

**Herts for Learning  
KS2 Reading Fluency Project  
2017-18  
Summary of impact and learning**

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## KS2 Reading Fluency Project 2017-18

### Summary of impact and learning

#### Context

The Herts for Learning (HfL) KS2 Reading Fluency Project, designed and delivered by the HfL Teaching and Learning English team, incorporates the strategies of modelled expressive reading, echo reading, repeated re-reading, skilled questioning, challenging text selection and modelling comprehension skills. Delivered over an eight-week period, the aim of the project is to improve the trajectory of Year 6 pupils (summer term Year 5) towards the expected standard in reading at the end of KS2. The project is being delivered with schools in Hertfordshire and surrounding counties, including London.

#### Brief description

The HfL KS2 Reading Fluency Project has been designed to:

- increase the number of pupils in Year 6 achieving the Expected Standard in reading at the end of KS2
- ensure pupils have a more positive relationship with books on exit from KS2
- cultivate enthusiastic, confident readers who have an increased understanding of challenging texts.

#### Project delivery

Participants receive the project CPD through a one-day launch session, a mid-project twilight and a final 'celebratory' half-day cluster. In addition, participating schools receive a two-hour, mid-project visit where elements of the project can be tailored towards specific school needs. The training is available for two delegates from the project school: the Year 6 (or Year 5 – summer term) project teacher and the subject leader.

Before beginning the project, class teachers complete the YARC test (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension), which provides a reading comprehension age for each participating pupil. The test is repeated at the end of the eight-week intervention to gather impact measures. Full instructions for how to administer the test are provided on the project's launch day.

As part of the project, participating teachers are asked to work with a group of six pupils for 40 minutes each week (two sessions of 20 minutes) for an eight-week period. These pupils are deemed to be not on track to reach the expected standard at the start of the intervention.

Each school is allocated a project adviser. The adviser will be on hand throughout the project period to answer queries and support the school as needed. The adviser will also analyse the project data and share this with the school.

The project began on a very small scale, in one school, where the subject leader was keen to ensure that those pupils who entered KS2 at a 2b/2c reached the EXS by the end of Year 6.

At the time, the school were concerned that many of these pupils, who were then in Year 5 and Year 6, would not do so. Observations of a sample of these pupils reading a well-pitched ARE text, indicated that they were far from fluent: their reading sounded choppy; robotic and monotonous. In addition, they displayed a disregard for punctuation, lacked the ability to monitor comprehension as they read (indicated by the fact that they often mis-read words, or at times completely missed out words – or whole lines of text – without realising and self-correcting). Their reading comprehension was poor (as judged by their inability to attempt many of the oral comprehension questions asked after reading the text).

The school sought a swift and effective teaching strategy that would – as the lowest indicator of success – support these children to quickly gain ground in advance of the impending test, but would – at best – turn these switched-off readers onto the joys of this particular pastime.

The HfL team decided upon a strategy initially named ‘modelled fluent reading’ sessions, but now, as the project launches into full swing, this has evolved into a more sophisticated model. The current project supports teachers to embed the following strategies into regular reading sessions of engaging, well-pitched ARE texts: modelled fluent reading; text marking; echo reading; opportunities for repeated re-readings and performance reading. The schools are asked to work with six children over an eight-week period, offering a double-dose of guided reading: session one to focus on modelled fluent reading practice and echo reading, and session two to focus on comprehension development.

### **Findings of the project**

- **More than simply reading aloud**

Repeatedly, HfL discovered that simply reading aloud to the children (despite doing so in a perfectly fluent and engaging fashion) did not support their comprehension development as much as had been anticipated. Exploring this aspect repeatedly during trials reaffirmed the observation that echo reading (where a child has the opportunity to hear the words on the page spoken by their own voice following modelling by an ‘expert’ reader) allowed for better comprehension, compared to when the text was simply read aloud to the children. Quantitative data to support this finding has not yet been gained (partly because the YARC test does not allow for this analysis) but it was witnessed time and time again during observations and trial sessions.

- **The significance of speed**

Most teachers lament the fact that many of their children simply do not read quickly enough to get through the reading paper in time to have a hope of reaching the expected standard. Conversely, the real problem may be that they read it too quickly, and too passively, merely hoping that by passing their eyes over the words, the meaning hidden within them will leap into their panicked brains. If they do this, then they will probably end up having to read the text over and over again during the test simply because it did not go in the first time. It might be more time-efficient, to read it a bit slower but more effectively.

HfL's study also revealed that prior to the project, the selected pupils rarely self-corrected as they read, demonstrating a lack of understanding. One child replaced the word monk with monkey and continued on, unaware. The same child read again from a 'cold' piece at the end of the project and re-read sentences and words for sense as she went along, demonstrating that she was 'taking in' the text. This may have slowed her pace, but aided her comprehension and retrieval.

- **Getting the simple things right**

Although the techniques proposed in the Reading Fluency Project could be neatly summed up in a few minutes, it takes time, effort and skill to get the simple things right. In order to effectively model fluent reading, teachers have to be acutely aware of what fluency is, and what it sounds like when reading an age-related text. Prosody being perhaps the most challenging aspect of fluency, we support teachers to apply their own prosodic knowledge to the analysis of a challenging text that would test even an expert reader's prowess. This proves to be a real eye-opener for many teachers and helps them realise what a door-opener prosodic knowledge is to reading comprehension. Teachers also need to gain confidence in knowing what a good text choice looks like if it is both going to inspire a reluctant reader to read, and prepare them for success in the KS2 test. Finally, teachers need the time and space to reflect on their current practice and consider how this is contributing – or not – to the development of prosodic understanding. All of these things take time, practice and most importantly, headspace: something that HfL try to offer on project launch days.

## Impact and outcomes



Since its launch in autumn 2017, over 60 Hertfordshire schools have taken part in the KS2 Reading Fluency Project, involving over 300 Year 5 and 6 pupils.

### Outcomes from the autumn 2017 and spring 2018 project

Pupils on the autumn 2017 round of the KS2 Reading Fluency Project made an average of 22 months' progress in reading comprehension age, with pupils in the spring 2018 round reaching an average of 23 months' progress. In the same period, pupils in receipt of pupil premium grant (PPG) funding made an average of 29 months progress.

PPG pupils made

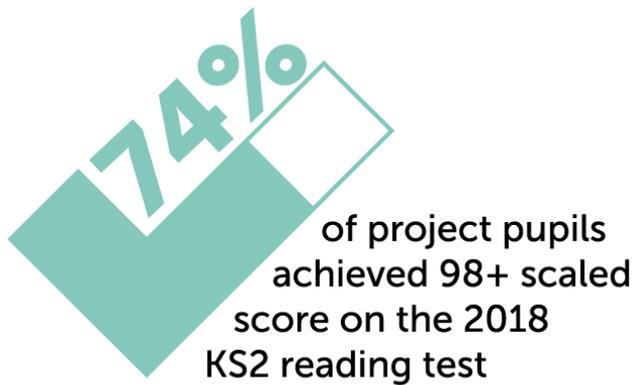


months progress

Average progress in reading comprehension for all pupils



Provisional 2018 SATs data was sought for 292 project pupils. 74% of these pupils achieved 98+ scaled score in the 2018 SATs reading test – all of these pupils were judged as being 'not on track' at the start of the project; 60% of these pupils achieved the Expected Standard (this equates to 175 pupils); 5% of this cohort achieved the Greater Depth Standard.



**5%** of project pupils achieved GDS

The provisional KS2 SATs results for 2018 indicate that 79.2% of Hertfordshire pupils reached the expected standard for reading, an increase of 3 percentage points on last year; schools who had participated in the KS2 Reading Fluency Project showed an increase of 5.8 percentage points.

This puts Hertfordshire schools 4.2 percentage points above the national average of 75% for reading, and those schools who took part in the project 7 percentage points above.

Pupils typically demonstrated the following changes in reading behaviour:

- increased stamina – able to read more text for a longer period whilst retaining understanding
- increased accuracy – children make less substitutions, omissions, mispronunciations, additions when reading a ‘cold’ text
- increased enjoyment – pupils read more and are more willing to explore a wider range of literature
- increased confidence – pupils tackle challenging texts with greater willingness and show improved tenacity in teasing out meaning
- increased engagement – pupils offer more extended contributions in group discussions about challenging texts.

### **Feedback from project participants**

“Pupils absolutely loved this project and make incredible progress. For me, it was invaluable CPD that has improved the teaching of reading for all children in my class.”

“This project has made a measurable impact on children’s reading comprehension but perhaps, more importantly, I have seen children’s confidence and enjoyment of reading grow.”

“Children who have taken part in the project are now ‘loving’ the job of helping others echo read and text mark.”

“A parent told me that her child fell in love with a book for the first time and asked to be taken to the library to get a book by the same author. Whilst there, she took a recommendation form to write about the book, then displayed it.”

“Will change the way you teach reading.”

The project has received considerable interest from across the country and training events (where information from the project is shared and summarised) are being delivered in Lincoln, Derby, Halifax, Newquay, Bristol, Manchester and Birmingham in autumn and spring 2018/19.

### **Next steps**

If you would like to express an interest in participating in the project, please sign up on the [Herts for Learning website](#).

We are also offering one-day CPD events nationally to offer an insight into the transformational teaching strategies used in the project, so schools unable to participate in the full project can incorporate them into their teaching practice.

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For more information about the Herts for Learning **KS2 reading Fluency Project** please contact [penny.slater@hertsforlearning.co.uk](mailto:penny.slater@hertsforlearning.co.uk)

For details on our wider training and consultancy services please visit [hertsforlearning.co.uk](http://hertsforlearning.co.uk)

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