Independent Report: Sound Discovery Research

Whole class quality first teaching with catch up interventions for those at risk

Research premise: Sound Discovery is the synthetic phonics programme on which Rapid Phonics is based. Its effectiveness was researched across 950 children in 56 schools.

Key points to take away
• Easy to use with clear and manageable lesson structure.
• Can be effectively used with pupils with a wide range of needs.
• Both motivating and enjoyable to help keep children engaged and progressing.
• Proven to progress advancements in reading and spelling ages.

Advancements in reading and spelling ages
Children entering school with low language assessments were on average 15 months ahead of their age for both reading and spelling after using Sound Discovery.

• Both boys and girls made good progress.
• Children with free school meals (i.e. eligible for Pupil Premium) obtained scores above their age in reading.
• Children with English as an additional language reached levels well above the national average in writing.

“15 months ahead of their age.”

Reading and writing SATs levels well above the national average
• Children who had used Sound Discovery throughout primary school achieved above the national average in KS1 and KS2 tests.

Boys achieved high levels in writing
Particularly noticeable was the performance of boys who achieved well above the national average in writing.

Wave 3 intervention
When used as a Wave 3 intervention, Sound Discovery accelerated rates of progress. Children who were experiencing difficulties made on average three times the expected progress in reading. This is well above the recommended rate of progress for an effective intervention.

One child said, “I can try to think what sound is in the word and I can write it. Before Sound Discovery it was really tricky for me.”

One parent said, “I thought it was one of the most positive things she’d done. There was a marked improvement confidence-wise and in her ability during the time. Now she’s enjoying reading and is flying.”

Sound Discovery has been effectively used with pupils from Reception to Year 8 with a wide range of needs including:
• dyslexia
• moderate learning difficulties
• autism
• attention and concentration difficulties
• speech and language difficulties
• emotional and behavioural difficulties
• English as an additional language

Summary of Results of Local Authority Wave 3 Intervention Studies using Sound Discovery, 2003-2010:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Year Group(s)</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Taught by</th>
<th>Reading Accuracy Ratio Gain</th>
<th>Spelling Ratio Gain</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Norfolk CC</td>
<td>YR - Y6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>10 wks</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>BANES LA</td>
<td>Y3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>20 wks</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Norfolk CC</td>
<td>Y2 – Y8</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group</td>
<td>1.8 – 5.3</td>
<td>1.4 – 3.2</td>
<td>12 wks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Wiltshire CC</td>
<td>Y2 – Y3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3-4 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>Y2 – Y3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9-12 wks</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Wiltshire CC</td>
<td>Y2 – Y3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Teachers/Teaching Assistants/Group</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>9-12 wks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The outcome – motivating, fun and easy to use
Teachers and pupils highlighted the motivating and enjoyable nature of Sound Discovery. For example, one parent commented: “It has helped me with my sounds and spelling and it’s fun!”

The Head Teacher at one school noted the way in which reluctant readers and writers moved from saying, “No” or “I can’t” … to “I can” and “Can we do some more during playtime?”

Schools found Sound Discovery easy to use. Teachers highlighted the clear, manageable lesson structure and the simplicity of the resources. Learning support and teaching assistants also found the materials straightforward to use. One learning support assistant commented that the manual was “simple and clear.”

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