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Concern over teachers' university advice

By Javier Espinoza

TEACHERS could be jeopardising the chances of pupils getting to a leading university by giving them poor feedback on their personal statements, a study has suggested.

The Sutton Trust studied the personal statements of 44 pupils from state schools. Out of these, 27 received help from teachers. The remaining 17 were used as a control group. All students

who were given help received at least one offer from a Russell Group university, which are regarded as the best in the UK, compared with 73 per cent of those in the control group.

All of the personal statements were read by both a teacher and an admissions tutor, with each asked to grade the document based on whether they thought it would increase or decrease the student's chances of being offered a place. Only 10 of the 44 personal state-

ments were awarded the same grade by both groups. Twenty were one grade different, 13 were two grades different and one was three grades different.

The report said: "A worrying aspect of the study's findings is that teachers' views about what makes a good personal statement are far from consistent with admissions tutors' views.

"It also calls into question the effectiveness of universities' attempts to engage with teachers."