



Primary National Strategy

Learning from *Every Child A Reader*

Layered literacy interventions in Key Stage 1

Every Child A Reader is a three-year initiative, working with 200 schools and 27 local authorities. It aims to demonstrate that, with the right support, almost all children can reach age-appropriate levels of literacy by the end of Key Stage 1.

An important piece of learning for the schools taking part has been the need to use a 'layered' approach to tackle the difficulties that some children have with early reading and writing. This approach aims the appropriate interventions towards each child, with more intensive interventions for those whose needs are greatest and lower-key interventions for those who can achieve age-related expectations with just a little help.

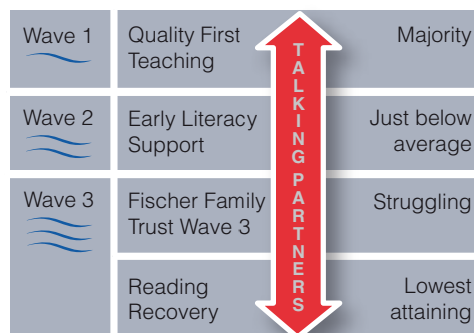
This leaflet describes some of the approaches schools have used and the impact they have had on raising standards for all children.

A layered approach to literacy interventions

Literacy difficulties are common, affecting some children in Year 1 and in Year 2 in every school. There is no one-size-fits-all solution that will meet their different needs. A range of targeted interventions will be required if they are all to achieve the goal of becoming effective and enthusiastic readers and writers by the end of Key Stage 1.

Schools funded through *Every Child A Reader* have been exploring ways of providing these different layers of support. At the heart of their work is a highly trained literacy expert (in this particular initiative, a *Reading Recovery* teacher) who works directly with the very lowest-attaining children. This teacher also manages a range of interventions for children needing less intensive support by:

- assessing children, to target interventions precisely;
- providing support for trained teaching assistants (TAs) delivering the interventions;
- monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions on children's learning and progress.



Leading teachers for intervention, headteachers & senior managers in primary and middle schools

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

Early Literacy Support

is an intervention programme for children in Year 1. It aims to accelerate children to age-appropriate NLS Framework objectives. The programme includes joint training for class teachers and TAs, a screening pack and 60 scripted lessons to be run by a TA. Six children work in a group for 20 minutes each day, usually for twelve weeks in the spring term.

Note: Early Literacy Support is currently under revision in order to address the recommendations of the Rose Report, 2006. A revised version will be published in 2007.

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 TA) works with three children (YR to Y3) for three sessions of 20 minutes per week. Training is provided for class teachers.

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 Year 1 but can also be used in Years 2 and 3. It is delivered by an experienced TA, for example one who is already accustomed to using ELS. There are three days of joint training for a teacher and TA. The intervention involves 20 minutes a day of one-to-one teaching on a rolling programme – a reading day followed by a writing day. The intervention lasts ten weeks.

Reading Recovery

is aimed at children who are about six years old. It enables children who have made little or no progress to catch up with their peers in reading and writing. Children work one-to-one with a specially trained teacher for half an hour a day, every day, for 12 to 20 weeks. Teachers are trained over a period of one year.

Other schools might choose different interventions in their 'layers'. The *FFT Wave 3* intervention could be replaced, for example, by *Reading Intervention*, another well-evidenced TA-led programme developed at the University of York. Some schools use a scheme called *Better Reading Partnership*, in which TAs are trained to read one-to-one 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. In Hackney schools, the layered approach involves the *Reading Recovery* teacher in supervising daily supported reading, in groups, for all children in Year 1.

What research tells us

Intervention should be early...

The layered interventions in *Every Child A Reader* are aimed at children who, after one year of schooling, show they are having difficulty with reading. Evidence suggests that this is the optimum period for intervention: any later, and the effects on the child's self-confidence and attitudes to learning of not being able to read make remediation increasingly difficult. Intervening at age six to address literacy difficulties is also more cost-effective than later intervention. The gap is less wide and less time is needed to bring children up to average attainment.

Some children can benefit from help in groups, but some need one-to-one help.

A number of international research studies have documented the greater impact of one-to-one teaching when compared to group instruction. Groups seem to work best when children have



already made some progress, and with less disadvantaged children. For other children, providing help in groups may look like good value for money, but not if the help is ineffective.

Some children can benefit from help from a trained TA or volunteer, but some may need an expert teacher.

When it comes to use of a trained teacher rather than a teaching assistant, research points to differential effects according to the degree of literacy difficulty that an intervention has to tackle. Interventions like the *Better Reading Partnership*, in which volunteers or teaching assistants work one-to-one with children for ten weeks, work well as long as the children have started reading, but not if they are non-readers. A recent evaluation of the effectiveness of an intervention implemented on a daily basis by trained teaching assistants found that it was successful for the majority of children, but not for all: between a quarter and a third of children showed a decline in reading standard scores over the period of the intervention. Those with severe reading problems at the beginning of the study and children in receipt of free school meals had the poorest response to the programme.

One conclusion from this is that the most efficient and cost-effective approach will be a layered one in which highly trained teachers work with the hardest-to-teach children, but well-trained and supported TAs work one-to-one with children in the next layer of need, and with groups of those children who are just below the level of their peers.

Interventions need to provide personalised work on phonological awareness and phonics.

The majority of children who struggle with early literacy have difficulties with phonological awareness and phonics and will need specific help in understanding and applying the systematic synthetic phonics teaching they have had in class. They will need repeated, supported practice in thinking about the order of sounds in spoken words, and linking those sounds with appropriate letters.

There is also evidence, however, that intervention programmes need to be multi-faceted rather than focusing on only a few components of the reading process if they are to be effective.

The most effective interventions:

- are not used as a substitute for 'quality first teaching', especially the effective early teaching of phonics;
- provide an early accurate assessment of children's phonic knowledge and skills;
- are focused on the appropriate children through careful assessment, regular updating and tracking of progress;
- use assessment information to shape appropriate support;
- are used early, before literacy failure has become embedded;
- aim for children who have fallen behind in reaching the target levels for their age rather than just narrow the gap between them and their peers;
- are time-limited and have clear entry and exit criteria.

Jim Rose, *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading: Final Report, 2006*

Case studies

Grazebrook Primary School

Grazebrook Primary school, 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 Key Stage 1 intervention, involving *Reading Recovery*, *Talking Partners* and *15 minutes a day*, a one-to-one TA-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 group (headteacher, deputy headteacher, Year 1 coordinator, English coordinator, EMA coordinator, SENCO and *Reading Recovery* teacher) decides which interventions are appropriate for each child. A fundamental change for the school has been the way that additional adults are now deployed to provide targeted help ('little, often and strategically' as the headteacher describes it), rather than simply supporting a class, group or child all year round.

All children in Year 1 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, TAs, 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 storybooks. 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 move groups as necessary.

The adult working with each group is given prompts for the session. A session might include a book introduction and then 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 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 levels. Results have been outstanding. Over one school year the Year 1 children have moved from 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, with 82% of children achieving level 2+ in Reading this year and 79% in Writing. This is an increase of around ten percentage points over last year.

Oak Farm Infant School

Oak Farm infant school is not funded by *Every Child A Reader* but has its own well-established layered approach. It is a large four-form entry infant school in the London Borough of Hillingdon. The school's non-class based SENCO is a trained *Reading Recovery* teacher. She is responsible for allocating TA support, tracking pupil progress and evaluating the impact of interventions. She also has responsibility for in-house training and quality assurance of the work of TAs.

The school had run ELS for several years but found that there were always children who did not have sufficient literacy skills to access the programme. The SENCO attended a three-day *FFT Wave 3* training course and introduced a term-by-term provision map. The programme allows older Year 1 children to be identified early, before the gap between them and their peers has had time to widen, while summer-born children can be targeted for interventions later on, allowing them – boys in particular – time to mature and develop their fine motor and language skills before they are given extra literacy support.



The impact on attainment has been marked. Children involved in the 10-week *FFT* intervention, for example, made an average gain of eight *Reading Recovery* 'book levels' compared to the three that represent normal progress over this period. Those who were not benefiting from the programme (two of the nineteen children involved) could quickly be spotted and moved on to *Reading Recovery* programmes. For the remainder, a lighter-touch intervention was sufficient to meet their needs.

	Y1	Y2
Autumn	<i>Quality First Teaching</i> <i>Reading Recovery</i>	(Summer-born children) <i>ELS</i> <i>Reading Recovery</i> <i>FFT Wave 3</i>
Spring	(Older Y1 children) <i>ELS</i> <i>FFT Wave 3</i> <i>Reading Recovery</i>	↓ ↓
Summer	(Younger Y1 children) <i>ELS</i> <i>FFT Wave 3</i> <i>Reading Recovery</i>	

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 TAs, *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 1999, 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 five 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. 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 the headteacher, when describing his extra reading lessons, 'It's changed my bloomin' life.'

Where to find out more

Better Reading Partnership: www.rowa.co.uk

Early Literacy Support: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

Every Child A Reader: www.everychildareader.org

Fischer Family Trust Wave 3 e-mail: hilary@fischertrust.org

Reading Intervention: www.york.ac.uk/res/crl/html/index.html

Reading Recovery: www.readingrecovery.org.uk

Talking Partners e-mail: jan.hilditch@educationbradford.com

This publication is available for download from:

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

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