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## Summary of the Reading Recovery™ Annual Report for the United Kingdom and Ireland: 2010-11

### Introduction

Reading Recovery is one of the most carefully monitored initiatives in education today. Every year detailed information is collected about every child and teacher involved in the programme. What follows is a short summary of the findings and answers the following questions:

1. How many children were involved in Reading Recovery and which children were they?
2. How well did the programme work?
3. What did children in Reading Recovery know about literacy?
4. What progress did children make after Reading Recovery?
5. How well did Reading Recovery children do in National Assessments?
6. How long does Reading Recovery take?
7. Who teaches in Reading Recovery?

### 1. How many children were involved in Reading Recovery and which children were they?

Reading Recovery proved itself to be a successful solution to children's literacy problems in 2010-11. The size of the implementation was larger than in the previous year and 24,107 children were served in Reading Recovery across the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Wales and Jersey.

The majority of children were identified for Reading Recovery in their first year of formal schooling after nursery/reception, and approximately two thirds of the older children in the programme had started their series of lessons in the previous year. Boys outnumbered girls among the lowest attaining children by approximately three to two and just over one in five children (21%) were learning English as an additional language. Nearly half of the children (45%) in Reading Recovery came from economically disadvantaged homes, a very high proportion compared with the distribution of such children in the general population (19%). 74% of children came from white European backgrounds, and around 5% from special cohort groups including children in the care of local authorities, traveller children and refugee children.

### 2. How well did the programme work?

More than four out of five (81%) of the lowest attaining children achieved accelerated learning in Reading Recovery, reaching independent levels of literacy within the required time. This corroborates high outcomes since the introduction of Reading Recovery and first annual monitoring in 1993-94. It demonstrates that the quality of the implementation was maintained in spite of all the issues and uncertainties surrounding the future of Reading Recovery and Every Child a Reader this year.

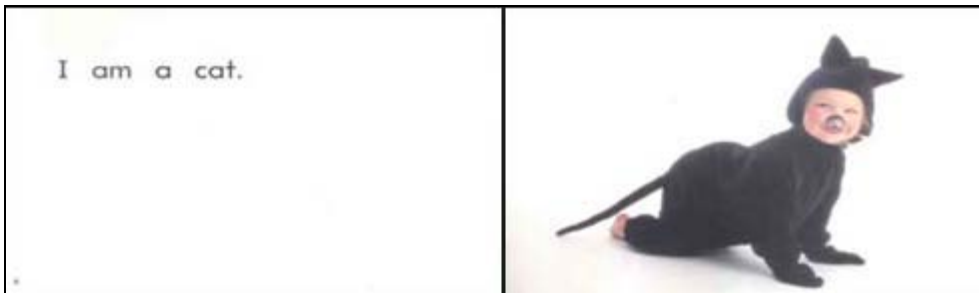
The achievement gap that was evident in the disproportionate numbers of boys and the over-representation of poor children among the least able had been almost closed by the end of their Reading Recovery programme. Children whose first language was not English were actually more successful than their English first language peers this year, with 84% and 80% discontinuing respectively. There was a substantial increase in the number of incomplete Reading Recovery programmes this year (10%), with a further 2% unreported. This is largely due to funding uncertainties causing schools to finish Reading Recovery at the end of 2010-11. Although small

group sizes mean the data should be treated cautiously, children from ethnic minority groups were very successful with more than four out of five achieving accelerated learning.

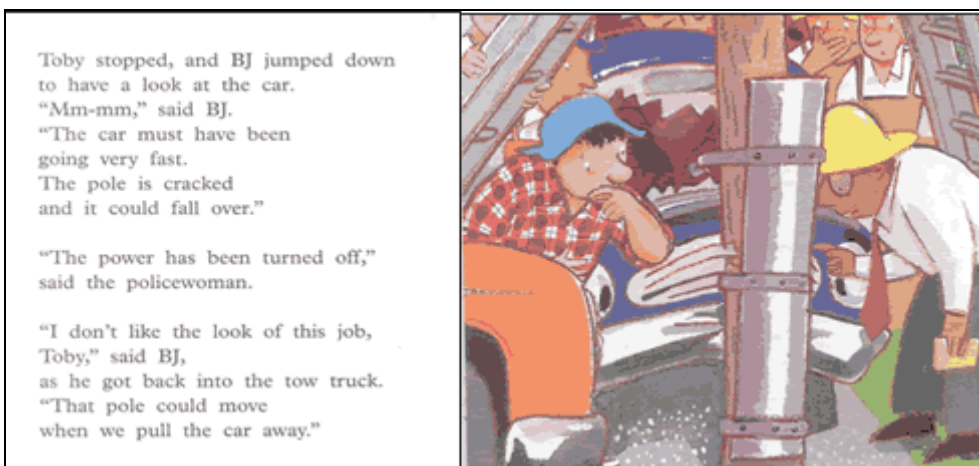
Of the 199 'looked after' children who had completed their lessons by the end of the year, 148 achieved accelerated learning, as did 50 of the 56 asylum seeker or refugee children. Approximately three out of four traveller children who completed the programme within the year achieved accelerated progress.

### 3. What did children in Reading Recovery know about literacy?

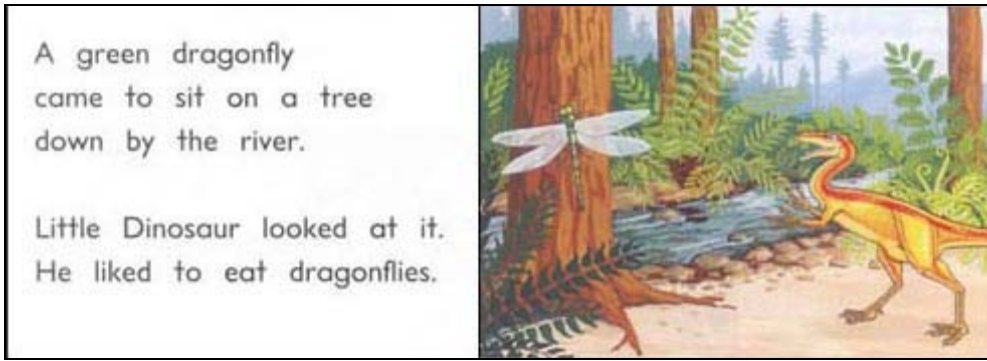
The children in Reading Recovery were the lowest achieving in their class, and when they started the programme they had learned very little about reading and writing. After at least one full year of formal literacy teaching, the majority were non-readers, and two in five could not read any text, in some cases not even their own name. The average text level at entry was 1.2, a short, predictable text, with few words on the page, and just one word changed on each page, the changed word strongly indicated by the picture (see below).



Children's programmes are discontinued when they are judged by an independent observer to be able to read and write independently within the average band for their class and age. On average, children whose programmes were discontinued were able to read a level 17 text, which meant they were able to read a story with elaborated episodes and events, extended descriptions, some literary language, full pages of print, more unusual and challenging vocabulary and less support from illustrations (see illustration below). Their writing vocabulary had increased from around 10 words to around 40 words written correctly within a timed assessment. More than eight out of 10 children achieved this magnitude of change.



Children who do not achieve the accelerated progress required for the programme to be discontinued are referred back to the school for longer-term support. Just one in five children were referred, but they had made considerable progress, reaching on average text level nine. These are simple story books with some repetition of phrase patterns, ideas and vocabulary, several lines of text and around 20-40 words per page. Story lines involve a number of incidents and some literary conventions are introduced (see illustration below). These children had also increased their writing vocabulary to around 23 words.



#### **4. What progress did children make after Reading Recovery?**

After the end of their series of lessons, without further intensive teaching, children who had achieved the goals of Reading Recovery (81% of completed programmes) not only maintained the gains they had made during their programme, but continued to make normal progress gaining one month in reading age every month. These were children who, prior to Reading Recovery, had made very little progress in literacy and suggests that they had acquired independent strategies for reading and writing.

Children who were referred for longer term support (19% of completed programmes) also maintained their programme gains in the six months following the end of one-to-one teaching and, remarkably, these children also demonstrated a normal rate of continuing progress, gaining one month in reading age every month. These were children who had made almost no progress in literacy learning prior to Reading Recovery suggesting that, whilst they had made insufficient progress to be deemed independent readers and writers, they had nevertheless acquired some strategies for reading and writing.

#### **5. How well did Reading Recovery children do in National Assessments?**

Children in England, Wales and Jersey sit national assessments in reading and writing at the end of their second year of formal schooling (Year two). The national prescribed target is Level two. Children identified for Reading Recovery are the lowest achieving in their class, and would be predicted to reach levels W or one without the intervention.

More than three out of four (74%) of all children who received Reading Recovery reached National Curriculum Level two and above in reading, and 58% in writing. This included children who did not achieve the goals of the programme, and those who were still only part way through their Reading Recovery programme when they took national assessments. Children who achieved accelerated learning in the programme had an 84% chance of reaching Level two in reading, with over half reaching Level two b or above.

#### **6. How long does Reading Recovery take?**

Reading Recovery is a short-term intervention, and there is an imperative for teachers to work briskly. There is no set length to children's programmes; teachers tend to take a little longer to achieve their goals during the year of training and children who start with very little in place may take longer to get under way.

Children achieved the goals of the programme, of progressing from being the least able children in their class to working at age appropriate levels of literacy, in a relatively short time, on average just over 18 weeks or 73 lessons, representing on average around 36.5 hours of teaching. Children who did not achieve the goals of the programme were, appropriately, given slightly longer, although in that time they were more likely to have missed lessons.

## **7. Who teaches in Reading Recovery?**

### **Teacher experience**

There were 2,945 Reading Recovery teachers in 2010-11. 1,136 teachers were undergoing Reading Recovery training during the year reported. About 12% of the cohort had four or more years of experience in the programme. Experienced teachers were able to lift on average, slightly more children to age appropriate levels of literacy than teachers in training, but the latter were able to do this a little more quickly, potentially enabling them to serve more children during the year.

### **Teacher responsibilities**

Nearly two thirds of all teachers in Reading Recovery had responsibility for other forms of learning support in their schools, and class teaching responsibilities. Class teachers, SENCOs and headteachers/principals were most likely to have other calls on their time, which interrupted their Reading Recovery teaching, whereas those whose only responsibility was Reading Recovery, often part-time teachers, were the most consistently able to teach daily lessons.

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