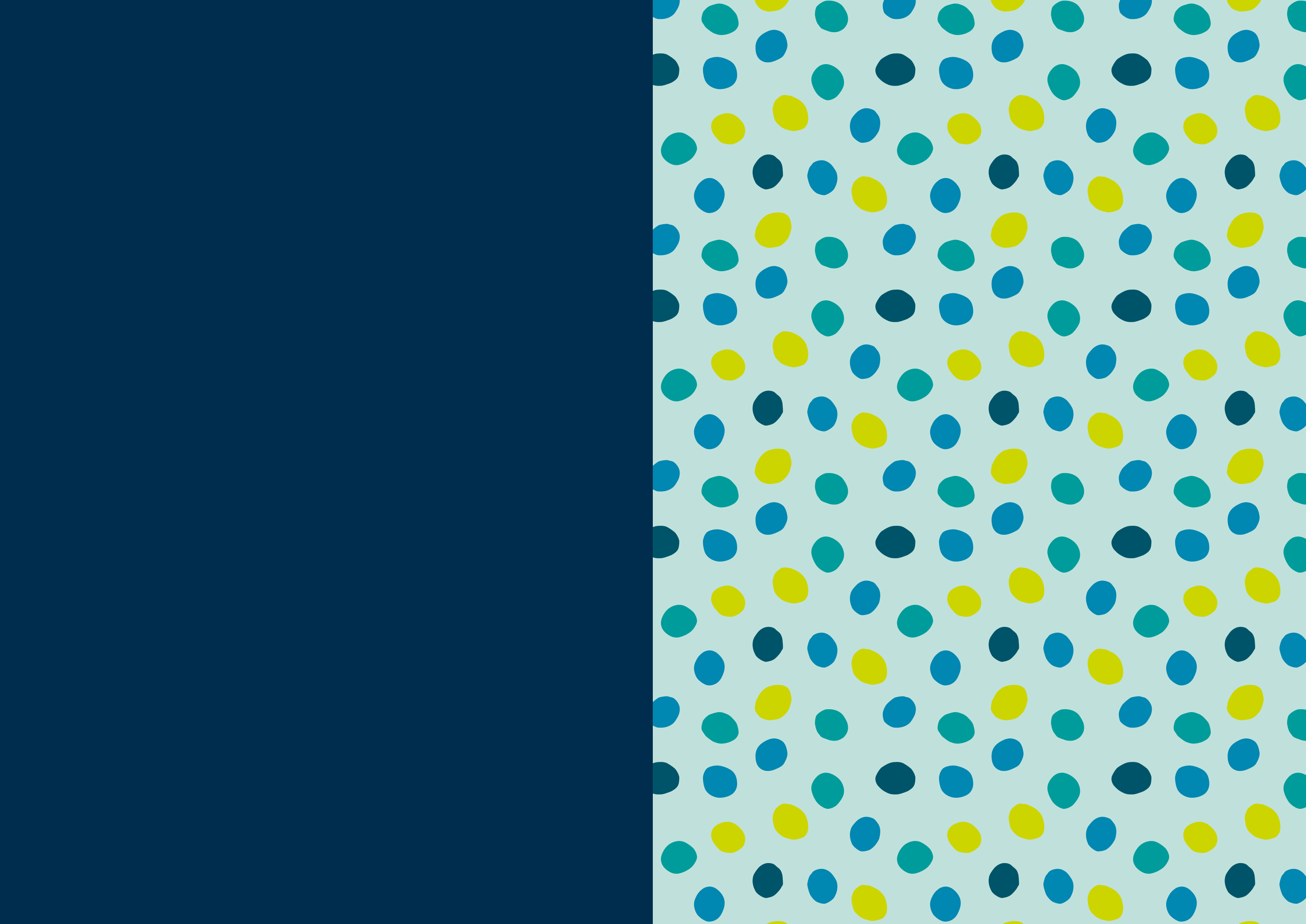


Helping struggling learners to close the gap

Discover the impact
our intervention
resources are making
in Primary schools.



Illustration by Kanae Sato



Together, we make an impact in Primary Education

As the world’s leading learning company, Pearson is committed to ensuring that everything we do delivers a measurable impact on improving children’s lives through learning.



We really care about making a difference in schools and work hard to make sure that our programmes do too.

Our intervention resources all form part of the **Rapid** family – Rapid Reading, Rapid Phonics, Rapid Writing and Rapid Maths.

Rapid has been designed by leading experts who have years of experience in helping struggling learners and children with special educational needs. In addition to expert pedagogy, huge care has gone into the design of all elements of the four Rapid programmes. Whether digital or print, Rapid gives you dyslexia-friendly fonts and cool-factor design that hooks children in. Both the design and topics are geared towards older children even when the content is at a younger level, so that children don’t feel excluded from the mainstream.

The results speak for themselves

Thousands of schools up and down the country use Rapid to help their struggling children catch up, and the results speak for themselves. An independent study by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) showed us that children using Rapid Reading **make more than twice the normal rate of progress**. And a Rapid Reading trial in Worcestershire outstripped even that, with over 50% of children making **four times the expected progress in reading accuracy**. Read more inside.

In a world of Ofsted inspections and increased accountability, you need to know that what you are buying really works and you need the data to prove it. So this guide pulls together the results and feedback from schools up and down the UK who are using Rapid to great effect in their classrooms. It includes independent studies, teacher and pupil testimonials and detailed case studies on how schools are delivering real results with Rapid.

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Illustration by Kanae Sato

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Becoming an Outstanding school: Raising standards with Rapid in Derby



School name:



Wyndham Primary Academy, Derby

School type:



Medium-sized urban primary

Number of pupils:



306

OFSTED Rating:



Outstanding (Spring 2014)

Context

Wyndham is an average-sized Primary school with 306 pupils from 3-11 years. It has a much higher than average percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

Wyndham Primary Academy opened in September 2012. Principal Angela O'Brien wanted to raise standards in the school, which had previously been a primary school placed in Special Measures.

Angela introduced Rapid Reading, Phonics, Writing and Maths to the school and has seen fantastic results from it. We went along to talk to Angela and two of the school's Teaching Assistants, Kelly Gallimore and Tania Waller, to find out more.

Why Rapid?

Raising attainment is a high priority at Wyndham and the staff set up intervention groups, but with up to 24 children in the groups at any one time, different plans from multiple class teachers and only two TAs to run the interventions, they needed something more sustainable.

They wanted to be able to provide children with quality learning that could be proven by data. When they saw Rapid, they loved the fact that all the plans, resources and structure were provided so that very little else was needed. Rapid has given the school a consistent approach to struggling learners and has empowered Teaching Assistants to work independently.

“It's so easy to follow.”

(Kelly, Teaching Assistant)

How is Rapid used at Wyndham?

Wyndham has a separate intervention unit, known as the NEST, run by two very dedicated Teaching Assistants. The NEST is a bright, positive, friendly place where struggling pupils have the chance to make real progress in small group interventions. Pupils who need intervention are referred to the NEST for a term. Pupils come out of the main class lesson to work on the subject they need help with every day for a term, returning to their classroom for all other subjects. Whilst in the NEST, they use Rapid Reading, Rapid Phonics, Rapid Writing or Rapid Maths to boost their progress in these subjects.

Staff assess children for reading or maths level and emotional development at the point of referral to the NEST, at the end of their term in the NEST and again one and two terms after they return to their class so that their progress can be measured and sustained.



What are the results like?

Staff assess children using a points system, where all children in KS2 are expected to make 4 points' progress per year.

“Rapid is our passion.”

(Angela, Principal)

Reading results

83% of the children working on Rapid Reading and Phonics during the 2013-2014 academic year made at least 1 point progress in a term, 50% made at least 2 points progress, putting them ahead of their target, and 21% made 3 or more points' progress in one term, putting them well ahead of their target. 15 out of 24 of these children were eligible for Free School Meals. Of the 12 children who were assessed again a term after they left the unit, all had made progress, all but one were on track to reach their 4-point target and one boy had made a full 7 points progress – that's almost two years' progress in just two terms.

Maths results

In Maths, 79% of children made at least 1 point progress during their term in the NEST and this progress continued for all children throughout the next term.

46% gained 2 points during their term on Rapid, putting them ahead of target, and 16% made a fantastic 3 points progress in one term – that's the equivalent of 1.5 NC sub-levels in one term.

Fantastic OFSTED results

In May 2014, staff at Wyndham were delighted to receive an Outstanding OFSTED rating. OFSTED commended the work in the NEST, saying that it makes a very significant contribution to the learning of children with special educational needs. They also reported that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make outstanding progress and that the gap between these pupils and their peers is rapidly reducing. In the 2013 national tests for Year 6 pupils their results were similar to and sometimes above those of other pupils in all subjects.

Asked to sum up the school's experiences with Rapid, Principal Angela O'Brien told us she believed that Rapid was a key factor in their school improvement:

"Raising attainment is a high priority for us, and Rapid has really helped. Rapid creates structure and consistency to intervention sessions and it has given our TAs the confidence to work independently."

What other changes have you noticed?

The children love using Rapid – they are excited by it. Children have lost their prior attitude of reading being something they felt unable to do – now they love learning! Children love being referred to the NEST to work on Rapid – even the children in the school who aren't struggling want to use Rapid!

What do the children think?

We asked some of the children to talk about Rapid in their own words:

- "Rapid Reading makes you a higher level. I like all the books!"
(Rapid Reading and Phonics)
- "The books aren't just boring. They're colourful and I like the ones with the dangerous animals."
(Rapid Reading and Phonics)
- "I am more confident now. I like doing the homework!"
(Rapid Maths)



How have parents reacted?

There has been a huge shift in the attitude of parents over the time the school has been using Rapid. A referral to the NEST is no longer seen as a stigma – now, it engenders excitement at the potential for their children to succeed. The NEST is seen as a unit for helping children to realise their potential and parents are very supportive of that. The NEST's doors are always open to parents, so they are able to discuss any concerns and see the progress their children have been making.

How Rapid quadrupled reading accuracy and comprehension in Worcestershire



Background

In 2013 Pearson launched the Rapid Reading online service. Previous studies into the Rapid books and CD-Rom software had shown that – used consistently – Rapid Reading could double children’s rate of expected progress. We believed that the new online programme was even better but were keen to test this to make sure. For this reason we contacted Wendy Robins of the Worcestershire Learning Support Team, to ask for her help in coordinating an independent trial of Rapid Reading across a range of schools and pupils.

Wendy recruited a total of seven schools in the county, who between them selected 41 pupils to take part in the three month study. Each child was given a reading log and sessions were recorded to ensure that the Rapid programme was followed as per the recommendation for optimal results. Parents were also contacted ahead of the trial to ask them to encourage and support their child with any online reading homework coming out of the trial.

Headline Results

The results of the trial were overwhelmingly positive. Teachers and children alike enjoyed using the programme and parents reported seeing an increase

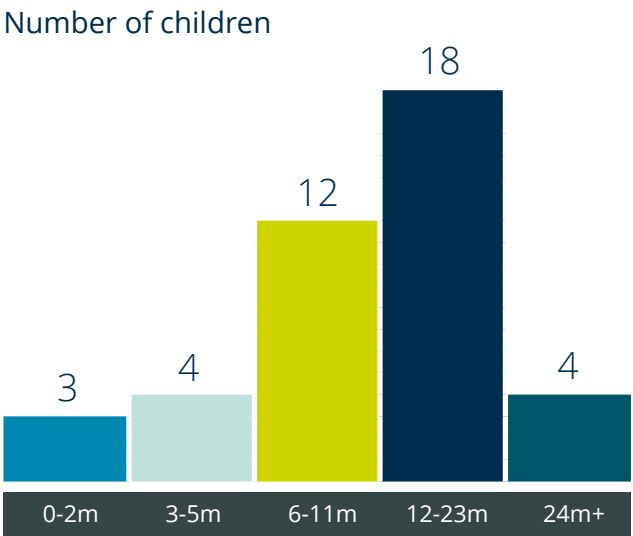
in their child’s confidence and attitudes towards reading. Over half of the children made **four times the expected progress in reading accuracy**. That’s an average of 13 months’ progress in just three months.

- **54%** of pupils made over 12 months’ progress in their reading age over the 3 months (that’s 4 times the expected rate of progress!)
- **83%** of pupils made at least 6 months’ progress (double the expected rate of progress!)
- **93%** made at least 3 months progress (i.e. at or above the expected rate).

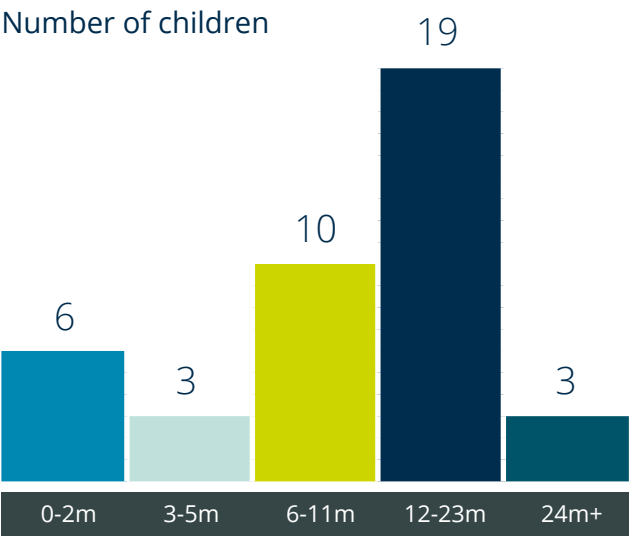
We also saw a wonderful example of how Rapid really can change lives. One Year 4 boy made an amazing 35 months’ progress in reading accuracy and an even more fantastic 45 months’ progress in comprehension. This took him from a starting reading age of 5 years 2 months to a reading age of 8 years 1 month (in reading accuracy) – meaning that he had effectively caught up to the level he should be at for his age in only 3 months.



Progress in reading accuracy



Progress in reading comprehension



Results by school

The results showed some variance by school (see table below). This may be many environmental factors contributing to this, as with any study where the circumstances of the individuals concerned are all unique. It is worth noting that even in the schools with lower average progress in reading accuracy and comprehension, progress is still double the expected rate. In the best performing schools, average progress was 4.5, 5 and even 6 times above expected. There is no doubt that the impact of Rapid does rely to a certain extent on the way the programme is implemented by the teachers, SENCOs and TAs using it. The Rapid Professional Development courses are a key part of any new adoption of Rapid, helping ensure that it is used to its best effect.

Average progress in reading accuracy and comprehension by school

| | Pupil 1 | | Pupil 2 | | Pupil 3 | | Pupil 4 | | Pupil 5 | | Pupil 6 | | Pupil 7 | | Average progress in accuracy (months) | Average progress in comprehension (months) |
|----------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------------------------------------|--|
| | A | C | A | C | A | C | A | C | A | C | A | C | A | C | | |
| School 1 | 4 | 1 | 27 | 15 | 11 | 8 | 19 | 21 | 11 | 23 | 35 | 45 | | | 17.8 | 18.8 |
| School 2 | 9 | 14 | 8 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 3 | 6 | 0 | | | | | 6.6 | 6.4 |
| School 3 | 17 | 21 | 9 | 21 | 24 | 20 | 20 | 21 | 13 | 18 | 15 | 10 | | | 16.3 | 18.5 |
| School 4 | 29 | 26 | 12 | 21 | 12 | 7 | 10 | 17 | 4 | 7 | 19 | 33 | | | 14.3 | 18.5 |
| School 5 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 7 | 13 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 13 | 11 | 5 | 14 | 7.5 | 7.28 |
| School 6 | 17 | 14 | 19 | 12 | 28 | 23 | 18 | 16 | 15 | 23 | | | | | 19.4 | 17.6 |
| School 7 | 9 | 7 | 19 | 8 | 10 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 4 | 18 | 16 | | | 12.3 | 6.5 |

Equivalent number of months’ gain in reading age over the course of the trial in: A = Accuracy, C = Comprehension

Results by Year

The average progress both in reading accuracy and comprehension all falls within a range of 10.5–16 months across the year groups, showing that Rapid is a successful intervention at whatever point it is introduced, making it a great option for Year 6 pupils when other approaches have not worked.

Average progress in reading accuracy and comprehension by year

| | Year 3 | | Year 4 | | Year 5 | | Year 6 | |
|---------------------------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|----|
| | A | C | A | C | A | C | A | C |
| Pupil 1 | 4 | 1 | 19 | 21 | 9 | 14 | 29 | 26 |
| Pupil 2 | 17 | 15 | 11 | 23 | 8 | 15 | 12 | 21 |
| Pupil 3 | 11 | 8 | 35 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 7 |
| Pupil 4 | 20 | 21 | 17 | 21 | 10 | 3 | 19 | 33 |
| Pupil 5 | 13 | 18 | 9 | 21 | 6 | 0 | 19 | 8 |
| Pupil 6 | 15 | 10 | 24 | 20 | 10 | 17 | 0 | 1 |
| Pupil 7 | 18 | 16 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 7 | | |
| Pupil 8 | | | 5 | 0 | 17 | 14 | | |
| Pupil 9 | | | 7 | 7 | 19 | 12 | | |
| Pupil 10 | | | 13 | 11 | 28 | 23 | | |
| Pupil 11 | | | 8 | 8 | 18 | 16 | | |
| Pupil 12 | | | 13 | 11 | 15 | 23 | | |
| Pupil 13 | | | 5 | 14 | 9 | 7 | | |
| Pupil 14 | | | | | 10 | 3 | | |
| Pupil 15 | | | | | 18 | 4 | | |
| Average Progress (months) | 14 | 12.7 | 12.9 | 15.5 | 12 | 10.5 | 15.1 | 16 |

A = Accuracy, C = Comprehension

Pupil, parent and teacher feedback

The majority of feedback from teachers, parents and children alike was positive. Satisfaction surveys were completed by two of the schools involved in the trial, and these schools also provided full before and after attitudinal surveys for the children involved, and a follow up questionnaire for parents:

- “I think the trial went very well. I liked it as it was so much easier than using the discs which resulted in more children being able to access Rapid. The children all really liked it. They were always keen to come and read and loved the reward system.”
Jean Green, TA, Chawson Primary, Worcestershire
- “The pictures kept my child interested which made her read on. She loved the reward system too. My child is more confident in her own reading ability; she will read on her own without being asked to.”
Parent, Chawson Primary, Worcestershire
- “His overall ability has improved and his willingness to read is much better. He is much happier to read and shows enjoyment in it.”
Parent, St. Oswald's Primary, Worcestershire
- “My favourite thing about Rapid is reading on the computer.”
Child, St Oswalds Primary, Worcestershire







Conclusion

Used consistently and effectively, Rapid Reading has an incredible impact on children's progress in reading. The data from the Worcestershire trial shows that Rapid is a powerful reading intervention tool throughout Key Stage 2, and works well for both girls and boys. The online books and rewards add a layer of motivation, particularly for reluctant boy readers. The consistent theme that comes through from the pupil, parent and teacher feedback forms is that Rapid helps children feel more confident in their reading, and that Rapid helps develop comprehension skills in conjunction with reading accuracy, creating more rounded literacy skills.



Supporting struggling learners in North Lanarkshire



| | | | |
|--------------|--|------------------------|---|
| School name: |  Orchard Primary School, Wishaw | Number of pupils: |  220 |
| Region: |  North Lanarkshire | School type: |  Primary and Nursery, Language and Communication Unit |
| Area type: |  Town | Pupil Equity Funding % |  30% |

Background

Orchard Primary is one of North Lanarkshire's newest primary schools, with around 220 children. They have been open for one academic year (2016-17), and are just starting their second year. The school has a mixed catchment, including some areas of extreme deprivation, and other areas which are the opposite. In addition, they run a specialist Language and Communication Centre for pupils with identified autism who come from various primary schools and nurseries. Orchard's Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is being used in part to fund two specialised teachers to deliver a targeted equity curriculum alongside a broader equity curriculum.

Age-appropriate, accessible and effective

Head Teacher, Jill Woodward brought Rapid to Orchard when it opened in 2016 having used it in her last two schools where she experienced what a powerful tool it can be for supporting struggling learners. The school has invested in all of the Rapid materials, including the online Rapid Reading collection.

“Rapid works with the North Lanarkshire Active Literacy strategy – so it fits right in with our approach to the curriculum.”

One of the things Jill likes most about Rapid is that it allows her to teach children who are reading below the expected standard for their age with age-appropriate books, rather than the typical banded

books for infants. Rapid allows these children to read books which look age-appropriate while still having stage-appropriate material. Jill also likes the fact that Rapid is a good fit for the North Lanarkshire Active Literacy approach; she can use the Rapid texts as 'mini-novels' for children who can't access Harry Potter or other mainstream novels, for example. This allows her to use the same teaching strategies with students who are behind and the rest of the class, helping them to catch up.



Orchard Primary School

Using Rapid for early intervention

Another key benefit of Rapid from Jill's point of view is the simple yet effective approach that allows staff to feel confident in delivering it, offering a concrete framework and valid alternative when mainstream approaches aren't working. Jill has evolved her use of Rapid over time, initially using the programme only with children in P4-7 who were showing signs of a significant reading delay, but now she uses it in P3 and even P2, as soon as children look as though they

are not making expected progress through the standard banded books.

Children likely to benefit from a Rapid intervention are identified through the ongoing planning and tracking dialogue between Jill and her staff members. Each of the identified children then undergo a baseline assessment to ensure they start at the Rapid Reading level appropriate to them, and so that progress can be tracked for evaluation purposes. Rapid interventions are used frequently, as a 'quick strike' to help children who have been identified as needing a little support to keep up – as well as catch up. This ensures that no child falls too far behind. Once children have made sufficient progress they are moved back onto the mainstream scheme.

Building confidence for really struggling readers

In addition to being used in school, Rapid is also used in the school's Language and Communication centre, where it is having a really positive impact in terms of increased engagement and progress even with previously non-readers. Rapid books offer an alternative, shorter read, while the format – fiction and non-fiction all in one book – gives variety and manageable chunks of text.

Jill reports huge gains in reading confidence among these children: "I'm seeing children who are able to re-engage with other reading approaches and schemes when they come off Rapid. They are far

“Children in the centre experience spikes and troughs in progress. It really helps to be able to hand them a book which they find much more engaging for their level, and the incorporation of facts and non-fiction are of great benefit to these children.”

more confident and feel good about their reading." In her previous school, Jill recalls the success story of two brothers, one in P3 and one in P5, both struggling with reading. The younger boy was keen but hadn't managed to develop the skills or confidence to read beyond a P1 level, whereas the older boy had become very disengaged and hated reading. Using Rapid Reading, supported by teachers and the North Lanarkshire Active Literacy strategy, both boys soon progressed through the literacy bands – and both came out the other side as confident, happy readers.

The future

Orchard is excited by the potential of the Rapid online reading resources, and plans to start providing access in after school clubs and at home, so children have more independence in their reading and can develop their comprehension and decoding skills. There are also plans to provide access and spaces for parents to use Rapid with their children, to encourage parental involvement and family learning.



Making catch-up cool: motivation is half the battle

The in-depth research NFER's study of Rapid Reading



Context

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) carried out an in-depth and independent research study in Rapid Reading in 2006, trialling Rapid in 12 schools across the UK. The schools involved in the study included a mixture of urban and rural schools with varying numbers of pupils on FSM or with statements, and a wide variation in ethnic diversity. The trials took place over a period of 3 to 4 weeks in the summer term, with the running of them left to the discretion of the individual schools. The results from the trials were then collated by the NFER and pulled together into the Rapid Reading intervention: case study report, which you can read in its entirety at: www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/rapidNFER

The trial provided a bank of qualitative data and anecdotal evidence about the impact of the Rapid programme on struggling readers – particularly in terms of their motivation and confidence.

- Many teachers and teaching assistants were impressed with the impact on pupils' confidence and their socialising skills. It was felt that being able to take facts back to class and share them with others and talk about the jokes was a valued aspect of the books.
- Many schools felt the books were motivational and highlighted examples of reluctant readers who were quite captivated by the books and were enjoying using them.
- The way the books were presented was valued by most schools. This included the mixture of cartoons with real-life images, short paragraphs of text and colourful images.
- Schools liked the length of the books, which they felt were motivational and helped improve pupil confidence because pupils were able to finish a book.
- Some schools felt that the books had a 'grown up' feel to them which was particularly useful in working with older pupils who may not have felt comfortable reading books they felt were 'babyish'.
- The separate fiction and non-fiction texts were well liked. Some schools felt that the non-fiction text was particularly appealing to pupils and that they liked reading about real life facts and information.



Using Rapid Phonics for Early Intervention in Neath Port Talbot

Neath Port Talbot Rapid Phonics Pilot



Context

In 2013, Neath Port Talbot LEA conducted an independent trial of Rapid Phonics in schools in their area. You can find their full report on our website at:

www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/rapidNPTtrial

Pilot Protocol

Initial training was held on February 7th, 2013 for two representatives (one manager, usually a member of the SMT /Language Coordinator /SENCO, and one Rapid Tutor, usually, but not always, a TA) from each of the 13 schools invited to join the pilot.

Schools were asked to target six to twelve pupils in Year 2 or Year 3 for this intervention and were provided with the programme resources including single copies of the decodable books. They were also given access to the electronic versions of the books online. The chosen pupils were to receive at least two sessions of Rapid Phonics per week.

The Salford Sentence Reading Test (pre-2012 version) was chosen to determine a reading baseline as many schools already use it to track pupil progress in Rapid Reading. In addition, the Schonell Spelling Test was used to establish a writing baseline.

Of the 13 schools who attended the original training, 11 felt able to run the programme for the trial period and provide baseline and progress data for their target pupils. Two schools included Year 1 pupils because by the Summer term those who needed extra support had already been identified by their teacher. Where need was apparent, some KS2 settings included Year 4 pupils in addition to those in Year 3.

The initial pilot lasted a week under 3 months (excluding holidays). In line with usual intervention protocols, gains of 6 months or above (double "real" time) were of particular interest.

Outcomes

Data was collected on 106 pupils targeted for the project, spanning Years 1 to 4.

| Total number of pupils: 106 | Year 1 | | Year 2 | | Year 3 | | Year 4 | |
|-----------------------------|--------|---|--------|----|--------|----|--------|---|
| | B | G | B | G | B | G | B | G |
| | 5 | 8 | 15 | 13 | 25 | 27 | 9 | 4 |
| Total pupils per year | 13 | | 28 | | 52 | | 13 | |

B = Boys, G = Girls

| Total number of pupils: 106 | Year 1 | | Year 2 | | Year 3 | | Year 4 | |
|-----------------------------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|
| | FSM | NFSM | FSM | NFSM | FSM | NFSM | FSM | NFSM |
| | 10 | 3 | 2 | 26 | 21 | 31 | 5 | 8 |

FSM = Free school meals, NFSM = No free school meals



In terms of percentage gains in reading and spelling, the following results were found:

Reading progress by cohort and gender

| | Year 1 | | Year 2 | | Year 3 | | Year 4 | | Total % | % Boys | % Girls | % FSM | % NFSM |
|----------------|--------|---|--------|----|--------|----|--------|---|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| | B | G | B | G | B | G | B | G | | | | | |
| Gain of 6m + | 3 | 4 | 12 | 10 | 20 | 24 | 7 | 2 | 77% | 78% | 77% | 69% | 82% |
| Gain of 1 – 5m | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 14% | 11% | 17% | 13% | 15% |
| No change | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 9% | 11% | 6% | 18% | 3% |
| Loss | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | – | – | – | – | – |

B = Boys, G = Girls

Scores based on Salford Sentence Reading Test (pre-2012)

Spelling progress by cohort and gender

| | Year 1 | | Year 2 | | Year 3 | | Year 4 | | Total % | % Boys | % Girls | % FSM | % NFSM |
|----------------|--------|---|--------|---|--------|----|--------|---|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| | B | G | B | G | B | G | B | G | | | | | |
| Gain of 6m + | 3 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 55% | 56% | 54% | 56% | 54% |
| Gain of 1 – 5m | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 34% | 33% | 34% | 31% | 35% |
| No change | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5% | 4% | 6% | 5% | 4% |
| Loss | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6% | 7% | 6% | 8% | 6% |

B = Boys, G = Girls

Scores based on Schonell Spelling Test

As can be seen, gains in reading of over 6 months were more readily achieved than in spelling. This lag might well be expected as decoding is generally accepted as being in advance of encoding, especially in the acquisition of early or emergent skills. If reading involves the learning of a skill set that enables the reader to recognise words and their parts and convert them into sound and meaning, it is at least bound within an extant context that remains constant and can offer up a range of cues. Writing, on the other hand, is all recollection; starting with a blank page, a context must be created from scratch (composition), and, moreover, a context that must conform to grammatical rules and graphic conventions in order to be successfully transcribed.

Interestingly, there was some suggestion (though not statistically conclusive) in the raw data that the gap between reading and writing gains was less pronounced in younger pupils. Perhaps they have had less time both to experience a range of reading contexts and to develop patterns of failure. They are closer to the learning of their peers and educated, for the most part, in a phase where emergent writing is

understood and valued. For Year 1 pupils in the pilot, in particular, the intervention is also closer in time to their original experience of phonics and thus might feel more like consolidation of recent learning than breaking fresh ground.

Clearly, these tentative findings confirm well-researched statements on the importance of early intervention but also have implications for the Stage 2. Certainly, in Neath Port Talbot, intervention has historically been focused on reading rather than writing, and one wonders how much opportunity children have to compose and scribe meaningfully “at their own level” in the mainstream classroom; how much explicit teaching occurs that scaffolds the emergent stage (while still enabling pupils to develop as thinkers, speakers, listeners and readers); and whether formative assessment is diagnostic enough to support next-steps improvement. The “low thresholds, high ceilings” principle of differentiation is a challenging one for schools to take on board, but is ultimately the only way forward for “closing the gap”, an aim that permeates all aspects of literacy.

Qualitative Response

In addition to the baseline and progress data, schools were asked to respond to a questionnaire: Nine of the eleven schools submitted a response, and the following is a summary of the views they expressed:

- All found the Rapid Phonics assessment process straightforward to administer and “very informative... an excellent way to find out exactly where the children need to begin.” The number of sessions per week varied from two (the minimum entitlement for the pilot) to four and sessions lasted from twenty to forty minutes, depending on the contingencies of the time-table. Group sizes varied, but the model of four pupils at a time was favoured in most Foundation Phase settings, rising to a maximum of six in KS2. One school with a particularly limited time allocation tried to run two sessions a week with 10 children (in two groups of five) which resulted in two fifteen minute mini-sessions, far too short a time to cover the full range of systematic activities. After this had been picked up by LEA observation, staff had the opportunity to see a model session and the school has since decided to reorganise the way it runs the programme.
- All schools agreed on the clarity of session plans (“very clear instructions”) and most had successfully organised resources in advance of teaching so that transitions during sessions ran smoothly. In several settings programme resources were usefully supplemented with additional ones e.g. magnetic boards and letters for the sound swap activity; sandboxes for additional rehearsal of grapheme formation; handwriting sheets to support the same; grapheme “vests” worn by pupils for human word building. Some schools used books to record dictation activities, thus providing useful evidence of progress, while others used whiteboards (although it would be worth investing in lined boards for this). One school successfully experimented with traditional handwriting books (four lines per letter) to do this and found that letter formation noticeably improved.

“...an excellent way to find out exactly where the children need to begin.”

- Most children made satisfactory progress although, unsurprisingly, for the majority of pupils reading was felt to have outpaced writing. Most pupils found the sessions engaging and “fun”. Pupils placed in the same group did not always progress at the same rate and some settings attempted to counter this by subdividing groups (especially where there were more “challenging” pupils) or, in one case, by providing supplementary 1: 1 sessions to consolidate learning. In terms of evidence of progress beyond the programme, several respondents commented on the early transference of skills into the mainstream classroom: “...Children’s skills improved, but their confidence also improved and they were able to use these skills in their everyday work.”
- Most schools felt that more work needed to be done to “creatively” develop home links round the programme. Most had informed parents by letter or phone that their children would be involved in the programme and are planning to attempt to bring parents of the next cohort into the school to give a fuller explanation of its content and opportunities.

All schools felt that outcomes for most pupils had met their expectations or exceeded them and are planning to use the programme again in the new academic year. Many of the target children will move out of Rapid Phonics and on to Rapid Reading or the ESTEEM project (an LEA literacy intervention), while new children will be targeted for the Rapid Phonics programme.



Sustaining and building

From their responses, schools clearly intend to continue to use the programme as part of their provision map of support for pupils identified as under-attaining. However, we would urge schools to consider certain priorities to ensure that pupil progress can be sustained beyond the intervention:

- early identification of need and early intervention (e.g. Year 2 in FP and Y3 in KS2);
- clear entry and exit strategies;
- continued collection of baseline and progress data to support and evidence monitoring and evaluation, including examples of pre- and post-teaching independent writing;
- ironing out problems with e-book access so that pupils can be allocated extra practice-time in school if access is unavailable at home;
- creating ways for the decodable books to be utilised more effectively;

- as soon as appropriate, pupils to move from Rapid Phonics to Rapid Reading;
- whole-class guided reading sessions to continue to support target pupils at an appropriate level of challenge, using flexible groupings to reflect movement in pupil progress;
- teaching of reading and, particularly, writing in the mainstream classroom to refer to useful strategies used in the intervention, therefore a shared knowledge of phonics required across school in line with Estyn guidance;
- creating more formalised channels for staff and parents to report on any progress observed;
- trying to engage parents in the learning of their children, particularly with the potential for home use of the e-books.

“...engaging and fun.”

We would like to thank all the schools, staff and pupils who participated in this project.

Neath Port Talbot Literacy Team, November 2013



INDEPENDENT TRIAL

Whole class quality first teaching with catch up interventions for those at risk



Sound Discovery Research

Context:

Sound Discovery is the synthetic phonics programme on which Rapid Phonics is based. Its effectiveness was researched across 950 children in 56 schools.

Advancements in reading and spelling ages

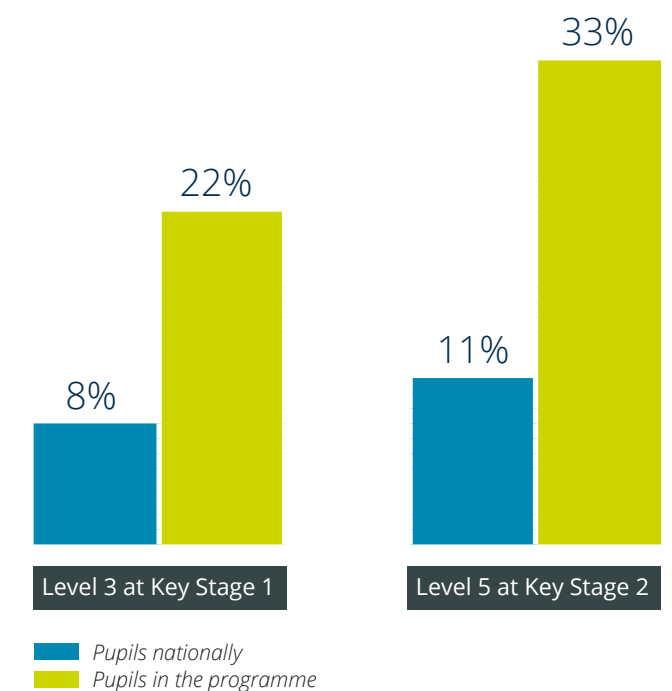
Children entering school with low language assessments were on average 15 months ahead of their age for both reading and spelling after using Sound Discovery.

- Both boys and girls made good progress.
- Children with free school meals (i.e. eligible for Pupil Premium) obtained scores above their age in reading.
- Children with English as an additional language reached the expected level for their age in reading and spelling.



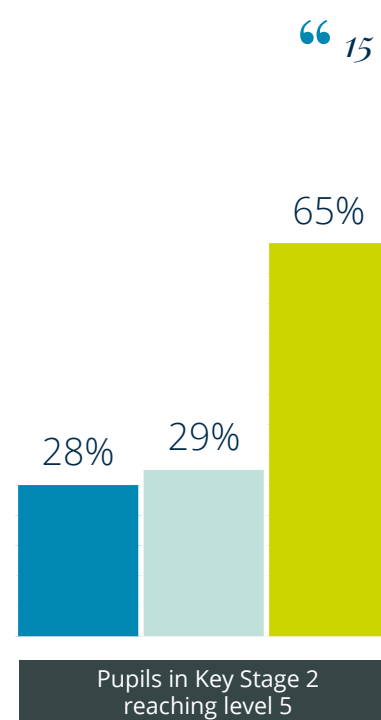
Boys achieved high levels in writing

Particularly noticeable was the performance of boys who achieved well above the national average in writing:



Reading and writing SATs levels well above the national average

Children who had used Sound Discovery throughout primary school achieved above the national average in KS1 and KS2 tests:



■ Pupils nationally
■ Pupils in similar schools
■ Pupils in the programme

“15 months ahead of their age.”

Wave 3 intervention

When used as a Wave 3 intervention, Sound Discovery accelerated rates of progress. Children who were experiencing difficulties made on average 3 times the expected progress in reading. This is well above the recommended rate of progress for an effective intervention.

One child said, “I can try to think what sound is in the word and I can write it. Before Sound Discovery it was really tricky for me.”

One parent said, “I thought it was one of the most positive things she’d done. There was a marked improvement confidence-wise and in her ability during the time. Now she’s enjoying reading – and flying.”

Sound Discovery has been effectively used with pupils from Reception to Year 8 with a wide range of needs including:

- dyslexia;
- moderate learning difficulties;
- autism;
- attention and concentration difficulties;
- speech and language difficulties;
- emotional and behavioural difficulties; and
- English as an additional language.



Motivating and fun

Teachers and pupils highlighted the motivating and enjoyable nature of Sound Discovery. For example, one child commented: “It has helped me with my sounds and spelling and it’s fun!”

The headteacher at one school noted the way in which reluctant readers and writers moved from saying, “no’ or ‘I can’t’ ...to ‘I can’ and ‘Can we do some more during playtime?’”

Easy to use

Schools found Sound Discovery easy to use. Teachers highlighted the clear, manageable lesson structure and the simplicity of the resources. Learning support and teaching assistants also found the materials straightforward to use. One learning support assistant commented that the manual was “simple and clear”.

“Can we do some more during playtime?”




Illustration by Kanae Sato

Summary of Results of Local Authority Wave 3 Intervention Studies using Sound Discovery, 2003-2010:

| Date | Reference | Year Group(s) | Numbers | Schools | Taught by | Reading Accuracy Ratio Gain | Spelling Ratio Gain | Time |
|------|--------------|---------------|---------|---------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 2003 | Norfolk CC | YR – Y6 | 17 | 1 | Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group | 3.8 | 2.7 | 10 wks |
| 2004 | BANES LA | Y3 | 18 | 4 | Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group | 3.3 | 1.1 | 20 wks |
| 2005 | Norfolk CC | Y2 – Y8 | 47 | 13 | Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group | 1.8 – 5.3 | 1.4 – 3.2 | 12 wks |
| 2008 | Wiltshire CC | Y2 – Y3 | 46 | 15 | Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group | 3.7 | 1.9 | 3-4 months |
| 2009 | Wiltshire CC | Y2 – Y3 | 52 | 11 | Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group | 2.9 | 1.9 | 9-12 wks |
| 2010 | Wiltshire CC | Y2 – Y3 | 70 | 12 | Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group | 3.1 | 1.4 | 9-12 wks |

Using Pupil Premium Funding to buy Rapid in Bradford



School name:  Blakehill Primary School, Bradford

School type:  Large-sized urban primary

Number of pupils:  420

OFSTED Rating:  Good

Context:

Blakehill is a larger than average primary with 420 children from a wide variety of backgrounds. It received a 'good' rating in the last two OFSTED inspections.

We talked with Assistant Head, Annette Patterson about her experiences of Rapid Phonics in Blakehill.

What resources do you use for phonics teaching?

Here at Blakehill we use Phonics Play based on Letters and Sounds and Rapid Phonics is our main intervention for children not making the expected progress in reading. We purchased it on a recommendation from another school with our Pupil Premium funding.

How did you introduce the resources to your staff?

James, our Pearson Sales Consultant, arranged for a trainer to go into school which was fantastic as we didn't have to take staff out of school!

What difference has Rapid Phonics made at Blakehill?

The staff delivering the intervention love it. Everything they need is in place, allowing the full 20 minutes of each intervention session to be really focused and effective. The teaching notes really support the teaching assistants, and enable anyone who has been trained to deliver effective sessions 'off the peg'. One support staff member said 'I have not seen impact like this before'. I have never found a child it did not work with and children no longer remain on interventions for long periods. They love the snappy lessons!

By using the placement tests every six weeks we tracked children's progress through the phonic steps. We deliver a phonic test to all children so that those on the intervention are appraised in the context of the progress of the whole class, against national expectations. **All the children at Blakehill on the Rapid Phonics intervention filled the gaps they had in their Phonics and after the programme were in line with their peers.**

Building on our success from last year, 88% of our Year 1 pupils passed the Phonics Screening check and Rapid Phonics played a big part in our achievement.

"I have not seen impact like this before."



How Rapid Maths can help your pupils progress by more than double the expected rate



Context:

Rapid Maths can help your pupils to progress by more than double the expected rate. Three trials were carried out in different parts of the country, asking schools to select groups of pupils who were struggling with Maths. In all cases, the pupils were tested at the beginning and end of the trial to measure their progress. The trials included schools with a wide range of intakes.

Richmond trial

Pupils at Meadlands Primary in Richmond used Rapid Maths three times per week over a period of four months. The sessions were led by the SENCo and each session lasted 45-60 minutes. They used the Rapid Maths printed materials and software. The pupils were all struggling in maths and were a mixed-aged group from Years 4, 5 and 6.

Over the four month period, pupils made **an average gain of 34 months** in their numerical age, with **one pupil making 47 months' progress**. Pupils were tested at the beginning and end of the trial using Hodder's Numeracy Progress Tests.

Caerphilly trial

Rapid Maths was trialled in two Caerphilly primary schools with very different settings. School A is a medium-sized primary school with an intake from an economically advantaged area, with no pupils eligible for free school meals at the time of the trial. School B

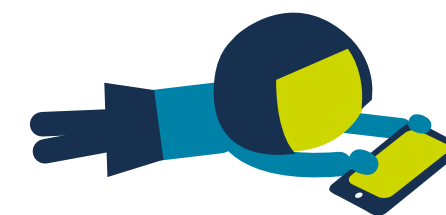
was from an area of high socio-economic deprivation, with 56.6% of pupils eligible for free school meals. A group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 were selected to take part in the trial.

The twelve pupils from School A made **an average gain of 17.25 months** in their numerical age over a five-month period (using the programme in two 30-40-minute sessions per week) and four of the pupils made more than 20 months' progress.

The eight pupils from School B made an **average of 5.6 months progress** over the five months, with one child gaining 21 months in numerical age. Overall the average across both schools (20 pupils) was **12.7 months** gain in numerical age.

Worcestershire trial

25 pupils from three different primary schools in Worcestershire used Rapid Maths over a five-month period. They were tested at the beginning and end of the five months. Overall, they made an **average gain of 18.1 months** in their numerical age in this period. **One pupil gained an amazing 63 months** in numerical age!




| Location of trial | Length of trial/expected gain | Average gain in numerical age | Actual gain vs. expected gain |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Richmond | 4 months | 34 months | 8.5 times |
| Caerphilly | 6 months | 12.7 months | 2.1 times |
| Worcestershire | 5 months | 18.1 months | 3.6 times |

Get 'sky high' results with Rapid Professional Development



School name:  St Nicholas C of E Middle School, Worcestershire

School type:  Medium-sized rural middle school

Number of pupils:  317

OFSTED Rating:  Satisfactory

Context

St Nicholas C of E Middle School had been using the printed Rapid reading books with their struggling readers for many years and were happy with them. They also had some limited experience of using the old-style Rapid software on CD Rom. However, the three Special Needs Educational Teaching Assistants hadn't previously felt very confident using the software, and were keen to learn how to help children get the most out of Rapid reading sessions.

When they got the opportunity to trial Rapid Reading online as part of the Worcestershire trial (see page 6) they jumped at it, but felt they would appreciate the extra support of Rapid Professional Development to help them get to grips with how to use Rapid to really make a difference to their pupils.

Having undertaken the two-day Rapid training, they all felt far more at ease with the technology, and began to integrate it much more in their reading catch-up sessions. The training gave them the knowledge and confidence to use the Rapid printed books and eBooks using best practice, ensuring good progress for all their struggling readers. Sally took on the mantle of Rapid Online champion, working with 5 children 3 times a week for 20 minutes, and soon saw the difference: 'The results were amazing! Levels have gone sky high!'

- 'We learned how to assess children at the end of each book using the Quiz pages – we now do this in school to improve comprehension.'
- 'We hadn't used Rapid online before, so it was useful to learn how to get the most out of the eBooks. One example of how this has worked is finding out about the recording activities. After

using this feature and listening to his own reading, one boy realised he sounded like a robot – it was a moment of realisation for him as he then was able to correct himself, and his reading has been better ever since.'

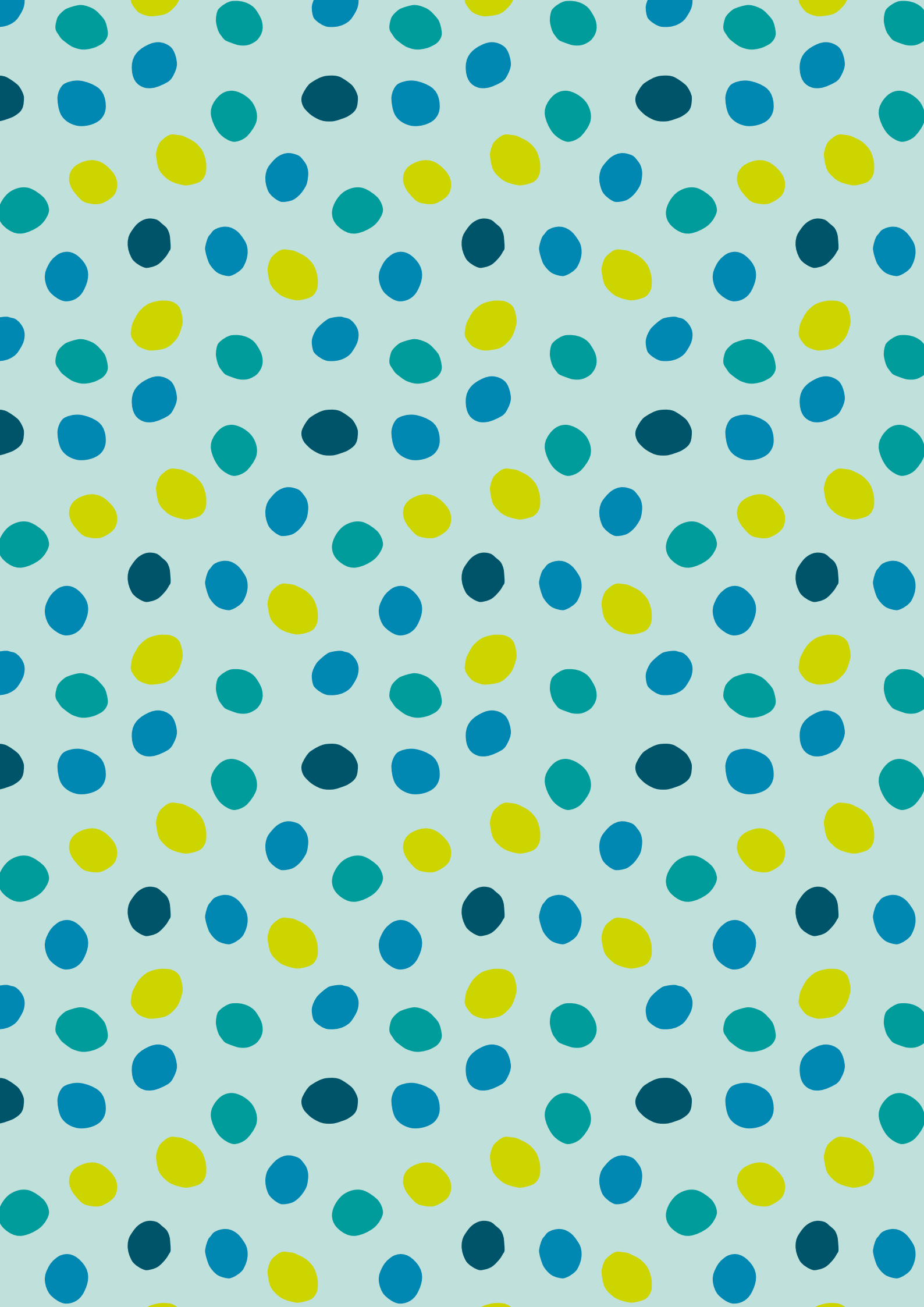
- 'Doing the training together felt like a shared experience – a blank slate. We were able to support each other and share a sense of achievement. Once we got past the fear of using the website and the barrier of getting children set up we realised that it wasn't difficult after all!'
- 'I would recommend the training to other schools. It gives you a clearer view of how to use the books correctly – and shows you the benefit of not cutting corners.'

The training was delivered by Crispin Evans, Educational Consultant for Pearson, who was delighted to see the teaching assistants grow in confidence – and excitement – as the training progressed. 'The training is great for breaking down those technical barriers, but that's just a small part of it. We look at areas such as best practice for shared reading and guided reading using the printed books – how to balance online and print, and how to get the best out of a one-to-one session with the teacher; for example how to generate discussion about the book, and how to teach the children to read with purpose.'

- 'Training also gave them a good view of the child's experience so they were able to fully support children and parents.'

After the training, all children made progress above what was expected and one made nearly 5 times the expected progress. All made more than double the expected progress in reading comprehension.





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www.pearsonprimary.co.uk/intervention

