



As every SENCO knows, literacy difficulties are one of the most common types of special educational need, occupying a great deal of SENCO time and increasingly, as children grow older, linked to behavioural, social and emotional needs. Researchers have found that a third of ten-year-olds with antisocial behaviour have a specific reading difficulty, and that pupils who enter secondary school with very low literacy skills have an exclusion rate five times that of their literate classmates. 25% of young offenders have reading skills below those of an average 7 year old. Good early reading skills have been shown to be a significant predictor of economic wellbeing in later life, and of mental health – depression, for example, is five times more common in women with reading difficulties than in women from similar backgrounds with average literacy skills. Being able to read is not just a route to ‘enjoying and achieving’– it helps children achieve all five Every Child Matters outcomes.

Until recently, the percentage of children leaving primary school each year with significant literacy difficulties (below National Curriculum Level 3 in English) was static, at 6 to 7% of all Year 6 pupils (and nearly one in ten boys). That finding convinced government to introduce its ‘Waves of intervention’ strategy, with schools encouraged to re-evaluate the provision made for children with literacy problems, and local authorities providing training and support for them in introducing Wave 3 approaches with a track record of success. That policy has been effective. The percentage of very low attainers has begun to fall, for the first time, and in 2008 stood at 5.3%.

What is new about *Every Child a Reader*

So what does *Every Child a Reader* add to this strategy, and why is it now being rolled out across England from its beginnings as a £10 million charity-backed initiative? At its heart, it is a scheme that aims to provide **early** intervention for children who are struggling to learn to read and write, catching them before the problems of anxiety and low self esteem set in and make remediation much more difficult. The scheme operates in Key Stage 1, part-funding highly-skilled Reading Recovery teachers who provide intensive one-to-one help to six year olds who have made no progress in reading after a year in school. Children are taught individually for 30 minutes each day for an average of 12-20 weeks. The teachers also contribute to raising whole-school standards, helping class teachers assess children’s precise learning needs and adapt their teaching accordingly, and providing training and support to teaching assistants and volunteers using a range of less intensive ‘layered’ literacy interventions.

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| Wave 1 | Quality First Teaching | T A L K I N G P A R T N E R S | All children |
| Wave 2 | Early Literacy Support Better Reading Partnership | | Just below average |
| Wave 3 | Fischer Family Trust Wave 3, Reading Intervention, Catch Up | | Struggling |
| | Reading Recovery | | Lowest attaining |



As well as providing intervention early on, *Every Child a Reader* emphasises catching children up completely rather than just narrowing the gap between them and their peers. It is putting new, earmarked money into the system to help schools fund an increasingly rare commodity in SEN – specialist **teachers** – so that the very hardest-to-teach children can have help from the most qualified and skilled adults. This is not to say that help from teaching assistants does not play a valued part in the scheme – it does, through the layered approach. But it is about using resources wisely, deploying a more costly teacher where the child needs that level of expertise, and a teaching assistant for the larger group of children whose needs are not so severe. It is also about supporting the work of teaching assistants through the presence in the school of a specialist who can provide on site training, monitoring, advice and coaching. In this way *Every Child a Reader* is intended to add to and enhance schools' existing Wave 3 provision, but not to replace existing effective teaching-assistant led programmes such as Catch Up, Ruth Miskin Literacy or other widely used schemes. <insert boxed case study 1 somewhere near here>

Reading Recovery

The Reading Recovery intervention that forms the backbone of *Every Child a Reader* has proved its worth. Over 5,000 children were reached over the three years of the initial £10 million project. Children have made over four times the normal rate of progress - an average 21 months progress in reading age after four to five months (just 40 hours) of daily one-to-one teaching. Eight out of ten have caught up completely with their peers and the remainder have made twice the normal rate of progress. Children in a comparison group of schools without the programme, who received the kind of help normally provided in Year 1, fell further behind. They made only seven months' progress on average over a whole school year.

The effects of Reading Recovery don't wear off. A study by the Institute of Education found that 86% of the children involved went on to achieve Level 2+

in Reading at the end of Key Stage 1 – two percentage points ahead of the national average for all children. 77% achieved Level 2B, compared to 71% of all children nationally. In Writing, too, the children outperformed national results. A 2004 study found that over half of children who had had Reading Recovery five years earlier at the age of six – none of whom would normally be expected to achieve nationally expected levels – achieved Level 4 or above at age eleven. Recent evidence from schools suggests that today this proportion would be even higher.

Does the programme work for children with special needs?

Reading Recovery has a policy of taking on the very lowest achieving children, no matter what their need may be. No child is excluded from the programme. Children with speech and language needs, ADHD and other behavioural needs, Down syndrome, and a variety of syndromes leading to physical coordination problems have all taken part and very often reached age-related expectations in reading as a result. As the case studies on these pages show, children with global learning difficulties and those with a family history of dyslexia achieve excellent results as a result of the individually tailored, multi-sensory teaching provided in Reading Recovery.

The government's roll-out plans

80 local authorities and around 1300 schools are now involved in *Every Child a Reader*, with plans to extend this gradually over time so that by 2010-11 30,000 children a year will benefit and all local authorities will have some degree of involvement. Government provides schools with around half the cost of a Reading Recovery teacher; they are expected to find the rest (in the order of £10,000) from the school budget, which includes the element provided by the DCSF for 'personalisation'. Funding for the programme is channelled through the local authority, which will publicise the offer to schools along with criteria developed locally to prioritise applications. Initially, schools with the highest numbers of children achieving below Level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 are likely to be targeted, but local authorities are being encouraged to plan ahead so that every child who needs help can eventually be reached – even where there may only be one or two in smaller or more socially advantaged schools. Schools like these will be asked to share a Reading Recovery teacher across two or three schools, or across a cluster.

SENCOs who want their schools to take part will need to make the case to headteachers and governors. It will help if they can present the right arguments. For example, they can show that taking part will raise standards for all children, not just those who come under the SENCO's wing. Schools involved in *Every Child a Reader* made on average a two percentage points gain in overall Key Stage 1 reading results when nationally results were static. Additionally, they can show that with the government's earmarked contribution of half the costs, the school will have to spend around £1,200 of its own budget per child receiving Reading Recovery. This can be compared with the average £2,200 a typical primary school will spend over the course of Key Stage 2 on SEN support for each child entering Year 3 with literacy difficulties, and the average £3500 over the course of Key Stage 3 and 4 spent by

secondary schools on SEN and behaviour support for each of these children. Finally, SENCOs can point out that improved 'Wave 1' whole-class teaching of early literacy (including systematic phonics teaching) is vital but will not of itself eliminate the need for intensive and individual help for some children – as one headteacher says, 'Whatever you do and however well you do it, there are always a few who don't catch on.' It is for these children that the scheme was designed. The aim is to cut the numbers who have to receive long term SEN support, and in the end, it is hoped, reduce at least some of the demands on the hard-pressed SENCO's time.

www.everychildareader.org

Whole school impact

Glenfrome Primary serves an area of high social deprivation in Bristol. It has had Reading Recovery in the school for two years, providing full Reading Recovery programmes for the lowest achieving Year 1 children and for the past year also short 'Booster' sessions from the Reading Recovery teacher for Year 2 children, two afternoons a week. The first cohort of children involved have just had their end of Key Stage 1 assessments. Over 90% reached Level 2C or above in reading.

Margaret Edwards, the headteacher, says 'We have been pleased with the effect of Reading Recovery in all its forms on the performance of the children in the school. We are looking forward to seeing the ripple of good readers as they now go into Key Stage 2.'

Glenfrome's Reading Recovery teacher also manages Phono-Graphix intervention for struggling readers and Better Reading Partners in Key Stage 2. The school has high numbers of children learning English as an additional language; many arrive mid-year. Those going straight into Key Stage 2 have often missed out on quality first teaching in letters and sounds. Glenfrome has had very good results using Better Reading Partners following Phono-Graphix. The Phono-Graphix has given the children the tools to build words and the Better Reading Partners scheme has enhanced their fluency and understanding.