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Reading Recovery™ Annual Report for the United Kingdom and Ireland: 2007-8

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Headlines

- *The year 2007-08 saw an almost 60% increase in size of the Reading Recovery implementation in England and a sustained, though smaller increase in Ireland.*

- *Literacy levels at entry were slightly lower than in previous years.*

- *Almost 82%, or sixteen out of every 20 children were lifted from being non readers to age appropriate levels of literacy.*

- *This was achieved this in same time scale, less than 40 hours of teaching, and children made the same leap in progress as in previous years, taking children from being non-readers and writers to age appropriate levels of literacy.*

- *Attainment gaps narrowed between boys and girls; poor children and their more affluent peers, and most ethnic minority groups and the majority.*

- *Half the cohort of teachers reported were in training, and many Teacher Leaders were new in the field, which may have had an effect in outcomes.*

Evaluation questions

1. How many children were involved in Reading Recovery and which children were they?
2. What were the programme outcomes for Reading Recovery children?
3. What were the literacy levels of children in the Reading Recovery programme?
4. What progress did children make after Reading Recovery?
5. Where were Reading Recovery children placed in a register of Special Educational Need at the beginning of their programme, and following their programme?
6. What were the results of National Assessments for Reading Recovery children?
7. What was the efficiency of the Reading Recovery implementation?

1: How many children were involved in Reading Recovery and which children were they?

More than seven and a half thousand children were served by Reading Recovery in 2007-08 taught by more than a thousand teachers. This was almost half as many children again as in 2007. Two thirds of the cohort were in England, and one in five in the Republic of Ireland.

The rapid expansion in England is evident in the very high proportion of the teacher cohort who were in training during the year, almost half. The number of children served in England had increased by more than 44% compared with 2007, due to the expansion of the funded Every Child a Reader (ECaR) project. The Republic of Ireland saw an even larger proportional increase in the number of children served, by 53% over 2006-07, continuing the rapid expansion there. In Northern Ireland six hundred children were served, more than had been expected, although less than one fifth the size of the cohort three years ago, as funding difficulties continue. Wales also experienced funding difficulties but managed to serve two hundred children, a one third decline on the previous year. In Scotland the implementation ceased due to loss of Teacher Leaders.
Two out of three children (64%) identified for Reading Recovery were in the first year of formal schooling (after reception/foundation stage) and of those in their second year, around half had started their series of lessons in the previous year.

Boys continue to be over represented among the lowest attaining children identified for Reading Recovery (59% of the cohort) as are poor children and bilingual learners. More than half of the cohort (51%) came from economically disadvantaged homes, a very high proportion compared with the distribution of such children in the general population (18%). Just over one in five (22%) were learning English as an additional language a further small increase on the previous year. The proportion of the cohort from ethnic minority backgrounds increased from 25% to 30%.

Although the proportion of children at particularly high risk of educational difficulties (e.g. looked after children) remained small overall at 6%, there were almost 500 children in all, compared with fewer than 350 in the previous year.

2: What were the programme outcomes for Reading Recovery children?

Children achieved the goals of the programme, of progressing from being the lowest attaining children to age appropriate levels of literacy, in a relatively short time, just under 20 weeks or 78 lessons, representing on average less than 40 hours of teaching.

Children who did not achieve the goals of the programme were given around two weeks longer but that constituted only an average of four more lessons. These children missed substantially more lessons, which could be a contributing factor to them not achieving accelerated progress. It is a matter of concern if any child is referred after a very short series of lessons but this is rare, only 18 children were referred after fewer than 10 weeks.

Almost seventeen out of every twenty children who completed Reading Recovery achieved accelerated learning in 2007-8, reaching independent levels of literacy within the required time. Given that these were the lowest attaining children, with high levels of disadvantage, and that criteria for success in Reading Recovery are very demanding (see section 3) this is a tremendous achievement and testament to the efforts of both teachers and children. This is consistent with the high outcomes achieved since the introduction of

Reading Recovery and first annual monitoring in 1993-94, although slightly lower than in 2006 and 2007. It is likely that the slight drop is accounted for by the high proportion of teachers in the cohort who were in training during the year.

The achievement gap that was evident in the disproportionate numbers of boys and the over-representation of poor children among the least able, had been considerably narrowed at the end of their Reading Recovery programme. The gap for poor children was almost closed, with 81% attaining age appropriate levels of literacy, alongside 82% of their more advantaged peers. Although girls still did slightly better than boys, nevertheless four out of five boys were successful. Children whose first language was not English were very slightly more successful than their English first language peers (83% and 81% discontinued respectively).

Overall, children from ethnic minority groups achieved the same level of success as those from any white background, with 82% achieving age appropriate levels of literacy. There was variation between ethnic groups, but even those who struggled most, such as the mixed race white and black Caribbean children, saw more than four out of five achieving age appropriate literacy levels.

Forty eight of the 59 looked after children (81%) who had completed their series of lessons by the end of the year achieved accelerated learning, as did 51 out of 57 asylum seeker or refugee children (90%). Traveller children were just as likely to complete the programme within the year as settled children and three out of four achieved accelerated progress.

The timing of the intervention between the first and second years of formal schooling had little effect on outcome, as did the interruption caused by the summer break for programmes which began in the summer term and were carried across into the new school year.

3: What were the literacy levels of children in the Reading Recovery programme?

Children who were identified for Reading Recovery had made very little progress in literacy prior to the intervention compared to normal readers and writers of their age. On the British Abilities Scales measure of reading age they averaged 4 years 10 months, the lowest possible reading age score on that measure, effectively non-readers after one or even two full years of formal literacy teaching.

Entry levels of children identified for Reading Recovery may provide some insight into the effects of changes in classroom literacy programmes for the lowest attaining. Since 1997 an increased emphasis on phonics based teaching in primary schools, especially in England, has been accompanied by children presenting with higher scores on a range of assessments, although that increase levelled off in 2008.
However, these children's text reading levels have remained low, and in 2007-08 more than two in five (42%) of the children entering Reading Recovery were unable to read any

published text at all. This was a higher proportion of the cohort than in 2007 (37%), possibly reflecting the targeting of ECaR in England to the lowest attaining 5% of children, and the expansion in Ireland to children in poverty. A further 42% were only able to read a very predictable, repetitive Level 1 or 2 text.

Once children started Reading Recovery, they made considerable progress on all measures with those children who achieved accelerated progress (82% of completed programmes) achieving an average reading age of six years ten months. This represented a gain of 24 months during the four or five months of their series of lessons, four times the normal rate of progress. They gained on average 16 text levels.

Children who did not make accelerated progress (18% of completed programmes) nevertheless made progress, achieving an average reading age of five years seven months, a gain of nine months, and eight text levels, at which level they could no longer be considered non-readers.

4: What progress did children make after Reading Recovery?

In the six months following the end of their series of lessons, without further individual teaching, children who had achieved the goals of Reading Recovery (82% of completed programmes) not only maintained the gains they had made during their series of lessons, but continued to make steady progress, gaining six months in reading age in six months. These were children who, prior to Reading Recovery, had made very little progress in literacy but the evidence suggests that they had acquired independent strategies for learning more about reading and writing.

Children who had not achieved the accelerated progress which is the goal of the intervention also made further progress in the six months following the end of their individual lessons, and indeed continued to make progress at the same rate as children without literacy problems. So, although still behind their peers, the evidence suggests that these children had also begun to develop strategies for independent literacy learning.

5: Where were Reading Recovery children placed in a register of Special Educational Need at the beginning of their programme, and following their programme?

Following Reading Recovery almost 1200 children, or 23% of the cohort, who had been identified as having SEN could be removed from the register of special educational needs. This was a substantial increase on the previous year (800). The numbers of children at each level of SEN was reduced, except that 130 children who had not made expected progress in Reading Recovery could be more clearly identified as requiring formal assessment at an early stage in their learning. This suggests that a successful Reading Recovery implementation can reduce substantially the numbers of children registered as having Special Educational Needs, and efficiently identify those in need of specialist support.

6: What were the results of National Assessments for Reading Recovery children?

More than two out of three children who received Reading Recovery attained level 2 or above in National Assessments for reading (68%). This included children who did not achieve the goals of the programme, and those who received RR in Y2 and were still part way through their series of RR lessons when National Assessments took place. More than half (56%) attained Level 2 or above in writing, somewhat fewer than in the previous year (69%) reflecting a national trend.
Children who achieved the goals of Reading Recovery had an even greater likelihood of success in National Assessments, with 17 out of 20 (81%) reaching level 2 or above in reading and 11 out of 20 (68%) in writing.

7: What was the efficiency of the Reading Recovery implementation?

Four out of five (41%) of teachers in the cohort were in training during the data year 2007-08 and were still learning how to make Reading Recovery work with the children featured in this report. This compares with one in three in 2007 and one in five in 2006. Conversely one in five teachers (21%) had been teaching in Reading Recovery for some considerable time, compared with one in four in 2007 and one in three in 2006. This reflects regional increases in opportunities for training, driven by expansion in the Republic of Ireland and by ECaR in England, and represents a shift towards a less experienced teacher cohort.

As might be expected, experienced teachers were able to solve the problems of a higher proportion of children, compared with those learning how to teach in Reading Recovery for the first time and they were able to do so more quickly. In 2007-08 there was an increased proportion of new and relatively inexperienced Teachers in the cohort, and also of new and relatively inexperienced Teacher Leaders, a factor which may have contributed to the lower rate of programmes reaching discontinuing levels in 2008 compared with previous years. Teachers in training were able to safeguard their teaching time a little more than experienced teachers, missing on average six fewer lessons, potentially saving the equivalent of one week on each child's programme.

Teachers' other duties impacted upon their ability to provide daily lessons. Those whose only responsibility was RR, often part time teachers, provided the most consistent daily lessons. Those with senior posts, including Head teachers/Principals and their Deputies (listed Other below), were the most likely to be drawn away from daily teaching.
Those who combined class teaching and RR also suffered frequent interruptions, potentially adding four weeks to each child's programme.

Introduction

Reading Recovery™ is a short-term intervention for children who have the lowest achievement in literacy learning in their first years at school. Children are taught individually by a specially trained teacher for 30 minutes each day for 12-20 weeks. The goal is for children to develop effective strategies for reading and writing in order to work within an average range of classroom performance.

Proficient readers and writers develop early. There is strong evidence that school failure can very quickly lead to low self-esteem, diminished confidence, school dropout, and other negative outcomes. It is appropriate to direct educational policy and funding to the prevention of reading failure and these long term negative effects. Reading Recovery has a strong track record of preventing literacy failure for many children through early intervention.

The key to the successful implementation of Reading Recovery is professional learning. Three levels of professional staffing provide a stable training structure: university based Trainers who train and support Teacher leaders; local level Teacher Leaders working at LEA/ELB district level, who train and support teachers; and school-based teachers who work with the hardest-to-teach children.

The initial Reading Recovery teacher training course is part-time, for one academic year, during which the teacher works with low attaining children in their school. Teachers become sensitive observers of children's reading and writing behaviours and develop skill in making moment-by-moment analyses that inform teaching decisions.

Following the initial year of training, teachers continue to participate in ongoing professional development sessions. They continue to teach for their colleagues and to discuss their professional decision making. Continuing professional development sessions provide collaborative opportunities for teachers to remain responsive to individual children, to question the effectiveness of their practice, to get help from peers on particularly hard-to-teach children, and to consider how new knowledge and understanding might influence their practice.

Reading Recovery is not an isolated phenomenon in schools. It has a carefully designed plan for implementation into existing systems. The success of any intervention such as Reading Recovery is affected by the quality of the decisions made about implementation.

Replication studies document outcomes for all children served in Reading Recovery. Consistent outcomes have been shown for children across the UK and Republic of Ireland. A large majority of children with completed programmes have been successful in reaching age appropriate levels of literacy performance. There is also evidence that the effects of Reading Recovery are long lasting.

This report presents outcomes of the implementation of Reading Recovery in The UK and Ireland from September 2007 to June 2008 (Ireland) or July 2008 (elsewhere). The report accounts for all children served by Reading Recovery within the site during the 2007-8 school year. The information was collected as a part of the Reading Recovery National Network Annual Monitoring procedure. Further information about Reading Recovery is available from the Reading Recovery National Coordination team at www.readingrecovery.org.uk or at readrec@ioe.ac.uk.

1: How many children were involved in Reading Recovery and which children were they?

More than seven and a half thousand children were served by Reading Recovery in 2007-08 (Table 1.1) taught by more than a thousand teachers. This was almost half as many children again as in 2007. Two thirds of the cohort were in England, and one in five in the Republic of Ireland.

The rapid expansion in England is evident in the very high proportion of the teacher cohort who were in training during the year, almost half. The number of children served in England had increased by more than 44% compared with 2007, due to the expansion of the funded Every Child a Reader (ECaR) project (Table 1.2). The Republic of Ireland saw an even larger proportional increase in the number of children served, by 53% over 2006-07, continuing the rapid expansion there. In Northern Ireland six hundred children were served, more than had been expected, although less than one fifth the size of the cohort three years ago, as funding difficulties continue. Wales also experienced funding difficulties but managed to serve two hundred children, a one third decline on the previous year. In Scotland the implementation ceased due to loss of Teacher Leaders.

Table 1.1 Size of the Reading Recovery implementation across the regions of the UK and Ireland in 2007-8.

	Children served	All teachers	Teachers in training	% of teachers in training
Entire implementation	7738	1022	410	40%
England	5276	661	317	48%
Northern Ireland	625	102	0	0%
Republic of Ireland	1628	237	90	38%
Scotland				
Wales	202	22	2	

Table 1.2 Number of children served by Reading Recovery across the regions of the UK and Ireland 2004-5 to 2007-8.

	2007-08	2006-7	2005-06	2004-05
Entire implementation	7738	5341	4767	5372
England	5276	2893	1796	1719
Northern Ireland	625	1023	1603	2707
Republic of Ireland	1628	1062	784	512
Scotland		88	333	145
Wales	202	275	251	289

Year group

Children are normally identified and selected for Reading Recovery between the ages of five years nine months and six years three months, after a full year of formal tuition at school. Local conditions, e.g. admission policies or national assessments, may influence

the targeting of resources towards the first or second year (after reception) and account is taken of date of birth to ensure that summer born children are not excluded.

Gender
Children are selected for Reading Recovery based on literacy levels. Nationally, a slightly higher proportion is selected of boys than girls for Reading Recovery. This suggests that factors which affect boys' literacy, causing them to be more likely to get into difficulties, emerge early and continue to exist in spite of improvements in literacy teaching in schools.

Ethnicity
Children selected for Reading Recovery are the lowest attaining in their year group. Concerns have been expressed nationally about underachievement of children in some ethnic groups and how to address them. Where possible data on children's ethnicity, based on the UK national census, has been gathered to inform these concerns.

First language
Approximately 5% of the entire primary school population speaks English as an additional language. Among Reading Recovery children this statistic varies considerably from place to place and the extent of their control of English language is also very variable.

Free school meals
Although a crude measure, entitlement to free school meals offers an indicator of economic deprivation. Research has shown persistent links between economic deprivation and literacy difficulties. In the general population, approximately 18% of children are entitled to free school meals.

Special Cohort Group
Certain groups of children have been shown to be vulnerable to academic underachievement, including children of travellers, children of asylum seekers or refugees, and 'looked after' children (or children in the care of the local authorities)

Two out of three children (64%) identified for Reading Recovery were in the first year of formal schooling (after reception/foundation stage) and of those in their second year, around half had started their series of lessons in the previous year (Table 1.3).
Boys continue to be over represented among the lowest attaining children identified for Reading Recovery (59% of the cohort) as are poor children and bilingual learners. More than half of the cohort (51%) came from economically disadvantaged homes, a very high proportion compared with the distribution of such children in the general population (18%). Just over one in five (22%) were learning English as an additional language a further small increase on the previous year. The proportion of the cohort from ethnic minority backgrounds increased from 25% to 30%.
Although the proportion of children at particularly high risk of educational difficulties (e.g. looked after children) remained small overall at 6%, there were almost 500 children in all, compared with fewer than 350 in the previous year.

Table 1.3. Characteristics of children participating in Reading Recovery at entry to the programme: By programme completion, The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Description	All Programmes		Completed Programmes	
	number	percent	number	percent
Year Group				
Age 5-6	4965	64.2	2646	51.5
Age 6-7	2687	34.7	2418	47.1
Age 7-8	83	1.1	69	1.3
Programme Started				
This year	6406	82.8	3941	76.8
Last year	1263	16.3	1155	22.5
Not known	69	0.9	37	0.7
Gender				
Boys	4529	58.5	2986	58.2
Girls	3206	41.4	2146	41.8
Not known	3	0	1	0
Ethnicity				
Any Other White background	5452	70.5	3653	71.2
White and Black Caribbean	142	1.8	86	1.7
White and Black African	51	0.7	33	0.6
White and Asian	32	0.4	23	0.4
Any Other Mixed background	114	1.5	66	1.3
Indian	130	1.7	78	1.5
Pakistani	383	4.9	242	4.7
Bangladeshi	319	4.1	206	4
Any Other Asian background	106	1.4	62	1.2
Caribbean	201	2.6	138	2.7
African	369	4.8	253	4.9
Any Other Black background	89	1.2	58	1.1
Chinese	17	0.2	13	0.3
Other	198	2.6	123	2.4
Not Appropriate / Unknown	135	1.7	99	1.9
First Language				
English	6017	77.8	4029	78.5
Not English	1718	22.2	1101	21.4
Not known	3	0	3	0.1
Free School Meals				
Entitled	3964	51.2	2600	50.7
Not Entitled	3435	44.4	2280	44.4
Not Appropriate / Unknown	339	4.4	253	4.9
Special Cohort Group				
No	7110	91.9	4712	91.8
'Looked after' child	99	1.3	59	1.1
Traveller child	156	2	102	2
Asylum seeker or refugee child	81	1	57	1.1
Other special group	155	2	100	1.9
Not Appropriate / Unknown	137	1.8	103	2

NOTE: “All Programmes” includes every child served by Reading Recovery in 2007-8. “Completed Programmes” are only those children whose programmes were actually completed during 2007-8.
SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

2: What were the programme outcomes for Reading Recovery children?

Length of programmes

Reading Recovery is a short term intervention, and there is an imperative for teachers to work briskly. There is no prescribed length to children's programmes; teachers tend to take a little longer to achieve their goals during the year of training and children who start with very little in place may take longer to get under way.

Children achieved the goals of the programme, of progressing from being the lowest attaining children to age appropriate levels of literacy, in a relatively short time, just under 20 weeks or 78 lessons, representing on average less than 40 hours of teaching.

Children who did not achieve the goals of the programme were given around two weeks longer but that constituted only an average of four more lessons. These children missed substantially more lessons, which could be a contributing factor to them not achieving accelerated progress.

It is a matter of concern if any child is referred after a very short series of lessons but this is rare, only 18 children were referred after fewer than 10 weeks.

Table 2.1. Weeks and lessons of children completing Reading Recovery programmes: By programme outcome, The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Outcome/Time	Total pupils	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Accelerated progress (discontinued)					
Weeks	4124	19.5	5.5	5	35
Lessons	4124	77.5	22.4	20	175
Lost lessons	4120	19.9	13.8	-17	104
Progress (referred)					
Weeks	929	21.7	5.5	5	35
Lessons	931	83.4	23.7	20	172
Lost lessons	929	25.2	16.2	-22	133

NOTE: "Lost lessons" is the difference between the ideal number of lessons (total weeks × 5 lessons per week) and the actual number of lessons.
NOTE: This table excludes children taught by Teacher Leaders
SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

Outcomes

All children who receive Reading Recovery are accounted for in this report. There were five possible outcomes for children who received Reading Recovery.

1. Accelerated Progress (Discontinued): These children have made sufficient progress in literacy learning, within the time available, to catch up with the average band for their class, and have been judged to be likely to continue learning at the same rate as their peers, without the need for further special support.
2. Progress (Referred): The children have made progress, but have not reached the average band in literacy and will continue to need additional support.
3. Ongoing: These children started the programme late in the school year, and have not yet completed it, but will do so in the new school year.
4. Left: These children left the school part way through their programme.
5. Incomplete: These children were part way through their series of lessons when Reading Recovery ceased to be offered in the school, e.g. because the Reading Recovery teacher left the school.

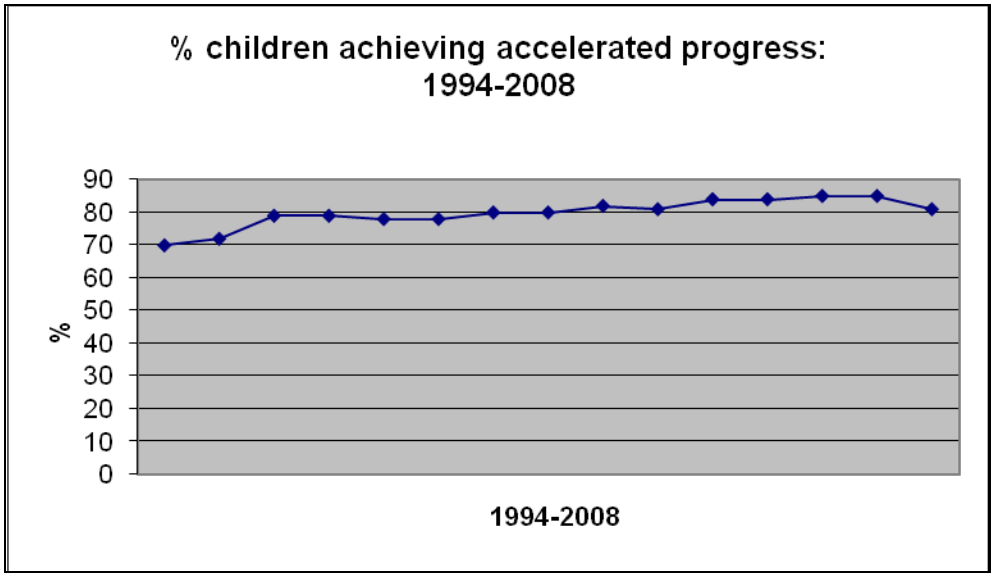
Almost seventeen out of every twenty children who completed Reading Recovery achieved accelerated learning in 2007-8, reaching independent levels of literacy within the required time (Table 2.2). Given that these were the lowest attaining children, with high levels of disadvantage, and that criteria for success in Reading Recovery are very demanding (see section 3) this is a tremendous achievement and testament to the efforts of both teachers and children. This is consistent with the high outcomes achieved since the introduction of Reading Recovery and first annual monitoring in 1993-94 (Fig 1), although slightly lower than in 2006 and 2007(Fig 1). It is likely that the slight drop is accounted for by the high proportion of teachers in the cohort who were in training during the year.

Table 2.2. Programme outcomes for children receiving Reading Recovery: by programme completion, The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Outcome	All Programmes		Completed Programmes	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Accelerated progress (discontinued)	4181	54	4181	81.5
Progress (referred)	952	12.3	952	18.5
Ongoing	2139	27.6		
Incomplete	248	3.2		
Left	204	2.6		
Not known	14	0.2		

NOTE: “All Programmes” includes every child entering Reading Recovery in 2007-8. “Completed Programmes” are only those children whose programmes were actually completed during 2007-8.
SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

Fig 1. Proportion of children with completed programmes achieving accelerated progress, since national monitoring began, UK and Republic of Ireland, 1994 - 2007.



The achievement gap that was evident in the disproportionate numbers of boys and the over-representation of poor children among the least able, had been considerably narrowed at the end of their Reading Recovery programme (Table 2.3). The gap for poor children was almost closed, with 81% attaining age appropriate levels of literacy, alongside 82% of their more advantaged peers. Although girls still did slightly better than boys, nevertheless four out of five boys were successful. Children whose first language was not English were very slightly more successful than their English first language peers (83% and 81% discontinued respectively).

Overall, children from ethnic minority groups achieved the same level of success as those from any white background, with 82% achieving age appropriate levels of literacy. There was variation between ethnic groups, but even those who struggled most, such as the mixed race white and black Caribbean children, saw more than four out of five achieving age appropriate literacy levels.

Forty eight of the 59 looked after children (81%) who had completed their series of lessons by the end of the year achieved accelerated learning, as did 51 out of 57 asylum seeker or refugee children (90%). Traveller children were just as likely to complete the programme within the year as settled children and three out of four achieved accelerated progress.

The timing of the intervention between the first and second years of formal schooling had little effect on outcome, as did the interruption caused by the summer break for programmes which began in the summer term and were carried across into the new school year.

Disaggregated outcomes

Table 2.3. Characteristics of children completing Reading Recovery programmes: By programme outcome, The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Characteristic	Accelerated Progress (Discontinued)		Made Progress (Referred)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Year Group				
Age 5-6	2149	81.2	497	18.8
Age 6-7	1977	81.8	441	18.2
Age 7-8	55	79.7	14	20.3
Programme Started				
This year	3258	82.7	683	17.3
Last year	899	77.8	256	22.2
Not known	24	64.9	13	35.1
Gender				
Boys	2363	79.1	623	20.9
Girls	1818	84.7	328	15.3
Not known	0	0	1	100
Ethnicity				
Any Other White background	2971	81.3	682	18.7
White and Black Caribbean	63	73.3	23	26.7
White and Black African	28	84.8	5	15.2
White and Asian	19	82.6	4	17.4
Any Other Mixed background	56	84.8	10	15.2
Indian	67	85.9	11	14.1
Pakistani	190	78.5	52	21.5
Bangladeshi	171	83	35	17
Any Other Asian background	54	87.1	8	12.9
Caribbean	114	82.6	24	17.4
African	218	86.2	35	13.8
Any Other Black background	48	82.8	10	17.2
Chinese	12	92.3	1	7.7
Other	94	76.4	29	23.6
Not Appropriate / Unknown	76	76.8	23	23.2
First Language				
English	3265	81	764	19
Not English	913	82.9	188	17.1
Not known	3	100	0	0
Free School Meals				
Entitled	2289	81	538	19
Not Entitled	1870	82	410	18
Not Appropriate / Unknown	22	84.6	4	15.4
Special Cohort Group				
No	3867	82.1	845	17.9
'Looked after' child	48	81.4	11	18.6
Traveller child	70	68.6	32	31.4
Asylum seeker or refugee child	51	89.5	6	10.5
Other special group	61	61	39	39
Not Appropriate / Unknown	84	81.6	19	18.4

SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

3: What were the literacy levels of children in the Reading Recovery programme?

Children selected for Reading Recovery are the lowest achieving in their class on six measures of early literacy which together comprise the Observation Survey (Clay, 2002). These measures are Book Level (captured by running record of text reading), Letter Identification, Concepts about Print, Word Reading Test, Writing Vocabulary and Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words. In addition, the British Abilities Scale Word Reading assessment is administered to provide an external standardised assessment. The programme is discontinued when children are judged to have an efficient reading and writing process in place and to be operating within the average band for their class and age. Children who do not achieve the accelerated progress required for the programme to be discontinued are referred back to the school for longer-term support.

Children who were identified for Reading Recovery had made very little progress in literacy prior to the intervention (Table 3.1) compared to normal readers and writers of their age. On the British Abilities Scales measure of reading age they averaged 4 years 10 months, the lowest possible reading age score on that measure, effectively non-readers after one or even two full years of formal literacy teaching.

Average scores at entry and exit

Table 3.1. Scores on *Observation Survey* tasks of children with completed Reading Recovery programmes: At entry to and exit from the programme, The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

		Book Level		Letter Identification		Concepts about Print		Word Test		Writing Vocabulary		HRSIW		BAS Reading Age
Assessment Point	Total Pupils	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean
Entry	5127	1.3	2	39.8	12.8	11.3	4.1	6.5	5.7	9.9	9.4	17.8	10.4	4:10
At discontinuing (accelerated progress)	4171	17.4	2.6	52.4	5.3	20	2.9	21.4	2.7	45.6	16.6	34.9	3.9	6:10
At referral (progress)	936	9.3	3.9	47.6	8.6	16.2	3.8	14.9	5.9	25	14.3	28.1	8.4	5:7
All completed programmes	5107	15.9	4.3	51.5	6.3	19.3	3.4	20.2	4.3	41.9	18.1	33.6	5.6	6:7

NOTE: "HRSIW" is the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words task.
SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

Entry levels of children identified for Reading Recovery may provide some insight into the effects of changes in classroom literacy programmes for the lowest attaining. Since 1997 an increased emphasis on phonics based teaching in primary schools, especially in England, has been accompanied by children presenting with higher scores on a range of assessments (see Table 3.2), although that increase levelled off in 2008.

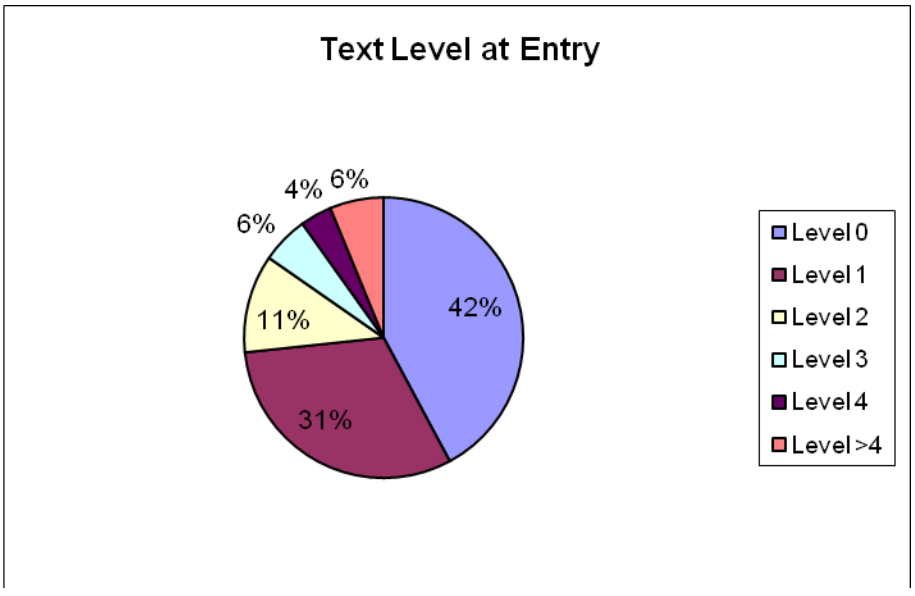
Table 3.2 Changes in average attainment in literacy prior to Reading Recovery, in sample years across the implementation.

year	number	Book level (0 - 26)		Letter Ident. (0 - 54)		CAP (0 - 24)		Word test (0 - 15)		Writing Vocab. (no max)		Hearing & Recording Sounds (0 - 37)	
		avg	*S D*	avg	*S D*	avg	*S D*	avg	*S D*	avg	*S D*	avg	*S D*
1994	4694	1.2	*1.6*	29	*15.6*	10.1	*3.7*	1.9	*2.4**	5.5	*5.4*	9.5	*8.5*
1997	5303	1.4	*1.8*	34.8	*14.4*	11.4	*3.7*	3.6	*3.1†*	8.2	*7.6*	13.0	*9.5*
2000	4989	1.5	*2*	38.4	*13.2*	12.5	*3.7*	4.8	*3.5‡*	10.3	*9.1*	15.5	*9.9*
2003	5008	1.6	*2.1*	40.3	*12.3*	12.7	*3.7*	5.3	*3.6‡*	11.7	*10*	17.5	*10.2*
2007	3671	1.5	*2.1*	40.2	*13.2*	11.9	*4*	7	*5.9‡*	10.8	*10.2*	17.9	*10.3*
2008	5127	1.3	*2*	39.8	*12.8*	11.3	*4.1*	6.5	*5.7‡*	9.9	*9.4*	17.8	*10.4*

Using Clay (1993, 2002) An Observation Survey Of Early Literacy Achievement
* Using Clay word reading
† Using Canberra word reading
‡ Using Duncan word reading

However, these children's text reading levels have remained low, and in 2007-08 more than two in five (42%) of the children entering Reading Recovery were unable to read any published text at all (see Fig 2). This was a higher proportion of the cohort than in 2007 (37%), possibly reflecting the targeting of ECaR in England to the lowest attaining 5% of children, and the expansion in Ireland to children in poverty. A further 42% were only able to read a very predictable, repetitive Level 1 or 2 text (see Appendix 1 for an example of a level 1 text).

Fig 2. Distribution by text reading level at entry to Reading Recovery, UK and Republic of Ireland, 2007-08



Once children started Reading Recovery, they made considerable progress on all measures (Table 3.1) with those children who achieved accelerated progress (82% of completed programmes) achieving an average reading age of six years ten months. This

represented a gain of 24 months during the four or five months of their series of lessons, four times the normal rate of progress. They gained on average 16 text levels (see Appendix 1 for an example of a level 17 text).

Children who did not make accelerated progress (18% of completed programmes) nevertheless made progress, achieving an average reading age of five years seven months, a gain of nine months, and eight text levels (see Appendix A), at which level they could no longer be considered non-readers.

4: What progress did children make after Reading Recovery?

After the completion of their programme, children are carefully monitored as they adjust to the withdrawal of daily intensive support. Some children may find their progress temporarily checked as they make this adjustment.

Accelerated progress (discontinued)

Table 4.1. Follow-up scores on *Observation Survey* tasks of children with discontinued Reading Recovery programmes: The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Assessment	Total	Book Level		Writing Vocabulary		BAS Reading Age
Point	Pupils	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean
At discontinuing	4137	17.4	2.6	45.7	16.7	6:10
3 month follow up	1981	19.3	3.2	52.5	19.3	7:1
6 month follow up	647	20.9	3.5	58.2	20.5	7:4

SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

In the six months following the end of their series of lessons, without further individual teaching, children who had achieved the goals of Reading Recovery (82% of completed programmes) not only maintained the gains they had made during their series of lessons, but continued to make steady progress, gaining six months in reading age in six months (Table 4.1). These were children who, prior to Reading Recovery, had made very little progress in literacy but the evidence suggests that they had acquired independent strategies for learning more about reading and writing.

Progress (referred)

Table 4.2. Follow-up scores on *Observation Survey* tasks of children referred after Reading Recovery programmes: The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Assessment	Total	Book Level		Writing Vocabulary		BAS Reading Age
Point	Pupils	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean
At referral	1274	9.2	3.9	24.9	14.3	5:7
3 month follow up	643	9.1	4.5	28.7	16.4	5:10
6 month follow up	419	10.7	5.5	33.9	18.6	6:1

SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

Children who had not achieved the accelerated progress which is the goal of the intervention also made further progress in the six months following the end of their individual lessons, and indeed continued to make progress at the same rate as children without literacy problems (Table 4.2). So, although still behind their peers, the evidence suggests that these children had also begun to develop strategies for independent literacy learning.

5: Where were Reading Recovery children placed in a register of Special Educational Need at the beginning of their programme, and following their programme?

Children who are struggling to learn literacy may be allocated to registers of Special Educational Need, in a continuum according to the gravity of their need. The specific wording of the register may vary from site to site, so children were recorded as:

- Not on the SEN Register
- At the lowest level on the SEN register
- At mid level on the SEN register.
- Recommended for formal assessment.

The child's placement on a continuum of Special Educational Need was recorded at the beginning of the child's Reading Recovery programme, and again following the child's Reading Recovery programme, in order to determine whether the level of need had changed.

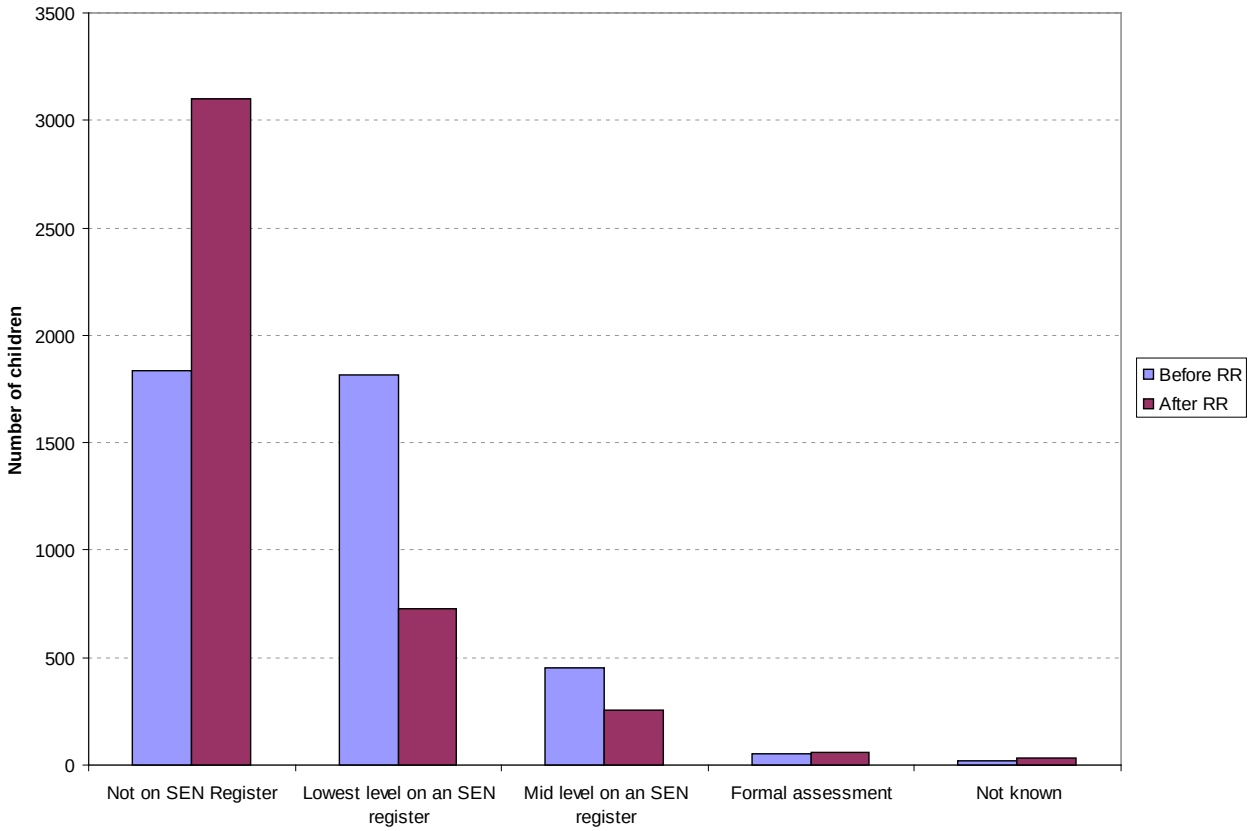
Following Reading Recovery almost 1200 children, or 23% of the cohort, who had been identified as having SEN could be removed from the register of special educational needs (Table 5.1). This was a substantial increase on the previous year (800). The numbers of children at each level of SEN was reduced, except that 130 children who had not made expected progress in Reading Recovery could be more clearly identified as requiring formal assessment at an early stage in their learning. This suggests that a successful Reading Recovery implementation can reduce substantially the numbers of children registered as having Special Educational Needs, and efficiently identify those in need of specialist support (Fig 5.1) .

Table 5.1. Statement of Special Educational Need of children with completed Reading Recovery programmes: The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Assessment	Total	Not on SEN Register		Lowest level on an SEN register		Mid level on an SEN register		Recommended for formal assessment		Not Known	
Point	Pupils	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Programmes											
Before RR	5133	2045	39.8	2256	44	720	14	85	1.7	27	0.5
After RR	5133	3236	63	1044	20.3	587	11.4	215	4.2	51	1
Accelerated Progress											
Before RR	4181	1838	44	1816	43.4	453	10.8	53	1.3	21	0.5
After RR	4181	3103	74.2	730	17.5	254	6.1	60	1.4	34	0.8
Progress (Referred)											
Before RR	952	207	21.7	440	46.2	267	28	32	3.4	6	0.6
After RR	952	133	14	314	33	333	35	155	16.3	17	1.8

SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

Figure 5.1. Statement of Special Educational Need of children with completed Reading Recovery programmes: The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.



6: What were the results of National Assessments for Reading Recovery children (UK only)?

Children in England undergo continuing teacher assessment reading and writing during their time in Key Stage 1. At the end of their second year of formal schooling (age 7) the assessments are collated and reported locally and nationally. The national prescribed target is level 2. Children identified for Reading Recovery are the lowest achieving in their class, and would be predicted to reach Level 1or below without the intervention.

More than two out of three children who received Reading Recovery attained level 2 or above in National Assessments for reading (68% Table 6.1). This included children who did not achieve the goals of the programme, and those who received RR in Y2 and were still part way through their series of RR lessons when National Assessments took place. More than half (56%) attained Level 2 or above in writing, somewhat fewer than in the previous year (69%) reflecting a national trend.

Children who achieved the goals of Reading Recovery had an even greater likelihood of success in National Assessments, with 17 out of 20 (81%) reaching level 2 or above in reading and 11 out of 20 (68%) in writing.

Table 6.1. Key Stage 1 Outcomes of National Assessment for Reading Recovery children: By programme outcome, The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Programme Outcome/	Key Stage 1 Reading		Key Stage 1 Writing	
National Assessment Level	number	percent	number	percent
Accelerated progress (discontinued)				
Below level 1	7	0.4	25	1.3
1	337	17.9	583	31.1
2c	567	30.2	806	43
2b	709	37.7	385	20.5
2a	223	11.9	62	3.3
3	37	2	14	0.7
All completed programmes				
Below level 1	59	2.5	127	5.3
1	700	29.1	924	38.5
2c	645	26.8	879	36.6
2b	739	30.7	394	16.4
2a	227	9.4	62	2.6
3	37	1.5	14	0.6

NOTE: "All completed programmes" includes those children who made progress (referred) and made accelerated progress (discontinued).
SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

7: What was the efficiency of the Reading Recovery implementation?

Experience

The course for Reading Recovery Teachers is a year long, part time professional development, during which already experienced teachers gradually learn the complex techniques, fine grained observation and sound professional judgement required to accelerate the learning of the most difficult to teach children

Four out of five (41%) of teachers in the cohort were in training during the data year 2007-08 and were still learning how to make Reading Recovery work with the children featured in this report (Table 7.1). This compares with one in three in 2007 and one in five in 2006. Conversely one in five teachers (21%) had been teaching in Reading Recovery for some considerable time, compared with one in four in 2007 and one in three in 2006. This reflects regional increases in opportunities for training, driven by expansion in the Republic of Ireland and by ECaR in England, and represents a shift towards a less experienced teacher cohort.

Table 7.1. Experience of Reading Recovery teachers: The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Years of experience	number	percent
In training this year	410	40.1
2-3 years after training	282	27.6
4-5 years after training	106	10.4
More than five years	224	21.9

SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

Outcomes

As might be expected, experienced teachers were able to solve the problems of a higher proportion of children, compared with those learning how to teach in Reading Recovery for the first time (Table 7.2) and they were able to do so more quickly. In 2007-08 there was an increased proportion of new and relatively inexperienced Teachers in the cohort, and also of new and relatively inexperienced Teacher Leaders, a factor which may have contributed to the lower rate of programmes reaching discontinuing levels in 2008 compared with previous years.

Table 7.2. Pupils served and programme lengths: By teacher training status, The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

Teacher training status/	**Pupils Served**		**Programme Length**	
Programme outcome	number	percent	Mean	SD
Teachers in training				
Accelerated progress (discontinued)	1343	77.5	21.4	5.8
Progress (referred)	389	22.5	23.3	5.8
Experienced teachers				
Accelerated progress (discontinued)	2717	83.1	18.6	5.2
Progress (referred)	551	16.9	20.9	5.3

SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

Days worked and missed

Children selected for Reading Recovery are those finding it hardest to learn literacy, and the steady build of daily lessons is an essential factor in enabling these children to make the accelerated progress necessary for them to catch up with their faster learning peers.

Teachers in training were able to safeguard their teaching time a little more than experienced teachers (Table 7.3), missing on average six fewer lessons, potentially saving the equivalent of one week on each child's programme.

Table 7.3. Days taught and days missed by Reading Recovery teachers: By training status, The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

	Total	**Days taught**		**Days missed**	
Training status	Teachers	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Teachers in training	410	171.1	20.6	11.7	14.9
Experienced Teachers	612	159.8	33.9	18.1	24.7

SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

Teacher responsibilities

Reading Recovery trained teachers can be a valuable professional resource in schools, able to provide advice and guidance to colleagues for the support of children who do not receive Reading Recovery. Those who combine RR with class teaching are often able to demonstrate the application of RR principles in the classroom. However, the demands made upon a RR teacher's time can interrupt daily lessons and undermine the effectiveness of the intervention. Part time teachers, on the other hand, whose sole responsibility is RR, can risk being marginalised, and their potential contribution to wider school standards, can be lost.

Teachers' other duties impacted upon their ability to provide daily lessons (Table 7.4). Those whose only responsibility was RR, often part time teachers, provided the most consistent daily lessons. Those with senior posts, including Head teachers/Principals and their Deputies (listed Other below), were the most likely to be drawn away from daily teaching. Those who combined class teaching and RR also suffered frequent interruptions, potentially adding four weeks to each child's programme.

Table 7.4. Days taught and days missed by Reading Recovery teachers: By teacher role, The UK and Ireland, 2007-8.

	Total	Days taught		Days missed	
Training role	Teachers	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
RR Teacher Only	227	168.8	29.2	9.7	16.2
Class Teacher + RR	136	159.9	32.3	20.4	25.3
RR + Support	532	164.5	28	15	19.3
Other	127	159.9	34.9	24.1	31.1

SOURCE: Reading Recovery National Network, Annual Data Collection: 2007-8

Appendix A: PROGRESS IN READING RECOVERY

Typical text at Reading Recovery level 1

I am a cat.

Typical text at Reading Recovery level 8

A green dragonfly
came to sit on a tree
down by the river.

Little Dinosaur looked at it.
He liked to eat dragonflies.

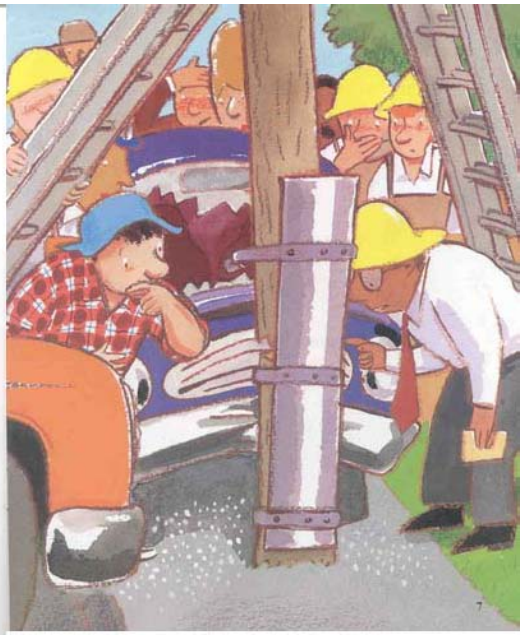
Typical text at Reading Recovery level 17

Toby stopped, and BJ jumped down
to have a look at the car.
"Mm-mm," said BJ.
"The car must have been
going very fast.
The pole is cracked
and it could fall over."

"The power has been turned off,"
said the policewoman.

"I don't like the look of this job,
Toby," said BJ,
as he got back into the tow truck.
"That pole could move
when we pull the car away."

6



7

Leading education and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

An end to literacy failure: Follow-up on the London comparison study

The costs of literacy failure

Every year in England 30,000 children go into secondary school unable to read or write. Most are from socially disadvantaged environments. The human and economic costs of poor literacy are high.

Researching the solution

A study at the The UK and Ireland, Institute of Education, published in 2006, explored whether *every* child could be taught to read and write early in their school lives.

42 schools in 10 London boroughs took part. These schools were similar in size (average 355 on roll) and had similarly high levels of children entitled to free school meals (average 41%), and children learning English as an additional language (average 49%). All of the schools offered some children extra tuition as well as classroom literacy teaching. Reading Recovery (RR) operated in half of these schools.

The literacy progress of the lowest achieving 6 year olds and of their Year 1 classes was first compared at the beginning and end of the 2005-6 school year. In July 2007, when the children had reached the end of Year 2, the researchers again compared these children's literacy progress.

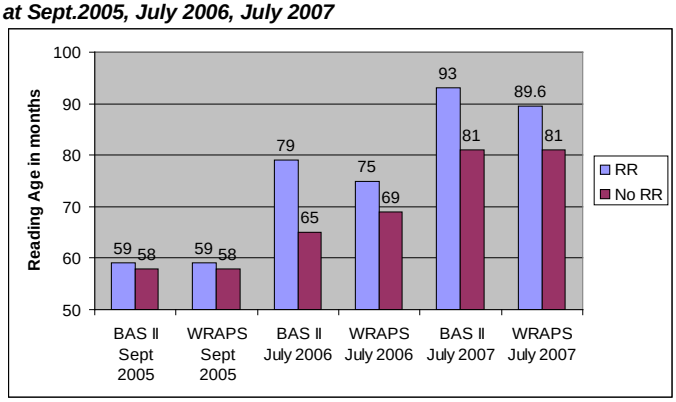
The lowest achieving children at the start of school Year 1 were assessed using a detailed diagnostic profile (Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, Clay 2002) and a word reading test (British Ability Scales II). Their whole classes (1166 Year 1 children in all) were assessed on the Word Recognition and Phonic Skills test (WRAPS, Moseley 2003). Additionally in July 2007, 'Progress in English 7' was used - a broad measure of literacy skills suitable for transfer into Key Stage 2. National Curriculum Key Stage 1 assessment results were also collected for Reading and Writing.

Can gains from early intervention be sustained?

At the beginning of school Year 1 the 292 lowest achieving children were unable to read even the simplest texts, could only recognise a few letters and write about six words correctly. At the end of Year 1 most of these children had made very little progress, except for the group of children who received Reading Recovery. From similarly low starting points, children who received Reading Recovery, on average, gained 14 book levels, gained 20 months reading age and could write 45 words correctly. Aged around six and a half, they had now successfully caught up with their average peers.

The follow up study determined that, on average, at the end of school Year 2, the ex-RR children were still achieving at the level expected for their age, and the comparison children who had not accessed RR were still well below age related expectations. This is how progress in word reading and in phonic skills compares at the beginning and end of school Year 1, and at end of school Year 2.

Word Reading (BAS II) and Phonic Skills (WRAPS), lowest groups at Sept.2005, July 2006, July 2007

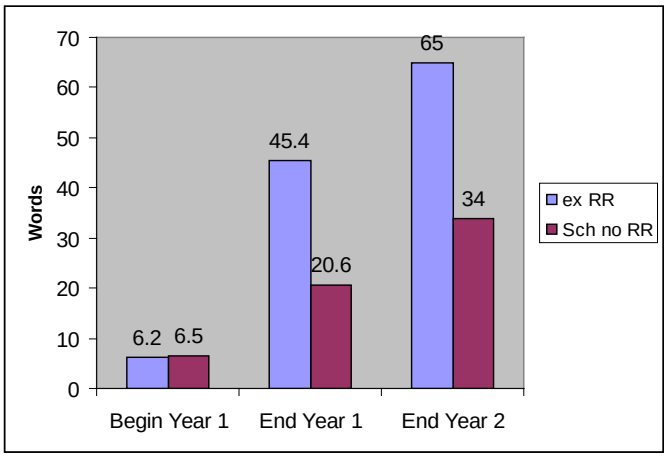


Year 2 follow up July 2007- BAS 93 = 7yrs 9m.WRAPS 89.6 = 7yrs 5.6 m.

81 = 6yrs 9 m. 81 = 6yrs 9 m

In writing vocabulary assessment task at the end of Year 1 and the end of Year 2, the ex-RR children were still able to write twice as many words correctly as those in the comparison group.

Lowest achieving groups - Writing vocabulary means



In the broad measure of literacy (Progress in English 7) ex-RR children were achieving within their age band expectations, and 10 standard points ahead of comparison children. In the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum (NC) assessments

86% of ex-RR children achieved Level 2+ in reading, (2% ahead of the national average of 84%). In writing 83% ex-RR children achieved Level 2+ (3% ahead of the national figure of 80%).

READING & WRITING Key Stage 1 NC assessments, 2007 Lowest groups

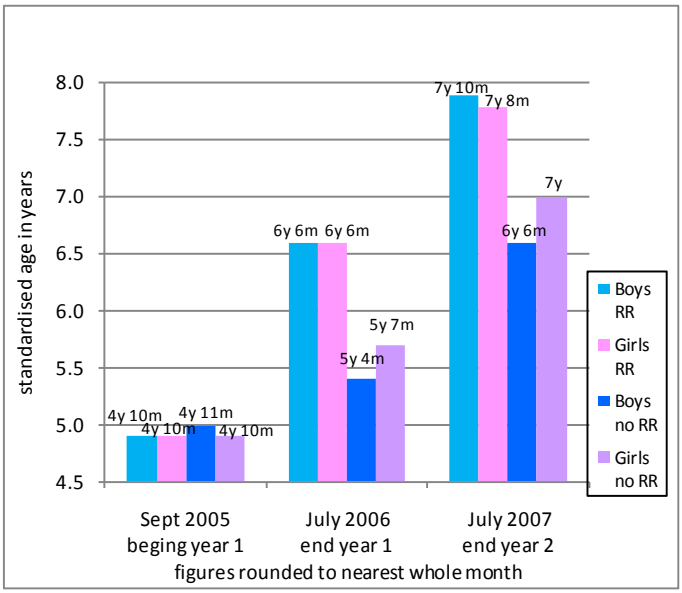
NC Level	Comparison group		Children who received RR in Year 1	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Reading				
W	**13**	**9.6%**		
Level 1	**45**	**33.1%**	**10**	**13.5%**
Level 2	**76**	**55.9%**	**64**	**86.5%**
Level 3	**2**	**1.5%**		
Writing				
W	**20**	**14.8%**	**1**	**1.3%**
Level 1	**37**	**27.4%**	**12**	**13.8%**
Level 2	**77**	**57.0%**	**65**	**83.3%**
Level 3	**1**	**0.7%**		

These results show the effectiveness of the RR intervention, combined with good classroom teaching, in maintaining children's early gains and accelerated rate of learning.

The gender gap in literacy achievement

Comparisons showed boys and girls in the lowest achieving groups started Year 1 with equally low literacy skills, and boys and girls who received RR were doing equally well at the end of Year 1. At the end of Year 2 no significant difference was found between the sustained progress of ex-RR boys and girls. The literacy progress of those children had not received RR in Year 1 was much lower overall, and 3 month gap between boys and girls at the end of Year 1 had become a 6 month gap in reading achievement by the end of Year 2.

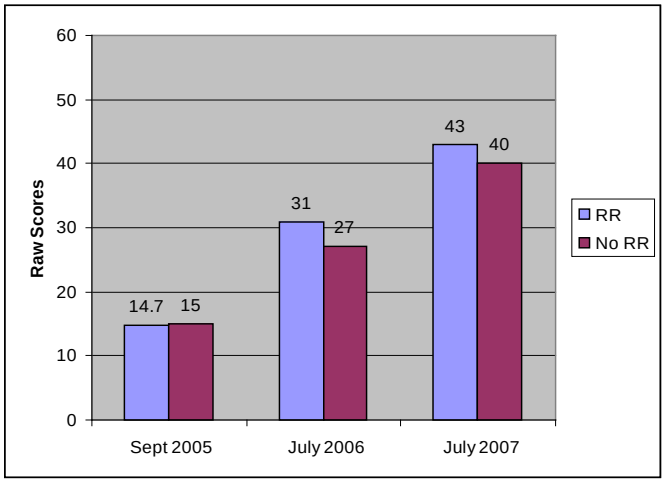
BAS II Word Reading Test Boys and Girls Lowest groups



Whole class literacy progress

The Year 1 study reported an average 4 months higher overall achievement in literacy for classrooms where the lowest achievers had access to RR. In the Year 2 follow up there was still a 3 months advantage in classes in schools with RR.

Classrooms in Year 1 & 2 WRAPS scores



This 2-year 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.

This study of the level of impact on literacy achievement and its sustained effects provides strong evidence that schools could enable almost every child to read and write appropriately for their age, if those that were failing were given access to expert teaching in Reading Recovery at an early age.

The full report can be read or downloaded from http://www.ioe.ac.uk/schools/ecpe/readingrecovery/index.html

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