



Every Child a Reader – the success story

The programme

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 so many children's lives.

The initiative funds specialist literacy teachers trained in Reading Recovery to provide intensive one-to-one help to six-year-old children most in need, and support tailored literacy teaching more broadly within their school.

Evaluating impact

Evaluating the impact of Every Child a Reader means answering five key questions

- ◆ Does the programme succeed in its aim of getting children back to at least average literacy levels for their age?
- ◆ Can we be sure that these children would not have learned to read and write just as well without Reading Recovery?
- ◆ Do the effects last, or do they 'wash out' over time?
- ◆ Does the programme have a wider impact in standards within schools, beyond those children directly taught?
- ◆ Does the programme work in challenging circumstances – in schools where it is hardest to raise standards?

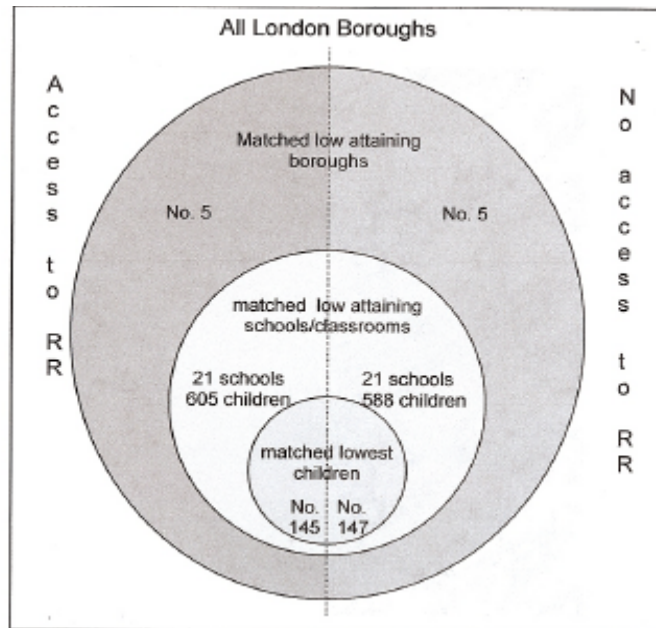
The evaluation

In 2005 the KPMG Foundation commissioned the prestigious University of London Institute of Education to undertake a two-year evaluation of Every Child a Reader. The research looked at the reading and writing progress of the lowest achieving children in 42 schools in ten inner London boroughs with high levels of social deprivation. The results from the first year of the evaluation have been reported in a peer-reviewed journal¹. The results of the second year have recently been published on the Institute of Education website and will be submitted for publication in due course.

**September
2005**

The researchers used standardised tests to assess whole Year 1 classes of six-year-olds in 21 schools involved in Every Child a Reader and 21 matched comparison schools without access to the programme. The eight poorest readers in each class were selected for further assessment.

¹ Burroughs-Lange, S. & Douetil, J. (2007). Literacy Progress of Young Children from Poor Urban settings: A Reading Recovery Comparison Study. *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, Vol 12, No 1.



87 of the 145 children in schools involved in Every Child a Reader then had the benefit of the Reading Recovery special tuition programme and their progress was compared to a group of 147 children of similar ability and backgrounds, who did not receive the same tuition.

July 2006

In July 2006 the researchers retested all the children. Children who had received the tuition had reading ages that matched their chronological age, and were 14 months ahead of the children in the comparison group. The whole-class test results showed that children in Every Child a Reader schools were four months ahead of children in the comparison schools.

July 2007

In July 2007 the researchers re-tested all the children who could be traced – 77 children who had received Reading Recovery and 109 comparison children. They established that the 'lost' children in each group were not significantly different in their initial profiles, as this could have affected the results. They also obtained National Curriculum assessment results for all the original children via the Unique Pupil Number database maintained by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

They found that the children who had received Reading Recovery were still doing as well as their chronological age band. They had an average reading age of 7 years 9 months compared to 6 years 9 months in the comparison group.

Their superior performance was evident on a wide range of tests – word recognition, phonics, reading comprehension, spelling and grammar. These initially very low-attaining children, coming from areas where there may be little home support for language and literacy development, nevertheless achieved comfortably in the average range on tests that demanded high-level language skills.

The children who had Reading Recovery did better than the national average for all children (across the whole ability range) in their end-of-

key-stage National Curriculum assessments. 86% of children who had received Reading Recovery achieved the expected level for their age (Level 2) in Reading, compared to 84% of all children nationally. In Writing, 83% of children who had received Reading Recovery achieved the expected level for their age compared to 80% of all children nationally.

The programme had also helped to narrow the gender gap. In the Reading Recovery group the differences in reading achievement between boys and girls were not significant. In the comparison group the boys were lagging four to five months behind the girls.

Whole-class test results showed that children in sample classrooms with Reading Recovery available to the lowest achieving group now had an average reading age three months above the children in the comparison group schools.

The researchers' conclusions

Does the programme succeed in its aim of getting children back to at least average literacy levels for their age?	✓	"Children who received Reading Recovery, on average gained 20 months reading age. Aged around six and a half, they had now successfully caught up with their average peers."
Can we be sure that these children would not have learned to read and write just as well without Reading Recovery ?	✓	"There is ample evidence in this Year 1 study and Year 2 follow up that without Reading Recovery children with low literacy understanding do not catch up to age appropriate levels".
Do the effects last?	✓	"This follow up study has shown that their progress was sustained at average levels a year or more after having accessed Reading Recovery intervention."
Does the programme have a wider impact in standards within schools, beyond those children directly taught?	✓	"This longitudinal study shows that a trained Reading Recovery teacher can provide accurate identification and detailed diagnosis of early literacy learning; can raise the achievements of the lowest groups of children; and impact on whole class progress."
Does it work in challenging circumstances – in schools where it is hardest to raise standards?	✓	"Even those children in deprived social and economic, inner-city environments who had made no start into literacy after a year or more in school, can catch up if the right help comes early enough. With access to Reading Recovery this is demonstrably an attainable goal."

[Click here to read a summary of the research](#)

[Click here for the full research report](#)