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# Evaluation of the National Literacy Trust's Literacy for Life programme

by

Dr Beng Huat See
Professor Stephen Gorard
Dr Rebecca Morris and
Dr Nadia Siddiqui

Durham University Evidence Centre for Education
b.h.see@durham.ac.uk

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the final report on the three years of implementation of the Literacy for Life (LfL) programme developed by the National Literacy Trust and implemented by school leaders and trained teachers in six secondary academies. The programme ran from 2015 to 2018 and is independently evaluated by Durham University.

LfL is a whole-school programme aimed at developing pupils' academic language, so that they can access the language of the wider curriculum, improving attainment, while at the same time promoting a love and enjoyment of reading. The programme includes teacher development and training activities and a range of interventions intended to contribute towards the improvement of pupils' English language for academic achievement. This impact evaluation of the programme looks at the combined effects of teacher training and the individual literacy programmes implemented on secondary school pupils. The impact results include language development as a whole (measured in terms of progress from KS2 to KS4) as well as pupils' attitude towards literacy measured using a bespoke questionnaire survey developed by the NLT.

Although LfL comprises a range of approaches (including, for example, Reading Aloud, Debate Mate, Grammar Writing and Premier League Reading Stars (PLRS)), the programme is conceived as having each approach feeding into the development of pupils' language as a whole. The LfL programme was implemented under a broad implementation protocol in six secondary academies. However, within each school there was flexibility in adopting the focus and balance of the programme. It is intentionally designed to be tailored by schools to their needs and those of their pupils. Schools are presented with a menu of approaches from which they can choose. NLT provides support, in terms of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and financial resources, to buy into these and others, along with expert consultants. A key feature of LfL is the professional development of teachers with a view to supporting teachers by building their confidence and competence in delivering this whole-school programme. The CPD programme is designed to encourage sustainable change within schools.

Targeted interventions and improvement programmes are needed because, according to National Curriculum Assessments (2012/13), about 25 per cent of pupils leave primary schools without achieving the expected achievement levels at Key Stage 2 (KS2) in English and there were nearly 767 mainstream primary schools (6 per cent of the total number of schools in the UK) below primary school floor standards (DfE 2013). Many more pupils are not considered to be 'secure' in attaining expected literacy and numeracy scores. Secondary schools then face a challenge where a substantial number of children transfer without true readiness to embrace the secondary curriculum, and these schools are more likely to be in areas of high disadvantage.

Evaluations of whole-school literacy reforms have previously tended to be conducted at primary school level. These include Every Child a Reader (ECaR) which involved a whole-school model of teaching plus engaging parents (Tanner et al. 2010). This may have had a positive impact but at a high cost. There is less evidence for secondary schools. One systematic review found 14 literacy interventions used at secondary level (Brooks 2013). The literacy interventions that had some evidence of effectiveness are: Academy of Reading, BRP, Corrective Reading, Literacy Acceleration, Read Write Inc. Fresh Start, THRASS and Toe

by Toe, Catch-up Literacy, Philosophy for Children, The Accelerated Reader, and Sound Training for Reading. The majority of these interventions are for Years 7 to 9 and none have been tested for Year 10 or above. In addition, these interventions were not usually implemented or evaluated as part of whole-school literacy programmes.

The purpose of the new independent evaluation is two-fold:

- To evaluate the impact of the whole-school programme on pupils' KS4 results and attitudes to literacy
- To assess the process of implementation and make recommendations for future scaling-up

The evaluation focuses on pupils in Years 8 to 11 in the six participating academies (although one was a new school and had no pupil intake in the relevant age group, so the evaluation is really of five academies). The primary outcomes for Years 8 to 11 are the gain scores in English from KS2 to KS4. The evaluation originally intended to use the KS3 results as a post-intervention measure for Year 8 and 9 pupils, but since the project was conceived there is no longer a standardized measure of attainment at KS3. For this reason, the project team and Durham University agreed to use the KS4 results instead for Years 8 to 11. From our experience in working on other similar projects, this was deemed to be a more reliable measure of attainment than the school recorded assessments at the end of Year 9. The headline impact of the programme was assessed by comparing the gain scores of pupils in the six academies with those in all mainstream secondary schools in England, and all mainstream secondary schools in the same local authority areas as the six academies.

The secondary outcomes are pupils' attitudes towards literacy and teachers' attitude, as assessed by the NLT literacy surveys. These outcomes were collected at three time points: pre-intervention (baseline), during year two of implementation (interim results) and during year three of implementation. However, no teacher attitude survey was conducted for the comparison schools at the interim phase, and although a national survey was conducted at the end of Y3 to provide data for comparison, only 98 respondents from 24 schools completed the questionnaire. Of the 98, only 39 were classroom teachers. The rest included headteachers, school managers and other support staff (e.g. IT technicians, school nurse, school administrator and school librarians). Ten were not attached to any schools. Therefore, an analysis of teacher attitudes was not feasible given the poor response rate.

This report also includes the in-depth process evaluation results carried out in the six academies since 2015. The six academies involved in this evaluation included two in the Midlands, two in the South East, one in the North West and one in London:

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Impact on attainment*

- There is little or no evidence that being in a LfL school, as opposed to any other, had any differential benefit for pupils' overall attainment at KS4, or in English and maths, or their value-added progress

- There is some early evidence that FSM-eligible pupils and those with SEN status fared worse in LfL schools than in comparator schools, and that the gap between them grew in the early years of the intervention.

*Impact on pupils' literacy attitude*

- Impact on pupils' attitude for reading and writing could not be measured reliably because the identities of the pre-comparison schools in the attitude survey were not recorded. Therefore, it was not possible to use the same subset of schools for comparisons.
- The number of pupils who participated in the survey also declined substantially over the three years.
- Comparator schools were not necessarily the same schools over the three years. Results are therefore weakened.
- But comparing LfL schools with non LfL schools, results suggest that LfL may have a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of writing, but not their reading
- Staff also reported perceived benefits for pupils' confidence, motivation, oracy skills and creativity.

*Challenges in implementation*

- Schools reported a number of challenges in implementing the school-wide programme. The most common challenges were constraints on the budget, pressures of time and high staff turnover, which have made it difficult to embed the approaches and maintain consistency of delivery over the three years.
- Another challenge noted with the whole-school approach is the difficulty in getting every member of staff in the school committed to the literacy programme.
- The current design of the programme makes it difficult, if not, impossible, to attribute the effects to either the LfL programme as a whole or individual aspects of it.

*Recommendations*

If the programme is to continue, the following may be useful points of guidance:

<u>Sustained Continuing Professional Development</u>

High staff turnover, particularly of lead teachers, could affect the delivery of the programme therefore retraining of new staff is needed. Refresher courses or workshops may also be useful to maintain the momentum and to remind staff of the focus of the programme. Some staff also reported difficulties in attending training due to teaching and other commitments. So perhaps drop-in sessions and open surgeries for teachers to consult literacy leads may be needed. Of course, this would mean freeing lead teachers of other responsibilities to devote time to the programme.

Lesson preparation is time-consuming and feedback from teachers suggests that they would welcome sharing of ideas and teaching materials. The NLT has a virtual platform where teachers share their writing. This forum could be used for teachers to post their lesson plans, share good ideas or find out how other teachers, for example, embed grammar or literacy in their curriculum.

<u>More targeted approach in identifying pupils</u>

There needs to be a more targeted approach in identifying pupils for the different interventions in order to meet the needs of individual pupils.

Initial consultation with NLT consultants
Feedback from literacy leads suggests that an initial consultation with NLT consultants would be useful in helping them shape the focus and direction of the programme.

Promote proven programmes
The key to the success or failure of the project is the ability to identify and use approaches that have been robustly evaluated and have shown success in a number of independent evaluations. These programmes could be continued and promoted within the LfL programme. Examples include Reading Recovery/Switch-on Reading, Accelerated Reader, Philosophy for Children (P4C), Fresh Start (systematic, synthetic approach to reading), Response-to-Intervention and My Reading Coach. For a fuller description of these programmes, see Recommendations on page 51 to 53.

Approaches that have no prior evidence of impact on academic improvement should be carefully adopted and preferably be assessed for impact at a smaller scale before implementing as a whole-school programme. For example, there is no robust evidence demonstrating that PLRS, Inference training, Storytelling and Reading Aloud have been effective, for aged 16 pupils' achievement outcomes or attitudes for reading.

## THE PROGRAMME

This section outlines each of the activities or interventions which combine to make the LfL Programme. The programme comprises two complementary strands – one is to develop academic language for the wider curriculum, and the other to promote reading for pleasure. Strategies or approaches designed to develop academic language include Academic Language Development, Grammar for Writing, Inference Training, Debate Mate, Subject-specific Literacy training and Spelling. Reading for pleasure is promoted through Reading Aloud, Pupils as Writers programme, literacy festivals, author visits and the Premier League Reading Stars programme. To support schools in adopting these different strategies, a range of professional development workshops and training sessions were offered to teachers.

### Teacher development

Teacher development is one of the key features of effective schools as characterised in the McKinsey reports (2007; 2010). According to the DfE's Standards for Professional Development effective professional development involves expert support and challenge as well as peer-support for problem solving. The NLT sees this as an important aspect of the LfL programme.

The LfL whole-school professional development operates on two tiers. Tier 1 is managed by the literacy coordinators in each academy who work with NLT staff in the planning and implementation of the programme. The second tier involves school subject leaders working with literacy coordinators in developing their own subject level goals, who then cascade the plans and ideas for literacy improvement to their staff members. NLT staff regularly provided support to the schools and monitored progress of the programme implementation. Progress meetings were held half termly or termly with literacy leads and

senior leadership teams to gauge progress. In addition, NLT circulated a monthly newsletter among all six academies to share information and keep schools apprised of events happening across the six academies.

In most schools, middle management (heads of department, pastoral heads, or subject leads) attended the majority of the LfL training sessions and cascaded the training to their faculty or 'tweaked' it to fit their subject. However, some training, such as spelling strategy and academic keywords, were offered to all staff. Follow-up training was given by in-house literacy leads and heads of department who attended the NLT training.

*Coaching*

Literacy for Life programme included the dissemination of CPD through coaching. Training in peer coaching was provided by the Centre for Use of Evidence in Education (CUREE), and was offered to subject leads, literacy leads and departmental literacy champions who cascaded the training to staff in their department. In some schools training was given to the entire school staff. Training was a half-day or one-day session of CPD on key coaching skills.

The aim of peer coaching was to provide subject leads and departmental literacy champions with the skills and strategies to coach individual teachers and disseminate the knowledge gained in other CPD sessions to other teachers in the department. Peer coaching was also meant to help teachers gain more confidence in teaching new approaches to reading, writing and oracy in their subject areas. The subject leads set goals within their respective department, aligned with the overall aims of the literacy project. They were meant to ensure that the subject specific staff members involve plans of literacy activities in the lessons.

*Grammar for Writing (GfW) training*

GfW focuses on contextualised grammar teaching to develop pupils' writing. The aim is to train teachers to embed grammar teaching across the curriculum through explicit teaching of language and literacy. The training provided subject teachers the skills and confidence to embed English learning in their regular teaching. The CPD training was developed and delivered by academic experts to support teachers in helping pupils in their meta-language and to understand how writing can be crafted for different subject areas.

Grammar for Writing workshops were conducted in all six academies by a leading expert in the subject area of GCSE English . An observation visit by evaluation team member was made to one of these workshops. The observed workshop was a whole-day event held as part of an INSET day and attended by all the teachers in the school. The emphasis of the workshop was on raising teachers' awareness of using subject-specific words and grammar as an opportunity to teach ways of writing. Examples from pupils' GCSE papers and written expressions in the science subjects were used as discussion points. There were some hands-on sessions where teachers used examples from their pupils' writings to discuss common problems in pupils' written work and to think of effective strategies to address these issues. Feedback from some teachers and subject leads suggested that the focus of the workshop was too broad. They would have liked the workshop to be more tailored to their subject needs. They thought the subject-specific CPD was more helpful.

*Subject Specific Literacy (SSL) training*

SSL training was offered to all teachers, intended to develop language and literacy teaching and learning strategies pertinent to maths, English, science, humanities, IT, DT, PE and art. The aim was to help subject teachers to understand the importance of language and literacy in subject learning, and to provide them with a theoretical framework and classroom toolkit. SSL training focuses on different literacy strategies specific to each subject. For example, English SSL training supports the new GCSE specification and the role of inferential reading. For maths, the focus is on oral questioning and how to handle the new style of questions. Training for science teachers looks at the literacy demands of the new GCSE requirements in the extended answers. In the other subject areas (humanities, art, PE, and DT), training relates to the reading, writing and oracy relevant to the specific subject areas.

SSL workshops were conducted in all six academies. The evaluation team members attended one of the SSL training sessions. This was a two half day CPD workshops led by expert subject trainers or consultants. To ensure that the training was relevant to the respective subject, subject leads and literacy leads met with the consultants prior to the SSL training to discuss the needs of the department and to ensure that the CPD training provided teachers with practical examples that they could apply in their lessons. NLT staff members were present at these workshops to oversee the delivery of the training.

Teachers were shown how to plan and deliver lessons. The small group sessions focused on what each subject could contribute and how the GSCE results for their subject could be improved by using the ideas of the overall literacy approach of the school. The emphasis was on how literacy should be thought of holistically during planning. Teachers were also trained to look at OFSTED requirements in the planning and delivery of such lessons. considered was how the approach could be differentiated and applied to all year groups with a focus on bringing GSCE level skills to year 7.

The workshops promoted paired and group work with hands-on activities and practical examples in the maths workshop. Teachers were encouraged to take part in discussions with each other and the trainer, and most of them appeared to be enthusiastic and engaged in the process. However, there were few examples that teachers could take away directly and apply in their lessons.

*Consultancy*

In addition to the SSL training, every school also had access to two full days or four half days of consultancy. The consultant supported the strategic leadership of the literacy lead. The kind of support offered depends on the needs of the school and the focus of the literacy lead and SLT. Consultants also provided subject specific training on embedding language and literacy specific to the subjects. Teacher CPD in LfL was underpinned by consultancy support, to bring about system change within the schools. This is a key difference to stand alone CPD.

*Academic language development*

Whole-school academic language development is the main component of LfL programme. The underlying concept of the programme is that language and literacy should be integral to learning and this is the rationale for an emphasis on areas such as understanding and answering exam questions. Academic language

development is explicit, cross-curricular teaching and learning of academic language. CPD training provided by NLT is meant to help raise awareness of the relevance of language and literacy across the curriculum for teachers. The theory is that knowledge of the theoretical framework of how pupils learn writing, reading and oracy combined with explicit teaching and learning, can have a strong effect on pupils' academic learning.

*Teachers as writers*

Teachers as Writers workshops were optional for interested teachers. This training aimed at developing teachers' abilities and confidence in writing. Teachers were introduced to the concept of writing together in a variety of ways to develop their own writing. The perception is that teachers who write together become better at teaching writing. The initial session is to bring ideas together and subsequent workshops will be arranged by the literacy lead. Teachers share their writing on a virtual forum on the NLT website. This approach involved all teachers sharing their writing with each other at least on a monthly basis.

Teachers as Writers workshops started running by January 2016. Schools booked workshops with Simon Wrigley and Jeni Smith. It was recommended that such workshops run with groups of six teachers or more. Teachers taking part in these workshops were given writing journals to encourage them to write.

Four Teachers as Writers workshops were conducted. In these workshops a small group of teachers explored writing for pleasure. Teachers discussed how to continue this as a self-sustained group and how to encourage their pupils to get involved in writing for pleasure.

*Spelling CPD*

Teachers and Teaching Assistants (TA) were trained to teach spelling using a systematic approach, employing a range of sound-based strategies. A Spelling CPD was arranged in November 2015 conducted by Tricia Millar who led the training of a phonics approach to spelling. Tricia Millar's approach combines phonics with other strategies. The course conducted in London was offered to two teachers from each school to disseminate the training back at school with the support of a video training model. These teachers were provided with supporting texts and videos to train all staff in their schools.

*Inference training*

This programme trained TAs and English teachers who worked with struggling readers to develop their inferential reading. The programme was an intensive one-day of training and requires a minimum of 10 hours of intervention with selected pupils. It can be run as an intervention to develop pupil's inference skills, but can also be used in whole-class teaching.

*MA education*

As a part of LFL selected staff members, two from each of the six academies were invited to complete an MA degree in Education part-time. The plan was for the staff member to complete the degree and at the

same time work in school to share the knowledge and practice learned in the programme. They were also encouraged to share their work in training sessions, the NLT monthly newsletter and the NLT network.

*Additional support*

Additional support was given to schools via the NLT network and monthly newsletters. Schools were encouraged to share good practices and success stories such as individual case studies of pupils. Teachers and pupils posted their written work on the NLT network.

**Monitoring of the programme**

*Literacy Leader Tracking*

To monitor the implementation of the LfL programmes in the schools, literacy leads were provided with a monitoring grid collected every half term by NLT staff. Feedback was obtained from subject leads on how they embed the LfL approaches in the curriculum. Subject leads were also encouraged to highlight aspects of the programme that went well and any concerns they might have. The monitoring process involved finding out how the peer coaching model was working. Regular monitoring helped the NLT team to identify issues as they arose and address them promptly.

The Progress Tracker was introduced in January 2016 to support literacy leads to record and reflect on the impact of the training and programme across the school. This facilitated ongoing light evaluation to enable the NLT team to support schools in embedding the different aspects of the approaches.

*Individual literacy approaches*

In addition to the teacher development programmes, various protocols and approaches were used to achieve the overall aim of improving language and literacy of pupils. These are described below.

*Premier League Reading Stars*

Premier League Reading Stars is a reading intervention programme that captures the motivational power of football to inspire young people to read more and to improve their literacy skills. The aim of this is to make reading enjoyable for pupils and to inspire reading interests among pupils with a generic interest in football Premier League clubs and players. Pupils take on-line book quizzes as challenges offered by national football players, and in return they achieve points and rewards. This intervention involved school visits of book writers and authors to read their work to groups of pupils, and provides toolkits that include books for reading, posters and sticker rewards for completing reading tasks. Literacy leads in each academy identify 20 pupils who were underachieving in reading to take part in the programme.

*MACK (Motivation Aspiration Confidence and Knowledge)*

MACK was developed by Roisin Fulton, an educational psychotherapist. It is designed to support disengaged pupils to overcome emotional and social barriers to learning and to promote the role of literacy

in their lives. In one of the academies Fulton conducted a few sessions with a group of pupils in the autumn of 2015. Her approach began with assessing children's emotional and psychological approach to life and literacy learning before selecting a group to work with. The work so far has focused on removing the emotional barriers that prevent them from accessing the curriculum. The programme provides the support to scaffold pupils' emotional resilience and robustness which in turn helps not only the children's wellbeing but also their ability to focus and access their learning in more positive and productive ways.

*Reading Aloud (RA) Programme*

The *Reading Aloud* model requires the teacher to read aloud for 10 minutes every day. *Reading Aloud* focuses on the enjoyment of being immersed in a story by providing quality of access to content, tone and character developments, rather than a focus on the decoding of the text. The aim is to encourage inferential understanding of texts and to develop intrinsic motivation in reading to support pupils' language development. Teachers and pupils share the same book but different texts are used for children in different year groups and for different ability. Several copies of the texts are made available in the library. Pupils have a choice of which book they would like to read.

NLT offered a selection of books for Reading Aloud to all pupils. Examples of texts given to each school are:

- Thirteen Chairs, Dave Shelton
- This is Not a Test, Courtney Summers
- Taking on the Dead, Annie Walls
- Tinder, Sally Gardner
- Smart, Kim Slater

The books were carefully selected to connect with the experiences of British secondary school pupils. The role of the teacher, as the expert reader, is to open up the world of books to pupils. In RA, pupils listen to the teacher as an expert reader and discuss sections of the book. For example, they could talk about how they feel about the character, setting or theme in the book they read. They then discuss the ideas in the previous day's reading before starting a new section. Teachers were encouraged to read with expression to maintain active listening, and to elicit pupils' views about the story and make links with pupils' experiences. To encourage reading at home, pupils were given one of these books which they could keep.

In the third year of implementation, the Reading Aloud programme continued with a new set of books provided. An audio library was set up with audio texts and e-texts supplied to schools to develop students' intrinsic motivation to read. A space of the school library was designated as a listening corner library equipped with headphones and ipads to allow students to listen to texts and podcasts. Students were also able to read texts on screen.

*Storytelling*

This programme aimed at extending students' speaking and critical listening skills through a repertoire of talk. A professional storyteller is engaged to run a one-day workshop for students, which focuses on the importance of oral language in scaffolding learning. Storytelling offers two learning situations for students.

With teachers as the storyteller, students develop listening skills, while having students as the storyteller helps develop oral expression (Peck 1989). Listening to stories being told to them children can sharpen their listening and memory skills. Some writers, such as Littleton and Mercer (2013), have written about collaborative talk which they call "interthinking". Drawing on their experiences from working with teachers and analysis of different types of collective talk they show how effective discourses can be fostered and collaborative language can be used to encourage understanding and empathy. Alexander (2012) argues that well structured talk can help develop reading, writing and other cognitive skills.

*Author visits*

To bring to life the stories they read and those being read to them, authors are invited to the schools to meet the pupils. For example, NLT arranged school visits by Dave Shelton and Sally Gardner, authors of two of the selected texts. The aim was to encourage children to read and be enthused about books. One of the academies reported positive responses from their pupils. Pupils talked about how the scheme had introduced them to books that they would not have considered. A majority of the Year 8 pupils (72%) indicated that they would like to continue with Read Aloud. The author visits apparently raised further interest in the books as pupils did their own research to find out more about the authors and the storyline prior to the author visits. Dave read from his recent novel, Thirteen Chairs, which was one of the texts that the school had chosen as part of the Reading Aloud programme. He spoke to the children about his experiences of writing.

*Author in Residence*

This programme was introduced in the third year of implementation as an extension of the author visits. This was meant to encourage students to engage with real authors to learn techniques of writing to get them interested in writing and thus increase their writing repertoire. Under this programme specific writers are assigned to each school where they offer 3-4 days of workshops for the year. The programme focused on professional writing and began at the summer literacy festival in 2016. The writing workshops culminated in a published anthology of students' writing. These authors included poets Dreadlock Alien, Adisa and Valerie Bloom, and storyteller Ben Haggerty.

The idea behind this approach is to encourage divergent thinking through experimentation with a range of genres so that students had the confidence and ability to merge and create genres themselves. Through guidance from professional writers in rich classroom activities it was hoped that students would be exposed to these genres.

*Debate Mate*

Debate Mate is a peer-to-peer debating approach that employs university students as mentors for school pupils. Pupils are given intensive training in the art of public speaking prior to a series of competitions. Teachers are also trained in how to embed debating and public speaking in the curriculum. The theory is that oracy is a prerequisite for literacy development and this focus helps support reading and writing developments. Using a range of strategies, pupils can gain the skills of public speaking and enter competitions. University mentors from Debate Mate visited some schools and worked with the pupils for a

full day developing debating skills in a range of topics. Pupils were taught how to plan and structure a cohesive argument, to consider alternative points of view and summarise key points. Pupils were also prepared for an inter-academy debate.

*Pupils as Writers*

The Pupils as Writers programme is similar to the teacher version of Teachers as Writers with NLT gifting a Literacy for Life notebook (a writing journal) to all children in Year 7. Schools are free to encourage the use of the notebook, such as free writing in English or during library lessons. The aim was to develop writing as a pleasurable activity and improve writing stamina. Pupils used these books for 10 minutes a week, usually as part of their English lessons, an were not required to share their work unless they choose to. The work was not marked. In collaboration with the literacy lead, the NLT supported the setup of these workshops. In the third year, this was extended to encourage teachers and pupils to write together. In doing so it helped teachers develop an understanding of the process of writing and thus strengthen their own practice of teaching writing. At the same time students are encouraged to play with language and develop an interest in writing for pleasure.

*Spelling*

The Spelling intervention was implemented to train pupils to spell accurately using phonetic approaches. This intervention used a range of sound-based strategies to help pupils apply a systematic approach to spelling.

**Preparation for life after school**

In the third year of implementation additional support was also given to Y9 and Y10 pupils to prepare them for life after school, with new programmes like Words for Work, Future First and University Interview Support.

*Words for Work (W4W)*

W4W was a 5-week programme for Y9 and Y10 pupils to develop those aspects of listening and speaking skills that were useful for job interviews. The activity was aimed at preparing students for the world of work and education by helping them to be confident and articulate in presenting themselves.

*Future First*

Future First complements the W4W programme. It introduces role models from the school's alumni and local businesses to help students understand the importance of using standard English in speaking and writing. The aim is to provide students with broad language skills required for further education and employment.

*University interview support*

The aim of this programme is to introduce students to standard academic English necessary for success in higher education. It prepares students for interviews in their application for entrance to universities. Under this programme local universities are approached to offer one-to-one interview practice with students.

**Other approaches**

Schools also used the funds provided by NLT to buy into other existing programmes, such as Accelerated Reader and Lexia.

*Literacy Festivals (Voices)*

In addition to these individual programmes, participating schools also attended the national Language and Literacy festival events held across England. These festivals were one-day events organised in collaboration with local universities in the summer of 2016. The festivals provide a range of writing, drama, oracy and reading workshops alongside writers' performances to approximately 150 pupils from each school. Pupils learn the craft of writing for real purposes with published writers. The aim is to provide opportunities for pupils to meet real life authors to help enthuse pupils and teachers to use language creatively and purposefully, and also to give pupils access to the world of professional writing to develop enjoyment of language through writing and performance. It was expected that getting pupils to visit the universities would inspire them to consider higher education.

All six academies participated in the end-of-year festivals held in their local universities. NLT also arranged for the Globe theatre to deliver two workshops at each festival: a storytelling workshop, and the creation of 'Company of Players' where 10 pupils worked on scenes from Macbeth throughout the day culminating in a performance at the close of the festival.

## BACKGROUND EVIDENCE

As is clear even from these summaries, the LfL programme is wide-reaching and very complex. For most of the approaches used in the LfL project there is some weak research evidence of a link between the programmes and academic and wider outcomes. However, very few of these programmes have been tested rigorously to show that these links are causal. Nevertheless, there is some strong evidence that teaching pupils good reasoning and argumentation skills as in Debate Mate can improve pupils' academic outcomes. Another programme – Accelerated Reader – although not part of the LfL bundle of programmes has been used by some schools with funding from NLT. There is convincing evidence from RCTs that Accelerated Reader works in improving pupils' reading skills. Below we outline prior research evidence on the LfL interventions used by LfL. Further details about the evidence for each are in Appendix A.

**Existing evidence on teacher development programmes**

There are many studies claiming a positive relationship between effective teachers and pupil academic outcomes (e.g. the Hay McBer report, DfEE 2000; the Mckinsey report 2007; 2010 and the Sutton Trust report 2011). The LfL teacher development programme was aimed at developing teachers' skills, in the form of workshops, peer coaching, inservice training, MA course and subject-specific and literacy

consultancy, tailored to equip teachers with the pedagogical skills and content knowledge to help them to embed literacy across the curriculum.

However, there is as yet no strong evidence that developing teachers' skills can improve pupils' academic outcomes. Most previous studies, like those listed above, are based on correlational analysis, conflating pupil outcomes with effective teachers or effective teaching. Studies that actually test the impact of teacher training show no strong evidence that teacher development has any positive effect on pupil academic attainment. Of the 21 studies reviewed by Gorard, See and Morris (2016) looking at the impact of teacher training, 12 reported no effects. A multimillion dollar initiative by the Gates Foundation to enhance teacher effectiveness also found no discernible impact of teacher development on teaching effectiveness and improvement in student academic achievement (Stecher et al. 2018).

**Previous evidence on the individual literacy approaches used in this evaluation**

The Literacy for Life programme encompasses a large number of different approaches and interventions which schools are able to select and implement in a way that best suits the needs of their cohort. While the programme is to be evaluated as a whole, it is important to consider the different approaches and interventions included within the programme, their existing evidence-base and the rationale for their inclusion.

*Inference training*

The evidence on the impact of inference training so far is largely negative. Although the results of a small experiment (McGee and Johnson 2003) showed that explicit teaching of inference skills had improved pupils' writing skills, this was based on only 75 children within one school. Results from large-scale randomised control trials, however, have not shown positive results (Churches 2016; NCTL 2014).

*Grammar for Writing (GfW)*

The evidence for GfW is mixed. Research by the developers suggests that GfW had a beneficial effect on children's written work (Jones et al. 2012; Myhill et al. 2012; 2013). A large-scale randomised control trial suggests small positive effects especially when delivered to small groups (Torgerson et al. 2014). However, when the trial was scaled up extending the duration of the intervention, it found no effects (Tracey et al. 2018). This could be because in the effectiveness trial, the fidelity of the programme was compromised as several teachers did not use the full complement of the programme. Also, the intervention was delivered to the whole class rather than in small groups, suggesting that small-group delivery may be more effective.

*Premier League Reading Stars (PLRS)*

There is no convincing evidence as yet whether PLRS can improve children's reading ability and attitude despite claims of positive effects. This is mainly because no large-scale randomised control trials have been conducted that used standardised measures of pupils' outcomes. Studies by NLT suggest positive outcomes on reading and a range of behavioural outcomes, such as enjoyment and confidence (Pabion 2015; Pabion and Clark 2015). However, in these two studies children were not randomly assigned to treatment groups

and attitudinal and behavioural outcomes were measured using children's self-report. An evaluation by Coventry University (Wood et. al, 2017) also did not involve random allocation of children, and the two groups of children were already different at the outset in terms of reading ability and interest in football.

*Debate Mate (and other debating activities)*

Although no independent experimental study of Debate Mate has been conducted so far there is a body of research which suggests that developing pupils' debating skills can have a positive impact on academic outcomes, in particular literacy skills (Akerman and Neale 2011; Mezuk et al. 2011; the Minnesota Public Schools 2015). A systematic review of 17 studies on teaching thinking also indicates that developing reasoning and argumentation skills can have positive effects on pupils' numeracy and other intrinsic outcomes. More recent large-scale randomised control trials suggest promising results of teaching children to critique, reason and argue (Gorard, Siddiqui and See 2017; Hanley et al, 2015).

*Spelling*

The links between spelling ability and reading fluency and comprehension are well-established (Al Otaiba et al., 2010; Wanzek, 2013). There are different approaches to teaching spelling. Some found explicit instruction, repetitive practice and immediate feedback to be effective, while others like Torgeson et al. (2001) tested embedded phonics in teaching spelling. The LfL approach used synthetic phonics to develop pupils' reading and spelling. This approach has not been robustly tested, although an evaluation by Brooks (2012) using a one-group design (i.e. with no comparison group) suggested that pupils made considerable gains in reading as a result.

*Reading Aloud*

There has been no evaluation of the impact of the 'Reading Aloud' activity as used in the LfL project but there is a body of research evidence suggesting a positive relationship between reading frequency, reading enjoyment and attainment (Clark and Douglas 2011). Other studies have also suggested positive links between attitudes to reading, reading outside school and performance on reading assessments (Twist et al 2007; PIRLS 2006; PISA 2009). Clark and Rumbold (2006) suggest that reading for pleasure is correlated with other non-cognitive outcomes. Unfortunately, these are correlational studies, which make it difficult to establish causal impact.

*MACK*

As far as we know MACK has not been evaluated, but some work has been done that tries to establish the relationship between character education/social and emotional learning and academic engagement (Elbertson et al. 2010). However, a recent trial by Humphrey (2015) found no impact of social and emotional learning on academic outcomes. A systematic review of five trials on behavioural and social and emotional interventions revealed mixed effects (Gorard, See and Morris 2016).

*Accelerated Reader(AR)*

There is considerable research on AR and although the What Works Clearinghouse's review (WWC 2008) found no obvious effect on reading fluency and comprehension, two subsequent robust RCTs (one conducted in England) showed promising effects of AR on pupils' reading comprehension (Ross et al. 2004; Siddiqui, Gorard and See 2015).

As above, previous evidence for all of the individual approaches is patchy, with some elements more promising than others. Most have not been robustly tested, and where they have been, the results are often inconclusive or negative. If the programme is to be rolled out to more schools, perhaps focus should be on only those approaches that have been through rigorous testing and which have shown promise (see Recommendations for Future Evaluations).

## METHODS OF EVALUATION

This new independent evaluation of LfL considers first the impact of the intervention on pupil attainment and attitudes to reading, and then our investigation of the intervention implementation. Here we describe the methods used.

### Impact evaluation

*Design*

The design for the impact evaluation of the three-year intervention of Literacy for Life is quasi-experimental. It compares the outcomes of pupils in the five secondary academies with results (the treatment group) with the strongest comparators available. For attainment the comparators are all mainstream state-funded secondary schools in England and all mainstream state-funded secondary schools in the same local authorities as the five academies. For attitudes, the comparators are all other schools completing the NLT annual attitude survey. Using before, during and after figures, this provides a reasonably robust indication of impact.

*Academic outcomes*

Academic impact is measured using:

- The percentage of pupils obtaining 5+ GCSE or equivalent in English and maths at grade C or higher in 2014, and grade 5 or higher and grade 4 or higher from 2017 (due to national change in grading system)
- The percentage of pupils obtaining EBacc at grade C or higher in 2014 and grade 5 or higher from 2017
- Attainment 8 scores (from 2016)
- Progress 8 (value-added) scores (from 2016)
- Total KS4 points scores

These are used for each academy in LfL, all mainstream schools in their respective local authorities, and in England overall. The differences between LfL schools, LA schools, and all schools in England are standardised by conversion to 'achievement gaps' – the difference between two mean scores divided by their sum, where the relevant standard deviation for that figure is not known. Where the standard deviation is known, the differences are standardised as 'effect' sizes - the difference between two mean scores divided by their overall standard deviation.

Disaggregated analysis was carried out to estimate the effects of LfL on disadvantaged groups, defined as those eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs status.

A series of regression models are also presented, using individual pupil records for 2014 to 2016 (years available at time of creation), using prior attainment at KS2, background predictors and participation in LfL to explain variation in KS4 capped points. The 'effect' size for participation in LfL is its coefficient in the model. If knowledge of the treatment group makes more of a difference to the predicted results post-intervention than pre-intervention, this provides some evidence that the treatment has made a difference once the inevitable prior differences between groups are accounted for.

*Attitude outcomes*

Teachers' and pupils' attitudes to literacy were assessed via the Teacher Attitude Questionnaire and the Pupil Attitude Questionnaire respectively (see Appendix C1 and C2). These were administered at three time points (pre-intervention, interim at the end of year 2 and post-intervention at the end of year 3) by NLT. Both questionnaires were designed by NLT for their annual survey, and not specifically for this project. The evaluators had no input in to the content or delivery of these. As such these questionnaires were not designed to answer the research questions.

For pupils' attitudes, NLT identified the following themes to focus on:

- Enjoyment (both reading and writing)
- Frequency (both reading and writing)
- Self-confidence (both reading and writing)
- Attitudes (both reading and writing)

These are measured in terms of categories – for enjoyment, frequency, attitude and confidence in both reading and writing. The categories are cross-tabulated as percentages, and converted to odds ratios. For most measures, the post-intervention scores are compared between LfL and comparators schools. For enjoyment, the scores are compared between LfL and comparators schools over three years.

For analysis, all pupils reported as being in a year group other than 7 to 11 were removed from the attitude datasets. Most survey items had a small number of missing values. These were mostly ignored and the cases dropped for that analysis. The background variables were recoded to eliminate missing values, so that the variable represents membership of the minority group (if known) or not (otherwise). These include FSM or not, male or not, White British or not, and EAL or not. Other missing values were recoded as none, never, or average, as appropriate. However, some missing data, the lack of systematic sampling, and problems

with the instrument mean that small differences between responses or groups must be ignored as meaningless.

The frequencies of responses to each key item, for each group on each occasion, are presented as percentages within treatment/comparison group. To assist readability, the differences in these percentages between groups are converted to standardised odds ratios for pre- and post-intervention. Where odds ratios are greater than one, they represent a better standardised outcome for LfL schools, and odds ratios less than one suggest a worse LfL outcome. Where they increase over time, the odds ratios give an indication that the treatment group has increased their response in that category. Where they decrease, they mean that the treatment group has decreased their response in that category.

**Process evaluation method**

The process evaluation was set up to provide formative evidence on all phases and aspects of the intervention from training of teachers to the delivery of the programme. It helps to provide intermediate indicators to enable us to explain why the intervention had the effect that it did. It also enables us to identify the features of successful implementation as well as any challenges faced. The latter is important to provide guidance for future evaluations and scaling-up.

The method of process evaluation was light-touch as we wanted to minimize any inconvenience caused during our visits, and assess events as naturally as possible. For this reason the observations and interviews were intentionally kept open-ended. We wanted to let the interviewees focus or talk about things that mattered to them – not only about things we thought were important beforehand. Although there was no formal schedule as such, all researchers visiting schools on observation visits were trained and instructed on what to look for. For teacher training, the aim was to observe the quality of training, how teachers respond to the training sessions, their reaction or resistance (if any) and how they thought the training has helped them and how they could be improved.

The purpose of the process evaluation was to note if the programme has changed teachers' teaching behaviour and children's engagement with literacy activity. Did the children enjoy the lessons? Did the programme lead to discernible differences in writing and reading tasks, for example? As LfL is a whole-school approach to literacy, the school visits also hoped to capture the extent to which this occurred. Researchers were given these briefs when they visit schools.

The methods of data collection and analysis for the process evaluation included:

- *Participant observations of teacher CPD sessions*
  NLT kept us informed of training sessions and arranged for us to attend these.
- *Observations of classroom delivery during learning walks*
  School visits were arranged in collaboration with NLT staff. The aim was to visit all six academies once at the beginning of the programme and a sample of schools again during and towards the end of the programme to look for changes in teaching and children’s learning behaviours. During these visits we also had the opportunity to look at pupils’ written work via their exercise books and work

on display boards. The learning walks were useful in helping us get a picture of the whole-school embeddedness and effect of the programme.

- *Informal interviews and focus group interviews with staff and pupils* were used to gather the perceptions of participants including any resentment or resistance, and to advise on improvements and issues for any future scaling up.
- *Sharing of materials from the programme organizer* (the National Literacy Trust team)
  NLT arranged CPD sessions for schools, coordinated events and monitored programme implementation in schools, and kept us informed of activities and events happening in schools. They also shared their own evaluations and updated us with news via their monthly newsletters. These have been very useful.

In addition to our own observations at the CPD training, NLT shared their own survey of teacher feedback on the training programmes. However, the teacher training feedback instrument was not very useful as many of the questions were double-barrelled or even triple-barrelled. There were no separate responses for different training events or components. Some teachers attended more than one training event. For example, there were teachers who attended training on Grammar for Writing, Inference, PLRS, Reading Aloud and Academic Language. It is difficult to see how these teachers could answer questions like "Overall, how would you rate the training?", "Did the training meet your needs? ", "I was already familiar with all of the content of the training" or "The content was new to me", since they might have different views for the different training. Two teachers also shared the same feedback. This made it very difficult to analyse the responses.

The interviews with pupils and staff in the six academies have enabled us to capture the contexts within which the programmes were implemented. All these helped to identify the barriers or facilitators to implementation of the programme.

| School | Interviews | Lesson observations | Book look |
|---|---|---|---|
| BB | <u>Teachers</u><br>8 teachers (LfL programme lead, Assistant Principal, Head of Teaching and Learning, Head of Science, Head of Global Faculty, Head of Y7 and Food and Tech, English teacher and Performing Arts teacher)<br>Arranged to meet librarian, but he was absent<br><u>Pupils</u><br>9 pupils in the focus group – 3 each from Year 7, 8 and 9 | 5 different lessons were observed: one for maths, one English, Art, Music and Geography | A book look was organised where a range of exercise books from across subjects and age groups were seen. These included English, Maths and Science. |
| DB | <u>Members of staff</u><br>4 teachers interviewed. These included a Maths teacher, an English teacher, the Vice-Principal and the librarian. | Observed 6 lessons: Maths, Science lesson, RE, History, Reading Aloud and PLRS | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pupils<br>6 pupils in the focus group from Years 8 to 10 | | |
| KB | Staff<br>8 members of staff interviewed. These included the Literacy Lead, Assistant Principal (who is also MFL teacher), Head Teacher, Director of English and Maths, a librarian one SENCO and one teacher who supports the nurture group<br><br>Pupils<br>8 pupils in focus group of mixed ability | Observed 3 reading classes in the morning, and 6 Year 8 lessons for Science, 2 English classes, Art, Geography and RE | Looked at books from lower ability children who were supported by the SENCO.<br><br>Library visit |
| AF | Staff<br>7 members of staff interviewed. These included the Principal, VP (who is also head of TandL), Senior Literacy Lead, Deputy Head of English, one SENCO, couple of LSAs, librarian<br><br>Pupils<br>There was no focus group interview arranged for pupils, but we spoke to some pupils in the sessions we observed. | Observed 8 lessons (Y7 music, Y12 PE, Y7 DT, Y7 PLRS, Y7 Inference training, Y7 Lexia Reading and 6th form RE class) | Book look of pupils' work in the DT class.<br><br>Library visit |
| AH | Staff<br>8 members of staff. These included the Literacy Lead/Director of English, Deputy Dir of literacy, librarian, Assistant SENCO, one LSP, a maths teacher, MFL (Spanish) teacher and Computing/IT/Business teacher<br><br>Pupils<br>9 pupils from Y7, 8 and 9 (all members of a newsletter group). | Learning walks – observed lessons in Y9 History, Y7 English, Y8 Maths | Visited the library and the Success/Inclusion Centre where the LSP has been working with SEN children SEN involved in the Lexia programme, Inference training and the PLRS. |
| AV | Staff<br>4 teachers, including Senior Literacy Lead and Head of TandL, Head of Maths, Head of Science, Leader of Excellence for Literacy<br><br>Pupils | | Review of pupils' exercise books and schemes of learning.<br><br>Looked at pupils' workbooks for Maths, Geography, |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 5 students from Y7, 8 and 9 | | Music, Science and Humanities |

It is common that the views and perceptions of participants and stakeholders are at odds with the findings of the impact evaluation. Most often, participants tend to report any intervention as being more successful than it really is. Therefore, the process evaluation is not used to assess impact at all.

## RESULTS

### Attainment outcomes

*Headline figures*

The headline findings are based on comparison of the percentage of pupils gaining Grade C or higher in GCSE or equivalent in English and maths. However, once the study was underway, the grading system changed for GCSEs, and there was no direct equivalent for Grade C. Instead a C was estimated to be a little higher than a Grade 4 and a little lower than Grade 5, and so here we present the results after 2016 for both Grades 4 and 5. The LfL schools started the programme with lower average attainment than schools in England overall, and by 2018 the gap remained about the same (Table 1). There is no evidence from this measure that the programme produced any benefit.

Table 1: Gap between all LfL schools and those in England 2014 and 2018 (percentage gaining English and maths)

| Gap 2014 – percentage grade C+ in English and maths | Gap 2018 – percentage grade 4+ in English and maths | Gap 2018 – percentage grade 5+ in English and maths |
|---|---|---|
| -0.12 | -0.11 | -.015 |

Looking at the gap between each LfL school and its local authority, as might be expected the gap is slightly lower by the end at the Grade 4 threshold but slightly higher on average at Grade 5 (Table 2). Again, there is no reason to believe that LfL has been beneficial overall.

Table 2: Gap between each LfL school and those in their local authority 2014 and 2018 (percentage gaining English and maths)

| School | Gap 2014 – percentage grade C+ in English and maths | Gap 2018 – percentage grade 4+ in English and maths | Gap 2018 – percentage grade 5+ in English and maths |
|---|---|---|---|
| DB | -0.25 | -0.11 | -0.23 |
| AF | -0.03 | -0.04 | -0.04 |
| AV | -0.05 | -0.01 | -0.03 |
| AH | -0.09 | -0.01 | -0.06 |
| BB | -0.30 | -0.17 | -0.44 |

*More detailed results for each measure and year*

Prior to the introduction of the programme (Table 3), LfL schools were behind all schools in England in terms of percentage achieving C+ in English and maths at GCSE (effect size = - 0.12) and C+ in EBACC (effect size = -0. 38). Compared to schools in their respective local authorities, LfL schools were also slightly behind, as indicated by the negative achievement gaps for each. This means that simply using post-intervention scores to assess the impact would not be fair to LfL schools.

Table 3: School, LA and England KS4 outcomes, 2014

| School | N | % C+ English and maths | Achievement gap | % EBACC at C+ | Achievement gap |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DB | 132 | 34 | | 4 | |
| DB LA | | 56.7 | -0.25 | 20.6 | -0.67 |
| AF | 278 | 51 | | 16 | |
| AF LA | | 53.8 | -0.03 | 13.6 | +0.08 |
| AV | 123 | 50 | | 9 | |
| AV LA | | 55.6 | -0.05 | 21 | -0.4 |
| AH | 97 | 44 | | 14 | |
| AH LA | | 52.6 | -0.09 | 16 | -0.07 |
| BB | 124 | 30 | | 3 | |
| BB LA | | 55.7 | -0.3 | 22.5 | -0.76 |
| England all schools | | 55.5 | | 22.9 | |
| LfL schools | 754 | 43.5 | | 10.4 | |
| Gap | | | -0.12 | | -0.38 |

At the end of the first year of its implementation the gaps between LfL schools and all other schools in England had closed (Table 4), and NLT schools were now roughly in line with the national average in terms of %C+ at GCSE for English and maths. For EBACC the gap narrowed only slightly from -0.38 in 2014 to -0.35 in 2015. Compared to schools in the local authorities, all LfL schools, apart from BB, were slightly ahead in terms of GCE results. Although BB is still behind other schools in the same local authority, the gap had narrowed. These changes may be too early to attribute the improvement to the activities of LfL, and it is noticeable that the number of pupils in the LfL cohorts is well below 2014.

Table 4: School, LA and England KS4 outcomes, 2015 (End of first year)

| School | N | % C+ English and maths | Achievement gap | % EBACC at C+ | Achievement gap |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DB | 115 | 62 | | 8 | |
| DB LA | | 59.5 | +0.02 | 20.6 | -0.44 |
| OF Academy | 211 | 52 | | 16 | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AF LA | | 50 | +0.02 | 14.9 | + 0.04 |
| AV | 120 | 63 | | 8 | |
| AV LA | | 57.2 | +0.05 | 19.6 | -0.42 |
| AH | 94 | 63 | | 16 | |
| AH LA | | 50.4 | +0.11 | 14.2 | +0.06 |
| BB | 101 | 39 | | 4 | |
| BB LA | | 63.2 | -0.24 | 28.1 | -0.75 |
| England all schools | | 55.8 | | 22.9 | |
| Lfl schools | 641 | 55.4 | | 11.1 | |
| Gap | | | -0.004 | | -0.35 |

At the end of the second year of implementation (Table 5), the achievement gap between LfL schools and the national average widened slightly for English and maths at GCSE (effect size = -0.06). But in terms of EBacc results, the gap closed a little further (effect size = -0.32). The picture in comparison to LA schools is mixed but largely negative. This was the first year that Progress 8 value-added scores were used. Again the picture for LfL schools is mixed, but only one academy has a positive score. Their overall Progress 8 score (-0.05) is slightly worse than that for England.

Table 5: School, LA and England KS4 outcomes, 2016 (End of second year)

| School | N | Average attainment 8 | Progress 8 | % C+ English and maths | Achievement gap | % EBACC at C+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DB | 183 | 49.7 | -0.09 | 67 | | 8 |
| DB LA | | 50.3 | 0.11 | 65 | +0.013 | 24.5 |
| AF | 152 | 48.4 | 0 | 49 | | 22 |
| AF LA | | 45.1 | -0.28 | 50 | -0.006 | 13 |
| AV | 117 | 45.1 | -0.1 | 54 | | 9 |
| AV LA | | 49 | +0.01 | 60.9 | -0.06 | 20.7 |
| AH | 109 | 48 | +0.16 | 54 | | 13 |
| AH LA | | 47.2 | -0.08 | 56 | -0.01 | 15.6 |
| BB | 69 | 42.1 | -0.29 | 51 | | 4 |
| BB LA | | 50.4 | -0.02 | 65 | -0.12 | 25 |
| England all schools | | 49.9 | -0.03 | 63 | | 23.1 |
| LfL schools | 630 | 46.7 | -0.05 | 56.2 | | 12.0 |
| Gap | | -0.03 | | -0.06 | | -0.32 |

As shown in Table 6, by the end of the third year, the Progress 8 scores for all LfL schools except AV were clearly negative. Overall, LfL schools had a Progress 8 score of -0.24 compared to -0.03 for England, suggesting that these schools were not improving as a result of the intervention and may even have been declining. This conclusion is supported by the negative results for English and maths, and EBacc, in comparison to England. All academies also had worse results than the other schools in the local authorities.

Table 6: School, LA and England KS4 outcomes, 2017 (End of third year)

| School | N | Average attainment 8 | Progress 8 | % Grade 4+ English, maths | % Grade 5+ English, maths | % EBACC at 5+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DB | 191 | 41.3 | -0.45 | 58 | 35 | 3 |
| DB LA | | 46.4 | 0.11 | 65 | 42 | 17.9 |
| AF | 151 | 42 | -0.15 | 49 | 19 | 9 |
| AF LA | | 42.4 | -0.18 | 52 | 29 | 10.6 |
| AV | 111 | 43.6 | +0.23 | 47 | 27 | 5 |
| AV LA | | 45 | 0.06 | 63 | 40 | 17 |
| AH | 105 | 41.9 | -0.22 | 42 | 28 | 0 |
| AH LA | | 43.3 | -0.09 | 53 | 32 | 11.2 |
| BB | 100 | 37.9 | -0.54 | 59 | 35 | 1 |
| BB LA | | 46.8 | -0.15 | 68 | 47 | 24.2 |
| England all schools | | 46.3 | -0.03 | 64 | 43 | 19.5 |
| LfL schools | 658 | 41.3 | -0.24 | 51.7 | 28.9 | 13.1 |
| Gap | | -0.06 | - | -0.11 | -0.20 | -0.20 |

The situation at the end of the fourth and final year of implementation is similar but slightly better (Table 7). AV showed improvement in Progress 8 scores from +0.23 to +0.4. Two other schools also showed improvements (AF and BB). However, the basic gaps between LfL schools and all schools in England, as far as it is possible to tell, have grown slightly from Table 1 to Table 5.

Table 7: School, LA and England KS4 outcomes, 2018 (End of fourth year)

| School | N | Average attainment 8 | Progress 8 | % Grade 4+ Eng, maths | % Grade 5+ Eng, maths | % EBACC at 5+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DB | 169 | 41.4 | -0.54 | 51 | 26 | 5 |
| DB LA | | 45.8 | +0.02 | 64 | 41.4 | 15.8 |
| AF | 190 | 41.8 | +0.01 | 47 | 26 | 4 |
| AF LA | | 40.6 | -0.31 | 50.7 | 28.4 | 6.4 |
| AV | 140 | 46.6 | +0.4 | 64 | 37 | 6 |
| AV LA | | 45.1 | 0 | 62.4 | 39.6 | 12.8 |
| AH | 68 | 39.4 | -0.44 | 53 | 29 | 2 |
| AH LA | | 41.9 | -0.26 | 53.6 | 32.5 | 8.1 |
| BB | 96 | 38.5 | -0.39 | 48 | 18 | 5 |
| BB LA | | 48 | -0.02 | 68.3 | 46.7 | 17.2 |
| England all schools | | 46.5 | -0.02 | 64.2 | 43 | 16.7 |
| LfL schools | 663 | 41.6 | -0.15 | 51.9 | 31.8 | 4.6 |
| Gap | | -0.06 | | -0.11 | -0.15 | -0.57 |

*Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils*

Tables 8 and 9 show the results for the FSM and SEN pupils in both the LfL group and for England, for three years. For both groups, results in LfL schools start out better than the national average (as indicated by the positive effects sizes) and drop each year. Whatever the headline figures say (above), it is clear that LfL was not working in the early stages for the poorer or most challenged pupils, and may indeed have been harmful.

Table 8: Capped KS4 point scores, EverFSM pupils

| | 2014 Mean | SD | 2015 Mean | SD | 2016 Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England | 264.7 | 106.3 | 265.0 | 107.0 | 34.76 | 18.51 |
| LfL | 272.1 | 81.0 | 264.0 | 85.5 | 32.97 | 14.90 |
| 'effect' size | +0.07 | | -0.01 | | -0.10 | |

Table 9: Capped KS4 point scores, SEN pupils

| | 2014 Mean | SD | 2015 Mean | SD | 2016 Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England | 253.1 | 104.3 | 253.0 | 105.4 | 31.56 | 17.36 |
| LfL | 260.5 | 77.3 | 251.2 | 80.8 | 29.39 | 13.70 |
| 'effect' size | +0.07 | | -0.02 | | -0.13 | |

*Regression models*

In order to create a different comparison, multiple regression analyses take individual pupils' prior attainment and background characteristics into account in 'predicting' or explaining KS4 attainment. The prior attainment is total KS2 point scores, and background characteristics are sex, age in year, number year known to be FSM, SEN and/or EAL, home IDACI score and ethnic group. By adding a variable stating whether a pupil is in an LfL school or not it is possible to get a less biased estimate of the impact of LfL shorn of differences in prior attainment and background.

Table 10 shows that the combined 'effects' of the background variables explained about 70% or more of the variation in KS4 outcomes for all pupils, for the years 2014 to 2016 (where data was available). This is a normal figure in the field.

Table 10: Predicting mean capped KS4 equivalent points

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|---|
| R | 0.79 | 0.78 | 0.70 |

Table 11 shows that the strongest predictor of KS4 results was, as is usual, prior KS2 performance. Other important factors include how long a pupil has been labelled as SEN, EAL or FSM. Once this is taken into account, participation in the LfL programme makes very little difference to KS4 outcomes. Less than 0.01% of difference in results can be explained by participation in LfL programme, and this remains roughly constant over time. As above, the finding is that LfL has made no difference to overall attainment in these early years.

Table 11: Coefficients for mean capped KS4 (GCSE or equivalent) points

| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | +0.079 | +0.050 | +0.069 |
| Month-in-year | -0.024 | -0.004 | -0.014 |
| FSM years | -0.121 | -0.166 | -0.134 |
| IDACI score | -0.084 | -0.109 | -0.098 |
| Ethnic group | +0.027 | +0.036 | +0.047 |
| Years EAL | +0.109 | +0.084 | +0.098 |
| Year SEN | -0.229 | -0.513 | -0.218 |
| KS2 total points | +0.527 | +0.091 | +0.490 |
| LfL or not | +0.005 | +0.004 | +0.005 |

**Pupil attitude outcomes**

The pupil attitude questionnaire did not collect data on school and pupil identifiers. There was, therefore, no way of tracking individual pupil progress, or even of ensuring that the comparator schools were the same on each occasion. A number of items were different between pre- and post-intervention or between treatment and comparison schools. The number of cases responding to the survey declined considerably over the three years of the intervention representing a loss of 57% of the original cases. This potentially bias the results, with the most interested pupils likely to be over-represented in the final results. The number of cases in the comparator schools, on the other hand, increased over time, especially for 2017. This is because the comparator group did not contain the same schools on each occasion. All of this greatly reduces the comparability of the two groups.

Given the lack of comparability of survey items in the pre- and post-intervention surveys and the absence of a consistent group of comparison schools and pupils between pre- and post-intervention, the impact on pupil attitude could not be reliably analysed. However, only the questions about enjoyment of writing and reading were asked in the same way and with the same coded responses in the pre-, interim and 2017 surveys, so only the responses to these two questions could be compared over time, and presented here. But we caution against making any interpretation from these analyses. For details on the analysis and results for other question items, see Appendix B).

As can be seen in Table 12, the number of cases in the treatment group dropped dramatically between pre- and post-intervention while those in the comparison schools increased. The comparison schools over the three time periods were clearly not the same schools, hence not the same pupils were being compared over time. This is likely to affect the validity of the results.

Table 12 – Number of cases in three surveys

| Pre – treatment | Pre-comparison | Interim-treatment | Interim-comparison | Post-treatment 2017 | Post-comparator 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1,670 | 10,124 | 1,477 | 11,666 | 713 | 21,735 |

Nevertheless, analysing the data as they were, the results suggest that LfL pupils were more likely to report decreasing enjoyment of reading over the three years compared to those in comparison schools (Table 13). However, comparison schools and pupils were not the same over the three years, so the comparisons may not be with the same pupils.

The odds ratio for those enjoying reading 'very much' or 'quite a lot' compared to 'a bit' or 'not at all' declined over the three surveys from 0.69 through 0.61 to 0.59. If the comparator is assumed to be meaningful then this suggests that the intervention had a negative impact on pupils' enjoyment of reading.

Table 13 – Enjoyment of reading over three surveys

| Enjoy reading | Pre – treatment | Pre-comparison | Interim-treatment | Interim-comparison | Treatment 2017 | Comparator 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Much | 16 (39) | 19 (48) | 18 (44) | 23 (54) | 14 (40) | 19 (53) |
| Quite a lot | 23 | 29 | 26 | 31 | 27 | 34 |
| A bit | 43 (61) | 40 (52) | 41 (56) | 37 (46) | 42 (60) | 38 (47) |
| Not at all | 18 | 12 | 15 | 9 | 18 | 9 |

Figures in brackets are in percentages summed over two rows.

After three years of the intervention, the treatment group also reported enjoying writing slightly less than the comparator group (Table 14). However, the odds ratio for those enjoying writing 'very much' or 'quite a lot' compared to 'a bit' or 'not at all' increased over the three surveys from 0.72 through 0.77 to 0.85. If the comparator is assumed to be meaningful this suggests that the intervention had a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of writing.

Table 14 – Enjoyment of writing over three surveys

| Enjoy Writing | Pre – treatment | Pre-comparison | Interim-treatment | Interim-comparison | Treatment 2017 | Comparator 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Much | 12 (37) | 15 (45) | 12 (35) | 13 (41) | 14 (40) | 12 (44) |
| Quite a lot | 25 | 30 | 23 | 28 | 26 | 32 |
| A bit | 45 (63) | 39 (55) | 46 (65) | 44 (59) | 41 (60) | 42 (56) |
| Not at all | 18 | 16 | 19 | 15 | 19 | 13 |

*Enjoyment in reading and writing*

Logistic regression analyses were conducted to determine whether participation in LfL could predict pupils' enjoyment of reading and writing taking into account pupils' background. Neither model is very predictive (increasing predictability from chance by 5.2 and 4.1 percentage points respectively (Table 15).

Table 15 – Percentage of responses predicted correctly for enjoyment of reading and writing, 2017

| | Reading | Writing |
|---|---|---|
| Base model (no predictors) | 52.7 | 55.8 |
| Full model (6 predictors) | 57.9 | 59.9 |

Sub-group analyses suggest that male, FSM-eligible, EAL and White UK pupils tend to report slightly less enjoyment of literacy, as do older pupils (Table 16). Net of these factors, the odds ratios for both outcomes

linked to being in the LfL treatment group are less than one (0.55 and 0.84). This suggests that controlling for these known differences between the two groups, the intervention had not increased pupils' enjoyment of reading.

Table 16 – Odds of predictors for enjoyment of reading and writing, 2017

| | Reading | Writing |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 0.60 | 0.49 |
| FSM | 0.85 | 0.98 |

**Teacher attitude outcomes**

Although the questionnaire was to be administered at three time points and comparisons made between teachers in LfL schools and a national sample, the questionnaire was administered only to the NLT schools at the pre and interim evaluation period. Although in the third year data was collected from a national survey of teachers (which would provide a comparison with the LfL schools), the response rate was very poor leading to a small, biased self-selected sample, which makes any comparison with teachers in the treatment schools almost meaningless. Comparison analysis was also not feasible because of a disproportionately small number of classroom teachers that took part in the national survey (26% in comparators vs 74% from LfL schools). Teachers who responded to the national survey are likely to be self-selected, biasing any findings.

Therefore, the analysis here is of the survey conducted at the end of the third year of implementation, comparing responses from teachers in LfL schools and those from a national survey. The national survey of teachers was advertised on the NLT website and responses were invited. It is therefore not possible to estimate the number of respondents targeted, the number who responded and the number who actually completed and submitted their responses. Thus we do not have the response rate. But it is safe to assume that those who returned the questionnaires are differentially motivated compared to the non-returnees. Respondents were therefore self-selected and thus their views may not represent those of the majority of classroom teachers in England.

**Respondents**

A total of 285 teaching and non-teaching staff completed the survey. Of these only 88 (30%) are from non-LfL schools. Non-teaching staff included IT technicians, school administration staff and librarians, a school nurse, an adviser from the South Wales Advisory Service, and a few who were not attached to schools.

Table 24 shows a break down of the respondents by their reported main role and responsibility. Of these only half were classroom teachers with no special responsibilities. This is the group that will be used for the analysis. Headteachers, support staff (e.g. teaching assistants, literacy mentors and IT technicians) as well as staff who are not normally involved in classroom teaching such as librarians, administrators and school nurses are excluded from the analysis. The main reason for this is that many of the questions in the questionnaire were directly addressed to classroom teaching, and thus not possible for other staff to answer. Including them would result in a high proportion of missing data. It is also not valid to include senior school leaders and senior management staff as the number of such teachers in the two LfL schools and in the national survey is not equivalent and this may skew the results. If we include all the respondents there will

be a disproportionate number in each subject group. For example, there were more English language teachers in non-LfL schools (20.5%) than in LfL schools (17.4%), and more STEM subject teachers (maths, science, DandT and computing) in LfL schools than in non-LfL schools. Many of these were in senior leadership positions. All these combined with the relatively small number of respondents from the national survey could skew the responses for the groups being compared.

**Table 24: Roles and responsibility of respondents**

| | Non- LfL school (n=88) | LfL school (n=197) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Teacher** | 39 (44.3%) | 109 (55.3%) | 148 (51.9%) |
| **Literacy coordinator** | 7 (8.0%) | 4 (2.0%) | 11 (3.9%) |
| **Management and leadership** | 27 (30.7%) | 58 (29.4%) | 85 (29.8%) |
| **Special teacher** | 7 (8.0%) | 3 (1.5%) | 10 (3.5%) |
| **Other support staff (includes teacher assistants school nurse, librarians, IT technician and LRC manager)** | 8 (9.1%) | 23 (11.7%) | 31 (10.9%) |

**Characteristics of teachers**

There are proportionately more females than males, with non-LfL schools having proportionately slightly more female teachers (Table 25). Non-LfL schools also have proportionately more English language teachers and teachers of other subjects, while almost half of teachers in LfL schools are STEM subject teachers. In terms of teaching experience teachers in the two types of schools are fairly similar, although non-LfL schools have proportionately more teachers with 3-10 years of experience.

**Table 25: Demographics of teachers**

| Gender | Non-LfL school | LfL school | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Female** | 28 (71.8%) | 75 (69.4%) | 103 (70.1%) |
| **Not Female** | 11 (28.2%) | 33 (30.6%and) | 44 (29.9%) |
| **Total** | **39** | **108** | **147** |
| **Main subject** | Non-LfL school | LfL school | Total |
| **English** | 8 (20.5%) | 19 (17.4%) | 27 (18.2%) |
| ****Humanities** | 0 | 9 (8.3%) | 9 (6.1%) |
| ***STEM subjects** | 15 (38.5%) | 52 (47.7%) | 67 (45.3%) |
| *****Others** | 16 (41%) | 29 (26.6%) | 45 (30.4%) |
| **Total** | **39** | **109** | **148** |
| **Teaching experience** | | | |
| **Trainee** | 0 | 4 (2%) | 4 (2.7%) |
| **Under 3 years** | 11 (28.2%) | 35 (32.1%) | 46 (31.1%) |
| **3 to 10 years** | 17 (43.6%) | 38 (34.9%) | 55 (37.2%) |
| **Over 10 years** | 11 (28.2%) | 32 (29.4%) | 43 (29.1%) |
| **Total** | **30** | **109** | **148** |

**STEM subjects include science, maths, computing and DandT.

*Humanities include geography and history
***Others include subjects that are not in the main category: music, modern foreign languages, PE, religious studies, citizenship and not teaching (e.g. IT technician)

Almost all the respondents agreed that it was their job to promote literacy in the school (96.5%). About 17% of non-teaching staff did not see promoting literacy as their responsibility.

**Confidence in developing literacy skills**
To compare the confidence of teachers in developing literacy skills of special groups of pupils we total up the scores for all the six variables: confidence in developing literacy for boys, girls, FSM, EAL and gifted and talented pupils and pupils with SEN status. The results for the individual variables are in the Appendix.

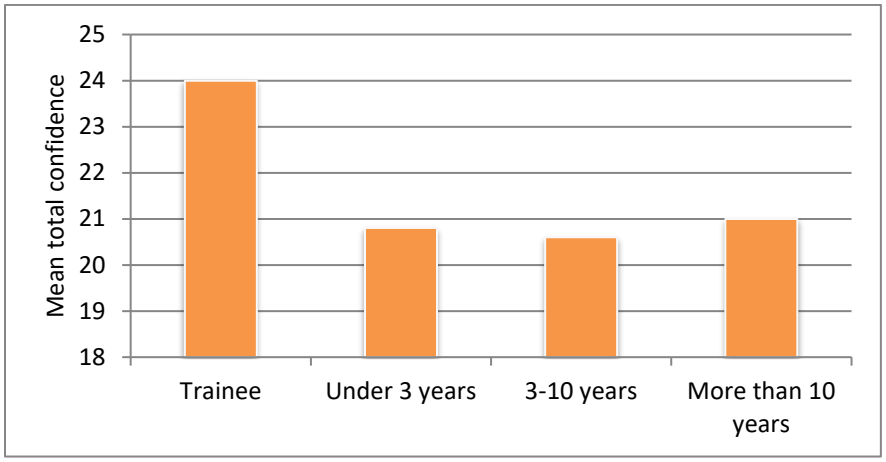
Table 26 compares teachers in LfL schools with the other schools in terms of their confidence in developing literacy skills of special educational needs children. Overall teachers in LfL schools report higher levels of confidence in developing the literacy skills of SEN pupils than those in the other schools (ES=+0.2). This is interesting given that there are proportionately more English language teachers in the other schools (20.5%) compared to LfL schools (17.4%).

**Table 26: Teachers' confidence in developing literacy skills of SEN pupils**

| | N | Mean (out of a maximum of 30 points) | SD | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| LfL schools | 108 | 21.12 | 5.13 | |
| Non-LfL schools | 39 | 20.10 | 4.19 | +0.2 |

**Confidence in developing literacy skills by years of experience**
In general trainee teachers expressed the highest levels of confidence in developing literacy skills for special groups of pupils. This has to be taken with caution as there were only four trainee teachers, and all the four were in the LfL schools where they have been exposed to the literacy programme. So, it may not be the fact that they were trainees as such, but that the LfL programme had given them the confidence that they would otherwise not have. However, with no comparisons in the non-LfL schools, this explanation can only be a speculation. Teachers' confidence in supporting pupils with special needs increases with the number of years of experience with older teachers reporting higher levels of confidence. This is not surprising, but what is interesting is trainee teachers' confidence in helping special needs children.

**Figure 1: Confidence in developing literacy skills for specific groups of pupils**




**Confidence in using strategies to develop literacy skills**

Table 27 compares the confidence of teachers in using different strategies to develop pupils' literacy skills. These strategies include: the use of structured talk, giving feedback, use of formative assessment, explicit teaching and focusing on GCSE requirements.

There is little difference between teachers in LfL and non-LfL schools with respect to their confidence in using different strategies in developing pupils' literacy (effect size = +0.05). Figure 2 shows that the four trainees surveyed reported highest level of confidence. We are not sure how these four trainees were selected, but there is a possibility of a selection bias in that the more confident ones were more likely to return the survey form. Apart from the trainees, teachers with 3 to 10 years of service were more likely than their younger and older counterparts to report higher levels of confidence in using strategies to develop pupils' literacy skills.

**Table 27: Teachers' confidence in using different strategies to develop literacy skills**

| | N | Mean | SD | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LfL schools** | 109 | 18.27 | 4.16 | |
| **Non-LfL schools** | 38 | 18.05 | 4.82 | |
| **Total** | 147 | 18.21 | 4.32 | +0.05 |

*Some of the questions were not applicable to a few teachers, so these were not included in the analysis

There is very little difference between teachers in LfL schools and other schools in terms of their confidence in promoting reading for enjoyment (see Figure 3). In general most teachers (74%) are confident that they are able to promote reading for enjoyment, but LfL teachers are more likely to report being very confident.

**Figure 2: Mean total confidence in using strategies to develop pupils' literacy skills**

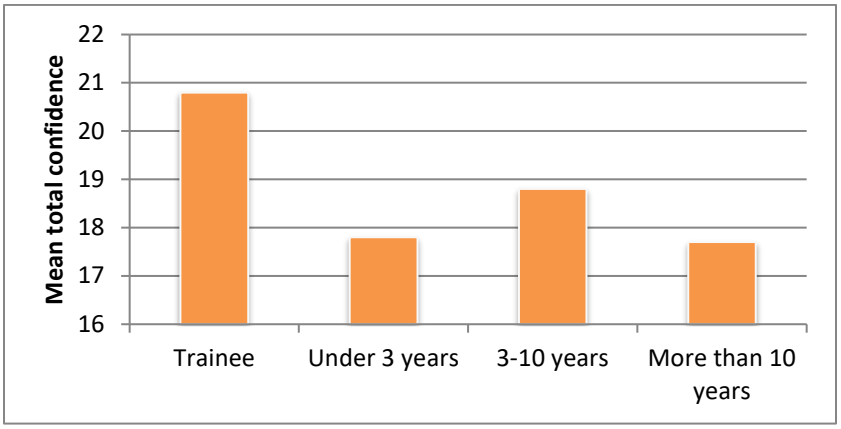
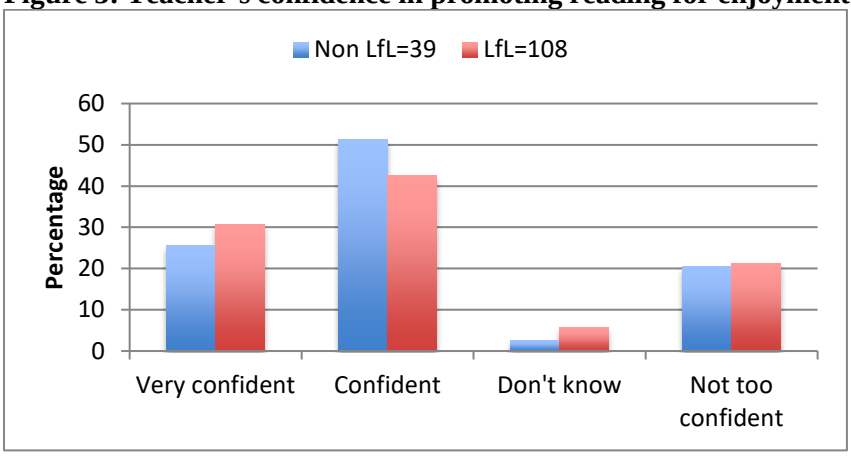


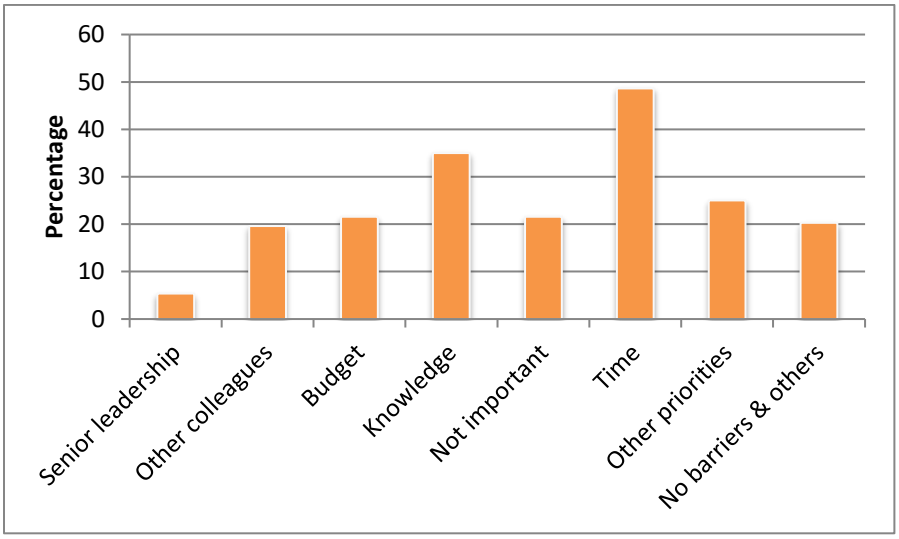

**Figure 3: Teacher's confidence in promoting reading for enjoyment**




**Barriers to improving literacy skills in school**

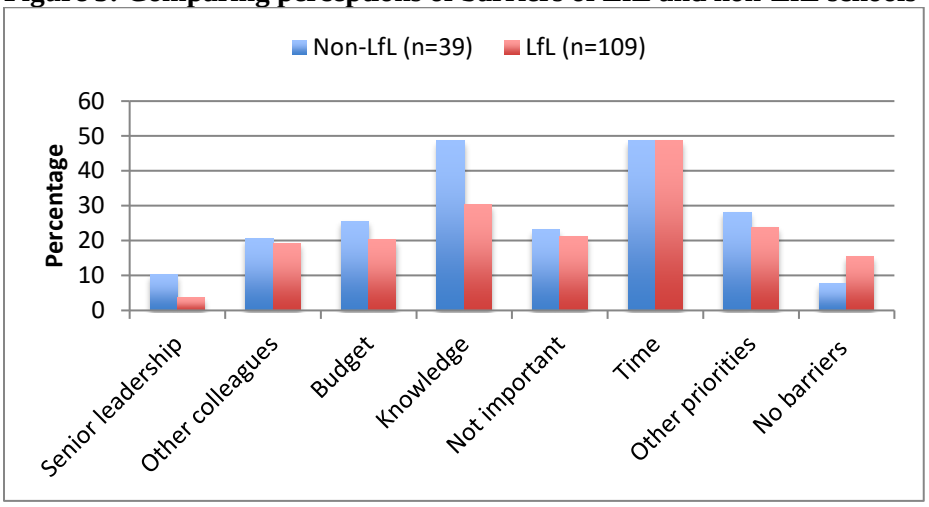
The biggest barrier to improving literacy in school, as perceived by teachers is the lack of time. Almost half (48.6%) of the teachers surveyed cited the lack of time as the main barrier to improving literacy in their school, followed by a lack of knowledge.

**Figure 4: Teachers' perceptions of the main barriers to improving literacy in school (n=148)**




**Is there a difference in LfL and non-LfL teachers' perceptions of barriers to literacy in their school?** There is generally little difference between LfL and non-LfL teachers in their perceptions of the kind of barriers to improving literacy (see Figure 5). The biggest difference is in teachers' perceptions of their own knowledge in supporting pupils to improve literacy. Nearly half (48.7%) of non-LfL schools saw their lack of knowledge as an important barrier compared to only 30.3% of LfL teachers. LfL teachers were also more likely than non-LfL teachers to report no barriers (15.6% vs 7.7%). There is therefore some evidence that the whole-school LfL programme has benefited teachers in equipping them with the knowledge to support pupils' literacy.

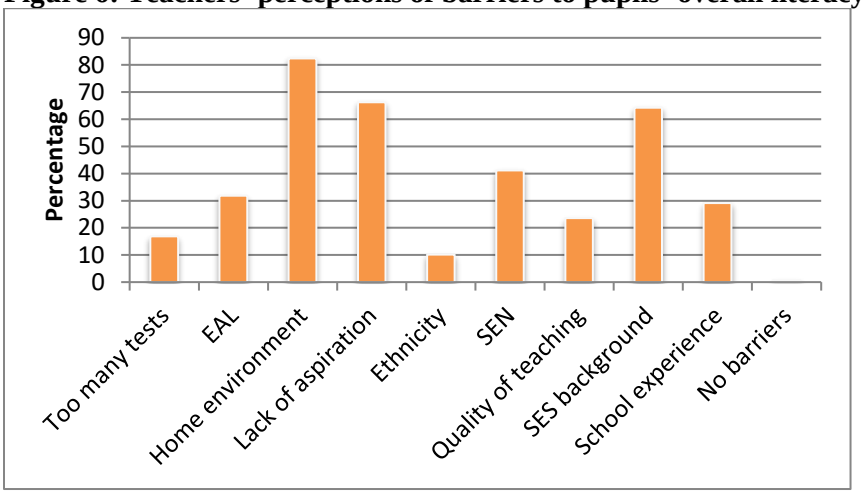
**Figure 5: Comparing perceptions of barriers of LfL and non-LfL schools**




**Teachers' perceptions of barriers to pupils' literacy attainment**

The survey also asked teachers what they thought were the main barriers to pupils' overall literacy attainment. The majority of teachers (82.4%) cited home environment as the biggest barrier to pupils' literacy (Figure 6). Besides pupils' home environment and their social-economic background, pupils' lack of aspiration (66.2%) is believed to be also a major hindrance to their literacy. Pupils' ethnicity was not seen as a major barrier (10.1%), but having English as an additional language was (31.8%). This finding is consistent with a large number of previous studies, which show that the quality of the home learning environment is closely related to children's intellectual and social development (e.g. Sylva et al. 2007; Siraj-Blatchford 2010).

**Figure 6: Teachers' perceptions of barriers to pupils' overall literacy attainment**

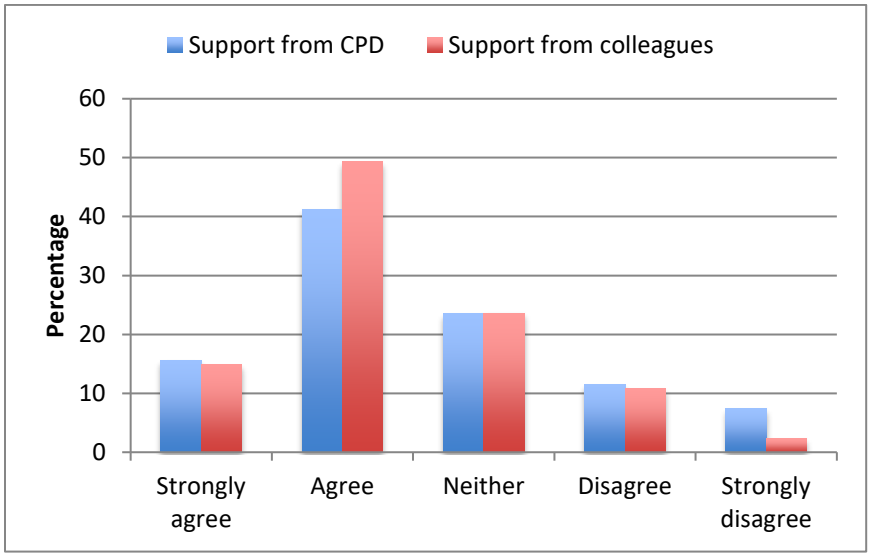



The most common home factors cited by teachers were lack of support at home to encourage young people to read and lack of parents'/carers' engagement with young people's education and poor literacy at home.

**Kind of support teachers received in school**

Generally teachers reported receiving support from their colleagues and other CPD training. They are more likely to get support from their colleagues than from CPD (Figure 7). Under a quarter (≈23%) of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that they received any kinds of support.

**Figure 7: Kinds of support teachers received**




**Who benefits from teachers' support?**

Almost all the teachers surveyed (79%) believed that their efforts to support literacy have had an impact on their pupils' progress, and that they have the required knowledge to support their pupils' literacy (79.8%). On the other hand, only slightly over half of the teachers (66.2%) thought that other staff needed more support with their own literacy.

As can be seen on Table 28, there is little difference in the responses of LfL and non-LfL teachers. LfL and non-LfL teachers reported equally knowledgeable in supporting their pupils' literacy and were equally likely to embed literacy in their classroom practice.

**Table 28å: Comparing non-LfL and LfL teachers' responses (%)**

| **N= 148** | **Strongly agree** | | **Agree** | | **Neither agree/disagree** | | **Disagree** | | **Strongly disagree** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Non-LfL | LfL | Non-LfL | LfL | Non-LfL | LfL | Non-LfL | LfL | Non-LfL | LfL |
| **My efforts have an impact on pupils' literacy** | 31.8 | 27.0 | 47.7 | 56.6 | 17.0 | 13.2 | 1.1 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 1.0 |
| **I have the knowledge to improve pupils' literacy** | 25.0 | 30.5 | 52.3 | 52.8 | 12.5 | 11.7 | 8.0 | 5.1 | 2.3 | 0 |
| **Developing literacy is embedded in my classroom practice** | 34.5 | 35.5 | 49.4 | 49.7 | 12.6 | 12.7 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Other staff could benefit from more support with their own literacy** | 25.3 | 24.5 | 37.9 | 47.7 | 20.7 | 23.5 | 16.1 | 4.1 | 0 | 0.5 |

**PROCESS EVALUATION**

This report synthesises the findings from the process evaluation of Literacy for Life over the three years of its implementation (LfL). It outlines effective areas of implementation and the challenges faced by those involved in the programme. The process evaluation draws on the perspectives and experiences of the school staff and children that participated in Literacy for Life. Visits to LfL schools took place across the three years of the initiative. In the first year, the evaluation team visited four of the six participating schools; in the second year, we made seven visits across the six schools; and in the final year, we visited three schools. During these visits the evaluation team conducted interviews with teachers and leaders, and spoke to a number of students in lessons and small focus groups. We also participated in observations of lessons and other activities associated with the LfL programme (e.g. library sessions and author in residence work). In the second year of the project we attended the NLT's 'Voices' festival in Stoke-on-Trent. The National Literacy Trust provided us with a series of documents from across the programme including end-of-year reports for each participating school; details from these have been incorporated where appropriate.

We discuss the process evaluation findings with reference to the NLT evaluation plan and the agreed process evaluation tool. We present the findings in three main sections. The first focuses on the features which appear to influence successful implementation of LfL. Following this we discuss outcomes and perceptions of impact, drawing on the perspectives of school staff, students and representatives from the NLT. Finally, we consider the challenges associated with the programme, including any negative consequences that have resulted from participation.

**Implementation**

The section focusing on implementation is structured around five aspects of the LfL programme which our evaluation found to be important in contributing to successful delivery. These are:

- Quality of CPD training and consultancy
- Access to and quality of resources and initiatives
- Embedding literacy across the curriculum and within lessons
- Leadership and staff involvement
- Support from the National Literacy Trust

***Quality of CPD training and consultancy***

Across the three years of LfL, a programme of coaching, consultancy and professional development was implemented to support and develop staff with the delivery of literacy and language initiatives. Coaching training, provided by CUREE, was positively received in the schools where it was received. Providing staff with the opportunity and time to discuss ideas about effective models of coaching was seen as valuable by some leaders. In one of the LfL schools, the coaching training was continuously used and developed throughout the remainder of the programme; the school introduced a 'pod' system for delivering CPD, allowing teachers to work in small groups and encouraging development across subject areas. In another

school a system of ‘peer buddying’ was set-up in English and Maths departments to support the development of literacy-based marking strategies, inference teaching and work scrutiny.

Consultancy formed another element of the teacher development programme. Again, this was well-received by schools. One head of department commented that the Science consultant had successfully supported the department in developing opportunities for extended writing in the subject. In other schools support from a literacy consultant was also found to be helpful. This has led to some trialling of strategies to improve the marking of children’s writing. In a further school, the NLT end-of-year report notes the range of subject areas which have been positively affected by the consultancy support. The head of Computer Science, for example, noted how strategies such as modelling writing and embedding debating in the curriculum had supported students’ progress.

CPD opportunities were successfully embedded across schools and, in most cases, across the duration of the LfL programme. These targeted different skill or content areas associated with literacy and language development, and allowed schools to put together an appropriate programme based on the needs of their staff and students. Staff in all of the schools that we visited in Years 2 and 3 of LfL commented that the subject-specific support was helpful. In addition, we also received positive reports of the inference training that was provided. Some leaders commented that this had given participating teachers and teaching assistants insights in to the teaching of reading that were new and informative, and would go on to impact their future practice. Following inference training in one school, there were plans to cascade this to all members of staff although it is not clear whether this did in fact happen. In other schools, the LfL CPD prompted further development opportunities. For example, a literacy lead in one setting developed a series of optional literacy CPD sessions which were open to all staff and were focused on providing knowledge and practical strategies for delivering literacy-based approaches within the classroom. These were well-attended and proved popular with staff. Another school sought ways to deliver their professional development in subject areas, focusing on issues such as developing key subject terminology, examination language and the use of displays to support this. One headteacher commented that he felt that the CPD involved in the LfL programme successfully complemented the overall objectives and strategy of his school, which very much focused on high standards of literacy across all subject areas.

Of all of the CPD provided as part of LfL, the Grammar for Writing training was the least enthusiastically received. Some staff struggled to see the practical relevance of it to their teaching of Key Stage 3 and 4 children. There was a sense that certainly the first session was too theoretical and complex. One head teacher suggested that it could have been made more useful by including practical activities and allowing teaching staff to consider how some of the grammar issues discussed might be relevant to the contexts and children that they were working with. In another school, senior leaders and the literacy lead agreed that the initial Grammar for Writing training for non-core subjects gathered too many curriculum areas together, meaning that it was not subject-specific enough to meet the needs and interests of participating teachers. There are reports that the second training session did attempt to tackle some of these issues and deliver a more practical approach. One of the schools also planned additional short CPD sessions to supplement and reinforce the grammar training.

Another aspect of LfL is the opportunity for individual staff to complete either a Master's level module in Literacy Leadership or a full MA in Literacy and Language (accredited by Exeter University). The end-of-year reports from the NLT suggest that in one school, two staff have taken up this opportunity.

***Access to and quality of resources and initiatives***

The wide range of initiatives that come together to form the LfL programme mean that there are many elements to consider in terms of implementation (see the introductory sections of the full report for details of each aspect of LfL). The bespoke nature of the programme also means that not all schools opted to take-up all of the elements, or chose to adopt them for different time periods across the course of the evaluation. In this section we draw on the evidence collated in relation to the initiatives and resources that schools did access and how these appeared to work in practice.

In the first two years of the programme, elements such as Reading Aloud, Premier League Reading Stars (PLRS) and the 'pupils as writers' scheme were adopted. Reading Aloud seemed particularly popular during the second year of the programme. In five of the six schools that we visited Reading Aloud had been enthusiastically adopted during Year 2. Staff spoke positively about the fiction texts that had been chosen by the National Literacy Trust as books for this scheme. Many reported that the children enjoyed the opportunity to listen and engage with a story, and to hear a text being read fluently and passionately. By the third year of the programme, Reading Aloud was continuing in two of the three schools that we visited. For the other three schools, the initiative was mentioned in one of the end-of-year NLT reports. In one school, the daily time allocated to Reading Aloud had been reduced from 30 minutes to 20 minutes. A literacy lead in another school said that they had moved the sessions from the beginning to the end of the day which she found to work better in terms of children's concentration and engagement. This teacher commented that they were now looking for new books to read as one year group had completed all of those supplied by the Literacy Trust. This school found that some staff were quite nervous about reading aloud to a group of children; the literacy lead is hoping to gain some time next year so that she can support these staff better, model good practice and perhaps provide some training. Another of the schools told us that while they had not been participating in Reading Aloud during the academic year 2016-2017, they did hope to restart it the following year and had embedded 20 minutes dedicated to this within the school timetable.

Another NLT programme, Premier League Reading Stars, was provided to schools during the second year of the project. This meant that the schools received a series of lesson plans and resources associated with the scheme. In the schools that had adopted this approach, reports from staff and students were generally positive although there was considerable variation in how it was delivered. In one school we observed a PLRS lesson involving a whole class of approximately 25 Year 7 pupils whereas in another school we had reports of a smaller-group focus. The whole-class approach to delivery appeared to present a number of challenges. One of these was in relation to the text which was being used as a focus. Comprehension of this was clearly difficult for many of the pupils in the class and the big group meant that it was challenging for the teacher to ensure that all of the children understood the key vocabulary and meaning. Second, it was clear that a number of the pupils in the class were actually disengaged by the football focus of the lesson. It would perhaps have been more helpful to have followed the NLT's suggestion of targeting the initiative at pupils with an interest in the sport and provide it as an additional literacy opportunity.

Some of the schools opted to participate in the Debate Mate programme during the second year of LfL. There were very positive reports from students and staff involved with this. An aspect that was particularly valued was the visit to Oxford to participate in a debating event organised by the NLT. One member of staff who led Debate Mate suggested that training for a wider range of staff on oracy and persuasive language would be particularly beneficial as her work on the programme had already influenced her teaching practice positively.

One school took the opportunity to receive the MACK training. A group of Year 7 pupils were selected for this training during the Autumn term 2015. A teacher who worked closely with the children involved spoke very highly of the work conducted by the MACK lead and felt that the children benefitted from it. The intervention was viewed as relevant, engaging and genuinely useful in supporting students to become more confident and aspirational. The teacher involved commented that he understood that seeing effects of this in terms of attainment would be difficult; however, he felt that the impact on the children's ability to focus on their studies and engage more fully with work was tangible and would have a longer-term effect.

One of the objectives of the LfL programme was to encourage children to write for pleasure. Writing journals were introduced to schools as a way of promoting this and inspiring children to write about subjects of their choosing. These 'free writing' books were used in a variety of different ways in schools. In one school, children were allowed to write in the journals if they had completed other class-based work. In another setting, children were allocated a certain amount of time in some lessons where they were able to write anything that they wanted. Some teachers supported this by providing stimuli (e.g. images) or a topic to focus on. It was clear that some children very much valued the opportunity to write creatively and imaginatively. Others perhaps struggled more with this – a number of the journals in one school, for example, contained drawings rather than writing and simple 'top 10' lists of favourite pop stars and TV shows. It is possible that even with the concept of 'free writing', some children will require some structure and guidance if the writing time is to be used meaningfully and if they are to produce something that allows them to 'practise' the skill of composition.

The development of the school library became an important focus for all of the LfL schools. A range of interesting and innovative approaches were planned and implemented in order to try and encourage more pupils (and in some cases, staff) to visit the library, read and borrow books or other texts, and participate in other literacy-focused activities. School librarians were viewed by staff and students as vital to driving the development of the library, and in engaging pupils from across the age range to use the resources available. In the schools that we visited, the librarians had introduced initiatives such as reading groups, competitions and quizzes, book displays associated with major events/celebrations, and writing groups. In one school the librarian had started a newsletter club which allowed pupils to use the library space and resources to develop copy for the school's newsletter. The NLT were also very supportive in terms of offering guidance to library staff and literacy leads in relation to how library provision could be improved and developed. Despite all of this activity, there was a still a sense in a number of the schools that the library was underused. One librarian presented evidence of the dwindling numbers of books being borrowed by older pupils; others commented on the fact that it tends to be the same small group of children who utilise the library. Getting others to venture in often proved challenging. One literacy lead was concerned that the Accelerated Reader programme, where all fiction books in the Library are labelled according to their reading level, could be

off-putting to certain groups of pupils, particularly those who associate these texts with the younger year groups who receive the AR intervention.

The Voices festival was held in the second year of the LfL programme and focused on pupils developing a love of language through the spoken word. For five of the six schools, the festival was held at a local university. The evaluation team attended the festival held at Staffordshire University in Stoke-on-Trent. Pupils from Year 7 and Year 8 attended the festival in June 2016. Observations from this day suggest that it was a very positive experience for the pupils (and for many staff who attended too). The event was well-organised and included a range of writers and performance artists working with the children in workshop-style sessions. The deputy vice-chancellor of the university also addressed the children at the beginning of the day and encouraged them to start thinking about their future and the opportunities available to them. During the day, pupils had the opportunity to work with authors, poets, and actors from the Globe theatre in London. Children participated with enthusiasm and excitement and the day culminated in a celebration session in the afternoon where their work was showcased to the whole cohort. Due to transport and other practical issues, one school hosted the festival on the school site. While this was still deemed a successful day, some staff commented that the festival lost the 'aspirational' angle that was gained through attending a higher education institution.

Many of the elements of LfL which were introduced in Year 1 or Year 2 continued to be available to schools in Year 3. At some schools, some of the components (such as Debate Mate, PLRS and Reading Aloud) were not continued in to the third year. In some cases this was due to staffing, time or the introduction of new initiatives which formed part of the final year LfL programme. These included: Words for Work, Future First support, Author in Residence and the audio libraries. These allowed for further development of some of the literacy and oracy aspects introduced earlier on.

Feedback on the resident authors suggested that the children involved enjoyed working with them. One school, for example, praised the visits from their author in residence, Valerie Bloom. The deputy head teacher commented that the author in residence was a "powerful motivating factor." A group of children that we spoke to said that they had enjoyed the sessions and had learnt a lot about the rules of poetry writing. They learnt that poetry is not just putting together "random phrases". A couple of pupils said that this had not only helped them with writing but also in evaluating poetry, which one pupil said was part of their Key Stage 3 assessment. One Year 9 pupil told us that learning poetry has helped him to express himself better.

> *I understand complex rhyme schemes and how rhyme schemes can portray many different things. For example, rhyming couplets in Romeo and Juliet in one of the lines Romeo described Juliet and that shows his love for Juliet. It helps me not only in poems, but also in general to appreciate and understand Shakespeare.*

At another school, staff commented that the author in residence visits had been successful in the way that they had engaged and entertained the children involved. However, the Literacy lead expressed concern about the choices of stimulus and also the organisation of the visits. Scheduling times and dates for the sessions had not been easy. In a third school, the NLT noted that pupils enjoyed working with author, Debbie McAndrew, as writing play scripts enabled them a further opportunity to perform.

As part of the LfL programme schools have also had visiting authors work with groups of students. Authors have included Dreadlock Alien and storyteller Ben Haggerty. Responses from students have been very positive. A staff member in one school commented on how much the students enjoyed developing some creative poetry with Dreadlock Alien. In another school, the literacy lead commented that the visions of school staff and the visiting author were not always the same. While the children were engaged, the staff there felt that there was perhaps not enough challenge in terms of content for certain groups.

The audio libraries were introduced during the final academic year of LfL. In the three schools that we visited in 2016-2017, the audio libraries were being introduced in the latter part of the year. Getting them set-up, purchasing the books and ensuring that the technology was organised and accessible had been quite time-consuming and complex. Two school librarians spoke at length about the challenges of this and explained that even at the end of the third year of the programme, the audio corner had still not been physically set-up in the library. Technology issues had not made the process straightforward. One Librarian commented that it was unlikely that the audio library would be ready to use in the current academic year, and there were doubts from other staff about whether it might be up-and-running next year due to the Librarian leaving the school and a lack of other staff with the time to oversee it. In all schools we visited pupils had been recruited to act as 'champions' for the audio library. It was hoped that they would do some work in promoting the existence and possibilities of the audio libraries and encourage others to borrow books in this way. Students were very positive about the potential of the audio library although some that we spoke to were disappointed that they had not yet materialised.

In the third year of the programme some schools ran the Words for Work programme which supports students with development of their oracy and literacy skills in preparation for future work and careers. One pastoral leader commented that the Words for Work programme of study and resources were excellent. He felt that it was high quality and that the students really engaged with it. He liked the teamwork aspects involved and the opportunities for students to practise presenting. Timing was an issue and it was difficult to fit all content in to the designated sessions. He also did not use the Future First organisation to source volunteers (as recommended as part of the LfL programme) but instead sourced other local people willing to support. He commented that these volunteers were 'amazing' and he is keen to run the programme again next year. In another school, Words for Work was run as an after-school activity with just three pupils volunteering to participate. While they found it a useful experience, the competition with other extra-curricular activities was a challenge and meant that student involvement was limited.

The literacy lead in another school said that they had really struggled to find volunteers to support Words for Work but that the volunteers from the CityYear charity (who were already working in school) stepped in to help. In this school, Future First was also involved in supporting a small number of sixth form students with preparation for work and university. They reported that Future First's input was helpful:

> *Things they were saying were really useful for us like make sure that you proof read your work and give the best representations of ourselves to potential employers.*

When asked how language was important in job preparation, one of the pupils said:

> *They talked about how language and punctuation and the basic writing skills are needed because companies often reject letters with basic grammatical mistakes.*

For one school the NLT commented in their end-of-year report that Words for Work had been run as a one day programme rather than in weekly sessions. Schools have clearly looked at different ways to accommodate this programme and the Future First support despite timetable constraints.

***Embedding literacy across the curriculum and within lessons***

As a whole-school approach to educational improvement, a key feature of LfL is that literacy and language becomes embedded across the school. The expectation is that literacy development becomes a focus for the whole school with the view that supporting children to improve in this area will also support outcomes in other areas of their school life (both academic and social). As a result of this it was important for the evaluation team to gain a sense of the extent to which schools had adopted this kind of approach, and to understand how this had been developed.

Our observations within schools and discussions with school staff made it clear that LfL had certainly helped to raise the profile of literacy within schools. Staff that we spoke to were generally aware of LfL and many were able to provide details of different aspects of the programme that they had been involved in or had used to influence their teaching. Within classrooms and across a range of subjects, we witnessed a number of examples of literacy being woven in to everyday teaching and learning. Exploring and developing vocabulary was a key theme which we saw across a number of schools. In one school, for example, a Music teacher was teaching Year 7 children key language related to the music they were hearing (e.g. unison, harmony, acapella, soprano). Repetition techniques were used to reinforce this language and to ensure that children were clear of pronunciation. In other LfL schools pupils' development and use of subject-specific vocabulary was also supported via the use of display boards in classrooms.

In relation to the development of students' writing, we also saw examples of written work being scaffolded and modelled by teachers. In addition, recommendations for promoting opportunities for extended writing were clearly visible from pupils' exercise books in one school that we visited. Linked to this, across all of the schools, we also saw evidence of how literacy is being used to influence students' understanding of and approaches to examinations. Some staff reported that the subject-specific training/consultancy had supported with this and had allowed them to explore exam requirements and grade criteria in some depth. In one school, for example, we observed a Year 11 geography lesson where the teacher was attempting to focus the pupils exam responses through clarifying the meaning and requirements associated with vocabulary from exam questions (e.g. describe, explain, analyse). In another school, a Year 8 Maths teacher focused on the functional and written communication questions that form part of the new Maths GCSE. He had introduced pupils to the problem-solving, word-based style of questions and reinforced the need for academic mathematical language when pupils were explaining their process of solving these.

The spelling training seemed to have had a visible influence on some of the teachers that we spoke to and the classrooms that we visited. In Year 9 History lessons in one school we observed children preparing for a spelling test; they told us that the tests were a regular occurrence and involved competing with the other Year 9 classes in the school. Pupils also talked about writing out spellings three times if they had been

marked incorrect by the teacher and they also discussed the importance of sounding out' words to help with spelling. In another school, the display boards of subject-specific vocabulary also included the words broken down in to syllables in order to support the students with both the spelling and sounds of the language.

***Leadership and staff involvement***

In order to implement a whole-school programme such as Literacy for Life, senior staff involvement and support seems very important in ensuring that initiatives and strategies are introduced, delivered and embedded. School literacy co-ordinators have been designated as whole-school leads on the LfL programme but all that we spoke to commented on how necessary it was to have wider support of head teachers and other school leaders too. The head teacher in one school commented positively on Literacy for Life and said that it had been embraced fully by all members of staff. He suggested that the key to good literacy outcomes for children was in good literacy teaching, and that the LfL programme helps to support this. In another school the deputy head provided ongoing energy and impetus in relation to LfL, working closely with the literacy coordinator and other staff members to promote and embed CPD and other strategies.

In at least four of the LfL schools there had been changes in the role of literacy lead with some staff moving in and out of the post for various reasons. This is, of course, to be expected; teachers are likely to progress and move roles, particularly over the course of a long-term initiative such as LfL. In all of these schools, the handing over of the role from one member of staff to another seems to have been handled well and new literacy leads seem to have embraced the role fully, finding ways to adapt it to suit their strengths and the perceived needs of the school. In one school, however, a literacy lead spoke of some of the challenges and frustrations faced due to her being away from school for a year on maternity leave. She felt that some of the initiatives that she had embedded during Year 1 of the programme had been abandoned or left undeveloped while she was away, and that this meant that there was much to do in order to 'catch up' on her return. She also commented that staff turnover at the school had been high over the past two years, and that this had also made embedding and sustaining good practice over time difficult. A subject lead for Science at this school, however, spoke very positively about the LfL programme. He explained how literacy has now become a faculty focus and they have implemented a range of literacy strategies to complement and enhance the teaching of science. His department also appointed a 'literacy champion' for the following academic year which he viewed as a very positive move and something that he hoped other departments might do as well.

In another school, the NLT end-of-year report commented on how the senior leadership team ensured that LfL has been embedded across the school curriculum. A new literacy lead started the role in 2017 in order to support another senior leader in continuing this work beyond the end of the evaluation period. It is also noteworthy that the school were hoping to use elements from LfL as part of the teacher training programme that they are involved in.

***Support from the National Literacy Trust***

Representatives from the National Literacy Trust have provided in-depth support to participating schools from the inception of the LfL programme. They have been involved in the planning of the bespoke approaches within schools and have facilitated the setting-up of initiatives and approaches too. The teaching

and leadership staff that we spoke to were positive about NLT involvement and felt that it was useful to have this additional expertise working alongside their school. During the first and second year of the programme, NLT staff were instrumental in ensuring the smooth introduction and implementation of LfL. By the third year of the programme involvement from the NLT had reduced somewhat although frequent contact was maintained and regular support visits occurred. One headteacher commented on the benefits of the 'strategic partnership' between the NLT and his school. He felt that the LfL programme complemented the whole-school drive for high literacy standards well and has welcomed the input and expertise of the NLT. In another school the Literacy lead was very pleased with the support that the project lead from the NLT had given in training six students to audio-library champions. During a joint visit with the NLT to another school we also noted that the project lead encouraged more literacy-focused marking and use of displays to promote literacy skills. She was also keen to support the school Literacy lead in ensuring that the audio library opens and gets utilised in the next academic year. The NLT's end-of-year reports give details of 'next steps' of support for the schools, making helpful suggestions for ways that the schools could continue to develop and improve their literacy provision following the end of the programme.

**Outcomes**

This section provides some insight in to the potential outcomes derived from the LfL programme. A separate analysis will focus on the impact on attainment outcomes following involvement in LfL. Here though we focus on perceptions of impact (both positive and negative) and also consider some of the challenges faced by schools in delivering the LfL programme.

***Perceptions of impact***

Throughout the programme, the evaluation team sought to capture the views of staff, students and NLT representatives in relation to the perceived impact of LfL. Of course, there were a wide range of views and experiences shared and these were often framed by the specific context of the school and the different aspects of LfL that each school or staff member had chosen to implement. Some staff spoke about the positive outcomes in relation to involvement in individual strategies or approaches while others felt qualified to speak more generally about the programme as a whole.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, where schools had invested time and effort in to implementing particular strategies, relevant staff tended to feel that these strategies had had some sort of positive impact. This could be seen in relation to the Words for Work initiative and the visits from professional authors. Staff commented on the improvements to students' confidence, motivation, oracy skills and creativity following participation in these activities. In two schools, the NLT's idea for a 'free writing' journal was viewed very positively; the Librarian in one of these schools had run 'writing for pleasure' sessions using these journals and said that as a result many of the children had developed a real love for creative writing. He felt that this should be something that is continued in to the future. In another school, the notebooks provided by the NLT were being used to support reflective writing in an attempt to develop a growth mindset in pupils. Students were being asked to write for 10-15 minutes to reflect upon the development on their written skills; the literacy lead felt that this was having a positive impact on confidence and willingness to 'take risks' with writing.

Some staff commented on the longer term impacts of some of the CPD and coaching sessions which were delivered in previous years. In one school, the Literacy lead explained that following the spelling training and implementation of some of the key strategies by the Science department, there were no spelling errors

in the end of year exam for the year group that had been targeted. Another school spoke about how NLT staff had encouraged them to increase the use of key words, examination language and literacy displays within classrooms. The Literacy lead said that as a result of this, these words are now often heard being used in lessons with teachers reiterating their meaning and how the vocabulary can be used effectively. Another school collected some data on staff perceptions on the 'reading for meaning' and 'punctuation and extending sentences' training sessions. The survey data indicated that staff felt more confident about teaching these aspects of literacy and that their understanding of some of the key concepts had improved. A high proportion of staff also claimed to enjoy this professional development and could see the relevance to their own subject area.

School librarians and some children commented on how money and resources invested in the libraries had encouraged reading activity amongst students (and in some cases, staff). In two schools, the librarians commented that they had successfully increased footfall in to the library through the use of displays, investment in more/different books, the instalment of comfortable seating and the introduction of reading matter such as newspapers/magazines. One school extended its opening hours too, including for a short period after school. The children that we spoke to felt that this was a very good idea and hoped that it would continue in to the next academic year.

In an end-of-year report for one school it was noted that the Voices festival from Year 2 had "made a lasting difference to the aspirations and attitudes to literacy in the pupils." As a result of this the school had decided to run their own festival in Year 3. This included visits from storytellers, poets and Shakespeare workshops. The literacy lead commented that the festival

> *…gave pupils exposure to opportunities they would not otherwise have and the school is committed to developing the cultural capital in pupils that these opportunities provide.*

Development of cultural capital was described as a positive outcome of the programme by staff at other schools too. Examples of this included where students had had the opportunity to work with graduate volunteers through Words for Work or university students via the Debate Mate programme. Participation in initiatives such as the Voices festivals, reading aloud and the work with visiting authors were also clearly enjoyed by pupils. Many that we observed and spoke to were very positive about these aspects of their school year. They found the activities engaging and could understand the rationale for development of good literacy skills.

In discussions with school staff, perceptions of an impact on overall academic attainment or improvement were fairly muted. One school shared some short-term data on some of the classes that had been involved with Premier League Reading Stars and Accelerated Reader. It is difficult to know whether the positive steps made by these children though can be attributed to participation in these initiatives or not. There is a sense that having such a wide range of strategies and activities makes it challenging to know which might be effective and the extent to which, as a holistic programme, the LfL initiative might positively benefit pupils' overall literacy achievement. One headteacher commented that:

> *Impact may be difficult to see as the school is already engaged in a range of other programmes so it'll be difficult to attribute impact to any one programme.*

***Reach of the programme***
The Literacy for Life programme has been implemented across six schools for the last three years. The National Literacy Trust note in their summary report that plans to scale-up LfL have begun to develop. Both academy chains involved within the evaluation have begun to share their learning within other schools in their mult-academy trust (MAT). One LfL school, for example, has been involved in providing literacy training at four primary schools to aid transition in to Year 7. Another school has presented their involvement in the LfL programme to 18 secondary schools at a MAT conference and 15 schools within a NLT city hub have received training linked to LfL initiatives.

In July 2017 the National Literacy Trust ran a free conference at Aston University in Birmingham to disseminate information about the programme and its implementation. A total of 38 delegates attended. These included representatives from local authorities, schools and teacher education providers.

**Challenges of implementing a school-wide programme**

***Pressure on staff workload***
As noted above, most staff that we spoke to were positive about the Literacy for Life programme and could see the value in committing time to it. Despite this, time pressures were often cited as a challenge in terms of the implementation of some aspects of the initiative. Literacy leads in schools often had other leadership, teaching and pastoral roles (including deputy/assistant heads, head of English). These additional responsibilities meant that they were often under considerable pressure and sometimes felt that they could not commit as much time as they would like in order to maximise the success of LfL. In one school, for example, the Literacy lead said that she felt that there was more she could have done to support less confident staff with delivering literacy teaching and reading sessions. Difficulties with being released from other responsibilities made this challenging to address though.

One school spoke about how they had redesigned their CPD programme in order to build in more literacy-focused elements as they felt that there was a limit to how much they could ask staff to do ‘above and beyond’ their existing roles. The same school had also begun a programme of optional, short after-school development sessions for staff in order to support them with literacy teaching and learning. The literacy lead was concerned that turn-out for these might be low due to time pressures but actually attendance had been fairly good and responses had been positive. This suggests that where staff see value in the sessions and in the overall intention of the literacy focus that they feel motivated to participate. The literacy lead stated that she intended to continue running these sessions in future.

Setting-up the audio-library was also a challenge for some schools. Technological issues meant that school IT staff have had to become involved and literacy leads/librarians have had to spend considerable time trying to contact the delivery company. Running some elements of LfL after school (e.g. PLRS, Words for Work, Debate Mate) has also sometimes required additional staff time on a voluntary basis.

***Embedding LfL on a whole-school level***
Both a strength and a challenge for the Literacy for Life programme is its whole-school nature. As a result, commitment and involvement from all school staff and departments is ideally needed. Due to some of the

issues mentioned above, this can be difficult and can lead to a 'patchy' or inconsistent approach to the programme or literacy more generally. In some of the schools we visited, it was clear that certain departments had fully embraced elements of the Literacy for Life initiative. Evidence could be found in classroom/department displays, in children's exercise books, in teachers' assessment and in discussions with pupils of some subject areas that were more committed to literacy development than others. It was also the case that, in some schools, Literacy for Life elements were more likely to be focused on certain year groups (often Key Stage 3). This could be due to limits of resources, time and staff but it may be an area to consider for future development. In one school the literacy lead spoke of her desire to target departments in her school that had been slower to adopt a literacy focus. In one instance a complete change in department staffing going in to the new academic year meant that she felt this was a good time to begin embedding some literacy strategies.

Staff turnover and absence was cited as a particular challenge in supporting literacy development on a whole-school level. Both of these issues meant that developing consistent and embedded approaches to literacy improvement were difficult.

***Sustaining involvement and impact***

The Literacy for Life programme is intended to embed a culture of literacy development and achievement within schools. While the evaluation of the initiative ends after the third year, the NLT hope that participating schools will retain a focus on literacy and continue to implement strategies that they have found beneficial. This continuation, however, depends on being able to access and run these elements without the support provided from the NLT. One school spoke of their desire to continue the Words for Work programme although without the financial support for the initiative from the NLT, this may be challenging. The NLT recommended that the school reuse the resources from this academic year rather than registering for it independently. Another school also stated that they would do a similar thing with the Premier League Reading Stars programme as they do not have the funding to purchase this anew next year.

While not part of the bundle of strategies provided by the NLT, two schools commented that they had spent LfL funding on the Accelerated Reader programme. Despite feeling very positive about its benefits, both felt that this was potentially unsustainable in to the following year due to financial reasons.

In one school, where considerable development of the Library had taken place, the imminent loss of a full-time and established librarian was a real concern to the literacy lead. She felt that this would have an impact on the times when the library was open but may also mean that there was less impetus and support coming from the library in terms of promoting literacy development to students and staff. Again, financial and strategic reasons were cited for this change in situation.

Staffing is also likely to be an important factor in relation to the sustainability of such a programme. While current leadership teams in the participating schools have clearly advocated and supported involvement in LfL, staff leaving, changes to staff responsibilities or shifts in the school 'vision' or circumstances are likely to impact the resources allocated to literacy. This has already been found to be a challenge in some schools over the course of the evaluation period.

**Overview of process evaluation**

This report briefly outlines the key issues that have emerged as part of the process evaluation. The findings presented here demonstrate clear engagement in the LfL programme from all six schools. Staff have made a concerted effort to implement a range of literacy-focused strategies and to engage pupils in literacy development and enjoyment. Each year of the programme has enabled schools to involve themselves in new initiatives while also continuing to embed strategies and training on an ongoing basis. We have highlighted the different approaches to implementation across the schools, and have foregrounded the diversity in how schools have engaged with the programme. This bespoke approach is a key element of LfL and appears to be valued by senior staff and literacy leaders. It provides opportunities in terms of targeting CPD and for selecting initiatives that are considered most needed based on the cohorts within each school. There are aspects that have presented challenges though or that appear to be less successful. If the programme is to be further rolled-out across schools, it will be important to consider how these issues might be tackled in order to develop more effective and efficient implementation.

Improving literacy on a whole-school basis is no mean feat; the core aspects of reading, writing and oracy transcend the curriculum, individual subject areas and age phases. One of the aims of the Literacy for Life programme is to convey a message that literacy is the domain of everyone and as such, it is the responsibility of every member of staff within a school to support its development and improvement. This is perhaps the key challenge in both operating and evaluating a whole-school approach such as this. Even within one school, there have been different approaches to the many different facets of the programme. Understanding these on a within-school and between-school basis is not straightforward. Drawing comparisons between schools is also not easy due to the variance that occurs in the schools' methods of implementation. Moreover, as some of the school staff that we spoke to highlighted, attributing impact (either academic or otherwise) in any meaningful way is incredibly complex as, with the current evaluation design, it is impossible to isolate the effects of either the LfL approach as a whole or any of the individual strategies within it. Follow-up work might take some of the seemingly more successful and workable elements of LfL and explore these components in more depth in order to better understand their potential to be effective in supporting literacy improvement.

## COSTS

Funding for the LfL programme is distributed directly to the six participating schools. Each school receives £25,000 per year which they used to put towards training (CPD sessions and release of teachers for training), expenditure on additional teaching assistants for Language and Literacy, new books for the library, assessments, transition strategies and literacy software such as Lexia and Accelerated Reader and to fund two teachers for the MA in Language and Literacy course and to engage specialist subject consultants. Funds are only released upon approval by NLT.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This section proposes actions and recommendations that could be considered for future implementation of the programme as well as lessons learnt that will be useful if the programme was to be rolled out. These recommendations are based on the feedback from pupils and teachers as well as observations from our school visits. They are listed here in no particular order of importance.

### Staff training

Given the high turnover of staff in some schools, particularly involving key teachers such as the literacy leads themselves, strategies need to be in place for the training of new staff. As this is a one-year programme, a refresher course or workshop may be needed to keep the momentum up and also as a reminder of the focus of the programme.

Some schools reported difficulties for some teachers to attend training. More advanced planning may be required for schools to schedule time to attend training.

Drop-in sessions or open surgeries for teachers to meet and consult with literacy lead either for advice or to discuss issues that may arise is one of the ideas proposed by one literacy lead on how to meet the needs of subject teachers and/or new staff.

Although teachers can share their writing on the virtual forum and NLT also published a monthly newsletter highlighting some success stories, there is no avenue as such for schools or individual teachers to share ideas, experiences or even teaching materials. The forum page could be used for teachers to post their lesson plans, share good ideas or find out how other teachers, for example, embed grammar or literacy in their curriculum. Teachers could seek advice from other colleagues on the forum. There may already be such a provision on the NLT network, but this did not come out in our discussions with teachers in the schools. If so, then more could be made of it.

The Grammar for Writing training was not generally perceived well by teachers as many found it difficult to apply it to their own subject area. It needs to be more focused and targeted to the needs of the different subjects. Perhaps GfW training could be incorporated with the subject-specific training – or held for different departments separately and using examples drawn from the different subjects.

SENCOs felt that the inference training would be very useful for teaching assistants as they are more often the ones dealing with pupils with language difficulties. More teaching assistants could be trained. There is

some strong evidence that teaching assistants, if properly trained, can be effectively deployed to work on a one-to-one basis with the very low attainers (Sharples, Webster and Blatchford 2015).

**Promote successful strategies**

The 'Voices' festivals proved to be very popular with pupils and teachers. More of such similar events could be organised, perhaps for different age group of pupils and pupils of different abilities (KS3 and KS4).

Debate Mate was also found to be very useful. Both pupils and teachers have spoken about how pupils have learnt new skills and how it has built their confidence. The opportunity to have an inter-academy debate was a good idea for pupils to practice the skill of putting together coherent arguments and to use more sophisticated language. Having university pupils as mentors also provided good role models to pupils.

These successful approaches should be celebrated and introduced to more pupils. Perhaps every child should have the opportunity to be involved in such programmes, but at different levels depending on the ability of the pupils.

**More targeted approach in identifying pupils**

A more targeted approach could be taken to identify pupils for the different interventions. The Response-to-Intervention individualised instruction comes with a set of protocols and framework for identifying individual needs of the pupils. This could be adopted. CUREE runs training on how to use these protocols. This could form part of the CPD training.

**Make the library a literacy hub**

In most of the academies the library was promoted as the literacy hub. The NLT have also emphasised the need to make the library more accessible to pupils. The creation of an audio/e-reader space is one of the ideas to make the library more appealing to pupils. Increasing the footfalls in the library is an issue that has been raised in many of the academies. Some have been more successful than others. The more successful schools were those that managed to organise a variety of activities in the library, for example, quizzes and competitions – perhaps reliant on an enthusiastic and knowledgeable librarian. Modelling on the more successful schools, perhaps more lunchtime or after-school activities could be organised. Screening of short films or book-related movies could be arranged to get pupils into the library.

The more successful schools also have the library as an activity hub, and the librarian is seen as central to the whole-school scheme to improve literacy. A common suggestion by pupils is to have more non-fiction books. The NLT could look into how the school libraries could increase the stock of non-fiction books and the kind of non-fiction books to have. Non-fiction books appeal to boys in particular.

The choice of appropriate books is another area to consider. One common reason given by pupils for their lack of interest in reading is the limited choice of what pupils consider as interesting books. More thought should be given to selecting books on themes that pupils can identify with and relate to. Perhaps pupils should be given a say in what books they want to see in the library, and what books they want to read. Or pupils could be guided to help them with their choice of books.

**Teachers as role models**

Interestingly pupils also expressed that they liked the idea that their teachers also read with them, for example, during silent reading. Just as we share with our friends the films that we have seen, perhaps teachers could occasionally share an interesting book that they have read (age-appropriate books, of course) with their pupils.

**Consultation with the NLT**

Some literacy leads also expressed that initial consultations with NLT consultants regarding their needs and focus would be useful to help them shape the direction of the programme.

**Recommendations for future evaluations**

In order for proper impact evaluations to be carried out good quality data is required. Great care therefore has to be taken with how the data is collected. Of immediate concern in that the post-attitude survey for pupils and teachers should be consistent with the pre- and interim survey in terms of question items and participants (both in treatment and control schools). Names and ids of schools of pupils will be needed for direct comparisons. Data should be collected from both treatment and comparison schools for sensible impact evaluation.

For future evaluations, care has to be taken in the formulation and structure of the attitude survey instrument. It is not clear if the instrument used in the current evaluation had been pilot tested or whether the items were validated.

If the programme is to be rolled out to more schools, the NLT may want to consider re-evaluating the individual approaches and get feedback from schools about the less successful approaches or those that proved to be difficult to deliver. These could be discontinued, and the resources transferred to more promising areas.

On the other hand, there are certain approaches that have been shown to be popular with both pupils and teachers. Debate Mate and the 'Voices' festivals, for example, could be scaled up to include more pupils. Schools have expressed interest in assessing the impact of Debate Mate, Inference training, Lexia, AR and PLRS, which they see as having an impact on their pupils. From the point of view of the impact evaluation it may be useful to have a list of names of pupils who are involved in each of these programmes. Pre- and post- intervention outcome results of these pupils and others are necessary for assessing impact, especially since pupils participating in these programmes are not randomly allocated. We are acutely aware that NLT is not keen to evaluate the impact of individual approaches, but there is evidence here from schools that there may be some value in doing this.

There are also other approaches that have shown promise in robust and independently evaluated trials that have not been used in this evaluation. These can be considered in future roll-outs. Examples include Reading Recovery/Switch-on Reading, Accelerated Reader (AR is used in a number of schools and supported by the NLT although it is not one of the LfL approaches), Fresh Start and Philosophy for Children. These have been tested with secondary school pupils in UK (Year 7) and on large samples using robust experimental designs. However, it is not our job to promote any one of these approaches over others. We merely present approaches that have evidence of impact based on robust evaluations with clear controls using standardised measures of outcomes. To assist NLT in making their decisions on which of these approaches they could

consider in future, we present here a brief description of each of these and the evidence of their effectiveness.

*Switch-on Reading* is derived from a long-standing programme called Reading Recovery (RR), an intensive one-to-one intervention for the lowest performing children, widely used in the US, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC 2013) found four small scale evaluations of RR that met minimal evidence standards (Baenen et al. 1997, Pinnell et al. 1988, 1994 and Schwartz 2005), and these showed mixed results. Tanner et al. in (2011) and May et al. (2013) reported positive impacts from school-level evaluations. A weak evaluation with primary age children (Coles 2012) reported an effect size of +0.8. The strongest evidence came from an independent evaluation of Switch-on reading carried out in 19 schools in UK, which has shown positive effects on Y7 pupils identified as struggling readers (Gorard, Siddiqui and See 2014). This study involved 314 pupils who were individually randomised to treatment (n = 157) and control (n = 157) conditions. Gain scores from pre- post-test comparisons on the New Group Reading Test showed an effect of +0.24. It was found to be particularly beneficial for pupils from disadvantaged background, defined as those eligible for free school meals (ES = +0.36).

*Philosophy for Children* (P4C) was developed in 1970 with the establishment of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC). It has now been adopted by schools in 60 countries across the world, although the nature of the practice varies (Mercer et al. 1999). The aim of P4C is to encourage pupils to think logically, use appropriate language in argumentation, voice their own opinions but also to consider the views and opinions of others. Pupils participate in discussions and are encouraged to clarify points, question assumptions, state and justify their own opinions. They are trained to think of alternative explanations, provide evidence for their arguments and quantify with expressions like ‘all’, ‘some’ or ‘most’, offering examples and counter examples.

The first evaluation of P4C was conducted using a matched comparison design involving 40 pupils from two schools (Lipman et al. 1980). The study reported significant gains in logical reasoning and reading, measured using the California Test of Mental Maturity (CTMM). Effects were reportedly maintained two and half years later. Trickey and Topping’s (2004) review suggested consistent moderate effects on a range of outcome measures, and these also seemed to be sustained over time (Topping and Trickey 2007). Two more recent randomised trials found positive gains in terms of cognitive ability test scores (Colom et al. 2014, Fair et al. 2015), but the results for attainment were not assessed. An independent evaluation of P4C in 48 schools (n = 772 pupils) in UK using a cluster randomized controlled trial design (Gorard, Siddiqui and See forthcoming) reported positive effects (ES = +0.12) on reading measured as progress from KS1 to KS2. It was also found to be even more effective for free school meals pupils (r) (ES = +0.29).

*Fresh Start (FS)* is a ‘systematic synthetic approach’ to reading, in which individual letters are sounded out and the sounds are then blended to form the pronunciation of the word, and so to ‘read’ it. When writing, the combination of sounds is said aloud and then converted to letters and written down. FS is produced by Read Write Inc., whose literacy programmes are cited by OFSTED (2010) as used by the ‘best’ performing schools. However, prior evidence related to FS is weak, because relevant studies have often been small, non-randomised, with high dropout or poorly reported. A study by Brooks et al. (2003) intending to evaluate FS for use with low attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 (KS3) only managed to retain 30% of its initial 500 pupils, making any claims for the success of the intervention weak. One local authority in England adopted

FS in all of its secondary schools for pupils not meeting or likely to meet expected levels of literacy (Lanes et al. 2005). The impact was never evaluated properly. Their 'evaluation' report shows that the approach was popular and considered effective by teaching staff, but the only evidence of impact came from before- and after-figures in one school with no true comparator. A later summary of reading interventions for KS3 included studies of FS, reporting effect sizes of +0.25 to +0.34 for reading comprehension (Brooks 2007). All of the samples were small, with one study having only 29 cases, and there was high dropout, with studies not clearly reporting the comparator groups, the allocation of cases, and whether the groups were equivalent at the outset. A more recent evaluation of FS conducted involving 433 Year 7 pupils from 10 schools across England reported a positive effect of +0.24 on the standardised New Group Reading Test (Gorard, Siddiqui and See 2016). In this evaluation pupils were individually randomised within schools (treatment n = 215; control n = 204) using a waitlist design where control pupils received the intervention after the trial. This study provided the strongest evidence so far on the beneficial effects of FS. However, there is no evidence that it is any more effective for FSM pupils.

*Response to Intervention (RTI)* is a personalised and targeted intervention developed in the United States as part of an inclusion policy to provide a differentiated programme of instruction for children with learning disabilities within regular school settings. There is also some evidence that the multi-tiered individualised approach as used in Response to Intervention (RTI) can be beneficial. The theoretical and empirical framework of the approach was based on work by Clay (1991) and Fountas and Pinnell (1996). According to Clay children learn literacy skills by developing an inner control of strategies for processing text. If a piece of text is too difficult, the child cannot develop this control. So any text used should be pitched at the right level. With effective and explicit teaching, the teacher can help the child build a strategy to enable them to process the text. Based on their work on Reading Recovery, Fountas and Pinnell (2006) developed an approach called Guided Reading using books matched to children's abilities employing differentiated instruction in small groups, gradually building up the child's inner control. This was the basis for the differentiated levels or tiers that forms the RTI approach. The effective elements are Tier 3 (individual or very small group) and Tier 2 (small group) work. These approaches involved breaking the class down so that pupils can be given targeted and appropriate attention.

Early evidence suggested that this approach was effective with pupils of transition age (Vaughn and Fletcher 2012), with a positive effect for pupils with severe reading difficulties, although the gains were not big enough to close the gap with typically performing pupils (Leroux et al. 2011). In a quasi-experimental study, Graves et al. (2011) suggested that RTI was particularly effective for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds with difficulties in oral fluency. Faggella-Luby and Wardwell (2011) also reported positive results for the small group intervention for older children but not for the younger ones. An independent evaluation funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (See, Gorard and Siddiqui 2015) comparing 27 schools (n =171 pupils) who were randomised to receive the intervention with 22 control schools (n = 180 pupils) who continued with business as usual, reported positive effects of +0.29 on standardised test of Progress in English. The programme was also found to be particularly effective for FSM pupils who made much bigger progress than their counterparts in the control schools (ES = +0.48). However, because of the high attrition (over 25%) and the inconsistency with which pupils who were eligible for the intervention were identified, the evidence of impact is not as secure as for FS and AR. A recent scoping review for the DfE (Gorard, See and Morris 2016) found 25 studies on RTI of which the strongest and the majority suggested that the idea has considerable promise (e.g. Piper and Korda 2011; Fuchs et al. 2014; Al Otaiba

et al. 2011; Vadasy et al. 2013; Jimenez et al. 2010; See, Gorard and Siddiqui 2015). On balance the evidence is that the small group individualised and targeted approaches of RTI are effective for literacy.

**More generally, the most successful interventions were based on individual or small-group sessions**. It would be best if these were conducted as part of general literacy classes (where other pupils could have more advanced interventions or use the library), rather than the target pupils missing other lessons to attend the intervention session.

*My Reading Coach* is another approach that can be considered. Slavin et al.'s (2009) review of 31 studies covering over 10,000 pupils identified My Reading Coach (an intensive use of computerised instruction for 45 mins every day) as the only approach using IT programme as having positive effects (ES = +0.24). This was a large randomised controlled study. There is also good evidence for Grammar for Writing, (ES = 0.24). This can be continued, but only as a small group intervention perhaps as part of the RTI approach.

**Potential for future research**

This evaluation of the LfL programme has revealed gaps in research in a number of approaches. These are opportunities for future research. A number of the approaches adopted in the bundle of programmes do not yet have strong evidence of impact because much of the research to date has been weak – largely correlational or observational and based on self-reports by participants. More rigorous evaluation design such as randomised controlled experiment or matched comparison design using validated instruments is needed to provide a stronger evidence of impact for each of the individual approaches. These include:

- Tricia Millar's "That Reading Thing" spelling instruction
- Premier League Football Stars
- Inferential reading
- Reading Aloud for secondary school-age pupils
- Roisin Fulton's MACK (Motivation, Aspiration, Confidence, Knowledge) programme

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## Appendix A

### What is the current research evidence on teacher development in secondary schools?

Teacher development includes professional development, training teachers in content knowledge, pedagogic skills and teaching strategies for specific interventions. In the US, the Reauthorisation of the Elementary and Secondary Act (2010) states that teachers need "effective, ongoing, job-embedded, professional development that is targeted to pupil and school needs… [and] aligned with evidence of improvements in pupil learning". Slavin et al. (2009) reported teacher development as one of the most useful approaches to helping beginning readers. Many studies that report positive effects from interventions aimed at individual pupils include an element of teacher development. In some examples, this involved training by a developer or similar in the use of a specific intervention or approach such as enhanced feedback or Response to Intervention.

There is substantial prior research on the relationship between teacher characteristics and teaching skills on pupil learning. The Hay McBer report suggested that teacher characteristics, teaching skills and classroom climate contribute as much as 30% of the variance in pupil progress (DfEE 2000). The Pearson Report identified seven effective pedagogical strategies (Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart 2014). A longitudinal study by the same team looking at Year 5 classroom pedagogies identified 11 effective strategies (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2011). The Mckinsey report (2007; 2010) consistently emphasised the role of teachers and teaching on pupil outcomes. It identified education systems that have maintained the top spots in the international league tables as those which focused on teacher professional development. However, all these studies based their evidence on correlational analysis, defining teaching approaches as ’effective’ by comparing schools having good results with those with poor results and attempting to summarise strategies merely associated with such ‘effective’ schools as effective strategies. Or define effective teachers by the progress their students make, so students that make progress have effective teachers. This is what Ouston (1998) described as the ‘potted plant theory’ of educational effectiveness. They look at existing patterns rather than actually trying the ideas out as part of robustly evaluated interventions.

For example, the Sutton Trust interim report (Sutton Trust 2011, p. 5) suggested that “the most rigorous academic papers find consistent and significant results that having a very effective, rather than an average teacher raises each pupil’s attainment by a third of a GCSE grade”. The studies cited were correlational, and ‘good’ teachers were not allocated to different classes to see what difference it made. The definition of effective teachers or effective teaching seems merely tautological because an effective teacher is construed as one whose pupils have good results.

Looking at studies that actually test out the impact of teacher training, there is no strong evidence that teacher development has any positive effect on pupil academic attainment. Gorard, See and Morris (2016) identified 21 studies on the impact of teacher training either in content or pedagogical skills (e.g. Gersten et al. 2013; Gallagher et al. 2014; Blair and Raver 2014; Heller et al. 2012; Matsumura et al. 2013; Diamond et al. 2014; Hairrell et al. 2011; McNally 2014; Dorsett et al. 2014; Rienzo et al. 2014; Rimm-Kaufman et al. 2014). Nine of these studies reported positive effects and 12 showed no effects. The impact of teacher development on academic achievement is thus mixed.

With the LfL programme, the schools involved were from different parts of England, of different sizes and locations. Teacher development was in the form of workshops, peer coaching, inservice training, MA course and subject-specific and literacy consultancy, tailored to equip teachers with the pedagogical skills and content knowledge to help them to embed literacy across the curriculum. These CPD and training sessions were of different duration and not sustained throughout the three years.

**Previous evidence on the individual literacy approaches used in this evaluation**

The Literacy for Life programme encompasses a number of different approaches and interventions which schools are able to select and implement in a way that best suits the needs of their cohort. While the programme is to be evaluated as a whole, it is important to consider the different approaches and interventions included within the programme, their existing evidence-base and the rationale for their inclusion.

**Inference Training**

The Inference Training aspect of LfL is provided by Tony Whatmuff (Leicester LA, 2013). His programme is based on work by Yuill and Oakhill (1988) which suggests that improving children's inference awareness will have a positive impact on their reading comprehension. Oakhill and Cain (2012) argues that inference skills are a key predictor of reading comprehension in primary school children. Brooks' (2013, 2016) review refers to some small-scale unpublished data received from Whatmuff and literacy consultant, Jo Puttick. Evidence of impact is difficult to established as these studies had no comparison groups, and for the earlier cohorts, no pre/post test scores were reported. It is also difficult to verify this data as they appear not to be published in full anywhere else.

However, a small experiment conducted by McGee and Johnson (2003) replicating Yuill and Oakhill's earlier work found a positive impact for the explicit teaching of inference skills on pupils' writing. However, this was based on only 75 children in a single school. Results from randomised controlled trials, however, could not confirm the positive effects of inference training. Dewits et al. (1987), for example, found that results differed depending on the test (literal comprehension or inferential) and on the topics. Another study using path model analysis showed that text-inferencing did not contribute to reading comprehension in general (Wassenburg 2016). Only knowledge-integration helps reading comprehension directly.

A recent report of school-led RCTs funded by NCTL (Churches 2016) reported negative effects of inference training (NCTL, 2014, p. 2) based on a standardised test of reading. This was a large study involving 1,371 pupils in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. There is as yet no convincing evidence that inference training is beneficial compared to other approaches.

**Grammar for Writing**

The Grammar for Writing intervention is based on a programme devised and delivered by a team at Exeter University. An evaluation of the programme conducted by the developers (Jones et al., 2012; Myhill et al., 2012), reported some evidence that the intervention positively affected children's written work, particularly benefiting more able writers (Myhill et al., 2012). A follow-up article (Myhill et al., 2013) suggests that teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge was essential in ensuring success.

A large-scale evaluation of the Grammar for Writing programme conducted by the EEF for primary aged pupils (Torgerson et al., 2014) found a small positive effect (ES = +0.1) on writing when delivered as a whole class intervention, modestly effective when used as a small group intervention (ES = +0.24). They suggest that this is likely to be as a result of the small group instruction rather than impact of Grammar for Writing. There was suggestion that the 4-week intervention was too short for effects to be realised. A recent article by Sullivan and Wyse (2016) drawing on evidence from the EEF evaluation and an EPPI systematic review (Andrews et al., 2004) concluded that there is currently no evidence which links grammar instruction with improved writing outcomes (Sullivan and Wyse, 2016). EEF has since funded an effectiveness trial of Grammar for Writing (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evaluation/projects/grammar-for-writing-effectiveness-trial/) involving 150 schools extending the intervention to a year. . It is hoped that this one-year trial will provide more conclusive evidence of the impact. The trial is currently in progress and results will be published in the Spring of 2018.

**Premier League Reading Stars (PLRS)**

Most evaluations of the PLRS reading intervention have been conducted by the National Literacy Trust, but only one evaluated its impact on attainment. Pabion and Clark (2015) focused on children's attitudes towards reading and their reading behaviour. Although the study claimed improvements in pupil attainment this was based only on anecdotal reports. An earlier NLT evaluation (Pabion 2015) suggested that PLRS pupils made bigger improvements in their reading compared to those who did not participate. But the attainment data was provided by teachers rather than from standardised test across schools. There is thus a question of validity because if the teachers were not blind to treatment allocation, there is potential for teacher expectation effects. In other words if teachers have knowledge of which pupils are involved in PLRS and if they are the ones assessing the pupils, they may be biased towards those in PLRS as there is the expectation that they would do better. Also, as the NLT note in their report, the data for the 231 pupils not participating cannot be viewed as a control due to the different social and academic profile of this group. This suggests that the two groups were not randomly allocated and there may be inherent differences between groups that may have explained differences in outcomes. Nevertheless, Pabion's study highlighted a number of positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (e.g. library use, enjoyment and confidence in reading, book choosing skills).

An independent evaluation by a team at Coventry University (Wood et al. 2017) reported positive outcomes for reading confidence, frequency and reading ability for PLRS children compared to a within-school control group. Reading ability was measured using the standardised British Ability Scales subtest. However, the groups were not randomly assigned and there were initial differences between the PLRS and the control pupils. Control pupils scored lower on the reading test at pre-test (86.7) than the PLRS Club group (91.5) and the PLRS School group (86.9). The control children were also less likely to be interested in playing and watching football. It is therefore possible that differences in outcomes between groups could be due to inherent differences between the groups rather than the result of the intervention. There was also a disproportionately small number of control pupils - 61 control pupils had reading scores compared to 200 in the two PLRS groups. Again there is not convincing evidence yet of the positive effects of PLRS on reading attainment.

**Debate Mate (and other debating activities)**

Debate Mate offers a range of programmes with the aim of improving children's attainment in speaking and listening and developing skills such as leadership, teamwork and confidence. The programmes also aim to raise pupil aspirations by developing sustained links with successful university pupils (Debate Mate, 2015). Debate Mate works with children in Years 5-10 and operates in over 200 non-selective state schools across England. To date, there have not been any large-scale, rigorous evaluations of the academic impact of the programme.

An evaluation conducted by the developer explores the speaking and listening attainment outcomes for 160 pupils (Debate Mate 2015). The authors claimed that pupils on the 17-week Debate Mate programme made, on average, 1.7 levels of progress, the same amount as other pupils are expected to make in 2.5 years of schooling. Unfortunately, there was no report of a comparator group. Without a counterfactual it is not possible to say if the pupils would have made the same progress if they had not had the intervention. The report also suggests that Debate Mate has a positive impact in relation to the softer skills of resilience, teamwork and leadership, measured using a self-assessment survey completed by 1,768 pupils (40% of the cohort that year).

Currently, no independent experimental study of Debate Mate using RCT and standardised or validated instruments for measuring outcomes has been conducted. Most of the evaluations have been based on participants' self-reports, which are often unreliable. The evidence for this intervention thus remains untested.

However, there is a body of research which looks at the impact of debating activities more generally, which suggests a positive impact of debating on pupils' academic outcomes, and particularly on literacy skills (Akerman and Neale 2011; Mezuk et al. 2011 and the Minnesota Public Schools 2015). Recently new evidence emerged that suggests that teaching children to critique, reason and argue has promise for literacy and numeracy as well as other intrinsic merits (Gorard, See and Morris 2016). Although not similar to the Debate Mate approach, Philosophy for Children (P4C), which is centred on philosophical enquiry and dialogic teaching to stimulate pupils' abilities of reasoning and disposition to question and construct argumentation, has been evaluated in a number of trials and the results are encouraging. The largest true randomised control trial conducted in the UK involving 48 primary schools in England (1,529 Y5 children) found promising results for reading and maths (+0.10), but slightly weaker effects for writing (Gorard, Siddiqui and See 2017). Another large scale RCT involving 1,513 Year 5 pupils from 41 schools reported positive effects of P4C for science (Hanley et al. 2015)

Other less robust studies provided insight into the pedagogical aspect of teaching critical thinking that could support learning. For example, Larrain et al. (2014) demonstrated that it was learning to provide justifications and contradictions among peers that prompted learning. There is therefore promising evidence that teaching argument, reasoning and critical thinking has positive effects on academic attainment.

**Spelling**

In 2012 OFSTED noted in their 'Moving English Forward' that too little attention is given to the teaching of spelling in schools, and that this was particularly the case in secondary schools (OFSTED, 2012). The links between spelling ability and reading fluency and comprehension are well-established (see Al Otaiba et al., 2010; Wanzek, 2013) and in recent years, the need to spell accurately has gained prominence due to

the addition of marks for spelling (as well as punctuation and grammar) on a number of GCSE examinations (DfE, 2011). This has perhaps led to more secondary schools adopting approaches to tackle pupils' spelling issues.

The teaching and learning of spelling in English (and other languages) is complex and comprises a number of different elements (Devonshire and Fluck, 2010). Hempenstall (2015) notes that although there is a lack of well-designed evaluations of interventions designed to improve pupils spelling abilities, some components such as phonemic, the whole word, and morphological techniques have received considerable research attention. Wanzek et al (2006) found that explicit instruction, multiple practice opportunities, and immediate corrective feedback were the most effective approaches in teaching spelling after the word was misspelled. Another effective strategy is Embedded Phonics Group, (Torgeson et al. 2001).

Phonics instruction alone, however, did not appear to affect progress in spelling (Torgerson et al., 2006). McArthur et al. (2012) concluded that teaching phonics was more effective for reading accuracy, but not for spelling. This is consistent with the findings of Slavin et al. (2009) and Slavin et al. (2011). In both their reviews they concluded that phonics training alone is not enough. Other studies have suggested that in addition to the use of phonics to teach spelling, explicit instruction should also include focus on morphology, etymology and rules about form (e.g. Devonshire et al., 2013). Cheung and Slavin (2012) found that for English language learners, programmes involving phonetic small group or one-to-one tutoring have shown positive effects. Wise et al. (2007) suggest that knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondences is necessary for the development of phonological awareness, when dealing with children with learning disabilities. In a review of research on writing in schools, the DfE (2012) concluded that there is very little evidence on the effective teaching of spelling using any approach. This seems to be particularly the case for secondary-age children.

The spelling instruction included within the LfL project is based on an approach devised by Tricia Millar known as 'That Reading Thing' (TRT, no date). The intervention is designed to be delivered on a one-to-one basis, using synthetic phonics to develop pupils' levels of reading and spelling. An evaluation of the strategy (Brooks, 2012) suggested that "young people who participated in TRT made substantial and statistically significant gains, on average, in reading" (Brooks, 2012, p.1). Unfortunately, the use of a one-group study (i.e. with no control group) seriously impacts on the robustness of these findings, making it impossible to know whether any gain in attainment can be attributed to the TRT programme. A larger-scale, more rigorous investigation is needed before the approach is more widely rolled out.

**Reading Aloud**

The Reading Aloud aspect of Literacy for Life requires children to be read to by an adult for at least 10 minutes a day in school. In groups (usually their classes) pupils are expected to listen and engage in discussion but no academic work is required. The idea behind reading for pleasure is that students, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds who have little exposure to books, can develop a love for reading which then helps develop their range of vocabulary and grammar. Although there have been no studies explicitly exploring the impact of the 'Reading Aloud' activity as outlined in the LfL project, there is a body of research evidence suggesting a positive relationship between reading frequency, reading enjoyment and attainment (Clark and Douglas 2011). Other studies have also suggested positive links between attitudes to reading, reading outside school and performance on reading assessments (Twist et al

2007; PIRLS 2006; PISA 2009). Clark and Rumbold (2006) also suggests that reading for pleasure is correlated with other non-cognitive outcomes. However, it is difficult for correlational studies to show the direction of causation. Children who do well academically may be more likely to read often and also to enjoy reading.

Some studies focus on the academic and social impact of shared reading between adults (usually parents) and children in the early years (Duursma et al., 2008; De Jong and Leseman, 2001; Rodriguez et al., 2009). The evidence so far is mixed. For example, Stevens (1996) reported no effects of parent shared reading on academic skills while Lonigan and Whitehurst (1998) found positive effects on expressive and verbal vocabulary but no effects on receptive vocabulary. Interestingly Lonigan and Whitehust suggest that parental shared reading is more effective when combined with teacher-paired reading. There are few studies, however, that consider the role of Reading Aloud for secondary-age children.

**MACK**

The MACK (Motivation, Aspiration, Confidence, Knowledge) programme is run by Roisin Fulton. The programme is based on the principles of validation, acceptance and re-education taken from the book 'Mummie's Little Helper' by Sarah Davies (MACK, no date), which aims to raise children's aspiration and engagement with learning. The premise is that change is facilitated through knowledge and articulating feelings and needs to help remove barriers to development. While there has been some work which has sought to draw links between character education/social and emotional learning and academic engagement (e.g. Elbertson et al., 2010), a recent trial in the UK focusing on a social and emotional learning curriculum found no positive impact on academic attainment (Humphrey, 2015). To date, there has been no research conducted on the effectiveness of MACK in schools.

**Accelerated Reader**

Although not part of the NLT programmes, some schools have bought into this approach. Accelerated Reader (AR), is a computerised reading programme which includes elements of explicit and systematic teaching and differentiated instruction (all believed to be effective instructional practice) to address phonemic awareness (PA), phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, in addition to writing and spelling. AR incorporates a number of strategies considered to be best practice – direct instruction (DI), understanding by design (UBD), which is teaching and testing for understanding (a form of feedback from pupils to teachers).

There is a considerable research base on AR, making it one of the most researched interventions in which reading is practised through online resources. Prior research has mainly been carried out in the context of US schools. The What Works Clearinghouse's (WWC 2008) review of evidence found no visible effect on reading fluency and a mixed effect on reading comprehension.

Two well-conducted RCTs showed AR as potentially promising in raising English achievement (Ross et al. 2004; Siddiqui, Gorard and See 2015).

## Appendix B

### Pupil attitude outcomes

After three years of the intervention, the treatment group reported reading at roughly the same frequency as the comparator group (Table B1). The odds ratio for those reading ‘daily’ or ‘2-3 times a week’, compared to less than that, is 1.00. This suggests that the intervention had no impact on the frequency of reading.

Table B1 – Frequency of reading, 2017

| Read outside class | Treatment | Comparator |
|---|---|---|
| Daily | 32 | 27 |
| 2-3 times a week | 22 | 27 |
| About once a week | 7 | 11 |
| A few times a month | 7 | 8 |
| About once a month | 4 | 3 |
| Rarely | 19 | 17 |
| Never | 10 | 6 |

After three years of the intervention, the treatment group agreed or strongly agreed that reading was ‘cool’ slightly less than the comparator group (Table B2). As with Table 12, this suggests that the intervention led to pupils enjoying reading slightly less than their counterparts.

Table B2 – Attitude to reading, 2017

| Reading is cool | Treatment | Comparator |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 12 (31) | 11 (33) |
| Agree | 19 | 23 |
| Neither | 40 | 42 |
| Disagree | 13 (29) | 14 (24) |
| Strongly disagree | 16 | 11 |

After three years of the intervention, the treatment group reported writing at roughly the same frequency as the comparator group (Table B3). The odds ratio for those writing ‘daily’ or ‘2-3 times a week’, compared to less than that, is 1.00. This suggests that the intervention had no impact on frequency of writing.

Table B3 – Frequency of writing, 2017

| Write outside class | Treatment | Comparator |
|---|---|---|
| Daily | 18 | 15 |
| 2-3 times a week | 20 | 23 |
| About once a week | 10 | 13 |
| A few times a month | 10 | 12 |
| About once a month | 5 | 6 |
| Rarely | 26 | 25 |
| Never | 12 | 7 |

After three years of the intervention, the treatment group agreed or strongly agreed that writing was ‘cool’ slightly more than the comparator group (Table B4).

Table B4 – Attitude to writing, 2017

| Writing is cool | Treatment | Comparator |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 10 (30) | 7 (26) |
| Agree | 20 | 19 |
| Neither | 47 | 44 |
| Disagree | 12 (24) | 17 (30) |
| Strongly disagree | 11 | 13 |

After three years of the intervention, the treatment group reported feeling substantially less confident than the comparator group in both reading (‘effect’ size of -0.43, Table B5) and writing (‘effect’ size of -0.39, Table B6). This suggests that the intervention had a negative effect on pupils’ confidence.

Table B5 – Confidence in reading, 2017

| How good at reading | Mean | Standard deviation | ‘Effect’ Size |
|---|---|---|---|
| Treatment | 6.58 | 2.14 | -0.43 |
| Comparator | 7.34 | 1.74 | - |
| Total | 7.31 | 1.76 | - |

Table B6 – Confidence in writing, 2017

| How good at writing | Mean | Standard deviation | ‘Effect’ Size |
|---|---|---|---|
| Treatment | 5.93 | 2.13 | -0.39 |
| Comparator | 6.64 | 1.78 | - |
| Total | 6.62 | 1.80 | - |

In summary, there is little evidence in terms of these ‘raw-score’ attitudes and responses, and changes over time that the intervention has been successful in helping young people to be become successful and confident readers and writers. However, the two groups are ad hoc being neither matched nor randomised. It is therefore possible that differences in the backgrounds of the two groups can explain these results further (it is not possible to consider changes over time in individual responses any further, see above).

*Confidence in reading and writing*

Table B7 summarises the results of two multiple regression models with confidence in reading and writing as their outcomes, and five individual background variables and the treatment group as predictors. Neither model is very predictive (R of 0.11 and 0.15). They show that, as might be expected, male, FSM-eligible, EAL White UK pupils tend to report slightly less confidence in literacy, and older pupils slightly more. Net of these factors, the coefficient for both outcomes linked to being in the LfL treatment group is negative (-

0.07, -0.06). This suggests that they are not due solely to differences in the known characteristics of pupils in the two groups. Far from having any benefit, the evidence available suggests that the intervention led to pupils reporting that they were slightly less ‘good’ in both reading and writing.

Table B7 – Modelling confidence in reading and writing, 2017

| | How good at reading | How good at writing |
|---|---|---|
| R | 0.11 | 0.15 |
| Male | -0.05 | -0.09 |
| FSM | -0.04 | -0.13 |
| EAL | +0.01 | -0.16 |
| White UK | -0.03 | -0.04 |
| Year | +0.04 | +0.09 |
| Treatment | -0.07 | -0.06 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| EAL | 0.73 | 0.78 |
| White UK | 0.87 | 0.88 |
| Year | 0.83 | 0.81 |
| Treatment | 0.55 | 0.84 |

**Appendix C1**
Pupil questionnaire 3rd year



# Literacy for Life pupils 3rd year

## 1. About this survey

**Hello! This is a survey about reading, writing, speaking and listening.**

**For most questions you just need to tick a box and it should take about 20 minutes to go through it.**

**This is NOT a test and there are NO right or wrong answers. Ask your teacher for help if you need it.**

**Thank you!**

**1. Please tell us your birth date (day, month, and year) ***

DD/MM/YYYY

**2. Please tell us your initials (the first letter of your first name and last name) ***

## 3. About you

**3. Are you a...?**

- Boy
- Girl

**4. What school year are you in?**

- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6
- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9

- [ ] Year 10
- [ ] Year 11
- [ ] Year 12
- [ ] Year 13

**5. Do you get free school meals?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know
- [ ] I would rather not say

**6. Do you speak another language than English at home?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

If yes, please tell us which language(s) other than English do you speak at home

## 5. You and reading

The next questions ask you about reading. By "reading" we don't just mean paper books but also magazines, newspapers, comics and anything you might read on the internet, such as websites, instant messages and so on.

**7. How much do you enjoy reading? (Choose one only)**

- [ ] Very much
- [ ] Quite a lot
- [ ] A bit
- [ ] Not at all

**8. On a scale of 1 - 10, how good a reader do you think you are? (Choose one only)**

| 1 Not very good | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Average | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 Very good |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**9. How often do you read outside class? Remember that by "reading" we don't just mean books but also magazines, newspapers, online content etc, and remember we are only interested in the reading you do in your own time. (Choose one only)**

- ☐ Every day or almost every day
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ About once a week
- ☐ A few times a month
- ☐ About once a month
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

**10. When you read in your free time, how long do you normally read for? (Choose one only)**

- ☐ Up to 10 minutes
- ☐ Up to 20 minutes
- ☐ Up to 30 minutes
- ☐ About 1 hour
- ☐ Longer than 1 hour
- ☐ I don't read

**11. How often do you read something for fun or something for information in your free time?**

| | Every day | A few times a week | Once a week | A few times a month | Once a month | Rarely | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| For fun | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| For information | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**12. Which of these do you read outside class at least once a month? Remember that we are interested in the reading you do in your own time. (Choose as many as you like)**

- ☐ Comics or graphic novels
- ☐ Song lyrics
- ☐ Emails
- ☐ Ebooks

- [ ] Websites
- [ ] Blogs
- [ ] Text messages
- [ ] Instant messages
- [ ] Poems
- [ ] Fiction books or short stories
- [ ] Books and other texts in a language other than English
- [ ] Newspapers
- [ ] Non-fiction books (e.g. fact books)
- [ ] Social networking sites (such as Facebook)
- [ ] Twitter
- [ ] Magazines
- [ ] Manuals/instructions
- [ ] Comedy

**13. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about reading? (Choose one for EACH statement)**

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I only read when I have to | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Reading is cool | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I do not read as well as other pupils in my class | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| The more I read, the better I become at it | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**14. And some more. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about reading? (Choose one for EACH statement)**

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I cannot find things to read that interest me | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| If I am a good reader it means that I'll get a better job when I grow up | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I would feel embarrassed if my friends saw me reading outside of class | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

# 13. You and writing

And now some questions about writing. Just like reading, we are only interested in the writing you do in your own time, not the writing that you need to do for school.

**15. How much do you enjoy writing? (Choose one only)**

- ☐ Very much
- ☐ Quite a lot
- ☐ A bit
- ☐ Not at all

**16. On a scale of 1 - 10, how good a writer do you think you are? (Choose one only)**

| 1 Not very good | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Average | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 Very good |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**17. How often do you write something outside class that isn't for school? (Choose one only)**

- ☐ Every day or almost every day
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ About once a week
- ☐ A few times a month
- ☐ About once a month
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

**18. Which of the following do you write at least once a month, not counting what you write for school? (Choose as many as you like)**

- ☐ On a blog
- ☐ Poems
- ☐ Emails
- ☐ Letters
- ☐ Essays
- ☐ Short stories/fiction
- ☐ Reviews (such as book or film reviews)

- [ ] Instant messages (such as MSN, Windows Live Messenger, Skype)
- [ ] PowerPoint presentations
- [ ] Song lyrics
- [ ] In a diary/journal
- [ ] Code
- [ ] On Twitter
- [ ] Notes to other people
- [ ] Comedy
- [ ] On a social networking site (such as Bebo, Facebook, Club Penguin)
- [ ] Posters
- [ ] Text messages

Do you write anything else?

**19. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about writing? (Choose one for EACH statement)**

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Compared with others I am a good writer | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| A pupil who writes well gets better marks than someone who doesn't | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I have trouble deciding what to write | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| The more I write, the better my writing gets | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**20. And some more. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about writing? (Choose one for EACH statement)**

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Writing is cool | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| If you can use a spellchecker there is no point in learning spelling and grammar | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| If I'm good at writing it means I'll get a better job when I grow up | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I would feel embarrassed if my friends saw me writing outside class | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| It is easier to read than it is to write | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

## 18. You and communication

Nearly there! The next few questions ask you about speaking and listening.

**21. Do you agree or disagree with the following? (Tick one answer for EACH statement)**

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| People often take good communication skills for granted | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| People judge you by the words and phrases you use | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Good communication skills are important to get a job | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Good communication skills give me more confidence in social situations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Good communication skills are some of the most important skills to have | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**22. How confident are you?**

| | Very confident | Confident | Not too confident | Not at all confident |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Speaking in front of a group | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Joining in class discussions | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Working in a team | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

## 20.

And finally...

**23. Which one of these best describes you? (Choose one only)**

- [ ] White – British
- [ ] White – Irish
- [ ] White – Traveller of Irish heritage
- [ ] White – Romany or Gypsy
- [ ] White – any other white background
- [ ] Mixed – White and black Caribbean
- [ ] Mixed – White and black African
- [ ] Mixed – White and Asian
- [ ] Mixed – any other mixed race background
- [ ] Asian or Asian British - Indian
- [ ] Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
- [ ] Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
- [ ] Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- [ ] Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
- [ ] Black or Black British – Caribbean
- [ ] Black or Black British – African
- [ ] Black or Black British – any other Black background
- [ ] Middle Eastern or Middle Eastern British
- [ ] Any other ethnic background
- [ ] I would rather not say

**Appendix C2**
Teacher questionnaire

# Literacy for Life teacher survey

## 1.

Thank you for taking the time to answer our survey. Your opinions will help us to be better informed about what school staff consider to be important when it comes to literacy. This survey should take around 15 minutes to complete.

**What is the name of your school?**

**Are you:**

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female
- [ ] Prefer not to say

**What is your main role within your school? (Please tick one only)**

- [ ] Teacher
- [ ] Literacy Coordinator
- [ ] Head of Department/Faculty/Subject lead (or other middle management role)
- [ ] Senior Manager (including Assistant or Deputy Head)
- [ ] Headteacher
- [ ] SENCO/Inclusion manager
- [ ] School librarian/LRC Manager
- [ ] Teaching assistant
- [ ] Support staff (e.g. IT, technician, admin or school nurse)
- [ ] Other (please specify):

**What is your main subject specialty? (Please tick one only)**

- [ ] Art and design
- [ ] Citizenship/PSHE
- [ ] Computing
- [ ] D&T

- [ ] English
- [ ] Geography
- [ ] History
- [ ] Maths
- [ ] Modern Foreign Languages
- [ ] Music
- [ ] PE
- [ ] Religious Studies
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Other (please specify):

**How many years have you been teaching/working in school (not including the years spent training)?**

- [ ] I am a trainee
- [ ] I am a newly qualified teacher
- [ ] Less than three years
- [ ] Three to 10 years
- [ ] More than 10 years

**Do you think it is your job to teach/promote literacy in your school?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

**What, if any, do you think are the barriers to improving pupils' literacy in your school? (Please tick all that apply)**

- [ ] Lack of commitment from the senior leadership team
- [ ] Lack of commitment from other colleagues
- [ ] Lack of budget
- [ ] Lack of knowledge of how to support literacy
- [ ] Lack of understanding of the importance of literacy
- [ ] Lack of time for literacy promotion/initiatives
- [ ] Other priorities

- [ ] There are no barriers
- [ ] Don't know
- [ ] Other (please specify):

**What, if any, do you think are the barriers to a child's overall literacy attainment? (Please tick all that apply)**

- [ ] Too many tests
- [ ] Pupil's EAL
- [ ] Pupil's home environment
- [ ] Pupil's lack of aspiration
- [ ] Pupil's ethnic background
- [ ] Pupil's SEN
- [ ] Quality of teaching and learning
- [ ] Pupil's socio-economic background
- [ ] Pupil's wider school experience
- [ ] There are no barriers
- [ ] Don't know
- [ ] Other (please specify):

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick one per row)**

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I get all the support I need from my colleagues to help support children's literacy skills | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I get helpful literacy CPD and support | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Developing literacy skills is embedded in my regular classroom practice | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I feel that my efforts to support literacy have an impact on pupil progress | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Other staff could benefit from support | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| with their own literacy level | | | | | | |
| I have the knowledge I need to help my pupils improve their literacy skills | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**How confident do you feel...? (Please tick one per row)**

| | Very confident | Confident | Not too confident | Not at all confident | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Developing the literacy skills of EAL pupils | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Developing the literacy skills of AG&T pupils | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Developing the literacy skills of girls | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Developing the literacy skills of boys | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Developing the literacy skills of FSM pupils | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Developing the literacy skills of SEN pupils | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**How confident do you feel about using the following strategies for developing pupils' use of academic language?**

| | Very confident | Confident | Not too confident | Not at all confidence | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Displaying key words in the classroom | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Planning structured talk to develop pupils' oral use of subject specific words | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Developing pupils' writing through giving feedback on grammatical structure | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Developing pupils' ability to understand command words for assessment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Also, how confident are you ...?**

| | Very confident | Confident | Not too confident | Not at all confident | Don't know | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Promoting reading for enjoyment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Developing the literacy skills of all pupils through explicitly teaching them within my subject | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| In supporting pupils with the literacy requirements of the new GCSEs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Using formative assessment to support literacy skills | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**How familiar are you with evidence-based approaches to teaching literacy?**

- ☐ I am very familiar
- ☐ I am quite familiar
- ☐ I have limited knowledge of evidence-based approaches
- ☐ I don't know if what I do is evidence-based

**Does your school have the following this year? (please tick all that apply)**

- ☐ literacy training and support
- ☐ a calendar of literacy or reading events
- ☐ a plan integrating literacy into all schemes of work
- ☐ a literacy-link governor
- ☐ community links relating to literacy (e.g. volunteers reading with children)
- ☐ a literacy marking policy
- ☐ a library
- ☐ a school action plan and/or policy for literacy
- ☐ a literacy working group
- ☐ a librarian
- ☐ displays relating to literacy
- ☐ a CPD plan or budget for literacy

**Is literacy included in your school improvement plan?**

- [ ] Yes, it is the top priority
- [ ] Yes, it is mentioned
- [ ] No, it is not included
- [ ] Don't know

**Is literacy included in your department/faculty action plan?**

- [ ] Yes, it is the top priority
- [ ] Yes, it is mentioned
- [ ] No, it is not included
- [ ] I don't work in a secondary school
- [ ] Don't know

**Does your school promote reading for enjoyment?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Not sure

**How is reading for enjoyment promoted in your school?**

**Do you have particular strategies or approaches to teaching literacy that you feel work well?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Not sure

If yes, which ones?