

EVERY CHILD A READER NEWS RELEASE

NEW RESEARCH SHOWS STARTLING SUCCESS OF READING INITIATIVE BACKED BY GOVERNMENT, CHARITIES AND BUSINESS

Research published today on more than 500 children shows massive gains in reading ability made by children receiving 'Reading Recovery' support through the Every Child A Reader project.

Results from the first year of the initiative, involving the most difficult to reach children in the country's most disadvantaged areas, showed that children made an average gain of 21 months in reading age in 4 - 5 months of teaching – well over four times the normal rate of progress.

Every Child A Reader is a three year project which aims to help 5,000 six-year-olds with significant literacy difficulties learn to read. It does this by placing specialist literacy teachers trained in Reading Recovery into schools to provide intensive one-to-one support to those children most in need. Every Child A Reader also aims to explore the potential for those teachers to support tailored literacy teaching more broadly within a school, beyond those receiving intensive one-to-one support.

It is estimated that 35,000 children, equivalent to 6% of the age group, leave primary school each year well below the expected literacy level for their age. Every Child A Reader was set up last year to address these children's difficulties. Children benefiting from the Reading Recovery literacy intervention programme receive intensive one-to-one support for 30 minutes each day over a period of four to five months.

The DfES is contributing around half the cost of the £10m project. Other sponsors include the KPMG Foundation, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, SHINE, the Indigo Trust, JJ Charitable Trust, the Mercers' Company and Man Group plc Charitable Trust.

Schools Minister Andrew Adonis said:

"The results are great news for children and parents. They show that with the right teaching and support virtually every child can become a successful reader after starting primary school.

"Getting literacy right in the early years is the key to children's long term educational success. That is why we are implementing the Rose recommendations and why we have renewed our literacy strategy to support faster progression in the early years. Quality first teaching for all children should always be the first priority but for some children additional intervention will be necessary. Reading Recovery is a well-established programme that demonstrates what gains can be made when children are offered intensive tailored support by well-trained teachers. We are helping schools to decide which interventions will best suit the particular needs of their pupils. This is one of a number of programmes available to schools to help those children facing the greatest reading difficulties."

Every Child A Reader's first annual report contains the results of research by a team from the Institute of Education, University of London, who followed 234 of the lowest achieving children aged six in 42 inner London schools between September 2005 and July 2006. They compared the progress in reading of 87 children who had received the Reading Recovery programme with 147 children with comparable reading difficulties who had not.

The two groups started at very similar levels (with an average reading age of 4 years and 11 months and 4 years and 10 months respectively, according to British Ability Scales). By the

end of the period the Reading Recovery group had caught up with their classmates and had an average reading age of 6 years and 7 months. The rest were 14 months behind them with an average reading age of 5 years and 5 months. In the academic year the Reading Recovery group had gained 20 months whereas the control group had improved their reading skills by only 7 months and had fallen further behind their peers.

Dr. Sue Burroughs-Lange, leader of the research team at the Institute of Education, said: "The progress made by children who received Reading Recovery was startling in comparison to the other group and statistical tests show it to be highly significant. The research also showed that for these low achieving children the intensive reading tuition narrowed the gender gap - at the end of the year although girls in schools without Reading Recovery had pulled 3 months ahead of boys, in schools with Reading Recovery both girls and boys were doing equally well, making on average 20 months progress in the year."

The annual report also covered the results of Reading Recovery programmes among 373 children nationally – in 61 schools in Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Middlesbrough and Sheffield as well as London. The children moved on average from a reading age of 4 years 10 months to a reading age of 6 years 7 months. There was also evidence that standards in many cases rose for all children in schools supported through Every Child A Reader, not just those directly taught, because of the presence of a skilled literacy expert in the school.

Jean Gross, Director of Every Child A Reader, said: "Over three quarters of the children involved – the hardest to teach in the schools where there is the biggest challenge to raise standards – have been returned to average or above literacy levels for their age after around 38 hours of one-to-one teaching. The majority of these children were poor, with 58% of them on free school meals as compared to a national average of 17%. Two thirds were boys. 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."

She added: "Our research shows that it is not the type of reading scheme that is important so much as teaching that is exactly matched to what each child knows and needs to know, and takes place every single day for a short period. The teachers are very highly trained and that matters too."

Notes for Editors

***Every Child A Reader : the results of the first year* is published by Every Child A Reader. It contains case histories of individual children who have benefited from the Reading Recovery Scheme. Copies of the report are available from www.everychildareader.org**

***Evaluation of Reading Recovery in London schools: Every Child A Reader 2005-2006* is published by the Institute of Education, University of London and available at <http://ioewebsserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid=9263>**

Further information from:

**Tim Devlin, Press Officer, ECAR, on 01205 290817 or 07939 544 487
Helen Green, Press Officer, Institute of Education, on 020 7612 6459**