

# Butterfly Phonics Intervention Study

<b>Submission date</b> 12/03/2013	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
<b>Registration date</b> 08/04/2013	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol <input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 30/06/2016	<b>Condition category</b> Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Real Action has worked with struggling readers for many years. Its Butterfly initiative (see <http://www.realaction.org.uk/about-us-2/butterfly/>) is a structured literacy programme which teaches decoding, beginning with alphabetic principles, teaching how to convert groups of letters to their sounds. It progresses to irregular spelling patterns, for example silent sounds and magic e to teach children to read the sort of vocabulary used in the secondary school curriculum. It aims to produce proficiency in reading and spelling. It also seeks to instil confidence in the learner. Butterfly phonics is taught by well trained volunteers, in a formal didactic manner, making use of published text books which are part of the Butterfly educational series. This study will assess how well the Butterfly programme works.

### Who can participate?

Struggling readers in Year 7 in the participating secondary schools. Most of them will have achieved less than level 4 in their KS2 English SATs and will have reading ages of a year or more behind their actual chronological ages.

### What does the study involve?

Up to 400 Year 7 pupils in six schools will be randomly allocated to one of two groups (a treatment or a control group). Children in the treatment group will receive a short course (up to 40 hours) in reading instruction using the Butterfly Phonics programme, whilst children in the control group will act as a comparison (control) group, i.e. they will not receive the programme during the study. The improvements in reading in the two groups can be compared to see if the reading lessons have been effective. The children in the control group will receive the reading course after the study is finished, so that they will not be disadvantaged. There will be tests of phonics, single word reading and reading comprehension, before the start of the reading programme and after its completion.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Potential benefits to participants are an increase in their literacy skills which will help them access the school curriculum and other areas of their lives which involve reading. A possible risk is that by taking part in a reading catch-up study, that there may be social labelling of the children as having a reading disability and the consequent stigma of that in relation to the way their parents, peers and teachers regard them in the future. It might also influence the self image of the children who participate, for example they may believe that they are less able than

the children who are not included in the study. The project team will do its best to try to avoid these possibilities occurring.

Where is the study run from?

Study run by Durham University, Durham, UK, in conjunction with the Real Action Charity based in London, UK. Participants in London schools.

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

March 2013 to December 2013

Who is funding the study?

Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact?

Dr Bernardine King

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## Contact information

**Type(s)**

Scientific

**Contact name**

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**Contact details**

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## Additional identifiers

## Study information

**Scientific Title**

An Evaluation of the Impact of the Butterfly Phonics Programme on the Reading of Year 7 Struggling Readers

**Study objectives**

Reading involves overlearning, perceptual acuity and synchronisation, memory, language skills, as well as other high order cognitive abilities and it interacts with the kind of instruction received. Thus, there are many reasons for poor reading skill development. Within the domain of reading are two interdependent skills: decoding, which is sounding out of written words or visual registration of words; and comprehension, which involves understanding the content of what is

read by appreciating linguistic rules, such as grammar, and making semantic links to comprehend sentences and text.

Year 7s who are poor readers may be still struggling with decoding or may find difficulties with the more complex language structures encountered when reading passages of text.

Some of these Year 7s may be poor readers due to a specific learning deficit such as dyslexia.

The hypothesis is that Year 7 poor readers who receive Butterfly Phonics instruction will show significantly greater improvement in reading than those Year 7 poor readers who are not taught Butterfly Phonics.

### **Ethics approval required**

Old ethics approval format

### **Ethics approval(s)**

Board of Ethics for the School of Education, Durham University, 20/12/2012

### **Study design**

Pragmatic individual randomized controlled trial, with random allocation at children level

### **Primary study design**

Interventional

### **Study type(s)**

Other

### **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Year 7 struggling readers

### **Interventions**

Butterfly phonics will be taught to the intervention group whilst the control group will not receive this tuition. There will be no control task for the control group.

The intervention group will receive the intervention two or three times a week for one hour at the same time of the day for each week of school from the end of March 2013 until the end of June 2013, totalling 40 hours of training. There will be some home work.

### **Intervention Type**

Other

### **Phase**

Not Applicable

### **Primary outcome(s)**

The standardised reading score derived from the digital New Group Reading Test, which comprises an initial test of sentence level understanding and a subsequent assessment of comprehension of passages of text. For children who do very poorly on the sentence understanding, they will not receive the text comprehension but go instead to simple phonics questions, such as testing the first sound of a word.

This is intended to assess their ability to access the sort of reading they will encounter in their secondary school careers, and to see if the intervention has improved their ability to understand passages of writing.

### **Key secondary outcome(s)**

1. Single Word Reading Test (GL) standardised score of reading aloud a list of words, testing improvement in reading familiar and unfamiliar real words..
2. PhAB nonword Reading test standardised score of reading pseudowords, to tap improvements made in relating letters to sounds and in phoneme blending following the intervention

### **Completion date**

20/12/2013

## **Eligibility**

### **Key inclusion criteria**

Struggling Year 7 readers in the participant schools conforming to the following eligibility criteria:

1. Key Stage 2 (KS2) test scores in English below National Curriculum level 4
2. Children without KS2 scores but with Yr 7 teacher assessment scores for English which are below a National Curriculum level of 4
3. In the absence of 1 and 2, a reading age on a standardised Yr 7 reading test of at least one year lower than chronological age
4. Pupils must be in Year 7 of a participating school

Randomization protocol will attempt to control for variability in eligibility criteria and schools by treating them as stratification factors in the randomization process such that both the intervention and the control groups have more or less the same number of children recruited using the same eligibility criteria and from the same school. This pragmatic approach for recruiting children implies that the number of children recruited into the trial may differ between schools, but since each school will have equal representation in both the experimental and control groups, the difference in number of children recruited from the schools should have little or no effect on investigating the impact of the Butterfly phonics programme on struggling Year 7 readers.

### **Participant type(s)**

Patient

### **Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

### **Age group**

Child

### **Sex**

All

### **Key exclusion criteria**

1. Children who do not match the eligibility criteria as detailed above
2. Children who match the eligibility criteria but whose parents do not wish them to take part
3. Children who have additional problems which would mean that they would not benefit from the intervention, needing more specialised assistance than the programme can offer, such as some children with severe learning difficulties.

**Date of first enrolment**

07/01/2013

**Date of final enrolment**

20/12/2013

## Locations

**Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

**Study participating centre**

**The Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Durham University (CEM)**

Stockton Road

Durham

United Kingdom

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## Sponsor information

**Organisation**

Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/03bhd6288>

## Funder(s)

**Funder type**

Charity

**Funder Name**

Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

# Results and Publications

## Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

### IPD sharing plan summary

Stored in repository

### Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Funder report results</a>		09/12/2016		No	No