

Evaluation Summary

Age range	Read Write Inc. Phonics is taught to children learning to read from Reception – Year 4, but the evaluation will focus on pupils from Reception – Year 2 only Fresh Start targets eligible pupils in Years 5 – 8, but the evaluation will focus on eligible pupils from Years 5 and 6 only
Number of pupils	Read Write Inc. Phonics: 4,440 with 1,320 of those being FSM Fresh Start: 1,200 with 360 of those being FSM
Number of schools	120
Design	Clustered-Randomized Control Trial
Primary Outcome	Read Write Inc. Phonics: New Group Reading Test at the end of the second year (independently collected by Queens University Belfast) Fresh Start: KS2 reading fine points score for Year 6 eligible students at the end of the first year of programme implementation and Year 5 eligible students at the end of the second year of programme implementation (i.e., the end of Year 6 for students who began programme in Year 5)

Programmes

Brief Name	Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start
Why	Literacy programmes rooted in phonics using decodable texts to teach children learning to read and write and those who need to catch up quickly
Who	Read Write Inc. Phonics: children from Reception to Year 4 learning to read; Fresh Start: pupils in Years 5 – 8 below appropriate reading age
What	Children are taught daily in homogeneous groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonic lessons for reading and spelling • Reading activities – from decoding to comprehension • Spelling and compositional writing • Children work with a partner and articulate their thinking throughout the lesson
What	Two days training for all staff in primary schools including knowledge of the alphabetic code and training on how to teach both programmes. Assessment processes to ensure children are taught at correct level and that slowest progress children receive daily tutoring. Ongoing, regular development days – a consultant trainer works with the leaders in school to ensure successful implementation and provide continuing professional development.
Who	Ruth Miskin trainers
How	Training sessions for teachers, and teachers then implement in the classroom
Where	At schools, and in the classrooms
When and how much	Read Write Inc. Phonics: Starts with 20 minutes daily in term 1 of Reception,

	building to 40 minutes by the end of the year. One hour a day for children in Year 1 and above. Many children complete programme by the end of Year 1 or beginning of Year 2. Fresh Start: Up to 33 weeks for eligible pupils in Years 5 and 6 in place of regular English lessons
Tailoring	Slower progress children are identified immediately and given daily one-to-one tuition to ensure they keep up with their peers
How well (planned)	Two days training and regular development days to maximise staff knowledge and children's progress. The headteacher and reading leader attend training before in-school training. The reading leader ideally attends three leadership trainings in the first year

Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start are phonics-based comprehensive literacy programmes. Read Write Inc. Phonics is a complete literacy programme targeted at 4 to 6 year-olds learning to read and write and 7 to 8 year-olds needing to catch up. Fresh Start is a 33-week catch up literacy programme delivered to target children in Years 5 – 8 identified as having fallen behind in expected standards in reading and writing; it aims to support pupils with reading difficulties at the end of primary school, using systematic phonics approaches embedded in content that is tailored for older pupils. The programme recommends a Fresh Start session every day instead of the usual English lessons and each Fresh Start session should be one hour long.

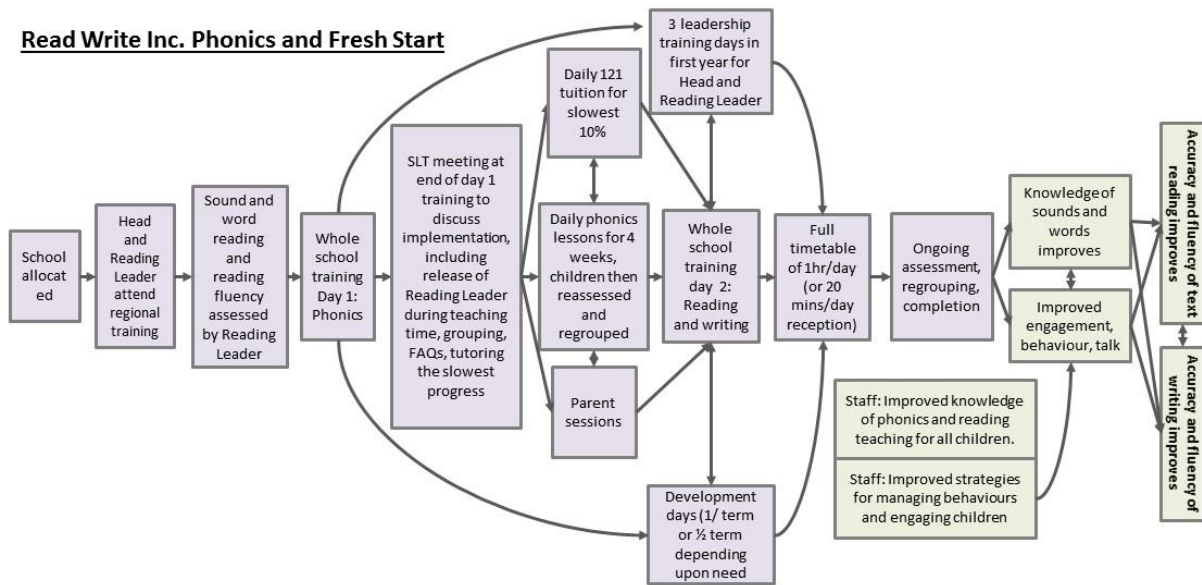
Both programmes involve the same training (depicted in Figure 1), which is usually delivered to the whole school. The headteacher and reading leader attend a regional two-day training before whole school training. The reading leader assesses the children on sound and word reading and fluency using the programmes' assessment materials. The assessment lasts for approximately five minutes and assesses pupils' phonic knowledge; it is focused on decoding and fluency and does not include a comprehension component. The first day of training is for all teaching staff including the headteacher and focuses on the phonic element of the programmes. Three or four weeks later, the trainer returns to support staff on a normal teaching day. She provides feedback, further training and coaching with a focus on the slowest progress children. The second day of training is approximately four to six weeks after the first training day and focuses on teaching reading and writing. In the first year of implementation the reading leader and headteacher attend three regional leadership training days. The trainer continues to visit the school termly to support and coach staff and work closely with the reading leader.

The primary components include:

- Training and ongoing support for all staff teaching the programmes
- Rigorous leadership and management by the reading leader
- Daily lessons that teach children to read accurately and fluently with good comprehension
- Teaching in homogeneous groups
- Multiple readings of age-appropriate decodable stories and non-fiction. Children read each story three times. On the first read, children focus on accurate word reading; the second, on developing fluency; and the third, on comprehension. Fluency and comprehension increase with each repeated read. An introduction, prompts for thinking out loud, and discussion help teachers ensure that children comprehend what they are reading.
- Daily one-to-one tuition for the slowest progress children in addition to their daily group lesson
- Teaching letter formation and spelling alongside sound and word reading

- Teaching writing – from simple words and sentences to independent compositional writing
- Opportunities for partner work throughout the lessons

Figure 1



Significance

According to the National Curriculum Assessment (2015) about 20% of pupils leave primary schools without achieving the expected attainment level in reading, and there are nearly 676 state-funded mainstream primary schools (5% of the total number of schools in the UK) that are below expected primary school floor standards (DfE 2015). In 2015, 77% of pupils met the expected phonics screening check in Year 1, which was a 3 percentage point increase from 2014. By the end of Year 2, approximately 90% of pupils met the standards, a 1 percentage point increase from 2014. Key stage 1 reading scores remained at 90%, which reflected no change from the 2014. Attainment in reading has been an important focus for the Department for Education in England, and there have been various policies implemented in order to achieve the national targets of attainment in reading at Key Stage 2. The government introduced pupil-premium funding for schools to raise the attainment level of disadvantaged pupils. Schools now have the opportunity to use these funds to purchase resources or teaching approaches that can support pupils who are at risk of falling behind. An essential step is to identify reading approaches that ensure all pupils meet National Curriculum expectations, including those pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

Large-scale reviews of the effectiveness of reading interventions in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia have shown that phonics instruction is significantly more effective than non-phonics approaches for teaching reading (Chambers, Cheung, & Slavin, 2015; Torgesen et al., 2006; NICHD, 2000; Australian Government, Department of Education Science and Training, 2005). In the United Kingdom, the Rose Report underscored specifically that the most effective kind of systematic phonics approach is synthetic phonics (Rose, 2006).

According to one of the most well-established theories of reading development, it is clear that both good word reading and language comprehension are required for reading comprehension development; neither is sufficient on their own (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990).

While there is some evidence for the effectiveness of phonics approaches for older pupils with reading difficulties (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001), the overwhelming majority of the studies examine the effectiveness of phonics on younger pupils, especially at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Furthermore, there is little evidence on its effectiveness on spelling and reading comprehension outcomes (as opposed to word reading). More evidence is necessary to understand what aspects of reading development are supported by a phonics-focused approach for older pupils.

Fresh Start was evaluated in an aggregated efficacy trial, which showed promising results as a catch up literacy intervention for Year 7 pupils (Gorard, Siddiqui, & See, 2015). Given that this evaluation was conducted independently by schools, there is the potential for selection bias (although the independent evaluators coordinating the efficacy trial do not see any evidence of such bias), and there is also inconclusive evidence about the programme's effectiveness under diverse conditions. We will address these concerns by conducting our own randomisation and examining the degree to which the programme works with differing levels of support from trainers, heterogeneity in the groups of pupils, and the duration of the programme.

Methods

Research questions

The evaluation is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. **Do Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start impact pupil reading outcomes?** Improving reading outcomes is the ultimate goal of the programme. We will assess the impact of the programmes on reading levels or progress—as defined by the KS2 reading points scores and KS2 writing scores for combined Years 5 and 6 pupils and the New Group Reading Test results for Year 2.
2. **How are the programmes being implemented?** In order to get a better picture of the effectiveness of the programmes on learning outcomes, we will conduct a “light touch” examination of whether the programmes are being implemented with fidelity, described in more detail in the Implementation and Process Evaluation Methods section. Are the teachers teaching the programmes as envisioned by the developers? Are teachers receiving support from the reading leader throughout implementation? How does training help support the ability of the reading leader to implement the programme with fidelity? How contingent is the success of the programme on this continuous professional development? How has the programme impacted teacher knowledge on how to teach reading? Does the programme change teacher practices and behaviours in the classroom?

Design

By eliminating selection bias and bias from confounding variables, a randomised controlled trial (RCT) is the optimal design for making causal claims about programme impacts. Building on the aggregated efficacy trial, which showed promising results of Fresh Start as a catch-up literacy intervention for Year 7 pupils (Gorard, Siddiqui, & See, 2015), we will conduct a cluster randomized controlled trial to determine the impact of the programme on various pertinent reading outcomes.

To control for potential bias that may have occurred when schools conducted internal randomisation as part of the aggregated trial, we will conduct our own independent randomisation. So that we might mimic real-life implementation the study will use random assignment at the level of the

school. This approach also limits spillover effects and ensures that pupils end up in more homogeneous groups.

The two-arm RCT will compare the reading achievements of the programmes and a two-year wait-list control, who will continue 'business-as-usual' for the teaching of phonics, reading and writing. The rigorous cluster-RCT would randomise schools into two groups in equal proportion: 1) those schools who receive Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start programmes, and 2) a control group of schools who would not initially receive either programme.

Randomisation

We will use stratification as part of the randomisation process. Stratification, or blocking the sample, helps improve the precision of the estimates by helping to ensure that the treatment indicator is orthogonal to the other covariates (Cox and Reid 2000). The process involves dividing the sample into groups that possess similar values of certain observable characteristics. While we would expect the simple randomisation process to produce similar groups on average, stratification helps ensure that the groups are similar in reality.

Research suggests that when conducting stratified randomisation, it is optimal to include a maximum of two variables that are highly correlated with the intended outcome to achieve balance; the findings suggest that any more than two highly correlated variables does little to improve balance while resulting in a reduction of degrees of freedom (Zeneli et al., 2016).

Thus the stratification will use the school-level historical KS1 reading score provided by schools as part of their registration form and the government assigned Ofsted grade, a measure of school quality that determines what kind of training they receive. The schools will be assigned to two groupings within the Ofsted grade, those with a grade of 1 or 2 and those with a grade of 3 or 4.

A block will be constituted of all the schools that share the same Ofsted rating and fall in the same "bin" of KS1 reading scores. This requirement helps achieve balance along the dimensions of Ofsted rating and helps ensure that the schools have similar pre-tests results. In each block, half of the schools will be assigned to the treatment condition and the other half will be assigned to the control. By assigning the same proportion within each block, we reduce the variance of the treatment effect estimate as compared to non-stratified randomised designs (Duflo et al., 2007).

The randomisation will be done in using Stata®. The combination of the set seed command before using Stata®'s random number function ensures that the results are replicable. Upon completion of the randomisation the associated do files, which contain the programming commands, and log files, which record the session, will be provided.

Participants

Schools: Queens University, Belfast is in the process of recruiting schools through their networks. The aim will be to recruit a sample of schools with some over-recruitment of EEF target underperforming, disadvantaged schools. All schools are eligible, but the mean FSMEver of the sample should be greater than the national mean for England. The schools must be state funded, and a large (but no more than 50%) share of schools must come from the North East region of the U.K. The initial communication that QUB provides to the school includes a flyer from Ruth Miskin Training and an information form on the trial, included as Appendix A.

Once schools have expressed interest QUB requests that the schools complete a registration form. The form includes information on school characteristics such as percentage of FSM, geographic region, school size, class size, gender ratios, and Ofsted category.

The information provided on the registration form will be used in the random assignment of the schools. Before being informed of their random assignment, Queens University Belfast will collect the following information from the schools:

- 1) List of pupils UPNs in the current year 4 and 5, and reception and year 1 as well as their SEN, FSMEver, Gender, EAL and ethnicity plus a flag for those year 4 and 5s identified as eligible for Fresh Start in the following year.
- 2) Confirmation that consent letters have been completed and any opt-outs removed.

Upon being informed of their random assignment, all of the schools (both treatment and control) will complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU will include brief questions on their existing phonics and reading programmes, and what they do for struggling readers in KS2.

Pupils: While Read Write Inc. Phonics is delivered to all children in Reception and Year 1 and those who are assessed as needing it in Years 2 – 4, the evaluation will focus on pupils from Reception – Year 2 only. While Fresh Start targets eligible pupils in Years 5 – 8 who are below appropriate reading age, the evaluation will focus on eligible pupils from Years 5 and 6 only. The eligibility criteria for the Fresh Start programme is a school progress measure, through which the children are selected according to their reading levels. Children reading below a reading age of 9.5 years are taught Fresh Start. The programme will be targeted to those children who are not on track to meet national expectations in reading at the end of KS2. These are students whose reading age is 9 years or below, which is 1 to 2 years below expectations. While the school knows the reading age compared to the actual age of the students, the pupil's progress towards 4b achievement is assessed by the teacher.

Outcome Measures

Read Write Inc., Phonics:

Primary Outcome: The primary outcome will be whole class Year 2 New Group Reading Test results at the end of the second year of the programme. The New Group Reading Test is an adaptive test that comprises three sections: phonics, sentence completion, and passage comprehension. As such, it targets both the decoding and language comprehension sub-skills of reading. Since this is an adaptive test, pupils will begin with the sentence completion tasks and then move up to passage comprehension if they “pass” sentence completion or move down to phonics if they do not “pass” sentence completion. QUB will independently collect this data and ensure that the assessors are unaware of the treatment status.

Secondary outcomes: The secondary outcomes include the teacher assessed KS1 writing at Year 2 and the teacher assessed Year 1 phonics screening check for both years of the programme aggregated. If the sample associated with the Year 2 retakes of the phonics screening check provides enough power, we will potentially examine the phonics retake as a secondary outcome. However, since the Year 2 retakes of the phonics screening check are only compulsory in Academies and free schools where participation forms part of their funding agreement, we cannot determine at this time whether the retakes will be a viable secondary outcome. Because the teachers will have knowledge of the treatment status when they conduct the Year 2 KS1 Writing and Year 1 Phonics screening check, these outcomes are likely to be more biased than the New Group Reading Test measure. The Department of Education does provide standardized guidelines for the implementation of these tests, which will help minimize bias.

Fresh Start:

Primary Outcome: The primary outcome will be KS2 reading fine points score for Year 6 eligible students at the end of the first year of programme implementation and Year 5 eligible students at the end of the second year of programme implementation (i.e., the end of Year 6 for students who began programme in Year 5)

Secondary outcome: The secondary outcome will be the combined KS2 writing results for Years 5 and 6.

Because these tests are nationally administered and high stakes, there is little concern over bias with the test administration. For Fresh Start we will be using the KS1 results as a baseline control. Since the KS1 tests are teacher administered they could contain some bias; however since the KS1 tests will have been conducted prior to randomisation, the risk of bias is decreased.

Sample size calculations

The evaluation will be carried out as a 120-school RCT with an even split between the treatment group and the control group.

Read Write Inc., Phonics:

Assuming this sample of 120 schools with 4,400 Year 2 pupils (37 pupils per school), we conservatively estimate the minimum detectable effect size (MDES) for intent-to-treat estimates of Read Write Inc. Phonics to be 0.184 for all eligible pupils and 0.222 for free school meal (FSM) pupils, assuming 11 FSM pupils per school.¹

Fresh Start:

Assuming this sample of 120 schools with 1,200 Year 5-6 pupils (10 pupils per school with 5 from each grade), we conservatively estimate the minimum detectable effect size (MDES) for intent-to-treat estimates of Fresh Start to be 0.215 for all eligible pupils and 0.267 for free school meal (FSM) pupils, assuming 3 FSM pupils per school.² Because of the small number of eligible pupils per school we will be unlikely to detect a separate effect for FSM pupils, although the analysis will be conducted.

Analysis plan

We will analyse the impact of the programmes using the difference-in-means specification:

$$Y_{ijk} = \alpha + \beta R_k + \theta X_{ijk} + \varepsilon_{ijk} \quad (1)$$

Y_{ijk} is the outcome measure for pupil i in classroom j in school k . That is, when analysing the effect of Fresh Start for pupil i in classroom j in school k , Y_{ijk} represents (1) the combined Year 5 and Year 6 KS2 reading results; and (2) the combined Year 5 and Year 6 KS2 writing results. For analysing the effect of Read Write Inc. Phonics for pupil i in classroom j in school k , Y_{ijk} represents (1) the New Group Reading Test at the end of the second year; (2) the New Group Reading Test writing results at the end of the second year; and (3) Year 1 phonics screening check for both years of the programme

¹ Using data from similar EEF studies on literacy outcomes, we settled on the following power parameters: ICC=0.10; Alpha=0.05; Power=80%.

² Using data from similar EEF studies on literacy outcomes, we settled on the following power parameters: proportion of variance in Level 1 (pupil level) outcomes explained by Level 1 covariates, $R_1^2=0.53$; ICC=0.133; Alpha=0.05; Power=80%.

aggregated. Given that the NGRT and NPD are standardized, we will utilize raw scores for these tests. For the teacher-assessed KS1 results (that we will use as a baseline control for Fresh Start), we will first normalize the scores to bring all scores into proportion with each other.

R_k is a variable that equals one if the pupil's school is part of the treatment (which includes both Fresh Start and Read Write Inc. Phonics) and equals zero if not. X_{ijk} is a vector of controls that includes the groups created for the stratified randomisation based on the school-level historical KS1 reading score and the Ofsted grades and the ever FSM status of the pupils from the NPD. Although there are too few areas in the analysis to reliably estimate variation in effects across areas, X_{ijk} will also control for the different areas of the schools. In the analysis for Fresh Start, this vector of controls will include KS1 results as a baseline measures of the outcome variable so that we can perform ANCOVA analysis, which will improve our power. ANCOVA analysis is not possible with the analysis for Read Write Inc. Phonics since no baseline measure of the outcome variable exists. We will use cluster-robust standard errors to account for a lack of independence across observations due to clustering of pupils at the level of school. Doing so ensures that standard errors are properly estimated. β is our coefficient of interest, representing the marginal effect of being part of the Read Write Inc. Phonics or Fresh Start programmes, as compared to the control group. Results will be reported as Hedge's g effect sizes that standardize the estimated impact using the unadjusted pooled within-group standard deviations of the outcome.³

We will also conduct subgroup analysis for the population of FSM pupils by estimating equation (1) only for the sample of FSM pupils. Additionally, we will examine heterogeneous effects to see if there is a difference between FSM and non-FSM pupil with the equation:

$$Y_{ijk} = \alpha + \beta_1 R_k + \beta_2 R_k * F_{ijk} + \theta X_{ijk} + \delta F_{ijk} + \varepsilon_{ijk} \quad (2)$$

F_{ijk} is an indicator for whether the pupil ever received free school meals. Here the vector of controls X_{ijk} includes the groups created for the stratified randomisation, the area of the school, and for the Fresh Start analysis the KS1 results as a baseline measures of the outcome variable. With the heterogeneous effects regression, β_1 represents the marginal effect of being part of the Read Write Inc. Phonics or Fresh Start programmes, as compared to the control group, for pupils who *do not* receive free school meals. β_2 is the marginal effect of being part of the Read Write Inc. Phonics or Fresh Start programmes for pupils who *do* receive free school meals. This heterogeneous effects analysis will clarify if there is a difference in the programme effect by FSM status.

Implementation and process evaluation methods

We will conduct a relatively light-touch process snapshot to check that the programmes were delivered as intended, to understand the contrast from usual practice and identify any barriers to implementation and necessary conditions for success.

We will use a variety of data sources for this process snapshot. First, from the MOU we will obtain information related to schools' existing phonics and reading programmes, and what they do for struggling readers in KS2. At the end of the evaluation, QUB will collect follow up information from the schools related to these topics. Second, we will use Ruth Miskin Training's soon-to-be-developed

³ Per both EEF and IES guidance, we will not use the level-1 within-group variance. (For EEF guidance see https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Evaluation/Analysis_for_EEF_evaluations_REVISED_Dec_2015.pdf; for IES guidance see http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/reference_resources/wwc_procedures_v3_0_standards_handbook.pdf)

online system that will collect information on delivery from teachers. The portal will focus on delivery as it relates to training and ongoing support, organisation, and assessment. The information that will be included under these headings relates to factors that they believe are most crucial to the success of the programme. Third, we will analyse the results of a survey that will be administered by QUB to teachers at the end of the programme. This survey, that will be delivered at the same time as the post-test will help to clarify teachers' perceptions of the programme and learn what teachers in control schools did instead. Finally, we will also conduct focus group interviews with 2-3 school administrators and teachers, and visit 2-3 schools (at least one high-performing school, and one low-performing school) to triangulate the information obtained from the learners.

AIR will contribute to the design and content of the various questionnaires that will be implemented by Ruth Miskin and QUB. To reduce concerns associated with response bias, whereby teachers answer with what they think the researchers want, we will use questions about actual day-to-day teaching practices. These types of questions are applicable to teachers in both treatment and control schools. These questionnaires as well as the focus group discussions will help us determine the following questions:

- How are the programmes being implemented?
- Are the teachers using the programmes as envisioned by the developers?
- Are teachers receiving support from the reading leader?
- How does training quality help support the quality of the reading leader to implement the programme with fidelity?
- How contingent is the success of the programme on this continuous professional development?
- How has the programme impacted teacher knowledge on how to teach reading?
- Does the programme change teacher practices and behaviours in the classroom?

Costs

A formal cost-benefit analysis is not recommended due to the challenges of monetizing the benefits (e.g., the numerous assumptions required about the returns to education). However, we will combine the benefits estimated in our impact analyses with the costs obtained from our implementation research to carry out a cost-effectiveness analysis. Specifically, we will assess the costs of the programmes using the ingredients method. For this purpose, we will need to specify all the ingredients that are necessary to replicate the program and then collect data on the unit costs of all these ingredients (Dhaliwal, Duflo, Glennerster, & Tulloch, 2011). Information on the five major categories of ingredients—(i) personnel and training, (ii) facilities, (iii) equipment and programme materials, (iv) other inputs, and (v) client inputs—need to be obtained. These form the starting point for considering specific ingredients and their costs and are disaggregated into individual cost items (Levin and McEwan, 2001). The approach enables a clear view of how costs are distributed across all types of expenditures. The cost can be in opportunity cost or capital cost, but the ultimate goal is to determine the value of any ingredient.

We will obtain these costs through focus group discussions with school administrators and through the collection of data on actual costs from Ruth Miskin Training. We will then estimate the costs of the programmes for the average beneficiary and divide these costs by the expected gain in outcome derived from the impact analysis to serve as the cost-effectiveness measure of the programmes.

Ethics and registration

- Describe the process for ethical approval
- What level of consent is needed from pupils (refer to current EEF guidance on ensuring appropriate consent for linking to NPD and data archiving)
- [International Standard Randomised Controlled Trial Number \(ISRCTN\)](https://www.controlled-trials.com) (register the trial at: www.controlled-trials.com)

QUB has submitted a request for study approval through their ethics board for all the data collection. QUB will apply to the NPD for access to pupil outcome and background data. They will conduct an initial application in September in order that any issues can be ironed out before the final application at the end of the evaluation. QUB will ensure that appropriate parent opt-out consent for data processing has been collected from schools.

QUB and AIR will work together to develop a data sharing agreement that accommodates the restriction that the NPD data cannot leave the UK. One possibility is that the evaluators become visiting fellows of QUB and stay for two weeks on campus to analyse the data and start writing the report. If this method is chosen, QUB can include an additional request to their ethics board for the data analysis. Alternatively, QUB could provide access to a remote portal through which the data could be analysed from the U.S. while ensuring that the data does not leave the U.K. If this method is chosen, AIR will submit a request to their Institutional Review Board to obtain approval for the analysis.

QUB will obtain opt-out consent for the evaluation.

The study has been registered and the International Standard Randomised Controlled Trial Number (ISRCTN) is ISRCTN97725862.

Personnel

Pooja Nakamura, Ph.D., a Senior Researcher at AIR, will serve as a co-principal investigator. She will oversee the quality of the study, provide literacy content knowledge, provide guidance and oversight on instrument development, oversee the “light touch” process snapshot, and participate in report writing.

Nisha Rai, Ph.D., an Economic Researcher at AIR, will serve as a co-principal investigator and project director. She will oversee the day-to-day activities of the study, serve as the primary contact, conduct the data analysis, ensure high quality work, manage the budget, and participate in report writing.

Hans Bos, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, will provide oversight as an impact evaluation expert.

Andrea Coombes, Qualitative Researcher at AIR, will develop materials for and will conduct focus group discussions; she will also participate in analysis and report writing.

Paul Sirma will participate in data analysis and report writing.

Rebecca Stone, a Senior Researcher at AIR, will serve as quality assurance for the study.

Anticipated roles of assessment partner

For this evaluation study, Queens University, Belfast will lead the recruitment of schools into the study, provide information on which schools were recruited, provide background information necessary for the randomisation, work with schools in informing them of treatment/control status and distributing consent documents, lead the data collection of the New Group Reading Test and National Pupil Database data, and support the process evaluation as requested by the evaluation team.

Risks

One risk to the evaluation is recruitment of sites and students. QUB will need to recruit at least 120 schools to power the study as originally planned. While it may be difficult to recruit such a large number of schools, QUB is mitigating this by working with staff who are familiar with school systems and have connections in the schools. Additionally, the recruitment and randomisation are being conducted in waves (approximately 19th April, 19th May and 19th June) to facilitate the timeline.

QUB will obtain opt-out consent for the evaluation. They will ensure that the consent documents fully describe the potential risks.

Data Protection

AIR takes the protection of data seriously and has implemented numerous companywide policies to promote the security of data. Staff are required to participate in yearly trainings on data security. All AIR computers are encrypted and password protected with stringent requirements for passwords, including specification on password length, character usage, and password expiration dates. Any login into AIR's servers and systems (including accessing email or shared network) outside of AIR offices require duo authentication.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, for this evaluation, no data will be stored on AIR's computers. The evaluators will either become visiting fellows of QUB and will analyse the data from the UK or QUB will provide access to a remote portal through which the data could be analysed from the U.S. while ensuring that the data does not leave the U.K.

Timeline

Date	Activity
April 2016	AIR randomises first batch of schools
May 2016	AIR randomises second batch of schools
June 2016	AIR randomises final batch of schools
September 2016	QUB to submit initial request of NPD data
April 2018	QUB administer New Group Reading Test
April 2018	QUB administer teacher survey
May 2018	QUB to submit request of NPD data
May 2018	AIR to conduct focus group discussions
July 2018	AIR to conduct analyses
August 2018	AIR write up report and submit to EEF
September 2018	AIR make edits per outside reviewer, submit final report to EEF

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Appendix A: School Information



EEF funds large trial of Read, Write, Inc. and Fresh Start Information sheet for Headteachers

Read, Write, Inc and Fresh Start

Read Write Inc. Phonics teaches young children to read and write, through a structured and systematic approach to teaching literacy. It is used by more than a quarter of the UK's primary schools. Fresh start is a similar programme, but is a catch up programme for those children that are struggling to read at the end of primary and the start of secondary. The reading materials used in Fresh Start are age-appropriate and older children do not feel they are reading books designed for much younger children.

Both programmes start with the systematic teaching of phonemes and graphemes, carefully matching the sounds that children have been taught with books that contain only those sounds. The programmes then move on to improving reading fluency and comprehension.

Schools receive two whole-school training days, with the training covering the principles and teaching techniques required to teach both RWI and FS. In addition, schools get between three to six developmental days per year, depending on their starting point for teaching reading within the school. Schools are encouraged to run sessions for parents, these teach parents the sounds that children will be learning and shows them how to use the books that children take home.

Why is the EEF funding a trial of these programmes?

Fresh Start has been tested through a previous EEF efficacy trial involving ten secondary schools and 433 Year 7 pupils. The study randomised pupils within each of the schools and focused particularly on pupils who did not achieve a level 4 on their Key Stage 2 SATs. The project found a positive impact on all pupils of an additional three months' progress over the course of an academic year. Read Write Inc. Phonics uses identical techniques with younger children with the aim of preventing reading difficulties so that later interventions aren't required or so that the number of children who need them is minimised.

Who can participate in this trial?

All Primary schools in England can participate in this trial, if they have not yet received full training from Ruth Miskin Training to deliver Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh start.

Primary schools in the North East are particularly being encouraged to take part in this trial as part of the EEF's North East Primary Literacy Campaign.

Recruitment is now open for 120 Primary schools to participate in this trial. Of the schools who agree to participate 60 will be randomly allocated to receive Read Write Inc Phonics and Fresh Start. The other 60 schools will act as a business as usual control group, continuing with their normal teaching of reading and support for struggling readers and receiving a financial incentive for taking part in the project.

When and how can schools sign up to participate in the trial?

When? The recruitment process has started and schools will be recruited on a first come first served basis, so speed is recommended if a school wishes to participate in this trial.

How? Schools who wish to participate should contact Dr Maria Cockerill at Queen's University, Belfast: maria.cockerill@qub.ac.uk. Schools who sign up to participate in the trial will be sent a Memorandum of Agreement to complete. This agreement clarifies what schools will receive and what they will need to do during the trial.

What will schools who participate in the trial do?

Schools who sign up to participate in the trial will either be selected to deliver the programme Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start between September 2016 and July 2018, or to act as a control school until August 2018.

How will schools be selected to be a programme or control school?

Schools will be randomly selected to participate as either a Programme School or a Control School. As selection is randomly undertaken schools have an equal chance of being selected to either group. **Programme Schools**, who will deliver Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start between September 2016 and July 2018. **Control Schools**, who will continue until Aug 18 with their normal teaching of reading and support for struggling readers.

When will schools know if they have been selected to be a Programme School or Control School?

Randomisation of schools into programme or control will occur in phases, monthly, beginning on April 19th, May 19th, June 19th and so on. Schools who sign up to participate in the trial during this period will be informed if they are programme or control school following the randomisation dates outlined here.

What will Programme Schools or Control Schools receive and commit to do?

Programme Schools will:

- Agree to deliver the programme in KS1 and KS2 between September 2016 and July 2018.
- Receive free staff training and ongoing support and development days from Ruth Miskin Training during the trial.
- Be eligible for a 20% discount from Oxford University Press to purchase all Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start resources during the trial. These can be ordered from April 25th 2016.

Control Schools will:

- Agree to wait to deliver Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start in their school until August 2018.
- Receive £3000 for participating as control schools between September 2016 and July 2018.
- Be eligible for a 20% discount from Oxford University Press to purchase all Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start resources from July 2018.

All Schools will:

- Distribute opt-out consent letters to parents of students who will be in Year 2 and Year 6 in January 2018.
- Be expected to provide access to reading test results from the Granada Learning New Group reading Test from the School Management System.
- Provide basic school level information that will be used to help ensure balance between control and intervention school sets.

If you are interested please complete the information sheet overleaf and also sign the consent to participate form.

Your decision to participate/not participate in this trial will not impact upon your (or indeed those of anyone in your school) existing or future relationships with Queen's University Belfast.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Dr Nicole Craig, 6 College Green, School of Education, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast BT71NN, or phone on 028 9097 5017 or via email at n.craig@qub.ac.uk. Or Dr Maria Cockerill at Queen's University, Belfast: maria.cockerill@qub.ac.uk.

If you have a complaint regarding the work then contact Allen Thurston at Queen's University Belfast on 07964916186 or via a.thurston@qub.ac.uk

**EEF trial of *Read Write Inc.* Phonics and Fresh Start
September 2016 – July 2018**

SCHOOL REGISTRATION AND CONSENT TO TRIAL	
School name	
School address	
School Telephone	
LA and County	
Headteacher name	
Headteacher contact email	
School admin email	
School Ofsted rating	
FSM %	
FSM Ever %	
Number of pupils on roll	
% No. of Boys % No. of Girls	
1, 2 or 3 class entry school	
2015 KS1 Reading results	
2015 KS2 Reading results	
% achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths	

% achieving level 4b or above in Reading and maths tests and level 4 or above in Writing Teacher Assessed	
Gap between disadvantaged pupils and others 2015	
% EAL pupils who achieve L4 or above in reading, writing and maths	
Any other information you consider relevant	

I consent to my school being involved with the Read, Write Inc/Fresh Start project. I have read and understand the information sheets and what will be required of schools. I understand that the school can withdraw participation at any time.

Your Name

Your Signature

Headteacher/Other (please specify).....

Date

Appendix B: Memorandum of Understanding – Programme School

Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start Research Project

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

Queen's University, Belfast

AND

PROGRAMME SCHOOL:

School Name

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document details the responsibilities of each party in respect of the Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start evaluation and project delivery between April 2016 and December 2018, grant funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

1.2 The parties to this memorandum of understanding (**MoU**) are:

(a) The Grantee, Queen's University, Belfast. 69-71 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HL (**Party One: The Research Team - QUB**).

(b) **School and Address** (**Party Two: The Programme School**).

1.3 The signature of this MoU by Party Two confirms its consent to participate in this research project as a Programme School.

1.4 Party One and Party Two have agreed to work together on the research project to this MoU (**Research Project**).

1.5 This MoU records the basis on which they will collaborate with each other on the Research Project, setting out the respective roles and responsibilities the parties will have during the Research Project to complete all evaluations and to deliver the intervention.

1.6 This MoU shall have an effective date of April 2016.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTY ONE (The Research Team - QUB)

2.1 The research team will undertake the Research Project on behalf of Party One:

2.1.1 *Computerised tests for completion by all Year 2 pupils in 2018*

All schools (both programme and control schools) will be provided with computerised tests (New Group Reading Test from GL Assessment) for all Year 2 pupils, to be completed in May-June 2018.

2.1.2 *Computerised school survey for completion by all schools in 2018*

All schools (both programme and control schools) will be provided with a digital survey to complete in May-June 2018 by the headteacher and at least two teachers from each school.

2.1.3 *Read Write Inc. Phonics/Fresh Start Training & Resources*

Programme schools will receive fully funded training for Phonics and Fresh Start programmes delivered by Ruth Miskin Training. This will include:

- Two whole school training days for up to 45 staff including the headteacher
- Three to six development days per year, depending on the school's starting point for teaching reading
- Two places on three leadership training days

Schools are responsible for purchasing the resources they require to deliver Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start. All resources are available for purchase by schools from Oxford University Press (OUP) and programme schools are eligible to receive **20% discount** on all resources from OUP until July 2018.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTY TWO (The Programme School)

3.1 The school will complete all computerised tests with Year 2 pupils in May-June 2018, an online school survey in June 2018 and will provide Party One: The research team, with individual pupil data as required during the trial.

3.1.1 *Completion of Year 2 pupil computerised reading tests*

The school will ensure all Year 2 pupils complete the computerised New Group Reading Tests from GL Assessment in June 2018, under exam conditions.

As necessary, administrator name and login passwords to the GL Assessment website will be made available by the school (Party One) to the research team (Party Two) to access computerised tests during the Research Project as required.

3.1.2 *Completion of computerised school survey*

The school will ensure that the headteacher and at least two teachers from the school complete the online survey in June 2018 as part of the process evaluation.

3.1.3 *Requests for individual pupil data*

The school will provide the research team with individual pupil data as required at intervals during the research project.

In the event that the delivery of the Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start programme is not completed by the school and identified participating classes or pupils or the school withdraw from the Research Project for any reason, the school will ensure that all pupils in Year 2 complete any necessary outstanding tests to enable the full evaluation of the project. In addition, the school will ensure that (1) the online survey is completed in June 2018, and (2) will continue to provide the research team with data as requested until the completion of the trial.

3.2 Read Write Inc. resources: Schools are responsible for purchasing the resources they require to deliver Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start. All resources are available for purchase by schools from Oxford University Press (OUP) and programme schools are eligible to receive 20% discount on all resources from OUP until July 2018.

4. VALIDITY

4.1 This memorandum of understanding is valid until 31st December 2018.

4.2 In the event that Party Two (The Programme School) terminates this agreement and cannot complete the Project intervention delivery for any reason, the school

will ensure that: (1) all Year 2 pupils complete any necessary outstanding tests in May-June 2018, (2) the online school survey is completed by the headteacher and at least two teachers in June 2018, and (3) the school continues to share any information required with the Research Team to enable the full evaluation of the Project to take place.

5.1 STATUS

This MoU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the parties from this MoU. The parties enter into the MoU intending to honour all their obligations.

AGREED BY:

**Signed for and on behalf of
Party One:** **Queen's University, Belfast**

Signature:



Name: **Dr. Maria Cockerill**
Position: **Senior Research Fellow**
Date: **20th April, 2016.**

**Signed for and on behalf of
Party Two:** **School name**

Headteacher Name:

Signature:
Date:

School address:

Contact email:

Contact Tel:

Questions to be answered by all Schools

- 1) What are the school's existing programmes for teaching Phonics and Reading?
 - Phonics programme/s
 - Reading programme/s
- 2) What interventions does the school use for low attaining readers in Year 5 and Year 6?

Appendix C: Memorandum of Understanding – Control School

Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start Research Project

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

Queen's University, Belfast

AND

CONTROL SCHOOL:

School Name

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document details the responsibilities of each party in respect of the Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start evaluation and project delivery between April 2016 and December 2018, grant funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).
- 1.2 The parties to this memorandum of understanding (**MoU**) are:
- (a) The Grantee, Queen's University, Belfast. 69-71 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HL (**Party One: The Research Team - QUB**).
- (b) **School and Address** (**Party Two: The Control School**).
- 1.3 The signature of this MoU by Party Two confirms its consent to participate in this research project as a Control School.
- 1.4 Party One and Party Two have agreed to work together on the research project to this MoU (**Research Project**).
- 1.5 This MoU records the basis on which they will collaborate with each other on the Research Project, setting out the respective roles and responsibilities the parties will have during the Research Project to December 2018.
- 1.6 This MoU shall have an effective date of April 2016.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTY ONE (The Research Team - QUB)

2.1 The research team will undertake the Research Project on behalf of Party One:

2.1.1 *Computerised tests for completion by all Year 2 pupils in 2018*

All schools (both programme and control schools) will be provided with computerised tests (New Group Reading Test from GL Assessment) for all Year 2 pupils, to be completed in May-June 2018.

2.1.2 *Computerised school survey for completion by all schools in 2018*

All schools (both programme and control schools) will be provided with a digital survey for the headteacher and at least two teachers in the school to complete in May-June 2018.

2.1.3 *Read Write Inc. Phonics/Fresh Start Resources*

Control schools who wish to purchase the Read Write Inc. Phonics or Fresh Start resources from July 2018 will be eligible to receive 20% discount from Oxford University Press (OUP) on these resources between July and December 2018.

2.1.4 *£3,000 payment to schools for full participation during the trial*

All Control schools who have fully participated during the trial will receive £3,000 in September 2018. Full participation by Control schools includes:

- Waiting to access training for Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start in their school until July 2018.

- Completing all evaluations required with Year 2 pupils in May-June 2018
- Completing the online school survey in June 2018 (to be completed by the headteacher and at least two teachers)
- Sharing all necessary data requested with the research team during the trial.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTY TWO (The Control School)

3.1 The school will complete all computerised tests with Year 2 pupils in May-June 2018, an online school survey in June 2018 and will provide Party One: The research team with individual pupil data as required during the trial.

3.1.1 *Completion of Year 2 pupil computerised reading tests*

The school will ensure all Year 2 pupils complete the computerised New Group Reading Tests from GL Assessment in June 2018, under exam conditions.

As necessary, administrator name and login passwords to the GL Assessment website will be made available by the school (Party One) to the research team (Party Two) to access computerised tests during the Evaluation Project as required.

3.1.2 *Completion of computerised school survey*

The school will ensure that the headteacher and at least two teachers complete the online survey in June 2018 as part of the process evaluation.

3.1.3 *Requests for individual pupil data*

The school will provide the research team with individual pupil data as required at intervals during the project.

In the event that the school withdraws from the Research Project for any reason, the school will ensure that all pupils in Year 2 complete any necessary outstanding tests in June 2018 and that the school completes the online survey in June 2018 to enable the full evaluation of the project. In addition, the school will continue to provide the research team with data as requested until the completion of the trial.

3.2 *Read Write Inc. Phonics and Fresh Start training and resources*

Training: Control Schools agree NOT to access training of Read Write Inc. Phonics or Fresh Start until July 2018.

Resources: From July 2018 Control schools who wish to purchase the Read Write Inc. Phonics or Fresh Start resources will be eligible to receive 20% discount from Oxford University Press (OUP) on these resources between July and December 2018.

4. VALIDITY

4.1 This memorandum of understanding is valid until 31st December 2018.

4.2 In the event that Party Two (The Control School) terminates this agreement and cannot complete the Research Project for any reason, the school will ensure that:

- (1) all Year 2 pupils complete any necessary outstanding tests in May-June 2018,
(2) the headteacher and at least two teachers complete the online survey in June 2018, and (3) that data continues to be shared with the Research Team as requested, to enable the full evaluation of the Research Project to take place.

5.1 STATUS

This MoU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the parties from this MoU. The parties enter into the MoU intending to honour all their obligations.

AGREED BY:

Signed for and on behalf of **Queen's University, Belfast**
Party One:

Signature: 

Name: **Dr. Maria Cockerill**
Position: **Senior Research Fellow**
Date: **20th April, 2016.**

Signed for and on behalf of **School name**
Party Two:

Headteacher Name:

Signature:

Date:

School address:

Contact email:

Contact Tel:

Questions to be answered by all Schools

- 1) What are the school's existing programmes for teaching Phonics and Reading?
 - Phonics programme/s
 - Reading programme/s
- 2) What interventions does the school use for low attaining readers in Year 5 and Year 6?

Appendix D: Opt-Out Consent Form

Parental Information Form for Read, Write Inc/Fresh Start

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child has been invited to continue to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like them to continue to take part, we would like to inform you about why the next stage of research is being conducted and what it will involve. We would appreciate it if you could please take a few moments to read the following information carefully.

Your child's school is involved in a two-year program called *Read, Write Inc/Fresh Start*. It is a partnership between Ruth Miskin, a team from the Centre for Effective Education at Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland and your child's school. The programme is being evaluated by a team from the American Institute for Research. The programme aims to improve reading.

As part of this programme we will require access to the Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and standardised reading test scores from your child's school and the National Pupil Database for the children at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 respectively. **Therefore, this letter and consent form is asking you to tell us if you do NOT allow us to access Key Stage scores from the National Pupil Database and Reading Test scores from the school.**

We require these scores to establish how successful the Read, Write Inc/Fresh Start program has been in improving children's educational attainment. We are evaluating whether the programme has benefited children (compared to children who have not had the programme), and not how well your child is doing in school. Data will be held securely for a minimum of five years by Queen's University Belfast and the funder of the research, The Educational Endowment Foundation and then securely destroyed. Electronic data will be held at a secure site on an encrypted computer. Your child's name will not be stored.

As participation is voluntary, your child is free to withdraw from the study at any time up until the point that the data set is made anonymous, after that we will be unable to withdraw them as we will not be able to identify them in the data set. Research reports will be the main products of the research and these will specifically attempt to determine the effects Read, Write Inc/Fresh Start has on literacy outcomes. Any reports will not mention individual names or even the name of schools that participated in the project.

A decision to participate (or not) will not affect your relationship with your child's school or with Queen's University Belfast. The project has ethical approval from Queen's University Belfast School of Education ethics Committee.

If you **do NOT wish** us to access your child's Key Stage data from the National Pupil Database, please complete the details on the consent form below, sign it, and return to your child's class teacher. If you are happy for us to access this data no further action from you is required.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Dr Nicole Craig, 6 College Green, School of Education, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast BT71NN, or phone on 028 9097 5017 or via email at n.craig@qub.ac.uk.

If you have a complaint regarding the work then contact Allen Thurston at Queen's University Belfast on 07964916186 or via a.thurston@qub.ac.uk

Parental Opt-out Consent Form for Read, Write Inc/Fresh Start

Please return this form to your child's class teacher if you **are NOT** willing for your child's Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2 scores to be accessed from the National Pupil Database/ Reading Test scores to be accessed via the school.

I **do NOT** give permission for my child's Key Stage scores to be accessed in the National Pupil Database as part of the Read, Write Inc/Fresh Start research project.

Your Child's Name

Your Name

Your Signature

Parent / Guardian (delete as appropriate)

Date

Read, Write Inc/Fresh Start is provided by Ruth Miskin and funded by The Education Endowment Foundation