Case Study: Ludworth Primary School

Great teachers make a world of difference to a child's love of learning. The successful interventions they put in place to support their pupils can unlock a life-long passion for the subjects being taught.

The impact of an engaging and effective intervention can be particularly significant in literacy, where the progress a child makes can help to raise their achievement across the curriculum.

At Ludworth Primary School in Marple Bridge, Stockport, teachers know that there is no single approach to supporting and developing children's literacy skills. That's why pupils' reading is assessed every term using the eye-tracking software from Lexplore Analytics.

The results are available in minutes, giving teachers across the school a clear understanding of each child's reading ability, both before and after an intervention. This has been key in helping them to ensure the support they provide has a positive impact on achievement and children's self- confidence.

Understanding the starting point

Ludworth Primary opened its doors in 1908 and today welcomes 245 pupils. With its own outdoor learning and wooded area, the school is focussed on ensuring every child benefits from a rich and varied education.
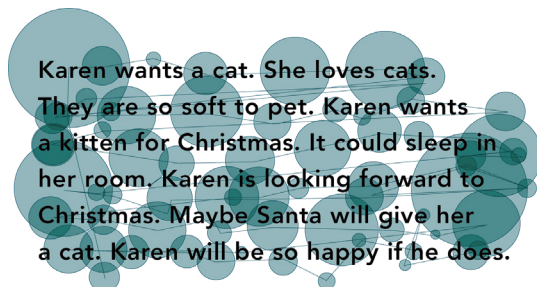
The school wanted to find a simple yet effective way to monitor the impact of the literacy interventions being introduced to boost children's reading skills. The introduction of Lexplore Analytics has enabled teachers to get the information they need quickly to uncover issues a child might be experiencing with their reading.

Nicola Hankey, a teacher and the SEND co-ordinator at the school, explains. "Using an online tool such as Lexplore enables us to get a benchmark of a child's reading ability in just a few minutes. We've found there is far less anxiety than there can be with a pen and paper test, particularly for pupils with additional needs. The assessment is computer based, quick to implement and there's no wait for the results."
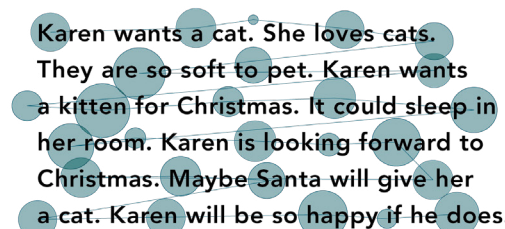
Shaping Interventions

Lexplore tracks a child's eye movements as they read and gathers information such as how long the eyes rest on a word, and how they move through the text.

The results help teachers to identify which aspects of literacy a child is having difficulty with and whether there might be a broader issue, such as dyslexia, which can then be explored and supported.

Karen wants a cat. She loves cats. They are so soft to pet. Karen wants a kitten for Christmas. It could sleep in her room. Karen is looking forward to Christmas. Maybe Santa will give her a cat. Karen will be so happy if he does.

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The depth of information available enables teachers to flag pupils who would benefit from a higher level of reading material too. This means they can shape interventions that meet the needs of individual pupils and groups, then monitor their impact over time.

"Teachers can use Lexplore to clarify and add measurable data to their own professional judgements, as well as gain further insight into the nature of issues individuals are experiencing," Nicola explains.

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Nurturing confident leaders

Lexplore helps teachers to identify pupils who have specific difficulties and tailor support around these.

"We might have a child who finds reading words with groups of sounds such as 'ai' or 'ou' challenging," says Nicola.

"Knowing this means we can set time aside each day to work through lists of words containing these sounds with the child. This repetition helps the sounds to become more familiar and as a result, their reading flows much more naturally and their confidence soars."

Beyond the classroom

The school has found that the confidence children gain in other areas can have a positive impact on their literacy too.

"One programme of activities which has been really effective in improving confidence is our life skills project. This helps children with using money, cooking meals and catching the right bus. The activities have been particularly effective for building the confidence of pupils with SEND," says Nicola.

The school's Gardening Club and Outdoor Learning Intervention have had an impact too, as all the programmes help develop communication skills, which in turn, supports literacy learning.

Nicola concludes, "Every child is unique and teachers know that just because a reading support plan has helped 10 other pupils to progress does not necessarily mean that it will work for everyone. You need to refine each intervention for each' child's needs.

"Lexplore gives us what we need to define the right type of intervention from the start and measure the impact of the support we put in place to make sure we are on track. This helps us to unlock the reading skills children need to develop a true love of learning that will stay with them throughout their education and into the future."