

Cost
£££££

Evidence strength


Impact (months)
+2

Effect size
0.11

What is it?

This summary focuses on extending core teaching and learning time in schools and the use of targeted before and after school programmes. Other approaches to increasing learning time are included in other sections of the Toolkit, such as [Homework](#), [Early years intervention](#) and [Summer schools](#).

The research focuses on three main approaches to extending teaching and learning time in schools:

- extending the length of the school year;
- extending the length of the school day; and
- providing additional time for targeted groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged or low-attaining pupils, either before or after school.

How effective is it?

The evidence indicates that, on average, pupils make two additional months' progress per year from extended school time and in particular through the targeted use of before and after school programmes. There is some evidence that disadvantaged pupils benefit more, making closer to three months' additional progress. There are also often wider benefits for low-income students, such as increased attendance at school, improved behaviour, and better relationships with peers.

In addition to providing academic support, some school programmes aim to provide stimulating environments and activities or develop additional personal and social skills. These programmes are more likely to have an impact on attainment than those that are solely academic in focus. However, it is not clear whether this is due to the additional activities or to improved attendance and better engagement.

The research also indicates that attracting and retaining pupils in before and after school

programmes is harder at secondary level than at primary level. To be successful, any increases in school time should be supported by both parents and staff, and extreme increases (for example more than nine hours of schooling per day in total) do not appear to be additionally beneficial.

Evidence of extending school time in the Arab world is almost absent. In one study in Palestine students who practiced writing outside of school hours showed a positive improvement on their outcomes. In Saudi Arabia, implementing recreational, educational and social programs after schools hours would increase the partnership levels with parents and kindergarten, which could lead to benefits in student learning.

To date, research in extending school time is limited in this region. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method study designs are needed to assess the value of the time spent in school and number of class hours during the school year with the student level of achievement. Research is also needed in this area to maximize opportunities for meaningful pedagogical interactions between teachers and pupils to increase students' learning opportunities.

How secure is the evidence?

The evidence is moderately secure. Decisions to lengthen the school year or school day are often one component of wider approaches to school reform. This makes attributing any learning gains to the additional time itself difficult. Gains are not consistent across studies, indicating that additional time alone is not enough — it must be used effectively. Discrete or targeted programmes are more likely to have been evaluated robustly than other ways of extending learning time, and even here there is substantial variation in impact.

What are the costs?

Overall, costs are estimated as moderate. The average cost of teaching a pupil is about 2,500.0 GBP (3,216.0 USD, 2,280.1 JOD) a year or 13.0 GBP (16.7 USD, 11.9 JOD) per day in primary school and about 3,500.0 GBP (4,502.3 USD, 3,192.2 JOD) a year or 18.0 GBP (23.2 USD, 16.4 JOD) per day in secondary school. Extending the school year by two weeks would therefore require about 260.0 GBP (334.5 USD, 237.1 JOD) per pupil per year for primary schools and about 360.0 GBP (463.1 USD, 328.3 JOD) per pupil per year for secondary. Estimates suggest after school clubs cost, on average, 7.0 GBP (9.0 USD, 6.4 JOD) per session per pupil. A weekly session would therefore cost about 273.0 GBP (351.2 USD, 249.0 JOD) per pupil over the course of a 39-week school year. The use of well-qualified and trained staff may increase these cost estimates.

Costs originally calculated in GBP; USD and JOD calculated via oanda.com on 22/09/20.

As yet there is no information about local costs.

What should I consider?

Planning to get the most from the extra time is important. It should meet pupils' needs and build on their capabilities.

After school programmes with a clear structure, a strong link to the curriculum, and well-qualified and well-trained staff are more clearly linked to academic benefits than other types of extended hours provision.

After school programmes could give the opportunity to carry out some more intensive tuition (see entries for [One to one](#) or [Small Group Tuition](#))

Enrichment activities without a specific focus on learning can have an impact on attainment, but the link is not well-established and the impact of different interventions can vary a great deal (see entries for [Sports](#) or [Arts participation](#))

Have you explored how the quality of teaching and learning during school time can be improved? It might be cheaper and more efficient to try introducing more evidence-based programmes or practices into the existing school day first.

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