

## Reading Masters

### Vauxhall Primary School

#### **Problem: What challenges do your school(s) have that need to be addressed?**

Vauxhall Primary School is an outstanding school in the heart of inner city London. The school has higher than the national average of pupils who have English as additional Language (62%), SEN (16.5%) and pupil premium pupils (57.7%). More often than not children enter the school with little or no English language and therefore the school staff must develop effective strategies for pupils to develop their speaking skills and understanding. Consequently, reading comprehension has always been a focus at Vauxhall, as the starting points of our children are often much lower than in other schools. During the change in SATs the attainment of our pupils in reading decreased, due to the increased rigour of the tests, highlighting the need for a new strategy to accelerate reading across the school. We found that this was a similar issue for all the other schools we intend to work with.

#### **Innovation: How will the innovation help improve the problem you have identified and benefit teachers and learners?**

The assistant head teacher has developed a new Reading Masters programme to improve pupils' reading and comprehension of text across the school. This programme focuses on the teachings of whole class reading focussing on specific reading skills each day.

As this is a whole class intervention, the children are able to access the expert knowledge of the teacher altogether. During the session, the children have the opportunity to read in pairs, which enables them to practice their skills and share learning and assessment with their peers. The teacher has oversight on the progress of all the children and can ensure that all the children are on track. Innovation of Reading Masters was informed by classroom practice, where whole class teaching of reading was the preferred method of the assistant head teacher. This meant high quality teaching for all pupils, which is in contrast to the traditional carousel guided reading structure where pupils may not be taught by the teacher.

The different reading skills are separated into different days:

- Day 1 – Reading and discussions of a text

- Day 2 – Retrieval questions
- Day 3 – Inference questions
- Day 4 – Structure, vocabulary and grammar questions
- Day 5 – Wider context and opinion questions

By separating the skills, strategies can be modelled and practiced for answering different questions types, before bringing them together in summative assessments.

### **Existing evidence: What evidence is there that this innovation will improve outcomes?**

EEF has documented a number of trials looking at accelerating reading and its effectiveness. In around a third of EEF trials evaluating reading interventions, the control made the same or greater progress than the intervention group, but some evaluations found the intervention had a positive impact. For example, Accelerated Reader is a whole-class reading management and monitoring programme. This internet-based software programme initially screens pupils according to their reading levels, and suggests books that match their reading age and reading interest. The initial project found a positive impact on all pupils of an additional three months progress in reading over the course of the academic year.

Reciprocal Reading is a structured approach to teaching strategies that pupils use to improve their reading comprehension which is currently being evaluated by the Education Endowment Foundation. Initially, pupils develop their use of these strategies by observing a teacher ‘thinking aloud’.

The Effective Interventions for Struggling Readers Good Practice Guide (Irish National Educational Psychological Service, 2012) describes a number of reading interventions that have been trialled such as:

- Accelerated/Accelewrite
- Peer reading
- Toe by Toe
- SNIP (a precision teaching approach)
- Arrow

This report looked for and reported on interventions which have evidence of impact, meaning that interventions with a negative or neutral impact were not commented on. Of these interventions with evidence of impact, SNIP was best for teaching word reading, while Toe by Toe gave the best overall results, but all of these interventions provided significant gains which met Brook’s

(2007) standard of 'twice the usual rate of progress'.

Our program was informed by the experience of the teacher in understanding the needs of the children and the difficulties they faced while trying to achieve good SATs results in reading. The revised SATs since 2016 focus on a more rigorous testing of reading including more vocabulary and low mark inference questions, as well as prediction and context questions. Reading Masters is based on the idea of teaching and assessing children on the separate reading skills, which are practiced over the week.

**Research question or hypothesis: What effect will the intervention, implemented for how long, with which pupils, have on what outcomes?**

What impact does Reading Masters delivered over an academic year have on the reading comprehension skills of pupils without specific SEN needs in year 4?

Based on existing work we predict pupils (not including those with specific SEN needs) will develop competence in reading and understanding text by making a minimum of expected levels of progress within an academic year.

**Method: Include sample, design, measures, intervention, process evaluation, and analysis**

Sample/participants

We will work with six schools:

- Wyvil Primary School
- Herbert Morrison Primary School
- Ashmole Primary School
- Immanuel St Andrew Primary School
- Heathbrook Primary School
- St Mark's Primary School

Wyvil Primary School is two form entry and the remaining schools are one form entry.

The programme has been designed to be accessed by pupils in Years 2–6, but we will only measure the impact on Year 4. All the schools selected to participate are part of The Wyvern Federation or a strategic partner of the Lambeth Teaching Schools' Alliance. Therefore all the children taking part are from inner city Lambeth. Consent from parents is not required as this new innovation will be part of the curriculum. However, where we feel data will need to be used and

shared, all pupils will be anonymous. If as a group we feel consent from parents is required, ask parents to opt out of participation in the evaluation. Pupils from the control schools not using the Reading Masters will continue to access their own existing reading programmes.

Children who are on the SEN register or of a low literacy EAL group and still accessing phonics lessons will not be included in this evaluation. Those children will continue to access phonics and will be withdrawn whilst Reading Masters is happening (as is the practice in many schools).

#### Design and assignment to condition

Participating schools have been assigned to intervention or control group after careful consultation and discussion with the schools. This will not be a random selection due to other factors from the school (eg, one school has already spent a large sum of money buying a different reading programme). However, we have made sure that all the schools in the control and intervention groups have not previously accessed Reading Masters. For pragmatic reasons, Year 4 teachers at Wyvil Primary School and St Mark's Primary School will deliver Reading Masters and the Year 4 classes from the remaining four schools will form the control group. This means there will be two classes in the intervention group and four classes in the control group.

The intervention group will use Reading Masters and the control group will carry on using their existing reading programme. A baseline assessment will be carried out in September 2018; pre-test scores from this assessment will be analysed to check that the groups' starting points are similar. We understand there will be some limitations to the trial by doing it this way.

#### Measures

All the participants will sit a Progress in Reading Assessment (PIRA) test at the beginning and end of the evaluation. The tests will be administered in September and June with the intervention taking place in between these months. The test reports a standardised score and has an equivalent version to be used in June.

#### Intervention

Reading Masters runs as a five-day per week programme for reading fluency and comprehension. Each day a specific reading skill is taught, modelled and practiced in a whole class setting. These skills are:

- Day 1: Reading and discussions of a text
- Day 2: Retrieval questions
- Day 3: Inference questions
- Day 4: Structure, vocabulary and grammar questions
- Day 5: Wider context and opinion questions

Each session lasts for 30 minutes. The sessions are delivered by the class teacher with Teaching Assistants (TAs) deployed depending on the context of the class.

Natalie Graham, who developed the programme, will work alongside the Lambeth Teaching Schools Alliance to deliver the training to all the participant teachers. There will also be scheduled times throughout the year for the participating teachers to meet as a network group (one afternoon per term). The purpose of these meetings will be to share resources, reflect on and discuss the programme. Natalie will also be time-tabled to visit each school in order to give on-going support and quality assure the sessions are being delivered as planned. This will be one visit per intervention school each term within the year.

Control group classes will continue with their existing programmes with no change, except that all pupils who are part of this trial will take part in a reading test at the beginning of the year and at the end of the programme.

#### Process evaluation

Teachers will be given a post-intervention questionnaire to complete to find out their views about the intervention. This questionnaire will be created by the project lead and intervention developer after researching effective post testing questionnaire examples.

Class observations of the intervention and control group will be carried out. We will create an observation schedule with a checklist to ensure all the schools are working at the standard expected.

#### Data analysis

PIRA test scores will be used to compare the progress of pupils using the new intervention and those using their existing programme. In order to ensure data is correctly analysed we will employ a freelance statistician to analyse our quantitative data to draw conclusions from the findings. To maintain confidentiality the children will be numbered rather than named. No personal details will be shared.

The analysis carried out on the data will include calculation of:

- The effect size
- Means pre and post-test scores of the intervention and control groups
- Standard deviation

**Conclusion: What will happen if your innovation improves outcomes, or not?  
What are the limitations of your evaluation?**

Potential Limitations

Limitation	Steps to minimise limitation
Teachers not having adequate skills and understanding to deliver the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff taking part in the research will be given training on using the programme before it begins.</li> <li>• There will be on-going support scheduled throughout the trial</li> <li>• A network will be formed for teachers to regularly meet.</li> </ul>
Not enough resources available to carry out the intervention	The funding requested enables additional resources to be purchased to ensure the intervention can take place.
Limited access to high quality texts	Recommended text/reading lists will be shared amongst the teachers trialling the intervention.
Children not accessing the programme	The intervention will be time-tabled and embedded into the curriculum. Teaching assistants will be used effectively to support children to access the programme.
Differences between the schools in the ability of the children at the start of the intervention	Pre-test scores will be checked to ensure the pre-test scores of the schools are similar

Implications

If the innovation is found to be successful we will then share our findings with other head teachers within The Oval Learning Cluster and Lambeth Teaching Schools Alliance. We will share our resources and offer training and support if other schools are interested in adopting the new programme. We will continue to use the programme in our own schools and monitor its effect over time.

If the programme is not successful, we will analyse where the issues lie in order to improve the programme or indeed ascertain that other reading programmes are better or just as good, therefore giving more flexibility and choice to schools.

## References

Brooks, G. (2007). *What Works for Children with Literacy Difficulties? The effectiveness of intervention schemes*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

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