

Do SEND pupils get the same benefit from teachers; and do they get different teachers?

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Contents

Key Insights	3
1. Background.....	3
2. Aims and Objectives.....	3
3. Data.....	3
7. Analyses and Results.....	5
8. Discussion	10
9. Limitations.....	10
10. Conclusion	11
References	11
Study Team.....	11

Key Insights

1. Teachers who are strong for non-SEND pupils also tend to be strong for SEND pupils.
2. Teachers who are especially strong for non-SEND pupils tend, on average, to add a bit less for their SEND pupils *relative to how much they add for non-SEND pupils*.
3. SEND pupils are not systematically taught by less effective teachers.

1. Background

The National Institute of Teaching (NIoT) is building the Teacher Education Dataset (TED), which links the attainment of pupils to their teachers in an anonymised dataset. This linkage allows researchers to estimate teacher value-add (TVA), which captures the extent to which pupils make more or less progress than expected after accounting for their prior attainment and demographic characteristics. The TED allows researchers to explore whether effective teachers are allocated to those who need them most. Given the importance of supporting SEND pupils, this report summarises a pilot showing how such analyses can be done.

2. Aims and Objectives

We used the TED to ask two questions:

1. Do teachers have the same impact on the attainment of their SEND pupils as their non-SEND pupils?
2. Are SEND pupils more likely to be allocated a less effective (lower TVA) teacher?

3. Data

We analysed attainment data from two large Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). The primary analyses reported here draw on data from **21 secondary schools** in one

Do SEND pupils get the same benefit from teachers; and do they get different teachers?

MAT. We also replicated the approach using primary school data from a second MAT to confirm the pattern of results, but do not present those findings here.

Pupil Sample and Subject Coverage

There are **17,259 distinct pupils**, with a total of **109,103 test scores**. Table 1 shows most scores come from EBacc subjects, with Maths, Science and English alone accounting for over half of all scores, while non-EBacc subjects make up just 6%.

Subject Group	Scores (n)	% of Scores
Maths	25,813	23.7%
Science	18,230	16.7%
English	18,068	16.6%
Geography	15,913	14.6%
History	12,484	11.4%
Modern Foreign Languages	12,287	11.3%
Other	6,308	5.8%

Note: 'Other' includes Computer Science, Art, Food technology, Music, Drama, Resistant Materials, Textiles, PE and Media Studies.

SEND and Non-SEND Pupils

Ten pupils (0.06%) appear with both SEND and non-SEND status at different time points. These records were retained so that score-level modelling uses the status recorded at the time of each score. As a result, the student counts in Table 2 sum to slightly more than the total.

SEN	Students (n)*	% of students	Observations (n)	% of observations
N	13,996	81.1%	90,233	82.7%
Y	3,273	19.0%	18,870	17.3%

Teacher Sample and Class Composition

There are **1,028 teachers** in the dataset. Across teachers, the **median number of pupils** taught is **76** (range: 1–409). The **median number of non-SEND pupils** per teacher is **62** (range: 1–355), compared to **13 SEND pupils** (range: 1–94). The

Do SEND pupils get the same benefit from teachers; and do they get different teachers?

median number of classes per teacher is **4**, and **18.1%** of teachers teach only a single class. Of these:

- **994 teachers (96.7%)** teach a **mix** of SEND and non-SEND pupils
- **24 teachers (2.3%)** teach **only non-SEND** pupils
- **10 teachers (1.0%)** teach **only SEND** pupils

7. Analyses and Results

Below we present our analyses and findings by research question.

1. Do teachers have the same impact on the attainment of their SEND pupils as their non-SEND pupils?

To explore whether teacher effectiveness generalises across SEND and non-SEND pupils, we used three complementary analyses, each offering a slightly different perspective.

***Note:** Estimates for SEND pupils are less precise because fewer observations per teacher contribute to those estimates. This affects how confidently differences can be detected but does not prevent comparison.*

(a) Comparison of separate models for SEND and non-SEND pupils

We fitted one model using only non-SEND pupils, and one using only SEND pupils. We then correlated the teacher estimates across the two, with the following interpretation:

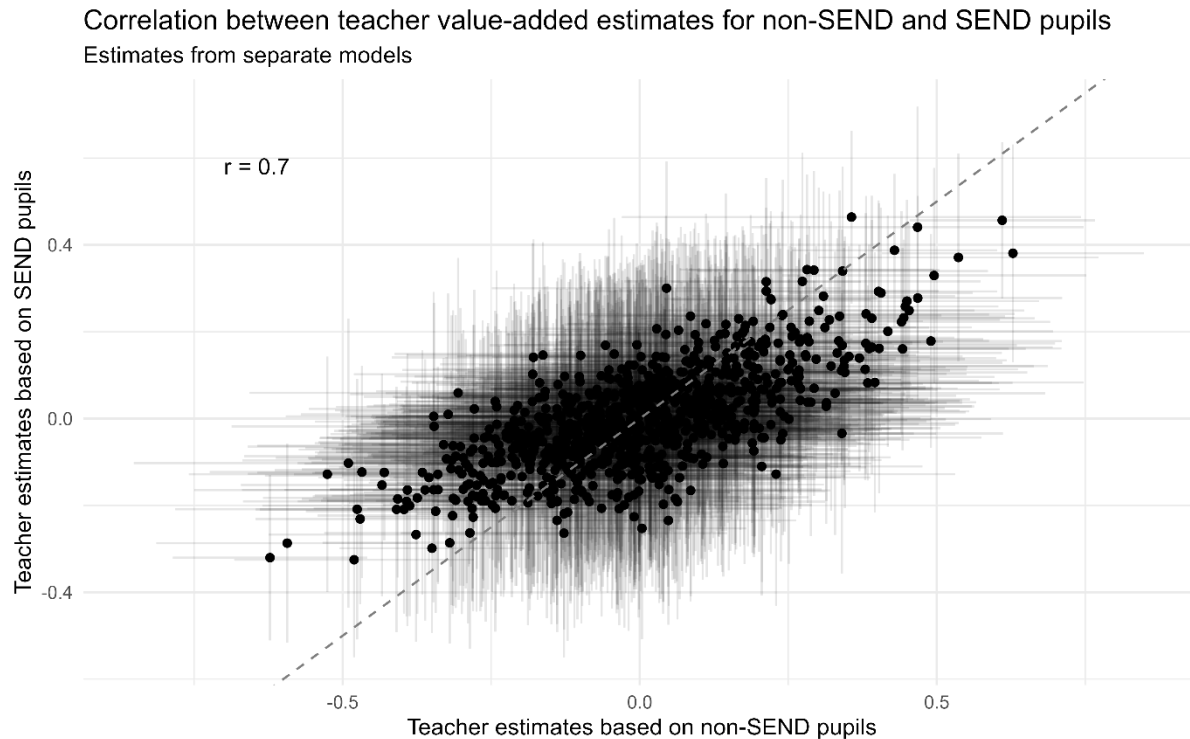
Correlation	Interpretation
Positive	Teachers strong with non-SEND are also strong with SEND, and vice versa.
Negative	Strong with non-SEND implies weaker with SEND, and vice versa.
Near zero	No systematic relationship.

The results are plotted in Figure 1. We found a moderate positive correlation, suggesting **teachers who are effective for non-SEND pupils also tend to be effective for SEND pupils**. In fact, given the error around each estimate, **this**

Do SEND pupils get the same benefit from teachers; and do they get different teachers?

correlation suggests teachers are, on average, equally effective for SEND and non-SEND pupils.

Note: The correlation is based only on teachers who appear in both models and who have complete data on all covariates ($N = 990$).



(b) Random slope model: absolute estimates

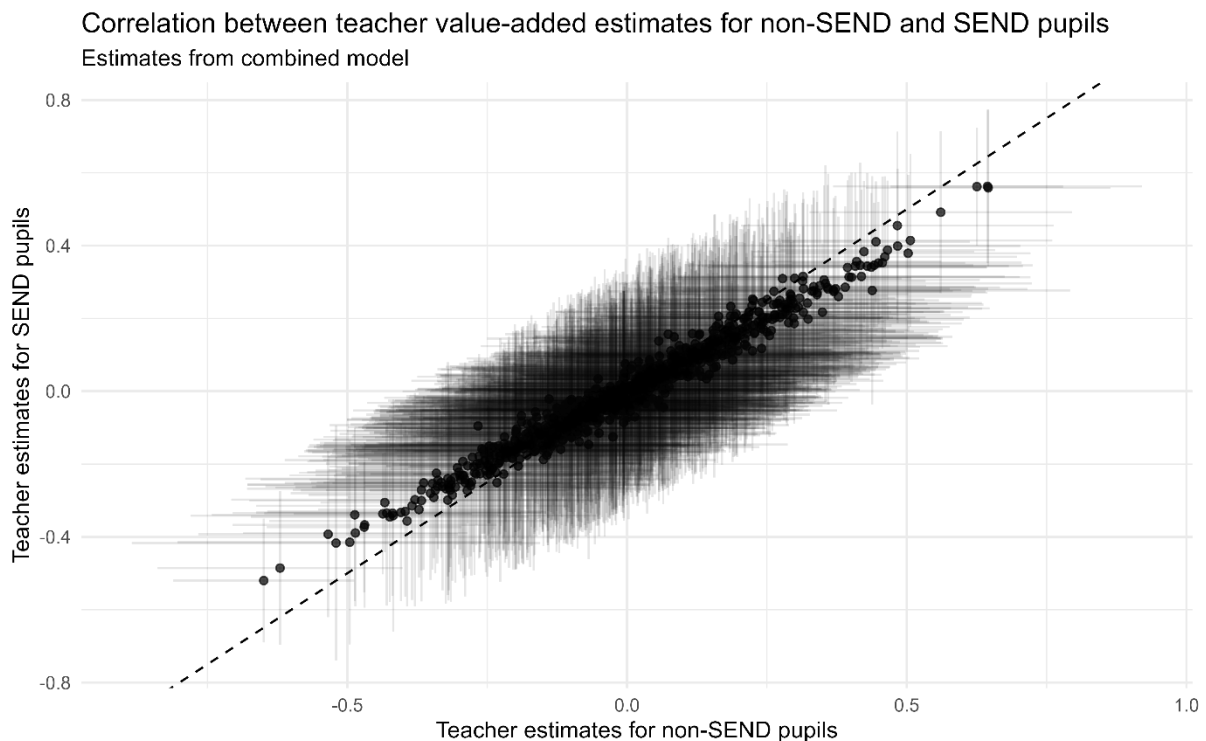
We fitted one combined model where each teacher had an intercept (their estimated effect for non-SEND pupils), and a slope (the change in their estimate for SEND pupils).

We then created an overall estimate for SEND pupils by adding each teacher's intercept and slope, and correlated this with their non-SEND estimate. The interpretation for the correlation is the same as the first analysis:

Do SEND pupils get the same benefit from teachers; and do they get different teachers?

Correlation	Interpretation
Positive	Teachers effective with one group are also effective with the other.
Negative	Effectiveness with one group implies lower effectiveness with the other.
Near zero	No systematic relationship.

The results are plotted in Figure 2. We found a very strong positive correlation (close to 1), suggesting **teachers who are effective for one group are usually effective for both**. This extremely high correlation is largely an artifact of the fact that the slopes (i.e. the estimates of the difference between their effect on SEND and non-SEND) are typically a lot smaller than the estimate of either effect.

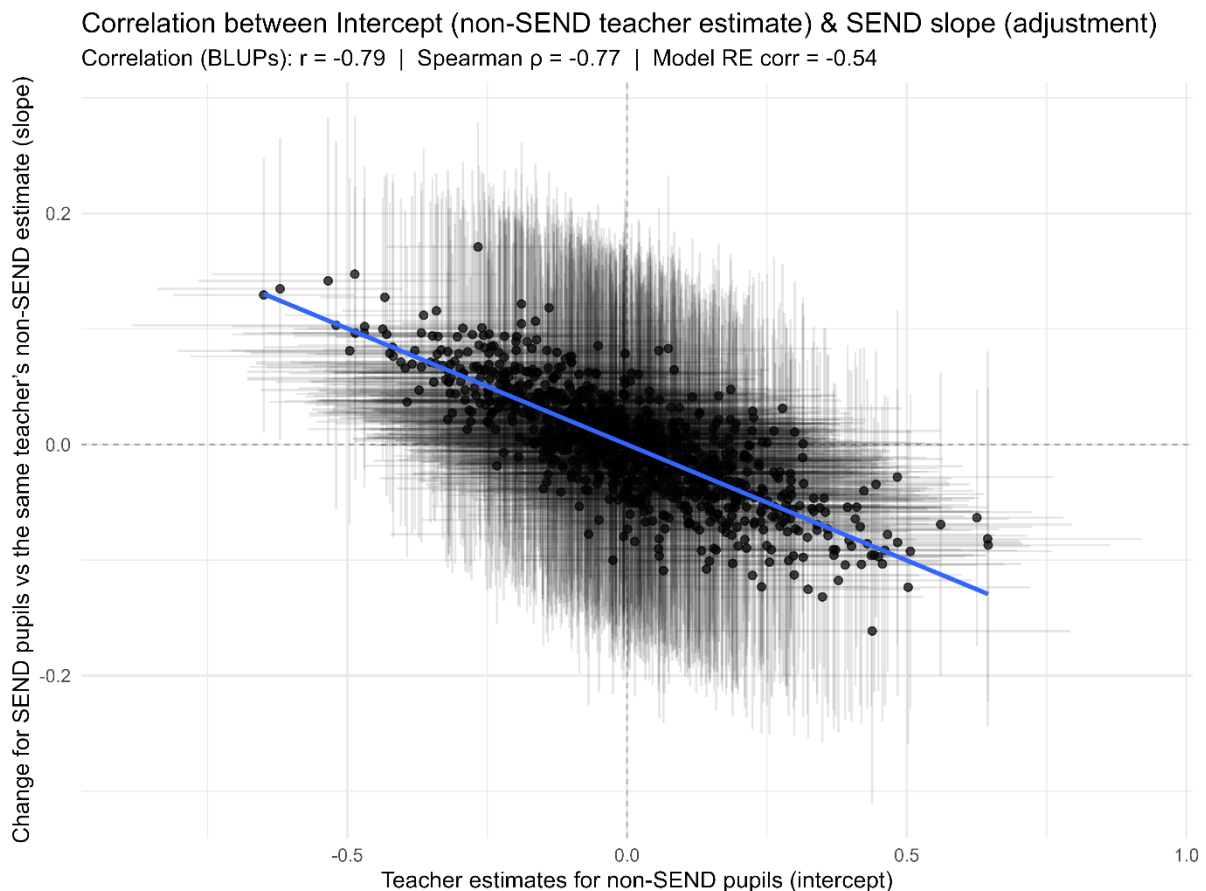


(c) Random slope model: relative differences

Using the same model, we then examined whether teachers who are more effective with non-SEND pupils also show larger or smaller differences in effectiveness for SEND pupils. Here we correlated the intercept (non-SEND effectiveness) with the slope only (i.e. the difference between SEND and non-SEND). Our results could be interpreted as follows:

Correlation	Interpretation
Positive	Strong teachers of non-SEND pupils have an even higher positive impact on SEND pupils.
Negative	Strong teachers of non-SEND pupils have a lower positive impact on SEND pupils.
Near zero	No systematic pattern.

The results are plotted in Figure 3. We found a negative correlation, which means **more effective teachers of non-SEND pupils tend to have a lower positive impact on their SEND pupils**. However, given relatively small numbers of non-SEND pupils, and the 'shrinkage' that multilevel models apply to the slope estimate, this negative correlation can largely be seen as regression to the mean. A teacher with high TVA for non-SEND will tend to get an estimate for their SEND TVA that is high, but not quite as high as their non-SEND estimate. **Although we do see strong teachers of non-SEND pupils achieving a lower positive impact on their SEND pupils, we think this is mostly an artefact of the data.**

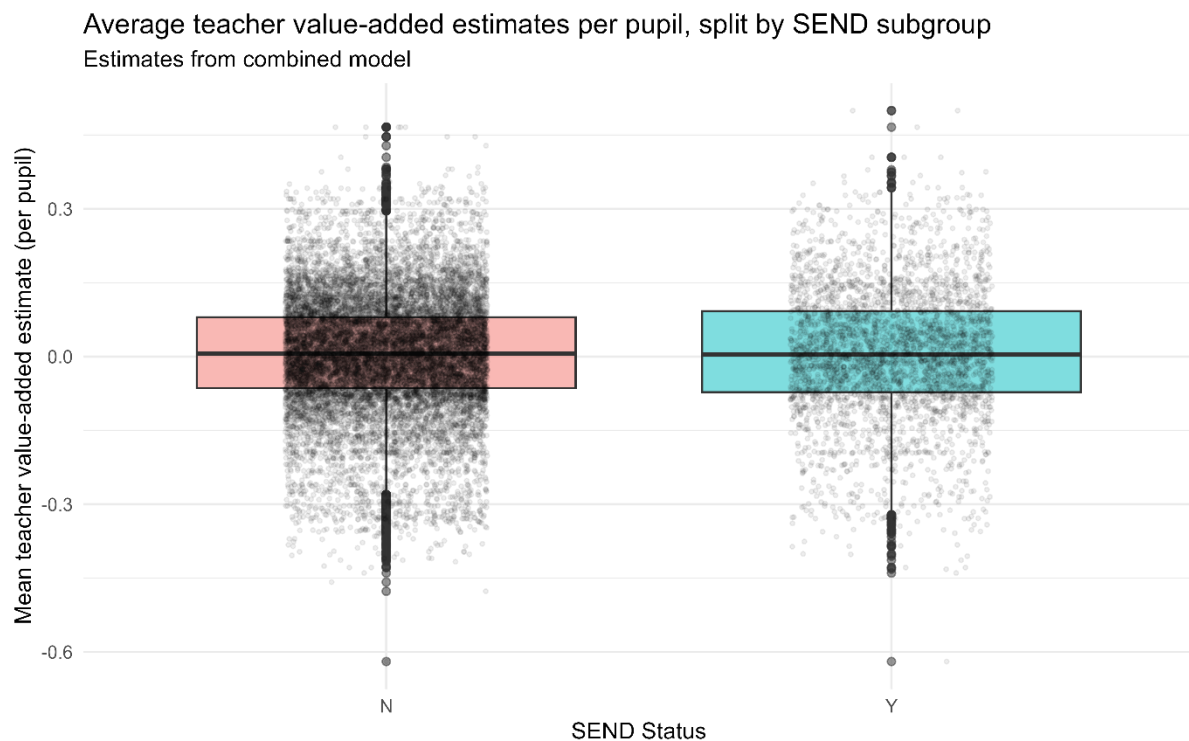


2. Are SEND pupils more likely to be allocated a less effective (lower TVA) teacher?

Using a combined model, we compared the TVA estimates of SEND and non-SEND pupils and interpreted the results as follows:

Average	Interpretation
Higher for non-SEND	SEND pupils are taught by less effective teachers.
Higher for SEND	SEND pupils are taught by more effective teachers.
No difference	SEND pupils are taught by equally effective teachers.

We found no meaningful difference, which means **SEND and non-SEND pupils are taught by equally effective teachers**, as shown in Figure 4.



We have replicated this analysis using a model that estimates TVA using data from one academic year and compares the allocation of those teachers to SEND and non-SEND pupils in the following year, and for the second MAT with primary school data. In no case is there a significant difference in the average quality of teachers (as estimated by TVA) allocated to SEND and non-SEND pupils.

8. Discussion

Our analysis **suggests that good teaching benefits all pupils**. Teachers who are strong for non-SEND pupils also tend to be strong for pupils with SEND, and we found no evidence that SEND pupils are systematically disadvantaged in terms of which teachers they are assigned. Most teachers showed similar value-added (TVA) for both groups.

However, relative analysis (2c) indicated a tendency for teachers who are especially effective with non-SEND pupils to add slightly less for their SEND pupils relative to their impact on non-SEND pupils. We think this pattern is largely a statistical artefact, driven by small SEND group sizes and shrinkage in multilevel modelling. Nonetheless, this finding contrasts with some expectations: for example, the Sutton Trust has reported that more effective teachers tend to deliver greater gains for pupils eligible for free school meals, a group that overlaps with those identified with SEND¹.

9. Limitations

There are important limitations to these findings.

- **Limited scope of SEND data:** We only have access to a binary SEND flag, without information about type of need or level of provision.
- **Measurement still under development:** The TVA measure we used is still being developed and validated². Further work is needed before we can be fully confident in the precision and interpretation of TVA estimates for subgroups.
- **Sample coverage:** The analysis draws on two MATs and is not representative of the wider school system. Results should therefore be treated as indicative rather than generalisable.
- **Smaller SEND samples:** Fewer observations per teacher for SEND pupils mean estimates for this group are less precise, with most confidence intervals overlapping zero.
- **Partial teacher coverage:** Not all teachers taught both groups, so subgroup comparisons reflect only those who did.

Therefore, while the findings from this pilot are encouraging, they should not be overinterpreted. They provide a useful early indication rather than a definitive assessment of whether pupils with SEND experience the same quality of teaching as

their peers. Future work through TED will expand the sample to additional MATs and years of data and continue validating the teaching quality measure.

10. Conclusion

Overall, we did not find clear evidence of systematic differences in teacher effectiveness between SEND and non-SEND pupils. Our results suggest that, on average, teachers who are effective for non-SEND pupils are also effective for those with SEND.

Crucially, this analysis demonstrates the value of estimating both absolute and relative differences in TVA to understand how teaching quality translates across pupil groups. As TED matures, it will allow us not only to explore subgroup differences in more depth, but also to evaluate the impact of specific practices and interventions. In future, this will make it possible to assess whether particular forms of inclusive teaching improve attainment for pupils with different types of SEND.

References

1. Murphy, R., & Machin, S. (2011). Improving the impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK-Interim findings. *UK: The Sutton Trust*.
2. Coe, R., Ventista, O. M., Chande, R., Maud, C., Kime, S., & Dillon, S. (2024). *Estimating teacher value-added from schools' internal assessments in England*.

Study Team

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