

# Reading Plus efficacy study in partnership with Derby Research School

Phase one data findings report

Term one: September - December 2021

## Reading Solutions UK

Since 2014, Reading Solutions UK Ltd has been supporting teachers and senior leaders in providing pupils with the skills to read well and with understanding - improving their life chances along the way.

Reading Plus is an evidence-based adaptive reading intervention and improvement programme. Designed to develop pupils' vocabulary, comprehension, metacognition – and silent reading fluency.

Aimed at pupils in KS2 and above, Reading Plus has a readability range from Y2 to beyond GCSE. It supports pupils in developing the skills they need to read well and confidently.

[readingsolutionsuk.co.uk](https://readingsolutionsuk.co.uk)

## Derby Research School

Derby Research School is based at Wyndham Primary Academy, an outstanding primary school serving an area of high social and economic challenge based in inner-city Derby. Their transformation is characterised by being outward-facing and engaged in evidence-based practice. Exploring what the research shows works best has allowed them to make a difference for their pupils in their context.

[researchschool.org.uk/derby](https://researchschool.org.uk/derby)

## Spencer Academies Trust

The Spencer Academies Trust is a multi-academy trust with schools across the East Midlands, and focuses strategically on Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

A high performing regional MAT with a national reputation for excellence, Spencer Academies Trust schools include primary, secondary and sixth form provisions. Their academies work across the highly diverse city and rural communities, including a strong presence in Derby and Nottingham. Standards and expectations in trust schools are high – and the trust focuses on rapid improvement on the journey to outstanding education delivery.

[satrust.com](https://satrust.com)

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# Executive summary

## The study

Reading Solutions UK has collaborated with Derby Research School and Spencer Academies Trust to undertake a non-randomised controlled study. The study will determine the efficacy of the online reading development programme, Reading Plus, and its impact on disadvantaged pupils.

Reading Plus works by building upon the foundational skills of phonics and phonemic awareness to develop a child's silent reading fluency, stamina, vocabulary and comprehension.

The study, which will run for the academic year 2021/22, involves 245 pupils from three schools who will use Reading Plus and a comparison-controlled group of 225 pupils from three schools who will not be using Reading Plus.

All schools involved in the study are part of the Spencer Academy Trust. Although each school has its own approach to reading to suit its curriculum mapping, the following strategies are followed by all schools:

- Weekly reading lessons that focus on content domains (whole class/school)
- A focus on reading and writing skills through English lessons (whole school)
- 2x30 minute weekly shared reading lesson using the Reciprocal Reading Structure (whole class/UKS2)
- Book talk - reading for pleasure - pupil premium (Group)
- Pupil premium fluency intervention (Group)
- Daily storytime using high-quality texts to model reading (whole class/across school).

All schools using Reading Plus have timetabled usage to fit with their curriculum and have been asked to use the programme for a minimum of 90 minutes per week. Pupils are also able to access Reading Plus from home.

All 470 pupils in the study are currently in Year 6 and will all sit the same past Reading SATs paper, in September 2021, December 2021, April 2022, and the new SATs paper in May 2022. This nationally standardised test provides the opportunity to compare data from the study and make a comparison against national data.

## Hypothesis 1

Using Reading Plus, pupils will make more significant progress in reading comprehension, and fluency than pupils who have not used the programme.

## Hypothesis 2

Using Reading Plus, disadvantaged pupils (pupil premium) will make more significant gains than non-disadvantaged pupils who have not used the programme.

## Data collection and GDPR

All schools taking part in the study have signed a data and school project agreement prior to the launch of the study.

## Phase one

There are three phases to the study, and this report details data collated and analysed from phase one, which ran from the first term of the academic year – September 2021 to December 2021.

In September 2021, all pupils completed the 2017 Reading SATs paper simultaneously in test conditions and submitted the scores to a central source.

The three schools using Reading Plus then started frequent usage of the programme. To demonstrate impact, the recommended usage per week is 3x30 minute sessions alongside home use. The three control schools continued following their standard reading curriculum.

In December 2021, all pupils completed the 2018 Reading SATs paper at the same time and results were collated centrally for comparison; this completed phase one of the study.

## Key findings from phase one

On average, pupils who used Reading Plus as a reading development tool made more significant progress in their reading ability than non-users.

Pupil premium children who used Reading Plus made an average of three times more progress than pupil premium children who did not use the programme.

Control school pupils scored higher marks on average in their first standardised tests than pupils using Reading Plus. However, after one term of usage, Reading Plus pupils have closed this reading gap.

# Method

## Study design

The study is a non-randomised control study following a difference-in-difference design using time trends to determine an outcome. Throughout the study, all pupils will be assessed at four stages (September 2021, December 2021, April 2022, and May 2022) to evaluate the effectiveness of Reading Plus on pupil outcomes. Both the intervention and control groups followed the same data collection procedure.

Derby Research School and Spencer Academy Trust selected both the control and Reading Plus schools involved in the study based on similar school Ofsted ratings and pupil demographics. Control schools' Ofsted ratings are Outstanding, Good, and the third does not currently have one as it is a new academy. Reading Plus schools' ratings are Good, Good, and Outstanding.

## Testing

All pupils will sit the same reading paper, at the same time, in each round of testing. Tests are standardised as they are past SATs tests. A national comparison of tests will be conducted after the third and final SATs tests in May 2022.

## Sample size

The study comprises 470 pupils, 225 control school pupils and 245 Reading Plus pupils. Both sample sizes are similar in the number of pupils and demographics, although there is more pupil premium in the Reading Plus schools due to the nature of the schools involved.

# Reading Plus as a reading development programme



Inefficient silent reading prevents students reading for meaning. Reading Plus is the only adaptive literacy tool that addresses this through the explicit teaching of fluency to develop comprehension, and the motivation to read.

## Guided Window

To support the development of reading fluency, Reading Plus uses the patented Reading Plus Guided Window (Figure 1). This scaffolds the reading experience by guiding the reader's eyes left-to-right across a page utilising a moving box. Speed is specific to each pupil and increases when the pupil demonstrates mastery.

This scaffold changes the way pupils approach the text while gradually and effectively increasing the rate at which they can read text with good comprehension and stamina.

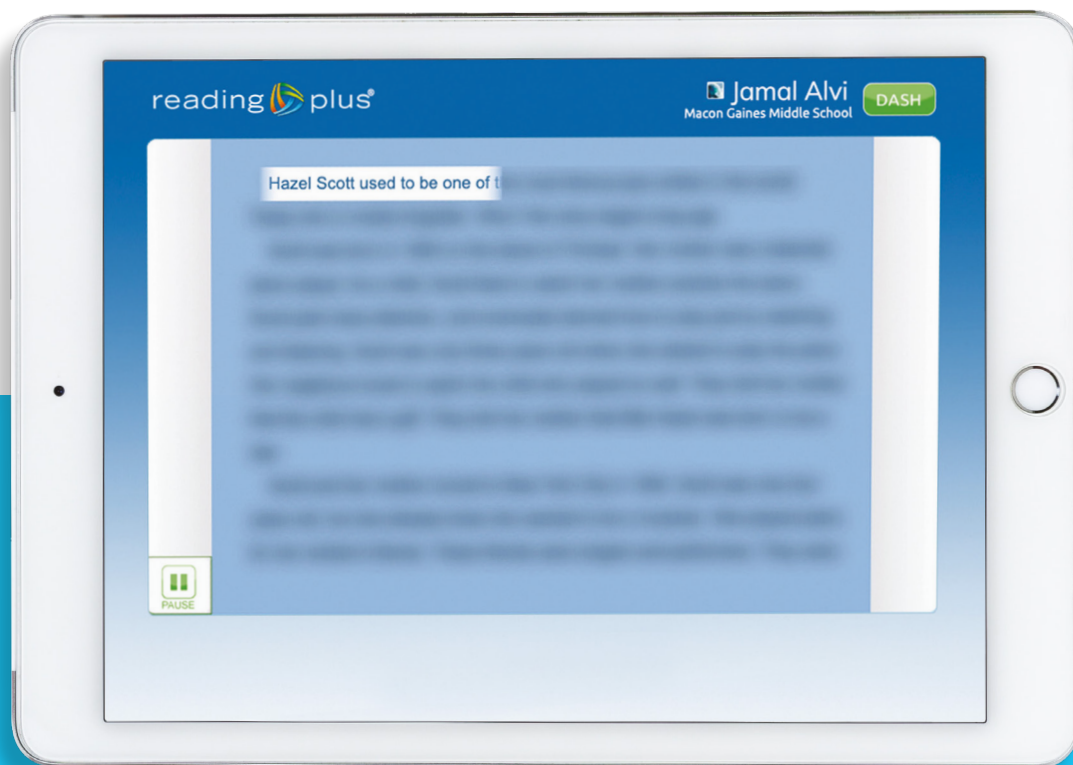


Figure 1. Reading Plus Guided Window.

## How it works

Reading Plus can be used in school and at home and begins with an adaptive assessment that pupils complete independently and without any intervention from their teacher. These results provide a baseline and the data-driven starting point for a pupil's journey through the programme.

Weekly assignments are set with personalised instructions for pupils, including visual skills development for eye-tracking, reading tasks for comprehension and fluency, and vocabulary tasks.



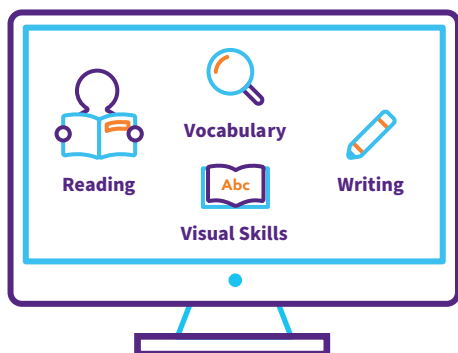
Measures efficiency, comprehension, vocabulary, and motivation.

### Adaptive assessment

- Diagnostic profile for each pupil in under 40 minutes
- Data-driven starting point for practice and instruction



### Adaptive, personalised learning

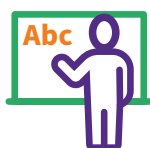


Online instruction adjusts dynamically based on student need.

- Proven instructional and practice activities in vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing
- Builds and strengthens the visual skills needed for efficiency using the patented Guided Window scaffold
- Continuous data collection to customise instructional scaffolds
- Assists pupils in developing capacity and independence
- Over 1000 levelled texts with cross-curricular links
- Promotes choice and control improving pupils motivation to read for pleasure



### Teacher-directed instruction



Integrated formative assessments drive differentiated instruction.

- Comprehensive online instruction and printable materials
- Tools for direct instruction and differentiation at the class, small group, and individual levels

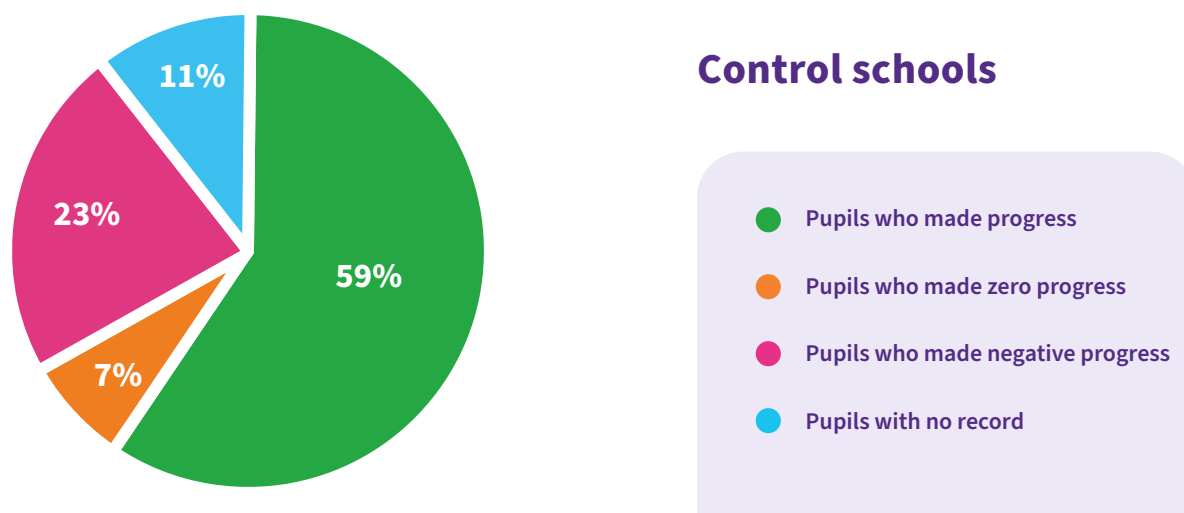


# Phase one data analysis

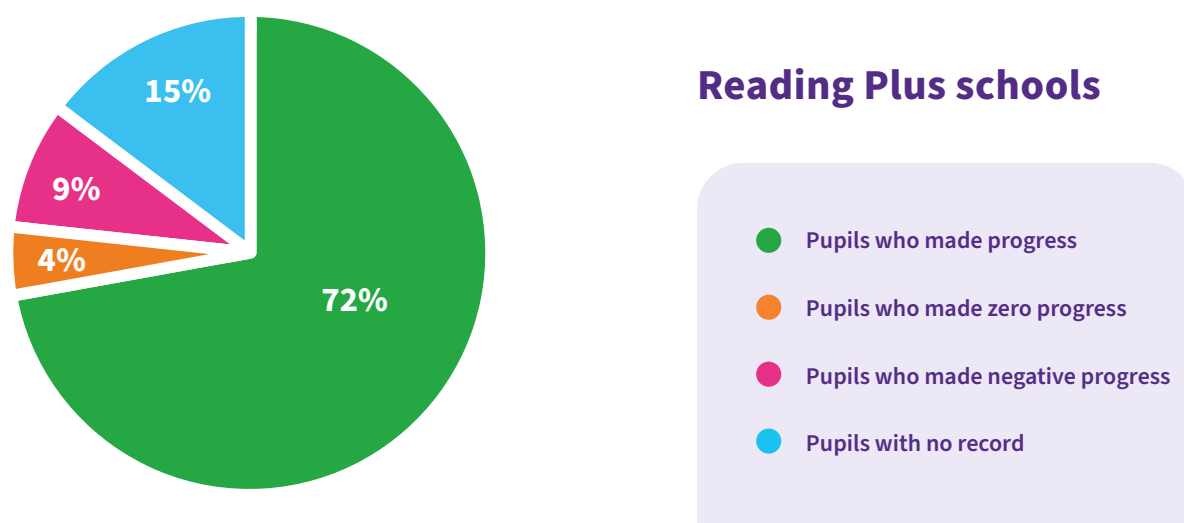
## Overall progress

All pupils involved in the study sat the 2017 Reading SATs test in September 2021 and the 2018 Reading SATs test in December 2021.

After completing the second test, progress data shows that pupils who have been using Reading Plus made more significant progress and less negative, or no progress, than control school pupils who did not have access to the programme (Figure 2 and 3).



**Figure 2.** Control schools' progress data after the second standardised test.



**Figure 3.** Reading Plus schools' progress data after the second standardised test.

## Progress made

On average, control school pupils scored higher on their first and second tests than pupils using Reading Plus, so they started with a higher reading ability (Figure 4 and 5).

After completing the second test, pupils using Reading Plus made more significant progress (190% more) and caught up to control school pupils' reading ability.

When we segment this data by gender, boys and girls made equal progress in the control schools, while girls made slightly greater progress than boys in the Reading Plus schools.

### Control schools

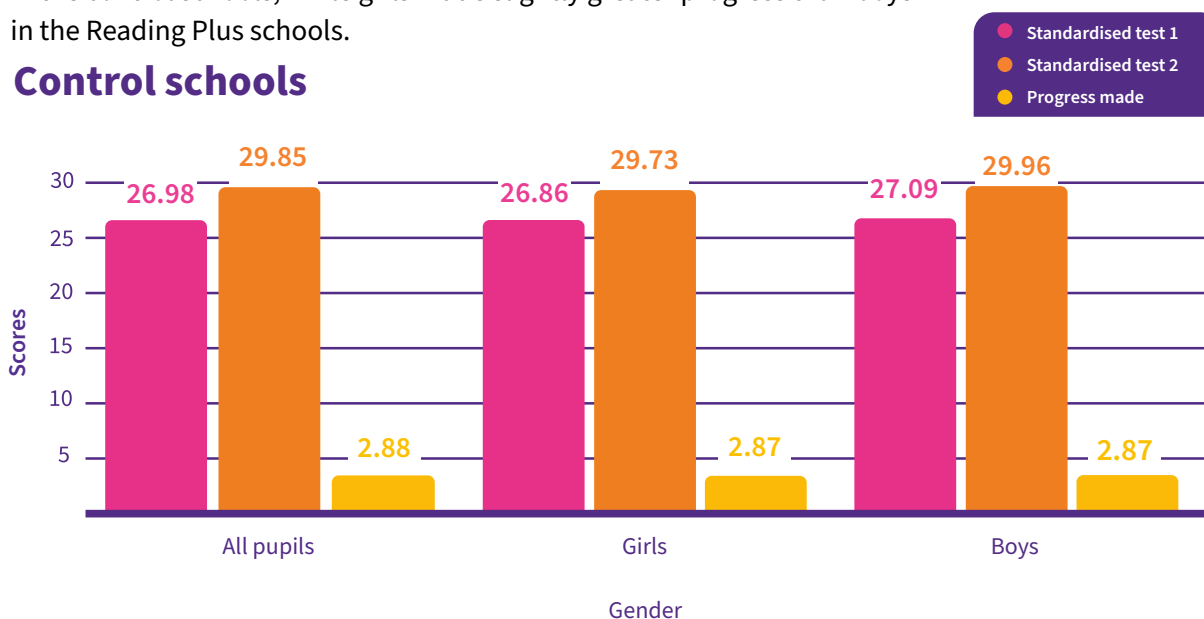


Figure 4. Control schools' average progress.

### Reading Plus schools

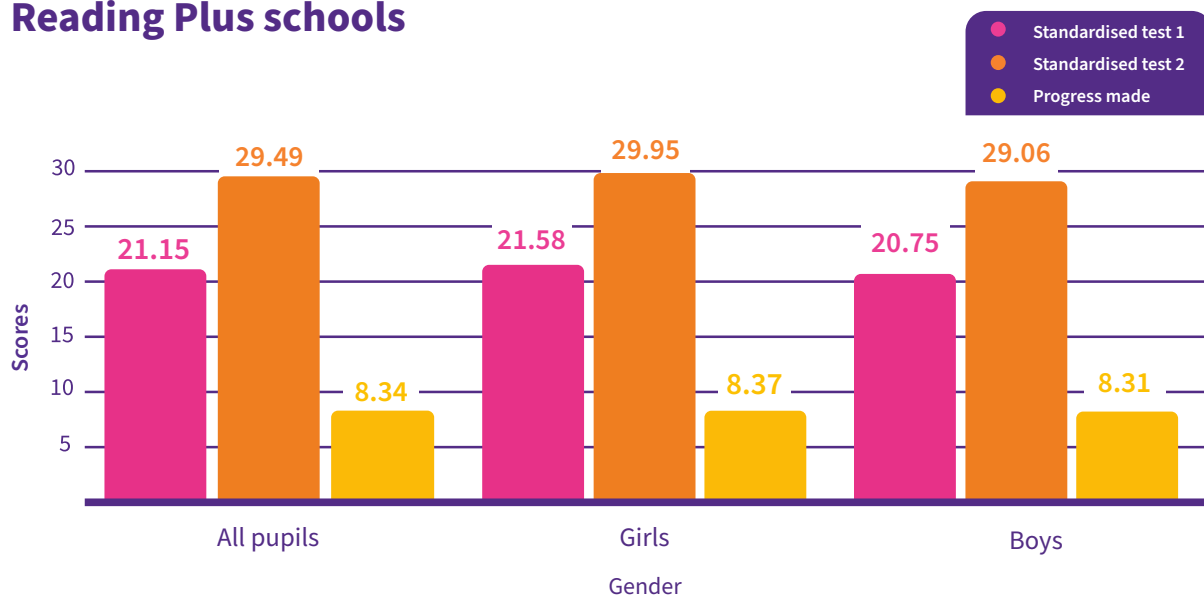


Figure 5. Reading Plus schools' average progress.

## Fluency gains

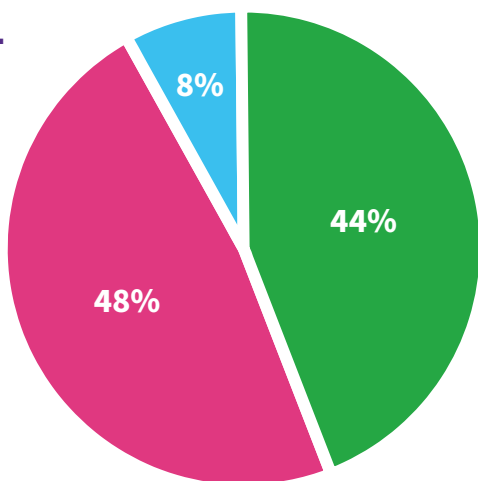
We measured fluency gains based on whether a pupil completed the test paper in the allocated time.

More pupils could complete the second test over the first in the control schools. However, a significantly higher number of pupils in the Reading Plus schools could finish the second test over the first (Figure 6 and 7). This shows that on average pupils using Reading Plus achieved greater fluency gains than non-users.

### Control schools

- Completed test in set time
- Did not complete the test in set time
- No record

#### Test 1



#### Test 2

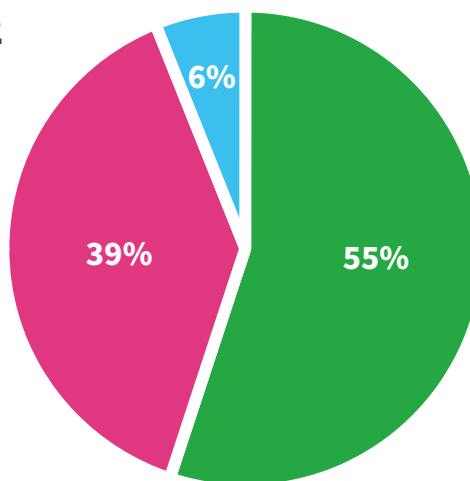
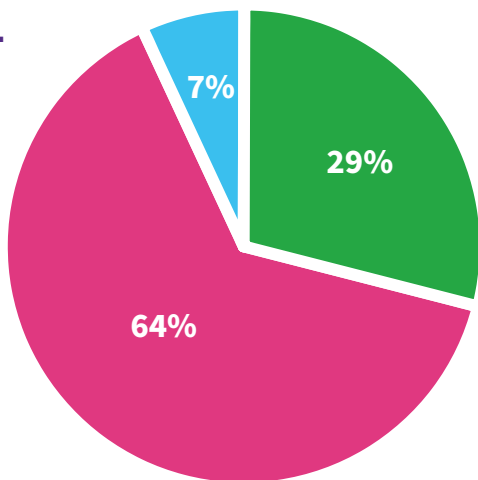


Figure 6. Control schools' fluency progress after the second standardised test.

### Reading Plus schools

- Completed test in set time
- Did not complete the test in set time
- No record

#### Test 1



#### Test 2

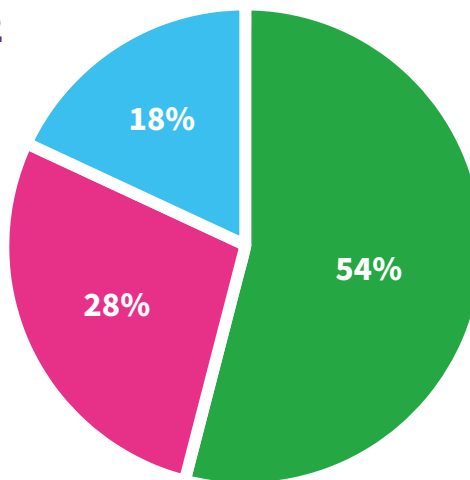


Figure 7. Reading Plus schools' fluency progress after the second standardised test.

# Demographic reporting

## Pupil progress against pupil demographics

We segmented the data demographically and reported on pupil premium, English as an additional language (EAL), and Special Educational Needs (SEN) to test our second hypothesis.

Some pupils may fall in more than one of these categories; for example, they may be pupil premium and EAL.

We have also included average progress for all remaining pupils as a comparison.

## Data comparison

When we compare the average progress data from the first and second tests, the control schools' demographic data shows that EAL pupils made the most progress (11% more) - followed closely by other pupils not categorised as pupil premium, EAL, or SEN (Figure 8).

Pupils who made the most progress between the first and second tests in the Reading Plus schools were SEN pupils (70% more), followed by pupil premium children. (Figure 9).

### Control schools

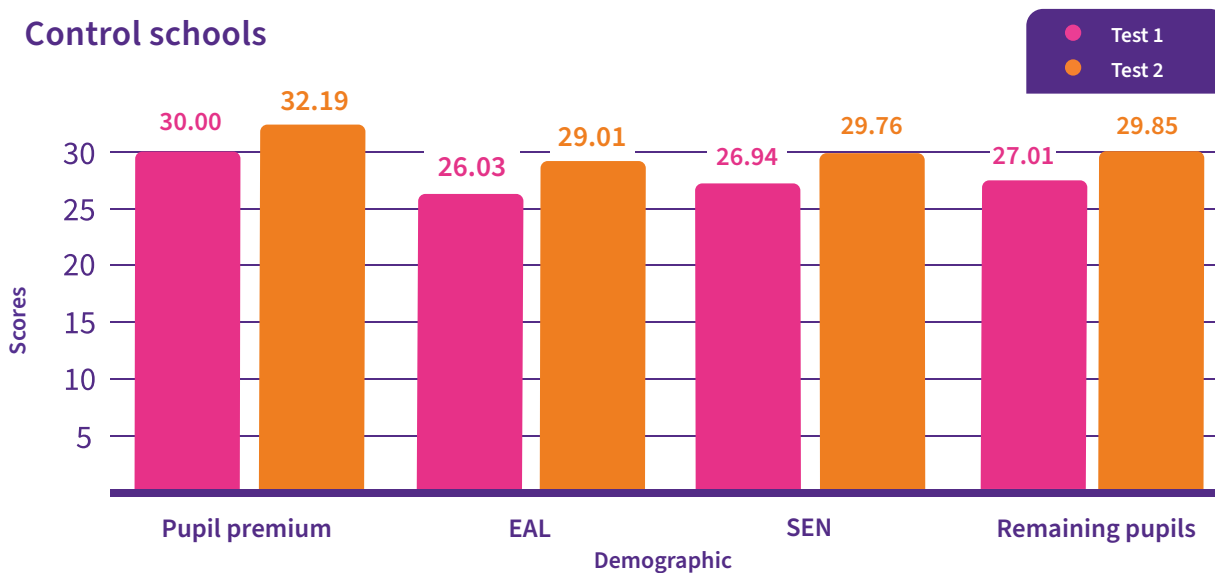


Figure 8. Control schools' average test scores against demographics.

### Reading Plus schools

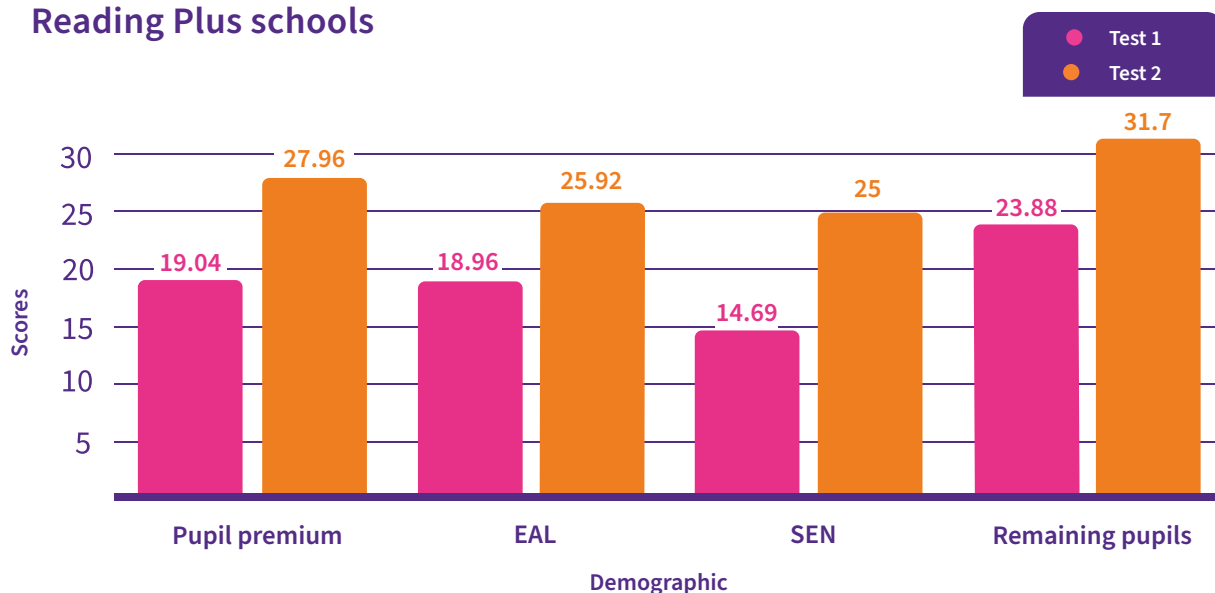
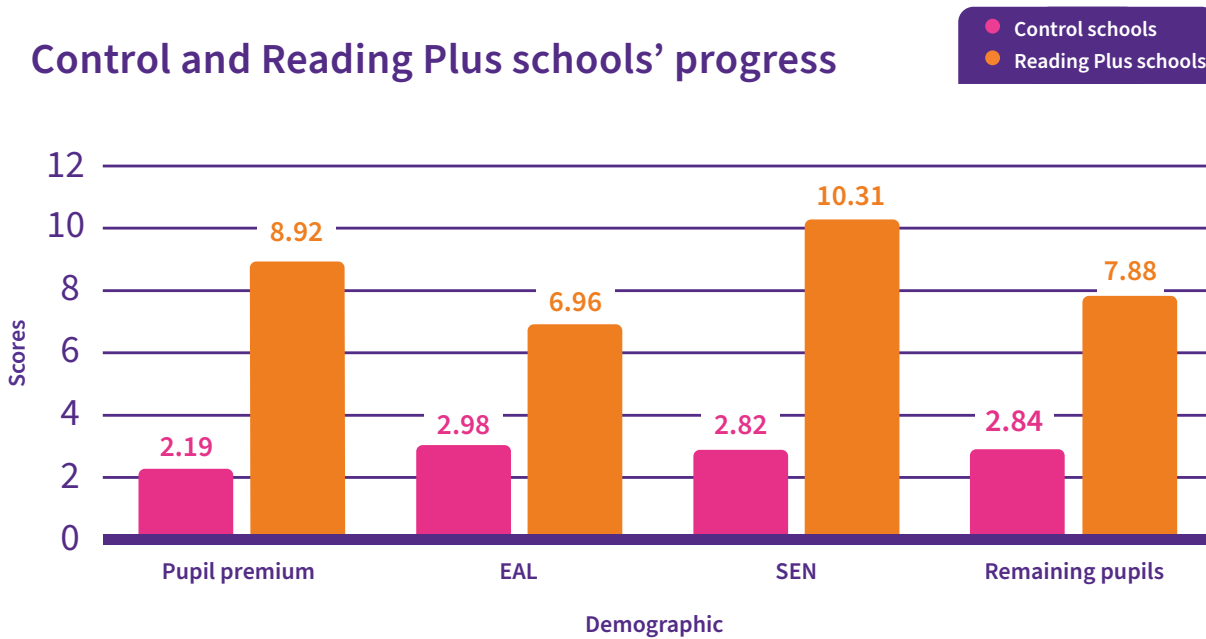


Figure 9. Reading Plus' average test scores against demographics.

## Demographic progress comparison

Reading Plus users across all demographics made more than double the average progress of non-users.

Pupil premium children who used Reading Plus made on average more than triple the progress (307%) as pupil premium children from control schools (Figure 10).



**Figure 10.** Average progress achieved after second standardised test.

# Scaled score

The scaled score for all pupils' average results showed that control pupils achieved a pass rate on their first and second tests, progressing by one mark. Pupils using Reading Plus failed to reach a pass rate after test 1; however achieved a pass rate after test 2, progressing by five marks (Figure 11).

	Test 1 Scaled score 2017 results	Test 2 Scaled score 2018 results	Scaled score progress
Control schools' average	100	101	1
Reading Plus schools' average	96	101	5

**Figure 11.** All remaining pupils scaled progress by demographic.

Segmenting the data by demographics to see the progression levels for disadvantaged children (Figure 12 and 13), we see that pupil premium children in the control schools achieved a pass in both tests, progressing by one mark. Pupil premium children who used Reading Plus failed to reach a pass in both tests; however, they progressed by three marks, ending with a scaled score of 98 (pass rate is 100).

## Control schools

Control schools	Test 1 Scaled score 2017 results	Test 2 Scaled score 2018 results	Scaled score progress
Pupil premium	100	101	1
EAL	100	101	1
SEN	100	101	1

**Figure 12.** Control schools' scaled reading progress by demographics.

## Reading Plus schools

Reading Plus schools	Test 1 Scaled score 2017 results	Test 2 Scaled score 2018 results	Scaled score progress
Pupil premium	95	98	3
EAL	95	98	3
SEN	95	98	3

**Figure 13.** Reading Plus schools' scaled reading progress by demographics.

# Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is the number of disadvantaged pupils from the control group and Reading Plus group.

More pupil premium children are in the Reading Plus schools due to the demographic split of the schools involved in the study. The impact of the smaller control group is that it can adversely impact the margin for error.

As the researchers, we have no control over how pupils are given access to Reading Plus; other than the recommended usage of 3x30 minute sessions per week, the authority lies with each school individually. As a result, there is a danger that pupils don't use or get access to the programme as instructed, which will adversely impact the data.

Access to computer hardware can also be a limiting factor for the Reading Plus schools; if this is compromised, the pupils' access will be limited, further influencing the data.

# Conclusion

Phase one data has shown that when pupils use Reading Plus as a reading development tool, reading progress is accelerated at a greater rate than those who do not use it.

Overall progress data shows that pupils using Reading Plus made more progress, and fewer pupils made no or negative progress than non-users. They also made more progress with their fluency.

Demographic data shows that EAL pupils on average made the most progress overall within the control schools, followed closely by all other pupils not categorised as pupil premium, EAL, or SEN. Pupils who made the most average progress in the Reading Plus schools were SEN, followed closely by pupil premium children.

In summary, phase one data supports our first hypothesis; when used as a reading development programme, Reading Plus has supported pupils to make more significant gains than pupils who have not had access to the software.

Regarding our second hypothesis, our findings demonstrate that Reading Plus is an effective tool for levelling up. In one term, disadvantaged children who used the programme made on average three times more progress than pupil premium children who didn't use Reading Plus.

# Phase two

All pupils will sit their third standardised test in April 2022. We will use the same methods of data capture as in phase one to report on findings and draw comparisons to conclude phase two. We hope to share this data in May 2022.

## Further information

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