

## **Fluency Focus Efficacy Trial Looking at reading through the lens of fluency A reading programme for Year 5**

London South Research School warmly invites schools to participate in the EEF's trial of Fluency Focus. Fluency Focus is a sequence of twenty fully resourced reading lessons designed to improve Year 5 pupils' reading fluency and consequently their comprehension.

The programme design brings together evidence-informed fluency strategies into a cohesive set of fully resourced lessons. Key sources of evidence are the EEF's *Improving Literacy at Key Stage Two* Guidance Report and the *Literacy Development: Evidence Review 2019*.

### **What is the Fluency Focus efficacy trial?**

The Fluency Focus efficacy trial is being conducted by Verian, and is funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). To rigorously test the impact of Fluency Focus, we are recruiting 120 schools to take part in this efficacy trial. The evaluation includes a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) and an Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE)

Participating schools will be randomly selected to either deliver or not deliver Fluency Focus:

- **The intervention group (60 schools):** These schools will receive full training and deliver the Fluency Focus lessons to their Year 5 pupils starting in September 2026.
- **The control group (60 schools):** These schools will continue teaching reading in the ways that they currently do, and will provide vital data needed to provide a comparison to help us establish the programme's efficacy.

This random assignment ensures the 'intervention group' and the 'control group' are as similar as possible, the only difference being that schools in the 'intervention group' have delivered Fluency Focus and those in the control group have not. By comparing the results between both groups, we can learn how well the intervention worked.

The efficacy trial will look at the impact of Fluency Focus on reading and fluency outcomes, and all participating schools will be asked to administer a few specific assessments to their Year 5 classes and work with Verian to allow independent assessors to administer some assessments to pre-selected Year 5 pupils. More information on exactly what will be required can be found in the Memorandum of Understanding which eligible schools that express an interest will receive. More information on data needs and use for this project can be found in the Data section below. The data collection is designed to minimise the overall burden on schools.

The IPE will seek to understand how Fluency Focus was implemented, what the impact was on schools and pupils, and through what mechanisms any changes in outcomes might have come about.

### Testimonials:

Fluency Focus was initially delivered in ten schools in Summer 2022:

- *Fantastic training given by fantastic and enthusiastic practitioners*
- *We saw a huge improvement in children's overall accuracy and fluency scores.*
- *We found that all children felt more confident in their reading aloud.*
- *The dialogue around books and the texts has flourished and I have overheard children talk about their favourite texts in natural conversation*

Following this success, Fluency Focus was piloted in twenty schools in Autumn 2023.

All schools involved in the pilot have continued their use of fluency strategies and extended them to other year groups.

Read the full pilot evaluation [report here](#).

### Who can take part?

To be eligible to participate, schools must meet the following criteria:

- **School type** - State funded primary schools only.
- **Location** - London, the South East, East Midlands, West Midlands or the East of England.
- **Prior experience** - Must not be delivering, or have previously delivered, the Fluency Focus programme.
- **Other EEF evaluations** – Must not be participating in the following EEF evaluations: PALS-UK or Power of Reading.
- **EEF Evidence Into Action partnerships** – Must not be participating in EEF Evidence Into Action partnerships in Dudley, Enfield, Havering or Worcestershire.

By participating, your school plays a vital role in shaping the national research landscape. Whether you are randomly assigned to the intervention or the control group, your involvement provides the essential data needed to understand what works in reading fluency and to inform teaching practices across the country.

### What does the programme involve?

The carefully sequenced programme of twenty, one-hour, whole-class reading lessons should be delivered to *all* Year 5 classes in each school in the intervention group. Lessons should be delivered once per week in place of an existing reading lesson, over approximately twenty weeks.

Each lesson follows a clear structure in which fluency strategies are taught, modelled, and then practised by children. Lessons are fully resourced with plans, a teacher guide, pupil booklets and PowerPoints.

All Year 5 teachers must attend all training. Schools must also nominate an SLT champion to support the teachers in school, carry out two lesson observations and attend the initial training day and the end-of-programme celebration event.

Teachers and SLT champions will receive one day face-to-face training in September 2026. This will be followed by one online coaching conversation (approx. 30 mins), one 45-minute mid-point webinar and an online celebration event at the end of the programme.

### What are the potential benefits for my school?

Participation in the intervention group offers your school:

- High quality training and resources for your teachers
- Improved fluency and comprehension skills for your pupils
- Improved confidence in, and love of, reading for your pupils
- The chance to contribute to research into what works in teaching reading fluency.

Participation in the control group offers your school:

- A payment of £500 in recognition of your completion of control group activities
- The chance to contribute to research into what works in teaching reading fluency.

### What does taking part in an evaluation involve?

The purpose of this trial is to evaluate the impact of the Fluency Focus programme on children's attainment in reading fluency and comprehension. We will be working with Verian to evaluate the project, and **all participating schools must support the collection of data** including, but not limited to:

Intervention group		
Action	Teachers	SLT
Pre- and post-programme surveys	✓	✓
Pre- and post- fluency and comprehension assessments of a selection of pupils. At each stage, teachers need to administer a whole class assessment (1 hour) and separately record each pupil in the class reading for 1-2 minutes.	✓	
Facilitate a one-day visit for an independent assessor to assess 10 pre-selected pupils.	✓	
Weekly logs of lesson delivery and attendance (via a short Google form)	✓	
SLT lesson observation forms (one form for each of two lessons)		✓
A subsample of schools will have an observation visit by a Verian researcher to observe a lesson, interview the teacher(s) delivering Fluency Focus, and interview some Year 5 pupils.	✓	

Control group		
Action	Teachers	SLT
Pre- and post-programme surveys	✓	✓
Pre- and post- fluency and comprehension assessments of a selection of pupils. At each stage, teachers need to administer a whole class assessment (1 hour), and separately record each pupil in the class reading for 1-2 minutes.	✓	
Facilitate a one-day visit for an independent assessor to assess 10 pre-selected pupils	✓	

### Who is running the project

The programme, funded by the Educational Endowment Foundation, will be delivered by the London South Research School. The trial will be independently evaluated by Verian, a large independent research organisation.

### Cost

#### The intervention group:

Schools assigned to the intervention group will contribute £300 to participate in the programme. This fee covers all training, lesson resources and dedicated coaching support. Schools commit to releasing staff for training and appointing a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) member to serve as the project's Fluency Focus Champion. Participating schools are also required to complete all scheduled evaluation activities throughout the trial.

#### The control group:

Schools in the control group will complete all scheduled evaluation activities throughout the programme. To acknowledge their participation in the trial, these schools will also receive a payment of £500 at the end of the programme, once all data has been submitted.

### How will data be used?

All data collected as part of the study will be treated with the strictest confidence by Verian and the London South Research School in line with the requirements of UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Verian's privacy notice explaining the full detail of what data will be used for the evaluation, how it will be used, and why can be found [here](#). This privacy notice will be shared with all participants, and with your school before you sign a Memorandum of Understanding committing to take part in the pilot.

Findings from the evaluation will be published in a report on the EEF website and may be used by the London South Research School to inform programme updates. No names of schools or

other identifiable information will be reported. The London South Research School privacy notice can be found [here](#).

## Timetable

### Recruitment timetable

Date	Event
Monday 23 February 2026	Recruitment for the Fluency Focus Efficacy Trial opens
Sunday 31 May 2026	Sign up closes
June-July 2026	Randomised allocation to groups

### Delivery timetable

Date	Event	Year 5 teacher/s	SLT champion
March - April 2026	Information webinar		✓
Summer 2026	Baseline assessments (a one-hour whole-class teacher-led assessment, as well as recording each pupil reading for ~1 minute)	✓ (This could be done by the Year 4 teacher)	
September 2026	Full day face to face training 1	✓	✓
	Lesson delivery begins: one hour per week	✓	
November 2026	Coaching conversation	✓	
December 2026	SLT Lesson observation 1	✓	✓
January 2026	Mid-point webinar	✓	
February 2027	SLT Lesson observation 2	✓	✓
March 2027	Lesson delivery finishes	✓	
March 2027	Online Celebration event	✓	✓
Summer 2027	Endline assessments (same as baseline, plus facilitating a 1-day visit by an independent assessor)	✓	

## Information briefings

We are holding several information sessions about the project on the following dates:

- Tuesday 10 March 2026, 4:00 - 4:30pm
- Thursday 26 March 2026, 4:00 - 4:30pm
- Tuesday 14 April 2026, 4:00 - 4:30pm

## Sign up and find out more!

To register for these sessions and to express your interest in joining the project please complete this Expression of Interest form: <https://forms.gle/MGZZhiUn2Mu8Pc4h8>

## Further information

For any further information, please contact David Windle, Research School Director at [info@londonsouthtsh.org](mailto:info@londonsouthtsh.org).