Every Child A Reader:
the results of the first year...
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Executive summary

The project

Every Child A Reader is a three year, £10 million project that is aiming to show that, with the right resources, it is possible to tackle the literacy difficulties that blight many children’s lives – particularly those of children who live in poverty.

Every year approximately 35,000 children in England - 6% of eleven year olds - leave primary school and go into secondary education without even the most basic skills in reading. For boys the percentage is even higher, at nearly one in ten. The children involved are predominantly socially disadvantaged.

Every Child A Reader is an initiative designed to tackle these children’s difficulties. It is supported and funded via a unique collaboration between charitable trusts, the business sector and government. The partners are the Department for Education and Skills (DFES), London Challenge, the Primary National Strategy, the University of London Institute of Education, the KPMG Foundation, Man Group plc Charitable Trust, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, SHINE, the Indigo Trust, the JJ Charitable Trust and the Mercers’ Company. The DFES is match-funding donations from business and trusts with £4.55 million over three years.

The initiative is funding highly-skilled Reading Recovery teachers in primary schools, to provide intensive help to children most in need. The aims are to:

• demonstrate the effectiveness of Reading Recovery as an intervention for children who would otherwise not learn to read;

• explore the potential for Reading Recovery teachers to support tailored literacy teaching more broadly within a school, with an impact beyond those receiving intensive one-to-one support;

• secure sustainable and long term investment in early literacy intervention.

This report evaluates the outcomes of the first year of the initiative against these three aims.

In the first year of the initiative (2005-6) Every Child A Reader provided a total of £1M funding to 61 schools. 255 schools will be funded in the second year of the programme and 310 in the third.

The local authorities involved are Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Derbyshire, Devon, Kent, Kirklees, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Sandwell, Sheffield, Swindon and Wolverhampton.
The effectiveness of Reading Recovery

In the schools funded through the programme, children receiving Reading Recovery lessons made on average a gain of 21 months in reading age in 4 - 5 months of teaching – well over four times the normal rate of progress.

Similar children in comparison schools in local authorities without access to the programme in 2005-6 fell further behind their classmates rather than catching up with them.

In 2005-6 542 six-year-old children received Reading Recovery programmes funded through the project. 373 finished their series of lessons; 146 children began their Reading Recovery lessons towards the end of the year and are still being taught.

The children who finished their lessons moved on average from a reading age of 4 years 10 months to a reading age of 6 years 7 months after just 38 hours of 1-1 teaching. Their writing also improved markedly.

Findings from an evaluation study commissioned from the Institute of Education demonstrate that in schools where pupils accessed literacy interventions other than Reading Recovery, the lowest attaining children not only failed to achieve average literacy levels for their age, but also fell further behind their peers.

Children in 21 comparison schools without access to Reading Recovery made on average only seven months’ progress in reading age over the course of a year, compared to the twenty months progress made by children in 21 schools funded by Every Child A Reader to provide skilled 1-1 teaching to their lowest achieving children. Children who had received Reading Recovery were on track to achieve nationally expected levels of attainment by the time they are seven (reading at National Curriculum Level 1A at the end of school Year 1), while children with similar difficulties in comparison schools were still well below national expectations (reading at National Curriculum Level W). This study also reports significant teacher-assessed gains in motivation, behaviour and work habits in children receiving Reading Recovery.

Qualitative data suggest that the programme is helping children achieve the range of outcomes described in the government’s Every Child Matters strategy. Their emotional health and wellbeing is improved; they begin to enjoy learning; they make a positive contribution through improved behaviour and ability to support others, and they acquire long term aspirations for an economically successful future.

The programme has contributed to narrowing the gender gap and the social class attainment gap in the schools involved. The children receiving Reading Recovery in Every Child A Reader schools were predominantly boys (63%). They were also predominantly poor, with 59% eligible for free school meals compared to a national average of 17%.

“The school serves an area of significant deprivation and constant change. Reading Recovery offers some of our children the opportunity to get individual tuition to catch up with the ‘norm’. We have bright children whose domestic experience and background denies them the privilege of early literacy. Reading Recovery helps bridge that gap and then demands that the school maintain the children at the ‘norm’. Thank you for creating the challenge!”

Headteacher in an Every Child A Reader-funded school
Supporting tailored literacy teaching more broadly within a school

There is evidence that standards in many cases rose for all children in Every Child A Reader schools, not just those directly taught, because of the presence of a skilled literacy expert in the school.

The Reading Recovery teachers were able to help class teachers assess children’s precise learning needs and adapt their teaching accordingly. They also introduced a range of extra support programmes for children who were struggling, and provided training and support to the adults delivering these ‘layered’ interventions – usually teaching assistants.

The schools involved in Every Child A Reader showed better progress in their end of Key Stage 1 results in Reading and Writing than the national trend.

The Institute of Education evaluation study showed that Year 1 classes in schools involved in the Every Child A Reader initiative ended the year with an average class reading age four months ahead of children in similar schools that were not involved. Classes in schools without access to Reading Recovery made average progress in reading over the year (12 months). In schools with access to Reading Recovery the classes made accelerated progress (15 months progress over the year). Given that these were low performing classes at the start of the year, accelerated progress was required if classes were to catch up with age norms.

“The programme has enabled our children to attain national average in their KS1 SATs for in reading and writing. When compared to all other interventions used within the school it has had the greatest impact on results.”

Headteacher in an Every Child A Reader-funded school

Securing sustainable and long term investment in early literacy intervention

Work on this goal has so far taken three forms.

- Raising awareness of the needs of the lowest attaining children amongst the business community, local authorities and schools.

- Conducting research on headteachers’ views on early literacy intervention and the factors that influence spending decisions.

- Commissioning an economic assessment of the return on investment of early intervention to address literacy difficulties.

Outcomes will be available in a separate report later in the year.
Introduction and background

The purpose of this report

Every Child A Reader is a unique collaboration between charitable trusts, the business sector and government. It aims to show that, with the right resources, it is possible to overcome the literacy difficulties that blight the lives of many children and adults.

The three-year, £10 million initiative is funding highly-skilled Reading Recovery teachers in mainly inner-city schools, to provide intensive help to children who, after one year of schooling, are struggling to learn to read and to write. The immediate aim is to reach 5,000 children, particularly those living in areas of high social deprivation.

This report evaluates the outcomes of the first year of the initiative against its three aims:

• Demonstrating the effectiveness of Reading Recovery as an intervention for children who would otherwise not learn to read.

• Exploring the potential for Reading Recovery teachers to support tailored literacy teaching more broadly within a school, with an impact beyond those receiving intensive one-to-one support.

• Securing sustainable and long term investment in early literacy intervention.

Section 1 reports on the impact of Reading Recovery, presenting the results for the individual children supported through the programme.

Section 2 reports on the work of Reading Recovery teachers in supporting tailored literacy teaching more broadly within their schools, and examines the impact of this work on whole-school standards.

Section 3 describes the work that has been done so far to secure sustainable and long-term investment in early literacy intervention.

Section 4 describes what the first year has taught us about implementing the programme effectively.
Sources of information

The programme has three strands of monitoring and evaluation.

1. Information collected routinely as part of the Reading Recovery National Network Annual Monitoring procedure. This covers all the Every Child A Reader-funded schools in England. It has been supplemented by data on whole-school standards provided by the DfES.

2. An evaluation commissioned by Every Child A Reader from the University of London Institute of Education. The Institute of Education were asked to evaluate the impact of the programme in 21 schools in London. The aims of this evaluation were:

   - to evaluate the effectiveness of Reading Recovery in raising the literacy achievements of struggling readers in Year 1 and to monitor their sustained improvement at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2);
   - to explore the impact of Reading Recovery on other aspects of children’s behaviour and attitudes at school;
   - to explore the impact of Reading Recovery on Year 1 classes having access to Reading Recovery for the weakest readers;
   - to evaluate the wider impact on the teaching and learning of literacy in Key Stage 1 of a Reading Recovery teacher who takes on a literacy leadership role.

The first year of this evaluation (2005-6) compared schools/classes with and without Reading Recovery and children who had received Reading Recovery with those who had not. In 2006-7 children selected for Reading Recovery in school Year 1 will be monitored at the end of school Year 2, and their progress will be compared with that of similar children in schools where the programme was not available.

3. Qualitative data from progress reports collected termly from participating schools.

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is a short-term intervention for children who have the lowest achievement in literacy learning in their first years at school. Children are taught individually by a specially trained teacher for 30 minutes each day for an average of 12-20 weeks. The goal is for children to develop effective reading and writing strategies in order to work within an average range of classroom performance.

The key to the successful implementation of Reading Recovery is in the model of training. Three levels of professional staffing provide a stable training structure: university trainers who train and support ‘Teacher leaders’; ‘Teacher leaders’ working at local authority level, who train and support teachers; and school-based teachers who work with the hardest-to-teach children.

Initial training for Reading Recovery teachers is a part-time course, for one academic year, during which they work with low attaining children in their schools. Teachers become sensitive observers of children’s reading and writing behaviours and develop skill in making moment-by-moment analyses that inform teaching decisions.
Following the initial year of training, teachers continue to participate in ongoing professional development sessions. They continue to teach children in front of their colleagues and to discuss their programmes. Continuing professional development sessions provide collaborative opportunities for teachers to remain responsive to individual children, to question the effectiveness of their practices, to get help from peers on particularly hard-to-teach children, and to consider how new knowledge in the field may influence their practice.

Every lesson is meticulously planned in advance by the Reading Recovery teacher, according to the individual child’s particular pattern of strengths and weaknesses. The lesson begins with the child re-reading two or three familiar texts, so as to develop fluency and provide practice in applying independent reading strategies.

The teacher will explicitly identify and feed back to child the strategies they used that helped them tackle new words independently:

**When you read that I noticed that you ...**

**I like the way you went back to check that, well done ...**

They also encourage the child to identify their own independent reading strategies:

**What was it you did on that page that helped you to work out the word ...?**

**Can you find a page where you got stuck and then found a way of sorting things out? What was it you did that helped you?**

**How did you know it said ‘brothers’ not ‘kids’? Why isn’t it ‘box’?**

**How did you know that was wrong?**

Next the child will re-read yesterday’s new book, while their reading is carefully recorded and then analysed by the teacher to inform teaching decisions. Then there will be work with magnetic letters on a whiteboard, to develop phonemic and phonological skills. The child will compose and write their own sentence or story, analysing the sounds in words in order to write them. Sometimes the teacher will ask the child to listen to each sound in a word and write the sounds in separate boxes, before writing it into their sentence. The teacher might also ask the child to ‘take a word to fluency ’, practising a common word over and over, tracing it in sand or salt or multi-coloured pens. Then the sentence the child has written is cut up into separate words or phrases and the child reassembles them into the right order. Finally the child is introduced to a new book, carefully matched to their reading level. The teacher might set a target for the child to use an independent reading strategy.

**What I’m looking for when you read this book is that you....**

Every lesson has homework – the child takes home several short familiar books to read with parents/carers, together with the cut-up sentence or story to re-make. Parents/carers regularly sit in on teaching sessions so that they can see how the teacher supports the child’s reading and writing through lots of praise and strategies that promote independence.
Every Child A Reader

Reading Recovery has significant implementations in the majority of English-speaking countries. In New Zealand, where the programme originated, it operates in two thirds of state-funded schools; in Australia it is available in all but one State; in the US and Canada over a million children receive the programme every year. It is long-established in the United Kingdom, and was supported by large-scale government funding in the early nineties. The implementation was later funded variously through local authority and school budgets, sometimes with support from regeneration programmes.

The programme has an infrastructure based within the University of London Institute of Education and supported by DfES funding. In 2004-5 the programme was provided to 5,300 children in the UK and Ireland. It is very widely used in both Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland, but in England the number of children involved has until recently been declining. Of 600 teachers who had been trained in Reading Recovery in England, only 60 were able to provide the programme in their schools in 2004-5. At this point the Every Child A Reader enterprise brought together government and a consortium of charitable trusts to expand access to the programme in deprived and underachieving areas.

In its first year Every Child A Reader has funded 60 previously trained but inactive Reading Recovery teachers to resume their work with children in Southwark, Hackney, Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham, Greenwich, Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield, Middlesbrough and Liverpool. Concurrently, an infrastructure has been built that is enabling the programme to expand to new areas in 2006-7. Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders have been trained for Islington, Haringey, Barking and Dagenham, Tower Hamlets, Devon, Leicester and Kent.
Every Child A Reader

Innovative aspects of the scheme include:

• Modelling a delivery partnership at national level between the Primary National Strategy and the Reading Recovery National Network at the Institute of Education. This has enabled *Every Child A Reader* funding to be targeted at particular local authorities as part of a coherent support package aimed at raising standards. For London local authorities, the positioning of *Every Child A Reader* within the primary strand of the London Challenge has also helped to ensure coherence for schools.

• Modelling implementation of Reading Recovery at local level through the local authority’s Primary Strategy structures for managing all primary phase developments. This has enabled Primary Strategy Managers to include Reading Recovery as one of a number of initiatives at their disposal, targeting funding strategically at the schools where it will make most difference.

• Improving value for money by developing a model of ‘layered’ literacy interventions. All the local authorities involved have been asked to implement such a model, supported and monitored by the Reading Recovery teacher, with Reading Recovery for the children with the greatest needs and lighter-touch interventions for children whose needs are not so severe.

• Enabling Reading Recovery teachers to take a wider role in developing literacy in their school.

• Beginning to trial new delivery models – for example, local authority-based Reading Recovery teachers, a teacher delivering Reading Recovery across several rural schools, or lighter-touch layered approaches across a cluster of schools.

• Embedding Reading Recovery within the Every Child Matters context: targeting extended schools, implementing Reading Recovery across schools in new multi-agency service districts, targeting vulnerable groups such as children looked after by the local authority.

• Using the opportunity presented by international changes to Reading Recovery’s methodology in its revised core texts to take a fresh look at the role of synthetic phonics in the scheme, ensuring consistency with the developments underway as a consequence of the government’s Rose Review of the teaching of early reading.
Section 1:
The impact of Reading Recovery on individual children

In the schools funded through the programme, children receiving Reading Recovery lessons made on average a gain of 21 months in reading age in 4-5 months - well over four times the normal rate of progress. These were the hardest to teach children in schools where it is hardest to raise standards.

Similar children in comparison schools in local authorities without access to the programme in 2005-6 fell further behind their classmates rather than catching up with them.

This section of the report examines Reading Recovery pupil outcomes for the schools supported by Every Child A Reader funding during the 2005-6 school year.

The information was collected as a part of the Reading Recovery National Network’s routine monitoring procedure. In this procedure, Reading Recovery teachers enter details of every pupil they directly teach into an international database, together with the results of the initial assessments they have carried out. At the end of the programme each pupil is independently re-assessed by another teacher in the school and outcomes again recorded on the database.

The section also presents outcomes from the evaluation study conducted by the Institute of Education in London schools.

Information from the Reading Recovery National Network annual monitoring procedure.

In the 2005-6 school year Every Child A Reader provided 1-1 Reading Recovery teaching to 542 children. At the point of data collection in July 2006, 373 children had completed their series of lessons and 148 had started Reading Recovery part-way through the year, so were due to continue into 2006-7. Only 23 children were unable to complete their lessons, either because they left the school or because the school was unable to continue to provide Reading Recovery – for example, because of teacher illness or maternity leave.

Teachers provided 1-1 teaching to between seven and eight children on average during the year – the very lowest achieving six-year-olds.

Reading Recovery is a short-term intervention, and there is an imperative for teachers to work briskly. Children completed their series of lessons in an average of 18.5 weeks, or 77 lessons. This equates to an average of 38.5 hours of 1-1 teaching.

The children were taught by 73 teachers, half of whom had trained more than five years previously, and many of whom had been away from Reading Recovery for some time.
The children’s profile

Almost two out of three (63%) of children taught were boys. More than one in four (29%) spoke English as an additional language. A relatively high proportion came from minority ethnic groups (38%, compared to 23% in the overall school population).

More than half the cohort (59%) were entitled to free school meals, compared to 17% in the national population.

22 children, or 4% of the cohort, were identified as being in groups recognised as being particularly vulnerable: looked after children, children from Traveller communities, asylum seekers or refugees.

Most children were identified for intervention in school Year 1; 75% were in Year 1 and 25% in Year 2 when their lessons began.

Children in *Every Child A Reader* had exceptionally low levels of literacy on entry to Reading Recovery, lower on all measures than even the lowest achieving children coming into Reading Recovery elsewhere in England. They scored at the lowest possible level on a word reading test.

Detailed assessment using the standard Reading Recovery diagnostic profile (An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, Clay 2002) showed that typically they had learned a number of letters and a small repertoire of words, but were not able to use that knowledge in text reading or writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of children</th>
<th>Reading Recovery Book Level</th>
<th>Letter identification</th>
<th>Concepts About Print</th>
<th>Word reading test</th>
<th>Writing Vocabulary</th>
<th>HRSIW*</th>
<th>British Ability Scales Reading Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>373</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>4 years 10 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* HRSIW is the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words writing assessment.

Outcomes

In spite of the children’s very low starting point, and the fact that a number of teachers were reinstated to teach Reading Recovery after a considerable time lapse, outcomes were excellent. Children moved from the lowest recordable reading age in the assessment to one commensurate with their chronological age. They made, on average, 21 months gain in reading age in a period of four to five months. This is well over four times the ‘normal’ rate of progress.

In terms of the complexity of texts they could read, they had moved, over the space of 12-20 weeks, from barely being able to read texts like this:

**Example of a Book Level 1 text. Mum, Nelson Price Milburn**
to being able to read texts like this:

"Toby stopped, and BJ jumped down to have a look at the car. "Mm-mm," said BJ. "The car must have been going very fast. The pole is cracked and it could fall over." "The power has been turned off," said the policewoman. "I don't like the look of this job," Toby," said BJ, as he got back into the row truck. "That pole could move when we pull the car away."

Example of a Book Level 15 text, *Toby and the accident*, Nelson Price Milburn

In national curriculum terms, they moved from a level 'W' (working towards National Curriculum Level 1) to Level 1A. Level 1A would put them well on track for achieving Level 2+ (the nationally expected benchmark) at the end of Key Stage 1, when they are seven.

These are average figures, based on the change in reading and National Curriculum levels over the whole sample. Another way of looking at the results is to use a ‘threshold’ measure – the proportion of children who achieved what in Reading Recovery terms is called ‘accelerated learning’ and for whom help can be discontinued. Over three quarters (77%) of the children who completed their series of lessons achieved this accelerated learning. 23% made substantial progress but were felt to need some further help from the school when they ended their lessons. In Reading Recovery terminology these children are described as ‘referred’ for longer-term support.

**Figure 1: Numbers of children achieving outcomes**

The detailed assessments carried out at the beginning and end of children’s Reading Recovery programmes provide information on the particular skills they developed as a result of their lessons. The profile of scores shows that children had expanded their repertoire of known words, letters or sounds, and were now applying this knowledge in reading continuous text. Their writing skills also improved markedly.
Table 2 Progress on Observation Survey tasks for all children who completed Reading Recovery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Exit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of children</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Recovery Book Level</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter identification</td>
<td>37.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts About Print</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word reading test</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Vocabulary</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRSIW*</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Ability Scales Reading Age</td>
<td>4 years 10 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* HRSIW is the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words writing assessment.

Through Reading Recovery children were able to learn at a much faster rate than their classmates. They were able to catch up with and in some cases overtake other children their age. This is illustrated in Figure 2, which shows the average scores of children at entry and exit compared with an average score on the same assessments for children across the full ability range at equivalent ages (Clay, 2002). The scores of children taught through Every Child A Reader were considerably lower than the norm at the start of their Reading Recovery programme, but were well within age-appropriate levels at exit.

Figure 2: Progress on literacy measures for children in Every Child A Reader and average for age between the ages of 5:6 – 6:0 and 6:0 – 6:6
Children receiving Reading Recovery are routinely followed up after they have finished their programmes, to make sure that their progress is maintained. At this follow-up, those taught through Every Child A Reader continued to make three months gain in reading age in each three months that passed – in other words they had developed a normal rate of learning.

**Information from the Institute of Education evaluation**

In its first year (2005-6) this study compared the literacy progress of the lowest achieving six-year-olds who had access to Reading Recovery with that of children at similarly low achievement levels in schools with no access to the programme. The schools without access to Reading Recovery in 2005-6 were in local authorities where access has subsequently been provided in 2006-7 through Every Child A Reader funding.

**Method**

The detailed Reading Recovery diagnostic profile and the British Ability Scales Word Reading test was used to assess the eight lowest achieving children in their Year 1 class – 292 children (145 in 21 Every Child A Reader schools and 147 in 21 comparison schools). Additionally a word recognition and phonic skills measure (WRAPS, Mosely 2003) was used with all the children in Year 1 (605 in Every Child A Reader schools and 588 in comparison schools). These children constitute the complete Year 1 classes and include the 292 lowest achieving children who were also diagnostically assessed. These assessments took place at the beginning and end of the 2005-6 school year.

Information was also collected on which literacy interventions the 292 lowest achieving children had accessed during the year. In the Every Child A Reader schools, 87 children had received Reading Recovery. This was the sample used in the end-of-year comparisons with the 147 lowest achieving children in the comparison schools.

A class teacher assessment was used to report on change in literacy skills and attitudes to learning amongst the lowest attaining children over the year.

At the end of the 2006-7 school year end of key stage results will be collected and a whole class measure of spelling and reading administered, to monitor the sustainability of earlier gains.

**Sample**

The ten London boroughs selected for the Reading Recovery and control samples are among the lowest achieving in England, with very high proportions of children entitled to free school meals. These school contexts have been shown to be amongst the hardest for raising the achievement of the very lowest performing group.
Results

All the children in the evaluation were very low attaining, compared with expected progress for children at this age and point in their school experience. The lowest attaining children in schools with Reading Recovery were slightly better than the lowest attaining eight children in the comparison schools, possibly because of the wider influence of Reading Recovery in the school.

Table 3: Comparison of Reading Recovery children and children in comparison schools at beginning and end of the year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Book level</th>
<th>Concepts About Print</th>
<th>Letter Identification</th>
<th>Hearing and recording sounds in words</th>
<th>Writing Vocabulary</th>
<th>BAS Reading Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>Reading Recovery</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4y 11m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4y 10m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Reading Recovery</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>6y 7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>5y 3m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of the year the progress made by children who received Reading Recovery (Figures 3, 4 and 5) is startling in comparison to other groups, and statistical tests show it to be highly significant. Even in measures with a strong ceiling effect (such as letter identification) there was a substantial difference between Reading Recovery children and the comparison group.

Figure 3: Text Reading: Average levels of books that the children could read

![Figure 3: Text Reading: Average levels of books that the children could read](attachment:figure3.png)

Figure 4: Writing Vocabulary: the number of words a child could write and spell correctly

![Figure 4: Writing Vocabulary: the number of words a child could write and spell correctly](attachment:figure4.png)
Children receiving Reading Recovery ended the year able to read texts like these:

**Example of a Book Level 15 text. Try Again, Emma, Ginn**

Comparison children ended the year only able to read texts like these:

**Example of a Book Level 4 text . The big kick, Nelson Price Milburn**
Children who received Reading Recovery made a gain of 20 months reading age on the British Ability Scales word reading test over an eleven month period, enabling them to catch up with their peers. Comparison children made a gain of 7 months, slipping further behind their peers. In National Curriculum terms, children receiving Reading Recovery were on average reading at Level 1A at the end of school Year 1. Level 1A would put them on track for achieving Level 2B+ (above the nationally expected level) at the end of Key Stage 1, when they are seven. Comparison children were on average reading at Level W at the end of school Year 1, well below the level that would put them on track to achieve nationally expected attainment at seven.

Teachers reported significant changes in the children’s writing skills. They said that more than half of the comparison group made marginal or no growth in written expression across the year, but only 23% of Reading Recovery children failed to make average growth, and almost half made what their teachers considered to be above average or exceptional growth in this area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>0 No Growth</th>
<th>1 Marginal Growth</th>
<th>2 Average Growth</th>
<th>3 Above Average Growth</th>
<th>4 Exceptional Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers also reported gains in reading comprehension for children receiving Reading Recovery that were significantly greater than those of children in the comparison group.

One of the most worrying long term effects of literacy difficulty is the impact upon motivation, behaviour and attitude to learning. This study demonstrated a positive impact on children through Reading Recovery. There were significant differences on all aspects of all-round learning skills reported by class teachers of children who received the programme compared with those who did not. Oral language skills, ability to follow directions, work habits, social interaction with adults and classmates and self confidence all improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Comparison schools</th>
<th>Reading Recovery group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No RR N= 138</td>
<td>N= 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average change score</td>
<td>Average change score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to follow directions</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work habits</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction with adults</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction with peers</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self confidence</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Differences between means significant at p <.05
** Differences between means significant at p <.001.
So far, this report has focused on quantitative data about outcomes. The progress reports collected termly from participating schools provide additional qualitative data. The comments made by the schools show that the programme is enabling children to achieve a range of Every Child Matters outcomes that go beyond simple academic achievement. It is also helping them develop emotional health and well-being, enjoy their learning, make a positive contribution and get on the road to economic wellbeing.

“Their whole outlook changes from being a negative ‘I can’t’ to a very positive, ‘I will have a go’. This leads into all areas of the curriculum not just literacy. It also seems to help with peer relationships as the child’s self esteem and confidence grow.”

“It is very pleasing to note the boost to self-esteem and confidence that the Reading Recovery programme has given the children involved. Long may it continue!”

“He wrote a very clear sentence (a letter to Father Christmas) which he took great delight in showing and reading to every adult he could find”.

“The children love Reading Recovery. I only hope that more children get to attend it also. Learning and enjoying at the same time.”

“Reading Recovery continues to have a dramatic impact on the educational standards of the children involved. It also develops their social/emotional skills and their self esteem. Keiron, in particular, has developed greater confidence with his peers and also in other subjects. Reading Recovery has improved his work in Maths too.”

“Omar had convinced himself he couldn’t do it. The experience he had on Reading Recovery completely changed his attitude to learning – ‘I’m clever now’, he says.”

“The three children who received the programme are now outperforming the average child in the class.”

“All of the children have gained in confidence and with many children it has had a marked positive impact on behaviour.”

“Shifali and Sumayya have finished their programmes and are now in the top group in their class. They are excited about reading and ask whenever they see me if they can read to me. What is lovely to see is that they share their enthusiasm with others in the class … sharing their large boxes of books with other members of the class and excitedly helping others who might struggle with unknown words.”
"Mikael began the year with a poor attitude to learning and found it difficult to focus on what was being said to him or to translate that into action. He made a slow start whilst we secured all the basics and he learned how to learn. He is now absolutely flying, moving from below Book Level 1 to Level 16. The family appreciate the opportunity they have had and have become quite ambitious for Mikael who currently hopes to become a vet after university."

"On a personal level, my son underwent the Reading Recovery programme in 1994 at Preston Park and is today considering his offers from universities. Reading Recovery is life-changing."

"Shea and Thomas both started the programme with very little letter recognition or phonetic knowledge. Both of them are making good progress. Shea says that, as he can now read, he can follow his dream and be an archaeologist."

Schools’ comments also show that the Every Child A Reader programme is having a particular impact on vulnerable groups – children learning English as an additional language (EAL), children with special educational needs (SEN) and children who are looked after by the local authority.

"All the children on the programme have been EAL but it has proved very effective at accelerating their progress. The programme has increased their confidence in speaking and listening as well as reading and writing."

"Shane comes from a family of SEN children and is the youngest. It has been a great struggle for him but he has finally taken off and really enjoys being a reader. Hopefully now at least one member of this family has avoided being on the SEN register."

"Joshua’s older sister has a diagnosis of dyslexia and has struggled all through primary school, making minimal progress. Joshua was born with a hare lip that was corrected but he is still having speech therapy. He finds it difficult to make sounds and has immature language. He began Reading Recovery two months ago and is now reading at level 8 and writing all the time. His class teachers see him as a different child in the classroom not just in literacy but also in his whole attitude to learning. A few days ago he had his speech therapy review and his use of language had risen from the bottom 3% to average levels. It may be that Joshua is dyslexic like his sister but I don’t think it’s going to stop him learning to read and write."

‘I am thrilled with Natika’s progress. She is a looked after child with social and emotional problems. Her reading has accelerated – Book Level 26 unseen text was read with 94% accuracy! I have watched her confidence and self esteem blossom.’

Finally, headteachers note the particular impact of the programme on closing the social class attainment gap:

"The school serves an area of significant deprivation and constant change. Reading Recovery offers some of our children the opportunity to get individual tuition to catch up with the ‘norm’. We have bright children whose domestic experience and background denies them the privilege of early literacy. Reading Recovery helps bridge that gap and then demands that the school maintain the children at the ‘norm’. Thank you for creating the challenge."
Section 2:
The impact on whole-school standards

Standards in many *Every Child A Reader* schools rose for all children, not just those directly taught, because of the presence of a skilled literacy expert in the school.

The schools showed better overall progress in their end of Key Stage 1 results in Reading and Writing than the national trend.

The research carried out by the Institute of Education in London showed that Year 1 classes in schools involved in the programme ended the year with an average class reading age four months ahead of the class reading age in similar schools that were not involved.

This section examines the impact of this work on whole-school standards. It then describes how this impact has been achieved, through the work of Reading Recovery teachers in supporting tailored literacy teaching more broadly within their schools.

**Impact**

The research carried out by the Institute of Education in London showed that children in Year 1 classes in schools involved in the initiative ended the year with an average class reading age four months ahead of children in similar schools that were not involved. Classes in schools without access to Reading Recovery made average progress in reading over the year (12 months). In schools with access to Reading Recovery the classes made accelerated progress (15 months progress over the year). Given that these were low performing classes at the start of the year, accelerated progress was required if classes were to catch up with age norms.

**Table 6: Year 1 class outcomes on the WRAPS reading test – Sept 2005 and July 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Classes in schools with RR</th>
<th>Classes in schools without RR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N= 600</td>
<td>N= 566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRAPS Age in months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of year</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>73.5**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRAPS Standardised Score*</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>102.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Standardised scores take into account children's age at the time of testing. A standardised score of 100 represents the average level in the population on which the test was standardised.

** Statistical analysis indicated no significant differences between the two groups on measures at start of year. Differences between the groups were significant at end of year at p<.05.
Since the majority of children and classes involved in the initiative were Year 1 six year olds, it is too soon to expect a large impact on 2006 whole-school end of Key Stage 1 results, which describe the standards achieved by Year 2 children at the age of seven. Nevertheless, the signs are promising.

Overall, the schools involved in Every Child A Reader showed better progress in their end of Key Stage 1 results in Reading and Writing than the national trend. The percentage of children reaching Level 2B+ in Reading (the level that is needed if children are to achieve the national expectation of Level 4+ when they are 11) fell nationally by 1 percentage point, but remained static in Every Child A Reader schools. The percentage of children achieving Level 2B+ in Writing fell nationally by 2 percentage points but again remained static in Every Child A Reader schools. The trend in mathematics results was worse than the national trend in Every Child A Reader schools, whereas the trend for literacy results was better than the national trend. This suggests that the positive changes were specific to literacy and result from the project rather than any more general changes affecting teaching and learning in these schools.

Progress in some local authorities was particularly marked. In Sheffield, for example, Reading Recovery teachers in Every Child A Reader schools are already well advanced in supporting a range of lighter-touch interventions for children with less severe difficulties, as well as working directly with the lowest attaining children. Schools involved in the initiative had an increase of 2.9% percentage points in children achieving Level 2+ in Reading, and 5.3% in Writing, while other schools in the authority showed a decrease similar to the national results.

Comments from the progress reports collected termly from headteachers of participating schools also attest to the emerging impact on whole-school standards.

“I feel that this programme is one of the best investments of money, in developing children’s reading, that I have been involved in. As a school, we try to maximise the impact of the programme by passing on the strategies to our teaching assistants who are enlisted to support other children in the same year group – Year 1. The benefits for the school, when looked at statistically, show an impressive improvement in reading levels, and indeed in the NFER English standardised scores, of this cohort. From a starting point of 50% of the group being average readers, by the end of the year nearly 75% were in this category. These children are now in Year 2 and the percentage of average readers and above is now recorded at 83%.”

“The programme was a strength of our literacy work in our recent Ofsted inspection. Reading Recovery contributed to the overall judgement of ‘outstanding’.”

“The programme has really made an impact this year, as in a small class of fifteen children, five children attained Level 3 (above average) for their Year 2 SATs reading, seven children attained 2a, two other children got 2b and 2c respectively which is within the national expected range for this age group. The one child who is still working towards Level 1 is a child from Poland who came to us with no English and has only been in the school nine months.”
“The programme has enabled our children to attain national average in their KS1 SATs for reading and writing. When compared to all other interventions used within the school it has had the greatest impact on results.”

Headteachers who have had Reading Recovery in the school for some time commented on the long-term outcomes:

“In Year 6 we have seven children who had Reading Recovery in Key Stage 1. Three have major special needs (one is Statemented). These children are predicted to get Level 3 or below in reading. Four children will get Level 4 or 5 (at or above the national average). In the previous year’s SATs (2005) all Reading Recovery children gained Level 4 or above.”

**How whole-school impact is achieved - supporting tailored literacy teaching**

Many headteachers comment on the opportunities for staff professional development that the programme has provided:

“All the school staff have had the opportunity to observe Reading Recovery sessions. The Reading Recovery teachers have led staff meetings. As a result all the staff are now more knowledgeable about the Reading Recovery method and more skilled in the teaching of reading and writing.”

“The expertise of the Reading Recovery teacher has had a very positive impact on the school. She works closely with the literacy coordinators and led staff meetings on reading. She has also ensured that all books in the school are book banded and is influencing the teaching of reading.”

“I am delighted with the progress the children are making and with the transfer of Reading Recovery skills to other members of staff. All our staff, support and teachers, are gradually observing Reading Recovery lessons and learning from their experiences.”
Waves of intervention

The Primary National Strategy describes a model of literacy interventions based on three ‘waves’ of support:

**Wave 1** The effective inclusion of all children in a daily high quality literacy teaching

**Wave 2** Additional small-group intervention for children who can be expected to catch up with their peers as a result of the intervention

**Wave 3** Specific targeted approaches for children identified as requiring SEN support

Schools funded by *Every Child A Reader* have used this model to describe how the Reading Recovery teacher supports literacy practice at all three waves. This is an example from St Teresa of Lisieux Infant School in Liverpool.

"These initiatives are already making a difference. This year with an exceptionally low achieving cohort we have made significant gains. Early predictions of progress have been surpassed in both reading and writing. We had no Level 3 readers predicted, yet after intervention we achieved 8%. We already have ten Year 1 children reading at a good Level 2 and are predicting a possible 16% at Level 3 next year."
Schools in the *Every Child A Reader* initiative have worked on delivering efficient and cost-effective approaches to children’s literacy difficulties. The greatest impact has been achieved through a layered approach, in which highly trained Reading Recovery teachers work with the hardest-to-teach children, but well-trained and supported teaching assistants work 1-1 with children in the next layer of need, and in groups with those children who are just below the level of their peers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave 1</th>
<th>Quality First Teaching</th>
<th>Majority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wave 2</td>
<td>Early Literacy Support</td>
<td>Just below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave 3</td>
<td>Fisher Family Trust Wave 3</td>
<td>Struggling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Recovery</td>
<td>Lowest attaining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many schools have developed a layered approach that involves Early Literacy Support (ELS) for children who are just below average; a teaching assistant-led 1-1 intervention devised by the Fischer Family Trust (FFT Wave 3) for some children; and 1-1 teacher-led Reading Recovery for those who have made almost no progress with reading and writing by the time they are six. A scheme called Talking Partners is increasingly used alongside literacy interventions, so as to develop children’s oral language skills.

**Early Literacy Support** is an intervention programme for children in Y1. It aims to accelerate children back to age-appropriate NLS Framework objectives. The programme includes joint training for class teachers and teaching assistants, a screening pack and 60 scripted lessons to be run by a teaching assistant. Six children work in a group for 20 minutes each day, usually for twelve weeks in the spring term.

**Fischer Family Trust (FFT) Wave 3** aims to enable children to participate more fully in literacy lessons and develop sufficient knowledge and skills to benefit from a Wave 2 intervention. It is aimed at Y1 but can also be used in Y2/3. It is delivered by an experienced teaching assistant, for example one who is already accustomed to using ELS. There are three days of joint training for a teacher and teaching assistant. The intervention involves 20 minutes a day of 1-1 teaching on a rolling programme – a reading day followed by a writing day. The intervention lasts ten weeks.

**Talking Partners** is a 10-week intervention aimed at developing confidence and competence in speaking and listening. Originally developed for EAL learners, it works well also for children whose first language is English. A trained Talking Partner (usually a teaching assistant) works with 3 children (YR-Y3) for 3 sessions of 20 minutes per week. Training is provided for class teachers and teaching assistants.

**Reading Recovery** is aimed at children around six years of age. It enables children who have made little or no progress to catch up with their peers in reading and writing. Children work 1-1 with a specially trained teacher for half an hour a day every day for 12-20 weeks. Teachers are trained over a period of one year.
Other schools have chosen different interventions in their ‘layers’. Some schools use a scheme called Better Reading Partnership, in which teaching assistants are trained to read 1:1 with children using techniques from Reading Recovery, in place of or to supplement ELS.

Some schools involved in Every Child A Reader choose to use their Reading Recovery teacher to work directly but not intensively with children in Year 2 on ‘booster’ programmes. Victoria Park Infant school, an inner city primary in Bristol, uses this approach. Its success with Reading Recovery recently featured in the Times Educational Supplement.

In Hackney schools, the layered approach to literacy involves the Reading Recovery teacher in supervising daily supported reading in groups for all children in Year 1.

**Victoria Park Infant School**

Victoria Park Infant School, in inner-city Bristol, uses a layered approach that combines extra synthetic phonics groupwork led by highly-trained teaching assistants, Reading Recovery for the lowest attainers and light-touch ‘booster’ programmes delivered by the Reading Recovery teacher for all those not on track to reach nationally expected levels.

Seven years ago in 1998 the school’s Ofsted PANDA rated attainment at E or E*. 50% of the children left the school unable to read. After the school put in place its new pattern of provision, results changed dramatically. The school was soon graded B in comparison with schools nationally and A in comparison with similar schools. Children have retained the gains they made in the infant school. Out of the total of 29 under-achieving children in one cohort who received Reading Recovery or Booster in Year 2, 28 could be tracked to Year 6. 25 (89%) achieved Level 4+ and 5 achieved Level 5+.

After a period of reduction in its Reading Recovery provision, Every Child A Reader funding has now enabled the school to get back to strength. Jenny Holt, the headteacher, is confident that the school will now continue to achieve outstanding results. More important is the difference this makes to individual children. As one child recently told Jenny when describing his extra reading lessons, "It’s changed my bloomin’ life.”

**Grazebrook Primary School**

Grazebrook Primary in Hackney serves an area of high social deprivation. 34% of pupils are eligible for free school meals; 52% are learning English as an additional language (many at very early stages). The school uses a layered approach to KS1 intervention involving Reading Recovery, Talking Partners and 15 minutes a day, a 1:1 teaching assistant-led intervention based on Reading Recovery principles. Detailed assessment is used to profile the reading and writing skills of every child at the start of Year 1. An early literacy steering decides which interventions each child requires.

All Year 1 children also have access to Hackney’s supported reading approach, which aims to increase the quantity and quality of independent reading. School staff and additional adults (at Grazebrook class teachers, teaching assistants, volunteers and teachers in training) work together in class with small groups for 20 minutes each day. The adults are trained by the Reading Recovery teacher to run tightly scripted guided reading or writing sessions based on early story books. Children are allocated to one of a series of graded groups, and texts are accurately matched to their reading levels. Their progress is regularly monitored and they change groups as necessary.

The adult working with each group is given prompts for the session. A session might include a book introduction and the adult modelling an aspect of the reading process before the children read independently. They might later find and practise a high frequency word, or find a word with a particular phonic pattern and make it with plastic letters. Each group has its own target for reading – for example, to ‘Check that what I have read makes sense’, ‘Look at the first letter and get my mouth ready to sound it out’ or ‘Read with my eyes not out loud’.

The class teacher and Reading Recovery teacher take it in turns to monitor the work of the other adults by sitting in on a group. Each term children are re-assessed to determine their reading level. Results have been outstanding. Over one school year the Year 1 children have moved to a position where 63% are now reading at average or above average levels, compared to only 32% at the start of the intervention.

As a result of high-quality class teaching and the layered approach, the school’s overall Key Stage 1 reading results this year have been the best ever. 82% of children achieved the nationally expected Level 2+ in Reading this year, and 79% in Writing – an increase of around ten percentage points over last year.
The literacy leadership course

A particularly effective innovation within the *Every Child A Reader* project has been the development of a year-long course for experienced Reading Recovery teachers, aimed at providing them with the skills they need to influence literacy practice at whole-school level. This year, 13 teachers from all the London boroughs receiving funding took part in the course, jointly tutored by staff at the Institute of Education and members of the Primary National Strategy literacy team.

The course helped Reading Recovery teachers to develop a wider role by providing access to the latest understandings and practice on a range of key topics about early literacy teaching and learning. These included understanding and using data, interventions to support oral language development, implementing a range of literacy interventions, literacy curriculum frameworks and current policy, mentoring and supporting colleagues in school, and involving parents and carers.

Each participant also undertook a piece of action research in their school. The support given to these projects by course leaders built the teachers’ skills and the confidence to make changes and support changes in others. They were enabled to involve others in identifying key literacy issues for their school, focus effort on a felt need which made changes/new activity valued rather than imposed, and develop skills in setting success criteria and evaluating progress.

The range of projects undertaken included improving writing in Year 1, providing training and coaching for class teachers on guided reading, providing professional development for class teachers and teaching assistants on book selection and reading development, implementing daily supported reading programmes across whole classes, and developing the literacy expertise of Key Stage 2 teachers with low achieving readers.

All participants are implementing plans to continue to develop extended activities in literacy support into 2006/7.

The taught literacy leadership course has now been developed for delivery by local Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders and Primary Strategy consultants in authorities outside London.

One school has developed a three-year plan to maximise the impact of their Reading Recovery teacher. She will support the school in ‘banding’ the books that children use, so as to make sure that all children are given reading books at just the right level. She is to provide training to all staff on how to use running records – a way of assessing children’s reading skills so as to determine exactly what it is they need to learn next. She monitors and supports the work of teaching assistants providing the Year 1 and 5 group literacy interventions devised by the government’s National Strategies, and will next year introduce the Strategies’ new, teaching assistant-led intervention for children in Year 3. She is also training teaching assistants to implement a system of one-to-one reading support for children in Year 2 who need a boost in order to achieve National Curriculum Level 2B.
Section 3: Securing sustainable and long-term investment in early literacy intervention

This section describes the work that has been done so far within Every Child A Reader to secure sustainable and long-term investment in early literacy intervention.

Work on this goal has so far taken three forms.

- Raising awareness of the needs of the lowest attaining children amongst the business community, local authorities and schools.
- Conducting research into headteachers’ views on early literacy intervention and the factors that influence their spending decisions.
- Commissioning an economic assessment of the return on investment of early intervention to address literacy difficulties.

Raising awareness

Direct conversations with a range of groups have secured a greater awareness of the importance of early, effective intervention when children are struggling to learn to read and write. It has been possible to talk directly to headteacher groups in local authorities joining the programme, to local authority officers, and to businesses. The positive media coverage that the Every Child A Reader initiative has received has also been helpful in raising the profile of early intervention.

Research on the factors that influence schools’ spending decisions

Focus group discussions with over two hundred headteachers in the first year of Every Child A Reader have been used to explore the issues that affect schools’ spending decisions.

We have learned that schools’ views and spending patterns are affected by their previous experience of the value of particular programmes. In one authority, for example, where Reading Recovery has been established for a number of years and has a high reputation locally as a school improvement strategy, a £10,000 contribution from Every Child A Reader proved sufficient for headteachers to commit match-funding and train or employ a Reading Recovery teacher. In another, in contrast, where the programme is not well known, an initial contribution of £16,000 was required.

Local factors such as ease of teacher recruitment and retention also make a difference. Where headteachers are struggling to recruit and retain classroom teachers they are reluctant to take a teacher out of class to train in Reading Recovery and may need a greater financial incentive to do so.

Another factor affecting schools’ investment is the mobility of the child population that the school serves. Teachers and headteachers often see children leave the school part way through their Reading Recovery teaching programmes, so that the child and school do not reap the full benefit. As one headteacher said:

“We had two girls on Reading Recovery – twins. Their house was petrol-bombed and they were moved to Wales – all that money was wasted.”
The return on investment of early intervention to address literacy difficulties

Work to secure a sustainable and long term investment in early literacy intervention needs to be informed by better data on the returns such an investment might bring – to schools, local authorities and the wider public purse. The KPMG Foundation have therefore commissioned an economic assessment of these issues.

The brief is to:

• review the research on the long-term consequences of literacy difficulties for individuals and for society;

• estimate the costs to the public purse that result;

• estimate the return on investment of the Every Child A Reader initiative.

The report will be published later in the year.
Section 4:
Implementation issues

This section describes what the first year has taught us about implementing the Every Child A Reader programme effectively.

We have learned from the first year of the initiative that the delivery partnership between the Reading Recovery and Primary National Strategy infrastructures provide coherence for schools in terms of what is expected of them, and the support available. There remain some issues about how well local authority Primary Strategy and special needs/inclusion teams work together. There are still instances where the response to literacy difficulties is managed by one or other set of personnel, rather than by both working in tandem.

Where local authorities have managed Every Child A Reader most effectively, this has been because:

- improving the quality of literacy intervention has been defined as a strategic priority for the local authority;
- there is high-level and overt support for Every Child A Reader;
- the programme is well integrated into other local authority Primary Strategy work, including work on schools below the government’s floor target for educational standards, and work on the leadership and management of intervention in schools;
- there is a clearly defined layered model of intervention which is effectively monitored and evaluated;
- there is effective joint work between the school improvement and inclusion services, which enables Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders to work in tandem with learning support teachers and literacy consultants;
- there is an emphasis on building capacity in schools – as an example, in one local authority monitoring of interventions is done jointly by a member of school staff and the local authority member of staff, so as to model the process and leave something behind as a result of the visit;
- schools’ governing bodies sign up at the start to an agreement setting out requirements;
- the local authority coordinates regular practice-sharing network meetings, attended by headteachers, Reading Recovery teachers and key local authority staff involved with the schools.
We have found that local authorities and schools are keen on the layered approach and have been quick to implement it, with the lead often taken very effectively by established Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders. In school, Reading Recovery teachers are also enthusiastic about and capable of taking a wider role, but often need initial ‘permission’ to do so. This is usefully achieved by undertaking action research as part of an external course.

At school level, we have learned that it is essential to provide opportunities for headteachers to learn from colleagues’ practice in getting the best from the initiative. The following factors are key to effective management of Every Child A Reader in schools.

• Headteachers are aware of the potential of the programme to raise standards across the school.

• The school establishes an early literacy steering group, made up for example of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, literacy coordinator, inclusion coordinator and Reading Recovery teacher. This group manages the process of assessing the needs of children in Key Stage 1, matching interventions precisely to these needs, and monitoring and evaluating progress.

• Headteachers are personally familiar with the teaching methods used in Reading Recovery.

• They make sure that the Reading Recovery teacher and other staff are given time to work together, so as to improve both everyday class teaching and the quality of ‘layered’ interventions.

• They strive continuously to engage the parents and carers of children involved in the programme, and to work in partnership with them.

• They protect the investment that the school and Every Child A Reader has made in the very lowest achieving children by ensuring that children having 1-1 support receive daily teaching.

• They make sure their Reading Recovery teacher can participate in the continuing professional development they need to keep their skills sharp, including, where relevant, the literacy leadership course that is on offer.
Conclusion

This has been a very successful first year for *Every Child A Reader*.

The programme has demonstrated that providing Reading Recovery is an effective solution to early literacy difficulties. Over three quarters of the children involved – the hardest to teach children in the schools where it is hardest to raise standards – have been returned to average or above literacy levels for their age after an average of just over 38 hours of 1-1 teaching. The majority of these children were poor, and two thirds were boys. This means the scheme has been able to address entrenched inequities that are of concern to all our funders. The initiative has shown that schools can raise their aspirations for the lowest attaining children, and begin to break the link between poverty, gender and attainment.

The scheme has also delivered innovation, producing a Reading Recovery model that is fit for purpose in the current educational context, and demonstrating how the presence of a skilled literacy expert helps the school to improve overall literacy practice and pay systematic attention to the bottom quartile of children through cost-effective ‘layered’ literacy interventions.

The next two years provide an opportunity to develop this approach further, to reach more children, and to work with all our partners to secure a sustainable future for the programme when the current funding ends.
Andrew’s Story

Andrew is a little boy who has experienced a great deal of turbulence in his life so far. He was put into voluntary care when he was 22 months old. He was placed with a foster family until he was three, when he returned to the care of his father, but this lasted for less than six months. Andrew then began the first of three long-term foster placements. During each placement his behaviour became too difficult for the carers to manage, necessitating a change of provision. At the same time he was behaving in extremely challenging ways in school.

This very difficult behaviour – tantrums, violent outbursts alternating with extreme quietness, lack of boundaries and refusal to co-operate – became a major barrier to his learning. In his Reception year, when he was five, Andrew was extremely demanding and reluctant to try anything without adult support. He enjoyed talking and loved being listened to, especially by adults, but would not do what he was asked. He would hide under tables and refuse to come out. He would also act aggressively towards adults and other children. He was highly unpredictable.

This challenging behaviour continued throughout his Reception year and into Year 1 where, after one particularly violent outburst in which he tried to trash the headteacher’s office, he was briefly excluded from school for the safety of the other pupils. At this point, near the end of Year 1, a full time, designated Learning Support Assistant was provided for him through funding from the local authority’s service for looked after children.

Whilst Andrew was in Reception and Year 1 he had struggled with the curriculum and made very little progress. In September 2005 he could read only picture books with captions. He then began his series of Reading Recovery lessons. Now he can read simple stories and is on track to achieve nationally expected levels in reading. His class teacher reports that he has become more engaged and his behaviour is much better. He is happy, looks as though he is enjoying himself, and is accessing the rest of the curriculum. He glows with pride at his success.
The reasons why children fail to learn to read and write alongside their peers can be as individual as the children themselves. For one child, Molly, it was hard to see how a child who liked stories, was keen to learn and was supported at home by her mum and dad, was finding it so hard to catch on to reading and writing.

After one full year in school, Molly was struggling. She was amongst the lowest attaining children in her class. She knew some letters but was not able to work out how they might work to form words. She knew that stories had to make sense. She would look at the pictures and ‘make up’ her own story to go with the illustrations. She wanted to engage with reading and writing but couldn’t work out how to. Her confidence began to plummet and her parents were very concerned that school was going to be a problem for her.

Luckily for Molly, her school was able to receive support from Every Child A Reader to continue with Reading Recovery. Molly began her programme at the beginning of Year 1 when she was 5 years and 11 months old. She was not yet able to read very simple story books and struggled to follow with her finger as the teacher read a simple caption book. She was able to write only her name and two one-letter words, ‘I’ and ‘a’.

When writing, she was able to record only a few of the ‘sounds’ she could hear.

\[\text{I have a big dog at home. Today I am going to take him to school.}\]

Forty-six half-hour lessons later, it is a very different story. After just 23 teaching hours, she is now amongst the most capable readers and writers in her class. Far from thinking she can’t do it, she complains if she doesn’t get the chance to read aloud to the end of her story in her reading book or finish the story she is writing. Molly is now a reader and a writer and, most importantly of all, she knows it.

Molly’s parents continued to support their daughter, taking a keen interest in her progress. When they went to school to observe her working with her Reading Recovery teacher, the reason for her incredible progress became clear. In Reading Recovery lessons, not a moment is wasted. The children read real books and write real stories. This means the children are taught not only words and letters that they need to read and write, but strategic ways of thinking about reading and writing. They are shown how they can use what they know to problem-solve and become independent learners.

Reading Recovery changes futures. Molly’s story, though remarkable, is not unique. Her future is now a rosy one, thanks to Reading Recovery and Every Child A Reader.
Alwin’s Story

Alwin arrived in his nursery class in November 2003 from India, where he had been living with his grandmother. He had no English and was very shy and quiet.

Whilst Alwin was in the nursery great emphasis was placed on language. He acquired a few words and phrases such as ‘Yes please’ and ‘Go out.’ His spoken language did not develop much beyond this, however, even though he had a great deal of group and individual support.

Alwin’s language skills developed little during his time in his next (Reception) class as he relied on facial expressions and gestures to communicate his needs. He also struggled to make any sort of start with reading and writing.

When he transferred to Year 1 Alwin was assessed for the Reading Recovery programme. His results were extremely low. He could not identify any letters or read any words. He could just write his name in capital letters and otherwise only form the letter ‘S’. Alwin was not communicating in English and it was difficult to know how much he understood. He never spoke spontaneously at all.

After about twelve weeks of Reading Recovery teaching he started to make rapid progress. He began wanting to read his new book as soon as he saw it, and would say, “I can read that!” He also began relating his own life experiences to the stories that he was enjoying. He could tell his teacher about the forest and wild animals in India whilst reading about Baby Bear who got lost in a forest.

Everyone in school has noticed the change in Alwin. He speaks to staff when he meets them, confidently saying, “Good morning, Miss.” He is beginning to structure his spoken language into clear sentences and he likes to chat with teachers on the playground. Now he has enough self confidence not to worry if what he says is sometimes not quite right. In the classroom Alwin is accessing the rest of the curriculum and is surprising his teacher with his rapid progress in written and spoken English. Alwin is now reading quite difficult books with good understanding and is reading above the level of the average children in his class. He says he loves reading. His parents are thrilled with his progress.
‘I don’t need help, I’m clever now’

Jake started his second year at school with few early literacy skills. He had difficulty participating in the literacy hour and this was compounded by his shyness and lack of confidence. His teacher noted that Jake would not ask for help. He would sit down and appear to get on with his work, although he often could not do it. Jake became even more withdrawn and his teacher became increasingly concerned about his lack of progress.

In Year 1, Jake was assessed for the Reading Recovery programme and, just before his sixth birthday, began a series of daily one-to-one lessons. At the start of his programme Jake was not able to read even the simplest stories. He knew very few letters and words and he got easily confused. He was unable to hear sounds in words as an aid to spelling and would either refuse to cooperate, or guess. Jake did not use any meaning cues to help him read and did not know that each printed word on the page would correspond to a spoken word. When he got stuck he tended to ‘shut down’, refusing to make eye contact or attempt to work things out.

During the first two weeks of the programme Jake’s Reading Recovery teacher only worked on the things she knew he was able to do, so as to build up his confidence. She noted that he got easily upset if he made mistakes and would stop using the little he knew, expecting the teacher to take over.

As the programme progressed and Jake began to understand the routine of the lessons, he began to worry less about getting things wrong. He started to anticipate tasks and would come in ready to write the word he had been taught the previous day or choose books for his familiar reading.

After a few weeks, Jake’s mother Pamela was invited into school to discuss her son’s progress and to observe a Reading Recovery lesson. She was amazed at the progress Jake was making and she became a regular visitor to the school to observe Reading Recovery sessions. This had a dramatic impact on Jake’s learning. Pamela supported at home what Jake had done in Reading Recovery. She took home extra games and activities. She also began to change the way she read with Jake, giving him more time to work out words by himself and encouraging him to apply the skills he had learnt in Reading Recovery. This valuable home-school link enhanced the special teaching Jake was getting and his progress became far more rapid.

As part of the programme, Jake’s Reading Recovery teacher had daily discussions with his class teacher about his progress. Regular joint planning provided opportunities for Jake to apply his newly developing strategies in the classroom. After just 18 weeks of Reading Recovery, Jake successfully completed his programme. His reading age had increased by 1 year 6 months over a four-month period. At the end of the programme Jake told his mum, “I don’t need help, I’m clever now.”

Jake’s class teacher reports that Jake is now far more confident in class. He will answer questions and is beginning to contribute to class discussion. He has developed into a more outgoing boy who enjoys learning. He is working within the top average band of his class and is expected to achieve the nationally expected reading and writing levels for his age when he is seven.
Kate’s Story

Kate, the youngest of three sisters, was not a very confident child when she started her second year in school. Her speech was immature and she sometimes confused words. When reading a book about pirates she told her teacher that her sister was allergic to them (we think she meant allergic to parrots …).

Kate enjoys lots of cartoons and watching television. She had a limited general knowledge, not identifying a jigsaw, insect or igloo when shown pictures of them.

Sometimes we expect children to understand more from the books they read than they really do. An important part of Reading Recovery lessons is talking to the child about a book before they read it, making sure they understand the vocabulary they will meet.

When Kate began the Reading Recovery programme, aged 5 years 10 months, she could not read the simplest picture books with captions. She found page turning difficult and was unsure where to start reading or which way to go.

In her lessons her teacher began with one-to-one matching, pointing to each word read, and asking Kate to get her mouth ready for the initial letters. Kate began to use a louder tone as she started to read more. Then she began to listen to herself as she was reading, to make it sound more like talking. She started to self-correct and developed expression. Now she likes to use character voices.

At the beginning of the programme Kate could only write ‘H’ for Harvest and ‘is’ by herself.

She is now writing independently, needing help with just the tricky parts such as the ‘h’ in white.

Kate has now completed her Reading Recovery programme. She has been helped by good class teaching and regular support from her mother, who is very pleased with her progress. Her mother’s comments in her home-school book often include ‘Excellent reading’ and ‘Well done.’ Kate is working at the average level for her class, at National Curriculum Level 1b. She is on target to achieve the expected level for her age at the end of Year 2. Most importantly she is confident, independent and happy with her reading and writing.
Saeed was a very quiet boy. His class teachers described him as ‘easy to miss’ as he didn’t push himself to their attention. His parents, though very supportive, needed the help of an English-speaking relative to communicate with the school. As other children in Saeed’s class began to read and write, Saeed fell behind.

Luckily for Saeed, at the beginning of his third year in school, when he was six, his Birmingham school were able to provide him with one-to-one Reading Recovery teaching. Assessments showed that he knew a lot of letters when shown them individually but he was not able to use them to record the first letters of words he wanted to write, or to think about how the letters would help him work out the words he wanted to read in a simple well-known story. He was finding the ways we talk about reading and writing – word, letter, page, bottom, top, first, last – difficult to match with the things he saw. He must have found the literacy hour in class a confusing time as he heard these words but didn’t know where to look for them. He was able to write the names of some his family members but didn’t know enough words to begin to write simple sentences.

Reading Recovery was able to help Saeed quickly and effectively. After just 15 weeks, Saeed is now able to read and write with as much skill and understanding as his classroom peers. He is more confident and is happy to take part in class discussions and presentations. He is able to search for information in his favourite information books, just like his friends. His parents are delighted that Saeed has made such fast progress.

Why is it that Reading Recovery works so well for children like Saeed? Reading Recovery teachers are trained to take into consideration what individual children know about spoken English as well as reading and writing as they teach, and to make no assumptions about a child’s oral language. The children have daily lessons with a teacher who knows their strengths and potential weaknesses very well and can plan the lessons to make sure children always experience success and the high levels of motivation that brings. Children read several little books each day. These are books written in simple English, similar to the language the children hear in school. Books may be re-read several times, so the grammar of English can become familiar. Children compose and write an original message or story every day, working on expanding their competence in English whilst learning how to write increasingly complex words. This mix of real reading and writing activities ensures development in language as well as in reading and writing.

Without essential literacy and oracy skills, it would have been all too easy for Saeed to become marginalised from school life and learning. The partnership between Saeed and his Reading Recovery teacher has changed how he is able to interact with the wider world and secured him a better future.
In his second year in school Daniel was amongst the lowest attaining children in his class. He read slowly and painfully, sometimes getting simple words like ‘on’ or ‘a’ wrong. He could write a number of two- and three-letter words, but had to work them out each time, making writing slow and laborious. He confused sounds such as ‘n’ and ‘m’. He wasn’t sure of the difference between a word and a letter, and did not understand words like ‘first’ and ‘last’ in the context of print.

Luckily for Daniel, his school was able to receive support via the London Challenge to employ a skilled Reading Recovery teacher. Daniel received daily one-to-one lessons for a period of 13 weeks. Here’s what Daniel’s mother said after his time in Reading Recovery:

“At first I thought, ‘I am to blame by not spending enough time with Daniel after working a full-time job.’ I felt guilty. But after talking to the teacher about it we went ahead with the extra lessons. It was the best decision I made. Daniel was able to have one-to-one. He loved the reading sessions and the extra attention he got on his own. Daniel’s reading skills got so much better and it also improved his confidence. Now he’s finished Reading Recovery he looks forward to taking home a book every day. He even takes pleasure in reading some ‘hard ones’ (that’s Daniel’s words). I just want to say ‘Thanks’ to the school and to the teacher for giving my son this extra support.”

Daniel’s mother also mentioned that, when Reading Recovery was suggested for Daniel, he didn’t hear very well. During his first year in school his hearing was poor and he was still waiting for an operation on his ears in Year 1. The one-to-one lessons in a quiet environment enabled Daniel to hear more clearly, learn letter sounds and sort out some confusions he had, as well as learning to listen to himself read and sort things out for himself when he made mistakes. It was easier for him to concentrate and to slow down enough to work on the ‘hard bits’ – he tended to rush through things in class.

After just forty-three Reading Recovery lessons, Daniel is now able to read as well as the other children in his class. His reads fluently and with expression. He can write a good variety of words and work out how to spell words he does not know by thinking about how similar-sounding words are spelled.