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Snappy Catch Up Phonics: Targeted Synthetic Phonics Intervention for Children in Norfolk in Transition from Year 6 to Year 7

Submission date
14/03/2013

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
08/04/2013

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
07/07/2016

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[_] Prospectively registered
[_] Protocol
[_] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[_] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Rapid Phonics is a reading programme that comprises teaching materials, lessons and assessments which are intended to help children catch up with their reading. Its lessons aim to be fun and are quick-paced, helping children to read fluently and to remember their reading instruction. There are three phases of instruction which progress children from sounding out words through putting letters and sounds together, to reading exception words which do not fit the usual letter-sound rules (e.g. island, pneumonia, etc). The children also move on to more complex sentences and passages of writing, such as would be found in the secondary school curriculum. This programme is aimed at children in the last term of primary school and in the first term of secondary school. This study aims to assess how well the Rapid Phonics programme works.

Who can participate?
Struggling readers in Year 6 in the 26 participating primary schools will take part. Most of them will have been forecast less than level 4 in their KS2 English SATs.

What does the study involve?
Approximately 300 children will be recruited from 26 primary schools in three areas of the county of Norfolk in the UK. They will be randomly allocated to one of two groups: a treatment group or a control group. Children in the treatment group will receive three lessons a week over a 12-week period using the Rapid Phonics programme. Six weeks of the course will take place in the last term of Year 6 in primary school and the second 6 weeks will occur during the first six weeks of Year 7, at secondary school.
A control group will act as a comparison group: they will not receive the programme as part of the study. The improvements in reading in the two groups will be compared to see if the reading lessons have been effective. There will be tests of phonics, single word reading and reading comprehension before the start of the reading programme in Year 6 and after its completion in Year 7. The presence of the six-week summer holiday in between these two periods of tuition means that progress during the Year 6 phase will be monitored by an additional test of single word reading at the end of Year 6. To assess progress within the Year 7 programme, another

single word reading test will be given at the start of Year 7. This test will later be compared with the single word reading test at the end of the Year 7 programme.
The single word reading tests at the end of Year 6 and at the start of Year 7 will allow you to see to what extent the childrens reading may have fallen back during the summer holiday break from the project. As an attempt to minimise any possible forgetting during the summer break, a reminder session will take place during the summer holidays as a way of refreshing the childrens memories about what they have learnt in the Year 6 programme. The children in the control group will receive the reading course after the study is finished, so that they will not be disadvantaged.

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 of social labelling. The participants might be regarded as having a reading problem by family, teachers and peers. There is therefore a possibility that the participants may be treated differently as a result. It is also possible that the children themselves see themselves as less able than others who are not in the study.

Where is the study run from?
Durham University, Durham, UK, in conjunction with Norfolk Local Authority in the UK. 26 primary schools in three areas of the county of Norfolk in the UK.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
April 2013 to November 2013

Who is funding the study?
Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact ?
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Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
An Evaluation of the Impact of the Rapid Phonics Programme on the Reading of Weak Readers as they Make the Transition from Yr 6 in Primary School to Year 7 in Secondary School

Study objectives
Poor reading may be due to many reasons, including: visual or auditory problems, language difficulties, problems in semantic understanding, lack of print exposure, lack of appropriate tuition, specific learning deficits such as dyslexia, major learning deficits, and many other reasons. Reading is a highly skilled task which is cognitively demanding. It requires thousands of hours of practice. Literacy is the key that unlocks the school curriculum and is an essential skill in modern society. Phonics catch up programmes attempt to help children who have fallen through the net improve their literacy.

It is hypothesised that the children who receive tuition in Rapid Phonics will show significantly greater improvement in reading than children in the same schools who are not instructed in Rapid Phonics.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Board of Ethics for the School of Education, 20/12/2012

Primary study design
Interventional

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

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Struggling readers as they move from primary to secondary school

Interventions
Rapid Phonics intervention group and the Control group. There is no control task.

Rapid Phonics is a published programme of lessons and literacy materials which aims to quickly allow children who are behind in their reading to catch up with their peers. This study will involve a 12 week course of instruction. Lessons are snappy and memorable and are designed to be fun. It features three stages of instruction, taking children from letter-sound conversions to understanding complex irregular multisyllabic words within passages of text.

Intervention Type
Other

Phase
Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)
New Group Reading Test: it begins with sentence comprehension. Very weak readers will then answer simple phonics questions such as what is the sound at the start of a word. More able students will go on to answer questions about passages of text. A nationally age standardised score of reading will be used as the primary measure in the study.

Key secondary outcome(s)
Single Word Reading test (GL) assesses ability to read real words without context. PhAB nonword reading tests ability to read pseudowords (e.g. 'pib'), and so tests the phonological route to reading used when sounding out a word. Both these secondary measures produce a nationally age standardised score.

Completion date
20/12/2013

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Struggling Year 6 readers in the participant schools conforming to the following eligibility criteria:
1. Who are predicted to gain National Curriculum Level 4C or below in English and who are eligible for free school meals
2. Who are predicted to gain National Curriculum Level 4C or below in English

Randomization protocol will attempt to control for variability in eligibility criteria and in 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 primary 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 Rapid Phonics programme on struggling Year 6 readers.

Participant type(s)
Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Child

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria

1. Children who match the eligibility criteria but whose parents do not wish them to take part
2. Those 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
20/12/2012

Date of final enrolment
01/04/2013

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
The Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Durham University (CEM)
Durham
United Kingdom
DH1 3UZ

Sponsor information

Organisation
Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

ROR
https://ror.org/03bhd6288

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
Education Endowment Foundation (UK) REF:Transition2012-242

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary
Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Funder report results	results	01/02/2015		No	No