Accelerated Reader (re-grant)

This page covers the second (effectiveness) trial of Accelerated Reader, testing a scalable model under everyday conditions in a large number of schools. To read about the first (efficacy) trial - testing whether it could work in schools under best possible conditions - click here.

Accelerated Reader is a whole-class reading management and monitoring programme that aims to foster the habit of independent reading among primary and early secondary pupils. The internet-based software initially screens pupils according to their reading levels, and suggests books that match their reading age and reading interest. Pupils take computerised quizzes on the books they have read and earn Accelerated Reader points related to difficulty.

Schools receive three one-hour remote training sessions and six hours of whole school training. Training sessions help schools ensure that their libraries are prepared for the intervention, show teachers how to use quizzes and analyse the data that they generate.

Why are we funding it?

Accelerated Reader is one of 24 effective reading interventions listed by the What Works Clearinghouse. According to the findings of their systematic review, Accelerated Reader has positive effects on reading comprehension and reading achievement.

Accelerated Reader has also been tested through a previous EEF efficacy trial involving four secondary schools and 350 Year 7 pupils. The study randomised pupils within each of the schools and focused particularly on pupils who did not achieve a level 4 on their Key Stage 2 SATs. The project found a positive impact on all pupils of an additional three months’ progress over the course of an academic year. The results also suggested that AR was particularly beneficial for children eligible for free school meals, with these pupils making an additional five months’ progress, however due to the smaller sample size this result was less secure. This project will now test the intervention in more schools.

Primary schools in the North East will be encouraged to take part in this trial as part of our North East Primary Literacy Campaign, co-funded with the Northern Rock Foundation. Read more about the campaign here.

How are we evaluating it?

RAND and the University of Cambridge have been appointed as the evaluation team. It will be an effectiveness study. Effectiveness trials aim to test whether an intervention can work at scale in a large number of schools.

The proposal is to recruit around 200 primary schools and to randomly allocate 100 to Accelerated Reader, with the other 100 acting as a control group who will be on a waitlist to receive Accelerated Reader one year later. Schools will deliver the intervention to all children in Years 4 and 5, with impact data collected at the end of Year 4 and all children tracked until they sit Key Stage 2 SATs.

When will the evaluation report be due?

The evaluation report was due to be published in Autumn 2019, followed by an addendum report in Autumn 2020.
The evaluation report and addendum report will now be published together in Autumn 2020.