

With reference to  
recent research and  
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It then reports analyses of individual data for 334 learners who received Catch up support in 2009/10 which shows average reading age gains of more than twice that expected of a typically achieving child; data for 87 learners, including a control group, which reaffirms that its effectiveness is due to more than its individual approach; and longitudinal data for learners tracked to the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 which shows that gains to the end of KS are maintained for 75% Of learners and maintained to the end of KS for approximately half the participants.

It also reports pleasing non-measurable soft data outcomes related to the attitudes, confidence and enjoyment of learners and positive reports of the support, training and impact of the programme from deliverers and Head Teachers. In 2001, as part of the Basic Skills Strategy for Wales, funding was made available to support projects designed to intervene strategically to reduce under-attainment in literacy.

Recognizing the importance of early intervention and taking into account the research of Thomas and Davis (1997) who found that 18% of children at the beginning of Key Stage 2 (KS) had difficulties with reading, X Local Authority (LA) decided to target Year 2 and Year 3 pupils. These children did not have defined special needs and thus were not entitled to additional language support sessions.

Nevertheless, their problems with reading were severe enough to limit their access to the curriculum and these children tended to fall further and further behind their peers in all subjects. The support was designed to boost the literacy skills of learners at an early stage in order to prevent difficulties

being carried through into secondary education. After a thorough investigation by the School Improvement Department of the LA in conjunction with the local advisory service, it was decided to use Catch up as the literacy intervention of choice in the LA.

A team of Learning Support Assistants was employed centrally to deliver the programme and a Literacy Project Coordinator employed to manage, monitor and evaluate the intervention. Catch Up has now been used in the primary sector for nine years and is very well established as a key intervention to support struggling readers. Since 2001, the central team of LASS has grown and now numbers 22 full time staff.

In 2008, with additional funding from the European Social Fund (ESP.) and consultation with the Senior Management Teams (SMS) in secondary schools, Catch Up was implemented as a pilot in 4 schools targeting Year 7 pupils. In 2009/10 the intervention was extended to involve Year 7 pupils in all secondary schools in the LA. In January 2010 the author was seconded from a primary school to the post of Project Coordinator and tasked with the role of managing the Basic Skills provision throughout the LA at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Despite the investment in Basic Skills in the LA through Basic Skills Cymae and ESP. funding and the high profile that Catch Up has in the LA, standards in reading in the LA and across Wales have steadily declined and pupils at 14 years of age are now falling behind their peers in many other countries in basic literacy standards (PISA report 2011). It is with this in mind that an investigation into the effectiveness of using Catch Up as a support for

struggling readers in the LA is required, and thus this paper will look at the principles of Catch Up and any key developments.

It will also interrogate and analyses individual data from learners who have received Catch Up support including results from a small control group.

Teachers at Key Stage 2 (KS) in Wales face an increasingly difficult challenge. With the advent of the Foundation Phase replacing more formal teaching methods at Key Stage 1, the new skills based curriculum at KS still makes the assumption that children in Year 3 can read and write with some degree of accuracy and fluency.

Despite many years of research concluding that there is a lack of emphasis upon continuing the teaching of reading for 7-11 year Olds, (Goodyear 1 972; Posted 1996) similar concerns continue today and the outcomes of the Programmer for International Student Assessment (PISA) 201 1 prove that our youngsters in Wales still lack the necessary literacy skills to compete with their peers across the developed world (COED 201 1 The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) have stated clearly that improving the outcomes for learners is one of their key priorities. One Wales' commits WAG to giving pupils in Wales a first class education and to working with education providers, practitioners and parents to create the best possible provision for the future. The School Effectiveness Framework (SEEP) has been signed to bring together programmer of action directed at school improvement. The SAFE plainly states the importance of using intervention strategies to improve standards. Whilst the body of research and practical experience on school effectiveness and improvement clearly shows that schools themselves need to be the fulcrum and dynamo for change, there <https://assignbuster.com/with-reference-to-recent-research-and-relevant-assignment/>

will always be a need for intervention and support to lift performance... It should not be perceived simply as a response to failure, but rather intervention and support which helps to improve effectiveness". In addition, the onus is clearly placed with Local Authorities to identify intervention strategies that reflect the best research knowledge. Local Authorities have a key role in ensuring appropriate support is provided to schools". The Defers in England describes effective literacy provision in terms of three Weaves' of literacy intervention :- ; Wave 1 -effective inclusion of all children in a daily, high quality literacy lesson; ; Wave 2 - additional small group intervention for children who can be expected to catch up with their peers as a result of the intervention; ; Wave 3 - specific, targeted approaches for children identified as requiring extra support.

The LA already has rigorous and effective support for children with Additional Learning Needs (ALAN) so ' Catch Up' is used as a Basic Skills intervention for struggling learners who do not have Individual Education Plans (Peps). Although as a one-to-one programmer it falls within the definition of Wave 3 support, the targeted children do have the potential to catch up with their peers. It is clear that WAG's current policy, embedded in the SAFE is in line with the evidence supporting the use of literacy interventions to support these struggling learners.

There is an unmistakable need for literacy intervention schemes in our schools to support the Basic Skills cohort of pupils. Greg Brooks estimates that in England in 2002 7% of children achieve below Level 3 in English at KS. Evidence for X LA suggests that for the academic year 2008/9, 22. 1 % of children failed to achieve the age expected level (Level 4 or above) at the <https://assignbuster.com/with-reference-to-recent-research-and-relevant-assignment/>

end of KS. The question remains however: Is Catch Up the most effective intervention to use in order to raise the literacy standards of our youngsters in the LA?

With the focus in education at the present time being very heavily weighted in favor of supporting literacy, there are many intervention schemes available. Indeed Basic Skills Cymae (BBS) have actively encouraged LAs to look carefully at the provision they provide for their Basic Skills learners and to critically evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention strategies supported by WAG through the Strategic Intervention Grant (SIGS).

In order to fully evaluate literacy interventions the following points must be considered :- ; if the intervention is effective in removing barriers to learning for children with a wide range of literacy needs; ; if the programme is cost effective; ; ease of implementation and management; ; if the training, support and development is adequate; sustainability and long term gains.

Although government guidance and policies advise that difficulties in learning should be tackled through intervention, research shows that there is uncertainty and many conflicting views about what is effective in removing barriers to learning for children with literacy difficulties. This uncertainty was acknowledged by Jim Rose (2006) when he stated that “ despite uncertainties in research findings... Synthetic phonics offers the best and most direct route to becoming skilled readers and writers. “. Professor Rose’s report provides an overwhelming endorsement of the use of Synthetic phonics to teach reading but the use of a purely synthetic phonic approach

to tackling underachievement in literacy has been a matter of educational debate.

Indeed it has been argued that phonics will only be a successful method of intervention for children who have a workable level of phonological awareness (Phillips, Glance-Mincemeat and Lording, 2008) and Stubbing, Birth, Chronic, Francis and Fletcher (2008) found that although a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics improves standards in reading, this is maximized when it occurs within the context of broad literacy caching that includes elements of other approaches to reading.

Evidence suggests that interventions should supplement and not replace general classroom literacy instruction (Toreros et al 2006). The number of phonologically based schemes has increased substantially since the publication of the Rose Report and the initial evidence on these quite recent schemes appears to show that they are generally effective (Brooks, 2007). Although Catch Up is not a phonologically based scheme it does address all aspects of the reading process, including phonics.

The approach of teaching honors alongside word recognition and language comprehension has been supported by the recent neurological research of Deanne (2009) There are many choices and decisions to be made when choosing a literacy intervention for use across a LA. Professor Greg Brooks reviewed the evidence on literacy interventions in 1 998, 2002 and 2007 for the Government and in all he reviewed 48 different kinds of reading intervention.

In the 2007 version of his report, Professor Brooks noted that there were many problems in assessing the quality of the intervention due to the low quality of data collection in UK trials on many of the approaches. A problem with effective data collection affects the review of the methodology as well as impacting the value for money of the intervention. When selecting a literacy intervention the quality of the data collection should be noted and all educationalists agree that the inclusion of a control group must feature in order to conclude that an intervention is more effective than alternatives. Properly defined control or comparison groups should be set up, through random assignment or at least by matching. " (Brooks 1 997) Indeed, Professor Brooks found that the only intervention to have carried out meticulous random controlled trial was the Cambric Reading Intervention, though there were several other, well-conducted, quasi-experiments including ' Catch Up' which used matched time in its initial evaluation study. For a large scale intervention to be used across Key Stages in the whole LA the cost effectiveness of the chosen programmer must be a consideration.

Many of the current interventions proved to be effective by Professor Brooks were found to be relatively expensive due to the high costs of training and the intensive, one-to-one nature of the programmer. In 2010 New Philanthropy Capital published a guide for charities and funders which found that over four years, in a typical school, each Catch LCP intervention generally cost approximately £120.00 per struggling learner (including staff costs). This compares with interventions such as Reading Recovery' which have initial training costs of over £1000 and high ongoing staff costs due to the intensive nature of the intervention.



Catch Up was developed in 1997 at Oxford Brookes University to address the particular needs of struggling readers in Years 2 and 3 by means of an intervention grounded in research (particularly Stanichion 1980, Indwell 1991 and Swami 1994). The intervention was re-launched as Catch up Literacy in 2007 and now addresses the needs of all struggling readers throughout the primary and secondary phases and beyond. The intervention is usually delivered to struggling learners by support staff who have received Catch Up training.

It addresses all aspects of the reading process and is targeted to the needs of the individual learner, enabling success within a clearly structured process. The intervention is delivered in two blocks of 15 minute sessions per week and is available in Welsh medium (Alternated Daffy Don). The full Catch Up Literacy training and resource package includes comprehensive training for senior leaders to manage the project as well as core training for the deliverers of the intervention that is accredited by the Open College Network and a 'Review and Next Steps' session for all those involved in the delivery.

As a complement to the intervention, Catch up have developed three collections of digital games (in English and Welsh medium) comprising structured reading, spelling and comprehension exercises in multi-media interfaces. It is the premise of this paper that Catch Up is the most effective choice for a LA intervention to support Basic Skills learners in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. In order to analyse the impact of Catch up Literacy on the reading abilities of the targeted children in the LA an analysis of the data from the academic year 2009/10 was conducted.

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Individual data for 334 learners across the primary and secondary phases have been analysed and supplemented with analyses of experimental data for 87 learners in Y LA (I. E. Data that includes a control group). In order for an intervention to be considered as effective any gains made at the end of the programme have to be maintained and built upon. In order to gauge the long-term effects of Catch up, a longitudinal study was also conducted on learners who received support in their primary schools.

The participating learners also conducted surveys to discover their attitudes to reading before and after the intervention and these results have been reported on. In addition to any measurable gains in reading achievement, engagement and enjoyment any effective intervention must be manageable and a good use of resources. In order to analyse the effectiveness of the training package, the evaluations completed by the Catch Up trainees during 2009/10 were analysed to discover if the training, support and resources provided were suitable, practical and detailed.

An evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness was also completed by Head Teachers in the Local Authority and these results are reported. The sample group of primary Catch Up learners all received support in either Year 2 or Year 3 for the whole of the academic year 2009/10. The sample group of secondary learners all received support in Year 7 for approximately 2 academic terms. They were all initially identified by the schools' internal assessment procedures as struggling learners who did not have recognized special educational needs.

These learners attended one Catch Up session with a fully trained member of the LA peripatetic central team and this session was matched by a school based L AS delivering the second 15 minute session. The children completed a baseline standardized reading assessment (Revised Sailors Sentence Reading Test) before the commencement of the intervention to give a starting reading accuracy age. A parallel test was administered mid way through the intervention and the original test repeated at the end of the intervention in order to determine any reading age progress.

The data was provided by the central team members who conducted the standardized reading tests and submitted to the coordinator for analysis. Due to practical constraints it was not feasible to have a control group. Instead the duration of the intervention stands as proxy (by virtue of the tests being standardized) for the progress in achievement that would be expected Of a typically achieving child (I. E. One month's gain in reading age for each chronological month) against which the progress of the participating children is compared. However, in light of

Professor Brooks' recommendation for using comparison groups to truly analyses the effectiveness of specific intervention schemes, data from a colleague who conducted an experimental trial of Catch Up with participants in Years 7 and 8 in a similar LA have been included and evaluated. For approximately 4 months a treatment' group of 20 learners were given Catch Up support while a control group of 67 learners received matched-time literacy support of the teachers choice. Other data (such as gender, dates of birth, number of Catch Up sessions etc) was collected and reported on where appropriate. No data was collected on socio-economic Status.

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Results from main dataset (334 learners) 2009/10 During the academic year 2009/10 193 children (95 boys, 98 girls) in 32 primary schools across the LA were receiving Catch Up support via central team members. On average the learners were supported over a nine month period (October 2009 to June 2010). During this time they made average gains in reading age (using the Sailors test) of 24 months. This calculates to a Ratio Gain of 2.6. The Ratio Gain was calculated on the basis of gain in reading age (in months), divided by the time elapsed between pre-and post- est. (in months) (Topping and Lindsey 1993).

The Defers states that for a successful individual intervention it is not unreasonable to expect twice the normal rate of progress I. E. A Ratio Gain of 2, although a Ratio Gain of 1.3 or above is significant (Defers leaflet 0201/2003). Closer analysis of the data from primary schools indicates that 88% of learners made gains of over 12 months during the 9 month period of the intervention. Of the 23 children who failed to make reading age gains of at least 12 months the following reasons were found to have an influence on the results . Absence; having less than the recommended 2 sessions per week; ; specific special needs. Nine children were persistent absentees which clearly affected their rate of progress as they missed whole class teaching as well as Catch JP sessions. These children received on average less than one session of Catch Up per week during the academic year. One child missed a large block of time due to illness. Five children attended a school where the long term absence of the school based Learning Support Assistant meant that the children only received one session of Catch Up per week from the central team member.

Four children were found to have specific learning needs and although these children made progress during the intervention it was very slow. In the secondary sector funding issues meant that the programme did not commence until the Spring Term. In the 6 month period January 2010 to June 2010, 141 children (66 boys and 75 girls) received Catch Up support from central team members. During this period the Year 7 learners made average gains in reading age of 13 months which calculates to an average Ratio Gain of 2.3. Further analysis revealed that 43% of pupils (n= 60) achieved the SAILORS test's ceiling score of 10. EARS at the end of the intervention. This limitation with the test precluded rigorous statistical analysis but a reading age of 10.2 years has been considered the age at which typical children have more or less achieved a level of reading competence that enables them to participate fully in the curriculum, so that they no longer need an intervention (Sawyer et al 1994; Madeleine & Wellhead 2002). In common with the primary sector, the main reason cited for lack of progress in the secondary schools was pupil absence. Of the 16 who failed to make the expected progress 11 were persistent absentees.

The main other reason for slow progress at Key Stage 3 proved to be timetabling issues which meant that the pupils were unable to be released from mainstream lessons for 2 sessions per week. In both sectors the results of Daffy Don were analysed separately. In the primary sector 15 children were supported, and at Key Stage 3 31 pupils received Daffy Don support. In both cases the standardized reading test used was Portion Glance Mean. Primary aged children achieved an average ratio gain of 2.9 while the ratio gain in Welsh medium secondary schools was 2.5.