



# Comprehensive School Reform Models: Secondary Educator's Summary

Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center **American Institutes for  
Research**

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**Best Evidence** Encyclopaedia  
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There are many comprehensive school reform (CSR) programmes that promise to turn around under-achieving schools, and these have been increasingly adopted. This trend is driven by the recognition that school improvement efforts are complex and require a co-ordinated, systematic approach that addresses every aspect of a school.

CSR programmes are often developed and supported by not-for-profit organisations which provide professional development, materials, and support to networks of schools. Typically, they include the following elements:

- Innovative approaches to instruction and curriculum used in many subjects throughout the school
- Extensive, ongoing professional development, and coaches or facilitators in the building to help manage the reform process
- Measureable goals and benchmarks for pupil achievement
- Emphasis on parent and community involvement

However, there have been few sources of information for schools to assess which of the available programmes can really meet the needs of their pupils.



This review summarises research on comprehensive school reform programmes for secondary schools, and was conducted by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (CSRQ) at the American Institutes for Research. They looked at *all* available evidence on CSR programmes designed for use with pupils aged 11-18, in order to establish what we know works. They examined all studies of relevant CSR programmes from all countries, as long as a report was available in English.\* (NB Most studies took place in the US). They were then able to assess and compare the effectiveness of these programmes. Descriptions and ratings for all the programmes are listed further down this summary.

The full report (which this review summarises) is available at [www.bestevidence.org.uk](http://www.bestevidence.org.uk)




\*Overall, 197 studies on 18 national programmes were reviewed. Of these, 15 studies were rated “conclusive,” and 12 were rated “suggestive.”

## Programme Ratings




Listed below are currently available programmes, grouped by strength of effectiveness. Within each group programmes available in the UK are listed first, and then the remainder in alphabetical order.

Key to Programme Ratings	
	<b>Very Strong:</b> At least 10 qualifying studies, with at least 5 rated “conclusive” and 75% of outcomes significantly positive, with an overall mean effect size of $ES=+0.25$ . “Effect size” is the experimental-control difference divided by the standard deviation.
	<b>Moderately Strong:</b> 5-9 qualifying studies, with at least 3 rated “conclusive,” and 51% to 75% of outcomes significantly positive, with an overall mean effect size of at least $+0.15$ .




	<b>Moderate:</b> 2-4 qualifying studies, with at least 1 rated “conclusive,” and 26% to 50% of outcomes significantly positive, with an overall mean effect size of at least +0.15.
	<b>Limited:</b> 1 qualifying study, with 1-25% of outcomes significantly positive.
	<b>Zero:</b> No qualifying study outcomes were significantly positive.
<b>NR</b>	<b>No Rating:</b> No qualifying studies






### Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness

Rating	Programme	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Success for All Middle School (for students aged 11-14)		Provides teachers and schools with a set of instructional practices, focusing on co-operative learning, which have been proved to be successful. These target achievement outcomes - reading, writing, science and the humanities – and non-achievement outcomes - student attendance, retention, and promotion, and discipline rates.	UK website: <a href="http://www.successforall.org.uk">www.successforall.org.uk</a> (Product training provided)
	America’s Choice		Learning focused on all students reaching standards, varying only the time and resources needed, using prevention, early intervention, and acceleration strategies.	US website: <a href="http://www.ncee.org">www.ncee.org</a> US contact: <a href="mailto:schooldesign@ncee.org">schooldesign@ncee.org</a>
	School Development Program		Offers a structure and process for mobilising teachers, administrators, and community members to support students’ along six developmental pathways: physical, cognitive, psychological, language, social, and ethical.	US website: <a href="http://www.schooldevelopmentprogram.org">www.schooldevelopmentprogram.org</a> US contact: <a href="mailto:schooldevelopmentprogram@yale.edu">schooldevelopmentprogram@yale.edu</a>




Rating	Programme	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Talent Development High School		Guides teachers in standards-based lessons, and encourages active participation and contextual learning during 90-minute scheduling blocks.	US website: <a href="http://www.csos.jhu.edu/tdhs">www.csos.jhu.edu/tdhs</a> US contact: bhebron@csos.jhu.edu

### Limited Evidence of Effectiveness

Rating	Programme	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Expeditionary Learning		Designs schools where students engage in active learning and connect this learning to the real world, with the belief that authentic practices in the classroom create academic rigour and character growth.	US: website: <a href="http://www.elob.org">www.elob.org</a> US contact: info@elob.org
	First Things First		A set of strategies that include engaging students through strong and consistent adult-student relationships within the school, connecting in-school relationships to a student's family, and improving the academic instruction within the school to enhance learning without remediation.	US website: <a href="http://www.irre.org/fft">www.irre.org/fft</a>
	KIPP		Provides under-served communities with free, open enrolment schools that prepare students to succeed at a higher level, including college, through the use of rigorous instruction, additional time, and high standards.	US website: <a href="http://www.kipp.org">www.kipp.org</a> US contact: info@kipp.org
	Middle Start		Provides professional development for teachers, support networks for schools, and challenging and supportive programs for students.	US website: <a href="http://www.middlestart.org">www.middlestart.org</a> US contact: info@middlestart.org
	More Effective Schools		Aligns school culture with research, and supports school leaders through professional development, technical assistance, and	US website: <a href="http://www.mes.org">www.mes.org</a> US contact: aes@mes.org



Rating	Programme	Type	Description	Contact / Website
			the recognition of success.	
	Project GRAD		Focuses on high-quality curriculum and instruction aligned with high academic standards, with the expectation that 80% of students finish school, and 50% of those move on to higher education.	US website: <a href="http://www.projectgrad.org">www.projectgrad.org</a>



### Zero

Accelerated Schools Plus - [www.acceleratedschools.net](http://www.acceleratedschools.net)

ATLAS Communities - [www.atlascommunities.org](http://www.atlascommunities.org)

Coalition of Essential Schools - [www.essentialschools.org](http://www.essentialschools.org)

High Schools that Work - [www.sreb.org](http://www.sreb.org)

Making Middle Grades Work - [www.sreb.org/programs/%20MiddleGrades/MiddleGradesindex.asp](http://www.sreb.org/programs/%20MiddleGrades/MiddleGradesindex.asp)

Modern Red Schoolhouse - [www.mrsh.org](http://www.mrsh.org)

Onward to Excellence II - [www.nwrel.org/scpd/ote](http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/ote)

Turning Points- [www.turningpts.org](http://www.turningpts.org)

## Review Methods

For its quantitative analyses of overall achievement, CSRQ identified 18 CSR programmes serving at least 40 schools in at least 3 US states. They then did an extensive search for all types of studies that evaluated these programmes. The evaluations' validity was rated as inconclusive, suggestive, or conclusive. Conclusive studies met the following criteria:

- Schools using each programme had to be compared to equivalent control groups
- Schools had to have pre-test scores or other baseline measures
- The outcome measures had to be reliable and valid
- The study duration had to be at least one year

To be considered “suggestive,” a study had to meet the same standards, but could have up to two “non-critical threats to validity.”

CSRQ also looked at evidence in three additional areas:

- Additional student outcomes
- The model's design based on research
- Services and supports provided to schools

## The Full Report

- The full report, which this review summarises, was produced by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (CSRQ), American Institutes for Research. The full report is available at [www.bestevidence.org.uk](http://www.bestevidence.org.uk).

