

## Randomised Control Trial of Rapid National Foundation for Educational Research

**Rapid** is a reading intervention programme combining books and speech recognition software for Key Stage 2 pupils with low literacy levels. It aims to move children aged between 7 and 11 years from a reading age of 5.6 years to 8+ years.

The research was conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), an organisation whose research contributes to government policy and whose expertise is recognised nationally and internationally.

### Summary:

Findings from one of the most robust independent research studies ever undertaken into the effectiveness of special needs literacy programmes revealed that **Rapid** can improve a child's reading age by significantly more than the normal rate of progress.

- **Rapid** delivers more than twice the rate of normal progress - the average improvement in reading age over the 2.3 months of the trial was 5.7 months.
- The average rate of improvement of pupils in the intervention (**Rapid**) group was greater than that of children in the control group - equivalent to 1.3 months of extra progress.
- The study also demonstrated that **Rapid** was equally effective with pupils at different reading levels, of different ages, and of either sex.

### Methodology:

During autumn 2006 a sample of 101 schools (786 pupils) were drawn which were representative of all primary schools in the UK in terms of country, type of school and achievement band at Key Stage 2. These schools were then assigned to the 'control' group or the 'intervention' group.

The 'intervention' group were provided with **Rapid** material - books and software. The 'control' group were asked to continue with their existing resources.

The trial took place over 10 weeks in the spring term of 2007. All schools were required to administer the 'Suffolk Reading Test' at the start and then again at the end of the trial period. All tests were scored by NFER and the data analysed. In addition, all schools were sent a short questionnaire at the end of the trial period to provide some contextual details.

### Result:

The NFER research found that the schools using **Rapid** could raise the reading age of their children by 5.7 months in the 2.3 month period. The control group not using **Rapid**, but still using their existing literacy intervention resources, achieved a lower increase of 4.4 months.

In summary, the findings established **Rapid** as an effective Wave 3 intervention programme.