

Research Briefing No. 18

Evaluation of the Reading Quest programme: ‘all of a sudden the lights go on’

Key findings

Quantitative findings

- Most pupils who received Reading Quest intervention reached an age-appropriate level of reading, as indicated by their reading age scores and the number of pupils reaching the national target of Level 2 in reading. It is not clear whether this was a result of natural progression or Reading Quest intervention.
- Although pupils with weaker literacy skills might be expected to fall further behind their peers over time, this was not the case in the sample of pupils who received Reading Quest intervention. Again, it is unclear whether pupils receiving Reading Quest would have progressed more slowly than their peers had they not received the intervention.
- The interview data indicate that a key benefit of Reading Quest is the perceived boost this intervention gives to children’s confidence with reading. Furthermore, the great majority of the children enjoyed the Reading Quest sessions and were keen to attend.

Qualitative findings

- Teachers felt that Reading Quest was particularly helpful for children with English as an Additional Language.
- Parents’ support was viewed as important, however, it was acknowledged that engaging all parents can be challenging.
- Tutors felt strongly supported and listened to by the Director of Reading Quest.



The research

This research is an evaluation of Reading Quest, an Oxford-based charity providing intensive one-to-one tutoring for Year 2 pupils in disadvantaged areas who do not reach expected levels of literacy. Reading Quest aims to give these children ‘the opportunity to catch up with their peers, enjoy attainment in the classroom and have aspirations for the future’ (www.readingquest.org.uk). The work of Reading Quest is based on Marie Clay’s Reading Recovery model. Reading Quest’s support is less intensive than Reading Recovery and comprises three one-to-one hour-long sessions per week over six weeks, from tutors with a range of experiences (and who are not necessarily trained teachers). Tutors also provide a weekly Family Library in Reading Quest schools, where parents are invited to come and discuss their child’s reading and borrow books and games to share with their children at home.

From having just such a poor concept about their reading skills, all of a sudden ... the lights go on and they say 'I've become more brave' and they discover 'hey, I can do this'(Reading Quest Tutor)

This project comprises an exciting research partnership between a charity (Reading Quest), the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) which funded this research, and the Graduate School of Education. The researchers declare no competing interests likely to have influenced their research or its reporting in this briefing.

Research design

7 schools with Reading Quest and 3 comparison schools without this form of support participated in this study.

Strand 1: Pupils receiving Reading Quest were tested before and after the intervention using the Marie Clay Observation Survey. Two to 6 children in each school received the intervention. Data were collected from 96 children.

Strand 2: All Year 2 pupils in 3 Reading Quest schools and 3 comparison schools were tested using the Word Recognition and Phonics test, and all Year 2 pupils in 2 Reading Quest schools and 3 comparison schools completed the Graded Word Spelling Test. These tests took place at the start and end of Year 2, and in the following February when the pupils had progressed to Year 3.

Strand 3: Interviews were conducted with Reading Quest tutors, class teachers for Year 2 classes in all 7 intervention schools, approximately half the Year 2 pupils who had received Reading Quest, and a small sample of parents whose children who had received Reading Quest.

Further information

Website

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/education/people/project/687>

<http://www.readingquest.org.uk>

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