



A rosy future – thanks to Reading Recovery and *Every Child A Reader*

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 (not her real name), 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. This Bristol school had for some years realised that Reading Recovery works and works fast; this is essential for children who may become disaffected by failure or begin to think that they will never learn and so cease to try.

Molly was identified for a Reading Recovery 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 2 one-letter words, 'l' and 'a'.

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

I₁ a₂ b₃ H₄ I₅ a₆ b₇ o₈ t₉ B₁₀ S₁₁ S₁₂.

'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, Molly 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. In short, 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. After an average of 37 hours on one-to-one teaching, more than eighty four per cent of children who received the programme attain levels expected for their age. Before Reading Recovery these children were expected to continue to struggle and fall further and further behind. Their futures could so easily have been bleak, with constant and continued additional support, as the gap of achievement between them and their peers grew wider year-by-year.

The future for Molly is a rosy one, thanks to Reading Recovery and *Every Child A Reader*. She is shortly to end her series of lessons. She is now a happy and confident member of her class and has the skills to make her school life a success.