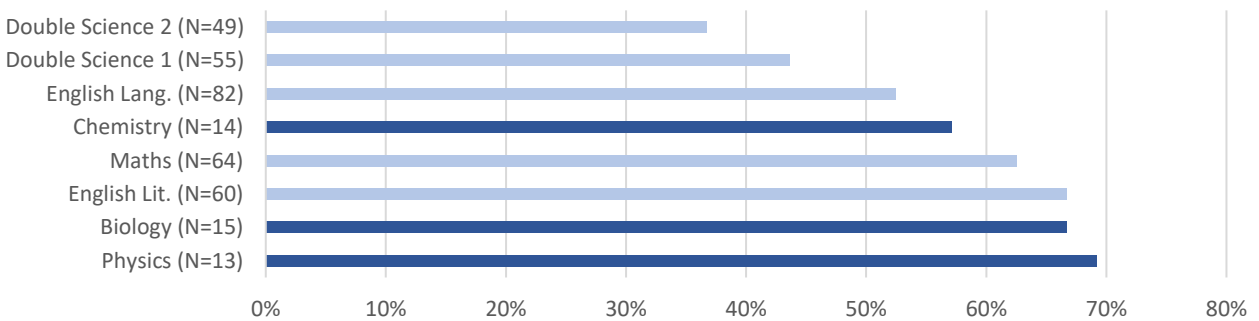


Of the 78 grades awarded to the target cohort in GCSE Triple Science, 77% (60) were a standard pass (4) or higher. Compared to the rest of the year group across subjects, this figure is well over two times higher than the usual passing rate, with only 35% (211) of the 600 grades awarded to students outside of the cohort being 4 or higher.

As shown below, students with a 'borderline' predicted (grade 3 or 4) were most likely to pass in Physics, with Biology and English Literature tied for the next best performance. 'Borderline' passes in Chemistry were less likely than in Maths and English Literature, but more likely than in English Language.

Pass rates for students with 'borderline' predicted grades were significantly higher in all three tutored subjects than in the same demographic for two groups of GCSE Double Science students, suggesting that the intervention for Triple Science students was particularly impactful for students in the cohort with lower predicted grades.

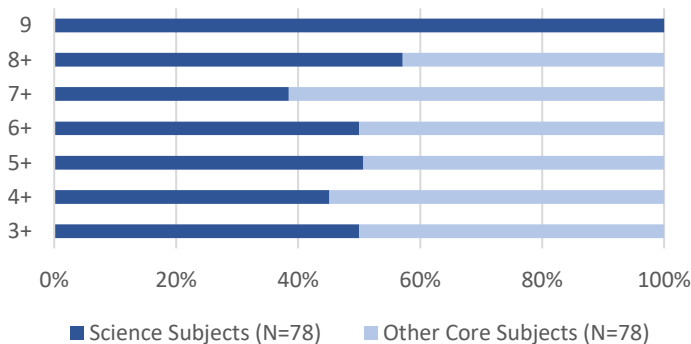
Pass Rate if Predicted 3 or 4



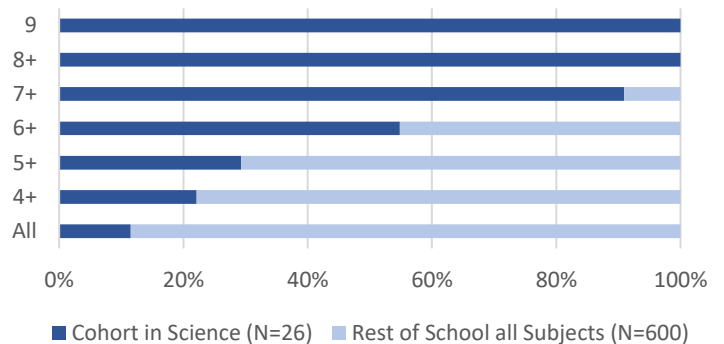
The two graphs below show how the cumulative performance by grade of students in the tutored cohort compares to two separate standards. On the left is the performance against the same set of students across their other predicted grades, with parity being 50% (represented by '3+'). On the right is the same measurement against the rest of the year group in all subjects, with parity being 11.5% (represented by 'All').

In the subjects in which they were tutored, the target students were more likely to achieve an 8 or a 9 than in the subjects that they were not tutored, though less likely to achieve a 7, 8 or 9. As expected, the target students in Science significantly outperformed students in the rest of the school in all passing grades.

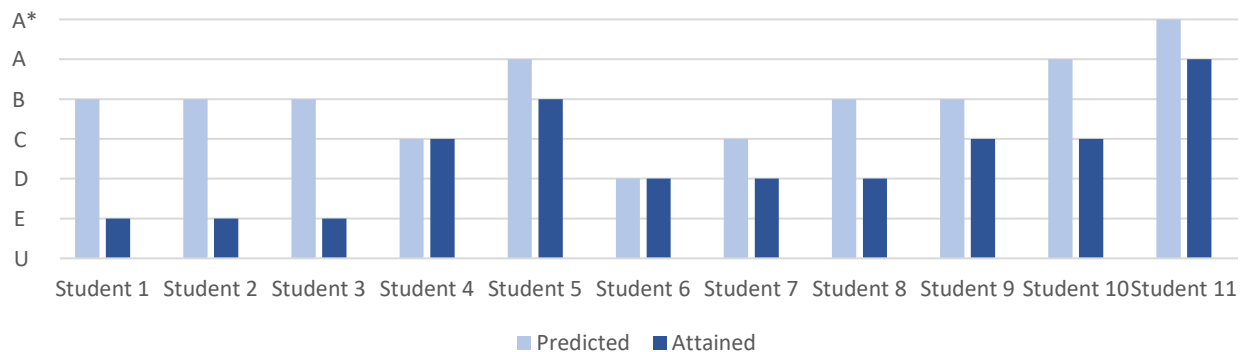
Cohort Tutored vs. Not Tutored



Cohort Tutored vs. Year Group All Subjects



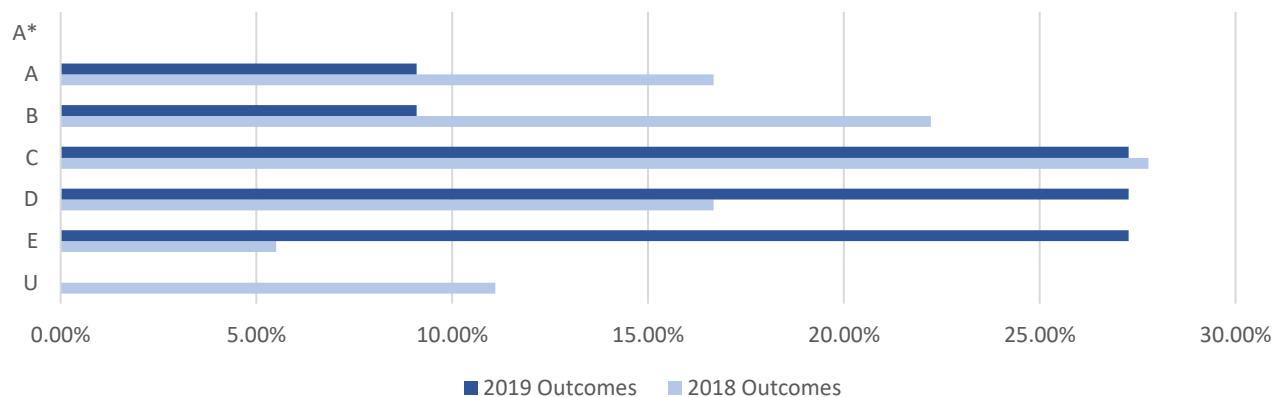
Maths A-Level Predicted and Attained Grades



Students in this year’s A-Level Maths cohort consistently performed below their target grades, with only two students attaining a grade that matched their teacher’s prediction and no students exceeding their teacher’s prediction. 3 students in the cohort received a grade E (all 3 from a target grade of B) which brings the average performance of the Maths group below the average performance for the year in all subjects by 0.46 of a grade.

As shown below, the 2018 A-Level Maths cohort were at least twice as likely to have attained an A or B grade as this year’s cohort, but two students from the 2018 cohort failed to pass their exam. In this year’s cohort, students were more likely than last year to score a D or an E grade, but every student received a passing grade in their exam.

Maths A-Level Outcomes by Grade: 2019 vs 2018



Although it is difficult to demonstrate impact without dedicated comparative data, the feedback from the A-Level support sessions was outstanding. This suggests that our tutor had a positive effect on the outcomes of students and likely contributed to the 100% pass rate in this year’s cohort.

At the end of the year, our tutor Amir was offered a permanent position as Head of Maths at the academy. He has declined the position but is eager to return to the academy on a voluntary basis in the coming year.

“I observed him teaching and I learned a lot. What impressed me with Amir is his professionalism and the fact that he knows exactly what to do to help the students. I am absolutely impressed, and I hope I will be given the chance to work again with Amir in the future. I recommend him without a question.”

Lazaros Vastavos
Head of Maths, Evelyn Grace Academy

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