

A randomised controlled trial of the Helping Handwriting Shine programme

Submission date 27/06/2018	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 24/07/2018	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 03/10/2022	Condition category Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Helping Handwriting Shine focuses on improving crucial elements of fine motor skills in order to develop children's handwriting fluency. In so doing, it aims to increase children's capacity to develop writing composition, and to improve children's writing attainment overall. Members of school staff are trained to deliver the programme to all Year 2 and selected Year 5 pupils; they then deliver the programme to pupils, which consist of three 30-minute sessions per week for eight weeks, over Autumn 2018 - Spring 2019. Sessions include a selection of engaging activities and approaches to support children's handwriting (including body position, pattern formation, stylus grip, and breathing). Training materials provided by the programme offer guidance on how sessions can be adapted to support pupil interest and motivation, and to mirror curriculum themes. The aim of this study is to explore the impact of the programme on children's overall writing, handwriting speed, and writing composition. The study will also investigate how the sessions are delivered, and teachers' and children's views on the programme and the support provided.

Who can participate?

All Year 2 pupils and targeted Year 5 pupils in need of handwriting support at primary schools across Leeds, Bradford and North East England

What does the study involve?

In Spring/Summer 2018, year 1 pupils complete tests and schools are then randomly allocated to either the intervention group (who receive the programme) or the control group (who do not receive the programme). In Autumn 2018, intervention schools select Year 5 pupils to take part in the intervention. Between 4 and 16 pupils should be selected depending on the school's size and needs. The pupils complete the same test as the Year 2 classes and are randomly allocated so that half of the group receive the intervention and half do not. Intervention schools then book a minimum of two identified members of staff onto a half-day training session, which is held locally to the school, paying a discounted rate of £500 per school to receive the training and materials. Schools then start the 8-week programme, split into two four-week sessions either side of the Christmas holidays. Intervention schools need to complete a weekly record about the sessions and be willing to take part in observations and interviews if invited. On completion of the eight week programme there are a number of tasks and activities for pupils before follow-up

tests are carried out in Summer 2019. Control schools do not receive the handwriting intervention, but need to complete a record about any handwriting support they provide in their schools during the study. Control schools may also be invited to take part in interviews and observations, and are required to complete the follow-up test in June/July 2019. Control schools receive a contribution of £500 on completion of the follow-up tests. In Summer 2019, NFER test administrators then support all schools to complete follow-up tests with all pupils in the study. This includes all selected Year 5 pupils selected to take part within the intervention schools, whether or not they have received the intervention.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

All schools in the trial will contribute to the evidence-base on what works in supporting handwriting and writing in primary schools. Schools allocated to the intervention group will have the opportunity to receive discounted training and support on the Helping Handwriting Shine intervention. Schools will also receive feedback on relative pupil performance in both sets of tests. Schools only have to take part if they wish to do so. Pupils can opt out of taking part at any time.

Where is the study run from?

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

October 2017 to January 2020

Who is funding the study?

Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact?

Dr Ben Styles

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Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

EEFH

Study information

Scientific Title

A randomised controlled trial of the impact of the Helping Handwriting Shine programme on Year 2 and Year 5 students' handwriting and writing composition ability

Acronym

EEFH

Study objectives

Receiving the Helping Handwriting Shine intervention improves children's handwriting speed and legibility, which in turn improves their writing composition ability.

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

University of Leeds ethics committee, October 2015, ref: 15-0089

Primary study design

Interventional

Study design

Interventional multi-site cluster randomised controlled trial

Study type(s)

Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Children's handwriting ability; children's writing composition ability

Interventions

Helping Handwriting Shine focuses on improving crucial elements of fine motor skills in order to develop children's handwriting fluency. In so doing, it aims to increase children's capacity to develop writing composition, and to improve children's writing attainment overall. Members of school staff are trained to deliver the programme to all Year 2 and selected Year 5 pupils; they then deliver the programme to pupils, which consist of three 30-minute sessions per week for eight weeks, over Autumn 2018 - Spring 2019. Taught intervention sessions include a selection of engaging activities and approaches to support children's handwriting (including body-position, pattern formation, stylus grip, and breathing). Training materials provided by the programme offer guidance on how sessions can be adapted to support pupil interest and motivation, and to mirror curriculum themes. A manual is provided to schools which includes information on how the intervention should be implemented, as well as all intervention materials and activities. Schools also receive a resource pack (stickers; playdough etc). The developer will also provide 'gap tasks' and video resources for ad hoc use within schools after the completion of the formal intervention. A minimum of two members of staff must attend

training but there is no ceiling on the number that can take part in each school. Staff can include not just teachers, but Teaching Assistants (TAs), SENDCOs, senior leadership or occupational therapists.

In Spring/Summer 2018, all schools will need to provide pupil lists/IDs for all current Year 1 pupils; Year 1 pupils will then need to complete baseline tests, and the school completes a short pro-forma. Schools will then be randomly allocated to either the intervention group (who receive the programme) or the control group (who do not receive the programme).

In Autumn 2018, Intervention schools select Year 5 pupils to take part in the intervention. Between 4 and 16 pupils should be selected depending on the school's size and needs. Schools provide pupil lists/IDs for selected pupils, who then complete the same baseline test as the Year 2 classes; they will then be randomised so that half of the group receive the intervention and half do not.

Intervention schools will then book a minimum of two identified members of staff onto a half-day training session, which will be held locally to the school, paying a discounted rate of £500 per school to receive the training and materials. Schools will then commence the 8-week programme, split into two four week sessions either side of the Christmas holidays. Intervention schools will need to complete a weekly record about the sessions; and be willing to take part in observations and interviews if invited. On completion of the eight week programme there will be a number of tasks and activities for pupils before follow-up tests are carried out in Summer 2019.

Control schools will not receive the handwriting intervention, but will need to complete a records about any handwriting support they provide in their schools during the trial period. Control schools may also be invited to take part in interviews and observations, and will be required to complete the follow-up test in June/July 2019. Control schools will receive a contribution of £500 on completion of the follow-up tests.

In Summer 2019, NFER test administrators will then support all schools to complete follow-up tests with all pupils in the trial. This includes all selected Year 5 pupils selected to take part within the intervention schools, whether or not they have received the intervention.

Intervention Type

Other

Primary outcome(s)

Students' overall writing ability, measured by the Writing Assessment Measure (Dunsmuir, Kyriacou, Batuwitage, Hinson, Ingram and O'Sullivan, 2013), marked using Comparative Judgement, at baseline and follow-up

Year 2 baseline: June – July 2018

Year 5 baseline: September – October 2018

Year 2/5 follow-up: June – July 2019

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Students' overall writing ability, measured on all Year 5 students and a random subset of Year 2 pupils using the Writing Assessment Measure (see primary outcome measure), marked using

published criterion-referenced mark scheme, at baseline and follow up
2. Students' handwriting speed, measured on the sample subsample, using the Handwriting Speed Test (Wallen, Bonney and Lennox, 2006), at baseline and follow-up

Year 2 baseline: June – July 2018

Year 5 baseline: September – October 2018

Year 2/5 follow-up: June – July 2019

Completion date

01/01/2020

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

Eligible schools:

1. Mainstream state schools in England with both a Year 2 and a Year 5
2. From the following regions in England: North East, Wakefield, Leeds, Bradford, Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield

All students in Year 2 at the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year, and selected students in Year 5

Year 5 students are selected by teachers using the following criteria:

1. Slow and effortful hand writers
 2. Those that are faster but unable to read their own handwriting
- Teachers will use these criteria to select between 4-12 students, who are then randomised into control and intervention within the school

Participant type(s)

Other

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Child

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

4216

Key exclusion criteria

1. Schools geographically outside of the target areas
2. Special schools, pupil referral units
3. Schools who have not signed MoU and provided data

Date of first enrolment

01/02/2018

Date of final enrolment

30/06/2018

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre**National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)**

The Mere, Upton Park

Slough

United Kingdom

SL1 2DQ

Sponsor information

Organisation

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

ROR

<https://ror.org/044sxgs38>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Charity

Funder Name

Education Endowment Foundation

Alternative Name(s)

EducEndowFoundn, The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), Education Endowment Foundation | London, EEF

Funding Body Type

Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

Location

United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be deposited in the EEF Data Archive (in association with the Fischer Family Trust). Enquiries to FFT's Datalab can be made via educationdatalab@fft.org.uk. Participants are made aware that data will be placed in the repository. Both an anonymised and pseudonymised dataset are uploaded. Pupil Matching Reference (PMR) is provided to allow pupil data to be matched to the NPD for long-term follow-up of educational attainment. Unique Pupil Numbers are not uploaded. Data should be available in the repository one month after submission of final report.

IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Funder report results	funder report		02/02/2021	No	No
Protocol file	version 2		03/10/2022	No	No
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes