

Evaluation of Power of Reading

School Information Booklet

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) is partnering with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and NatCen to evaluate the Power of Reading (PoR). This literacy programme aims to develop teachers' understanding of the ways in which high-quality texts can be used to support pupils' understanding of authentic writing process, ultimately leading to gains in writing attainment.

PoR has become very popular within primary schools. CLPE, who designed PoR, report that 1610 schools were members of CLPE and 259 teachers have attended PoR training (CLPE, 2023). Interviews with teachers and pupils indicate that they feel the programme has lots of benefits including developing teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge, improving children's engagement with reading and writing and supporting pupils' literacy attainment.

A recent evaluation of Power of Reading found that participating schools made an additional six months' progress in reading and writing and observed a narrowing of the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils (Doherty, 2019). However, although PoR was the core intervention within the trial, there were some other supports provided. There is therefore a need for a robust evaluation of PoR, which will be able to tell us more about its potential impact on pupils' reading and writing.

The programme

Power of Reading is designed to support teachers to understand the underlying interconnection between language, reading and writing. Through the training and resources, primary schools are supported to develop a high-quality and cohesive English curriculum using the best-quality children's literature to develop oracy, reading fluency, comprehension, writing stamina and composition, from EYFS to Year 6. The PoR programme involves:

- The class teacher attending **four training days** spread over the year (November 2026 to June 2027). [Please note that schools in the intervention group can send a maximum of two Year 5 teachers, but one must be the teacher of the selected intervention class].
- **School leaders** joining the **first and last day** of the programmes.
- Provision of **pedagogical strategies, teaching materials and guidance** to enable your school to adopt a text-centred, creative approach to literacy.
- Training which covers the **full breadth of the literacy curriculum**, demonstrating how to use poetry, picture books, non-fiction, storytelling and drama to deepen pupils' understanding and enjoyment of reading and writing.

- Provision of a pack of **12 high-quality children’s books** appropriate to the year group plus a second pack of **three books to support teachers’** subject knowledge.
- Your school will also be given access to **an online suite of teaching units and resources** to support teachers to use the books in their classrooms including **detailed teaching plans** and examples of **curriculum maps**.
- The opportunity to hear from **two published authors** to help them develop their understanding of authentic creative processes.
- Teachers are expected to use Power of Reading teaching strategies and resources in their literacy teaching throughout the year. **It is envisaged that PoR will replace their usual literacy lessons** (e.g. for an hour a day throughout the year).
- The PoR training will provide **gap tasks** between the training days to support teachers to embed the PoR approach into their teaching.

While PoR is designed to be a programme that can be implemented across the school, within this evaluation it will be **implemented only in selected Year 5 classes** (see below for details of the evaluation design).

The Project Team

- The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is funding this project.
- The CLPE delivery team are responsible for the overall delivery of Power of Reading.
- The independent evaluation of PoR will be conducted by Manchester Met University. The evaluation team will oversee data collection and will produce the evaluation report.
- Data collection will be supported by data collection teams from the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) Education and AlphaPlus.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for inclusion in the evaluation, schools must meet all the following criteria:

Eligibility criteria
Your school is a state-maintained primary, junior, middle or all-through school in England.
Your school is not already involved in an EEF funded trial targeting pupils and teachers in Year 5 (in 2026/27).
Your school does not stream classes for literacy instruction in Year 5.
Your school is able to confirm that the Year 5 teachers in the upcoming academic year have not participated in Power of Reading or Power of Pictures training within the last five years.
Your school is able to provide necessary IT connectivity to enable students to participate in online questionnaires.
Your school is able to release the Year 5 teacher from the intervention class (randomly selected in schools with multi-form entry to all four days of training (spread over the year).
Control schools will not be permitted to use PoR resources within Year 5 for the duration of the trial

In addition, we prefer that schools not participate in any other EEF trial in 2026/27 as this may affect their ability to engage with this project. If you are participating in another EEF trial and are interested in this project, please let us know which trial this is by contacting Jonny Rodgers at por@clpe.org.uk. You may be added to a recruitment waitlist.

Schools are also given preference for inclusion in the trial where they **do not have mixed age group classes for literacy instruction**. If schools that do have mixed age group classes remained interested in participating, they may be added to a recruitment waitlist.

Schools are able to send a maximum of two Year 5 teachers to the PoR training, but one must be the teacher of the selected intervention class. In multi-form entry schools only one class will be involved in the evaluation (but other classes will still be permitted to use PoR).

What will happen if my school takes part?

- Half of the participating schools will be randomly allocated to use the Power of Reading intervention. These are the 'intervention' schools.
- The other half will not take part in Power of Reading. These are the 'control' schools.
- The evaluation will focus on one Year 5 class per school. In multi-form entry schools the Year 5 class will be randomly selected by the evaluation team.

Intervention schools

- Participating Year 5 teachers will attend four training sessions between November 2026 and June 2027.
- Teachers in selected intervention Year 5 classes will teach PoR lessons from November 2026 to June 2027 using the books and online resources provided.
- These teachers will engage in the gap tasks set on each training day to support them in embedding the PoR approach into their literacy lessons.
- On the final day of the training, participating teachers present a case study where they show how they have embedded an aspect of their learning into their school practice.
- A small subset of intervention schools (six) will be invited to be a case study for the evaluation. The Manchester Met team will make two visits to each of the case study schools (Jan/Feb 2027 and Mar/Apr 2027). They will interview the headteacher, Year 5 teacher and pupils. They will also observe a PoR lesson.

Control schools

- Teachers in control schools will not receive any training or have access to the associated resources and will instead teach reading and writing as “business as usual”.

Intervention and control schools

- CLPE will ask all schools to provide a list of current Year 4 classes and the names the classes are likely to be known by in Year 5 (February to July 2026).
- In multi-form entry schools one Year 5 class will be randomly selected by Manchester Met to participate in the evaluation.
- FFT Education will collect pupil data (e.g. pupil name, date of birth etc), from each participating Year 5 class per school (Feb to July 2026).
- Teachers in participating Year 5 classes will administer a short writing assessment (Writing Assessment Measure, WAM) and an online Experiences of Reading and Writing (ERW) questionnaire (from September 2026) to pupils. This will be overseen by AlphaPlus, the Data Collection team supporting Manchester Met with the evaluation.
- School staff will be asked to complete a short online survey (headteachers and Year 5 teachers, September 2026) about their reasons for wanting to take part in the evaluation, current literacy teaching in Year 5, and subject/pedagogical knowledge (Year 5 teachers only).
- By the end of the autumn term (October 2026), schools will be randomly allocated to the intervention or control groups and informed by CLPE.
- In June and July 27 endline assessments with all students in the selected Year 5 classes will be carried out in both intervention and control schools. These assessments will be administered by teachers, and overseen by AlphaPlus:
 - one short writing task (20 minutes) and one longer writing tasks (35 minutes plus 10 minutes for planning), adapted from pre-2013 KS2 SATs writing tasks.
 - pupils will retake the online Experiences of Reading and Writing Questionnaire.
- Key Stage 2 scaled scores for reading will be accessed within the National Pupil Database by an accredited researcher at MMU once they become available for the target pupils, potentially by the end of 2028. Spelling, punctuation and grammar scores may also be accessed, as the programme involves teaching grammar in the context of reading and writing.

The delivery team will provide all necessary information, withdrawal and consent forms for headteachers, teachers, parents, and pupils. All schools (control and intervention) will receive a summary of the project findings when the final project report is published.

When will my school know if we are delivering the intervention?

- Schools will be informed whether they are part of the evaluation by September 2026. **Schools will then be informed whether they are an intervention or control school in October 2026.**

Project Timeline

Version: 1.0

Date: 24.11.25

Ethical approval number (EthOS): 75634

Activities	Date
All schools	
Schools offer Year 5 parents the opportunity to withdraw their child from data collection and inform pupils about the evaluation	February 2026 – July 2026
FFT Education collect pupil data from one Year 5 class per school (randomly selected in the case of multi-form entry schools)	February 2026 – July 2026
Year 5 pupils complete the WAM writing assessment and online Experiences of Reading and Writing (ERW) questionnaire	September 2026
Headteacher baseline survey	September 2026
Schools notified of allocation to intervention or control group	October 2026
Intervention schools only	
Teachers from intervention schools attend four training sessions held by CLPE	November 2026 – June 2027
Teacher of selected Year 5 class delivers Power of Reading intervention	November 2026 – May 2027
First case study visit to 6 case study schools: Power of Reading observation, interviews with headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants (if applicable), around 6 pupils	Jan-Feb 2027
Second case study visit to 6 case study schools: Power of Reading observation, interviews with headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants (if applicable), around 6 pupils	Apr-May 2027
All schools	
Teacher baseline surveys	September 2026
All pupils in the participating Year 5 class complete two writing assessments, and retake the Experiences of Reading and Writing (ERW) questionnaire	June/July 2027
Headteacher and teacher end of project surveys	June 2027
Publication of main evaluation report	Nov-Dec 2027
Additional analysis using KS2 data from the National Pupil Database	Jan – Feb 2029
Publication of additional findings	Mar-Apr 2029

Costs

Please read this section carefully. The EEF is funding this project. This includes meeting the full costs of providing the materials to support delivery of the Power of Reading intervention across the whole of Year 5. **Intervention schools are asked to contribute £300 per school plus VAT** towards the costs of the training and access to the platform and are expected to cover the costs of teacher time during training and when delivering the intervention.

Control schools will receive a payment of £500 per school if all required pupil data are provided and if the school facilitate administration of the required evaluation assessments (writing tasks and online questionnaires at the beginning and end of the evaluation). They will also benefit from a 20% discount off PoR membership and/or training at the end of the evaluation.

Why should my school take part?

There aren't many popular programmes within the writing sector, but PoR is by far one of the most well-known, having delivered to over 5,500 settings over 20 years. As mentioned above, a recent evaluation of Power of Reading (Doherty, 2019) found that participating schools made an additional six months' progress in reading and writing. These schools also observed additional gains for disadvantaged pupils and narrowing of the attainment gap for boys versus girls. A similar programme developed by CLPE, Power of Pictures (PoP), which adopts the same pedagogical principles has been shown to improve children's progress and confidence in writing in a recent EEF trial (Anders et al., 2021). The design of both PoR and PoP align with the EEF's Evidence Review on writing (Slavin et al., 2019), which found support for programmes which:

- Explicitly model the processes involved in writing across a range of genres (e.g. Torgerson et al., 2018)
- Introduce writing conventions within the context of creative writing (e.g. Kim et al, 2011)
- Make strong links between reading and writing (e.g. Olsen et al., 2017)
- Involve in-depth training for teachers which allows them to develop a strong understanding of the writing process themselves (e.g. Kim et al., 2011).

Each of these features is embedded within PoR. As well as benefiting from training in an evidence-informed approach to the teaching of reading and writing, **if assigned to the intervention group**, Year 5 pupils and teachers will also benefit from:

- A pack of **12 high-quality children's books** appropriate to the year group of the participating teacher.
- A **second book pack of three titles** is also provided to support teachers to develop their subject knowledge in the effective teaching of literacy.
- Access to an **online suite of teaching units and resources** to support teachers to use the books in their classrooms.

If assigned to the control group, schools will receive **£500** (on completion of the trial – please see the cost section for more details).

Control and intervention schools will be kept informed of the results and will be involved in building the evidence-base for a potentially low cost but impactful intervention.

Ethical considerations

This research project has been independently reviewed by the Health and Education Research Ethics and Governance Committee at Manchester Metropolitan University. All individuals taking part will be

fully informed and debriefed. Parents will have the right to withdraw their child's data from the research project or ask to have any identifiable information about them deleted at any time up until **30th September 2027**. Requests to withdraw after this point may not be possible but will always be considered. Any researchers with direct contact with pupils will have recently passed Disclosure and Barring Service Checks.

Your school can withdraw from the evaluation at any time, without giving a reason. You can ask us to delete your school's data at any time, but it might not always be possible. If you ask us to delete your school level data before **31st August 2027**, we will make sure this is done. If you ask us to delete your school's data after this point, we might not be able to. Anonymised staff survey responses may already have been included in the analysis if withdrawal is requested after 31st October 2026 (baseline survey) or 31st July 2027 (endline survey). Requests to withdraw or delete information after these dates may not be possible but will always be considered.

Personal data will be used throughout the duration of the project, including the analysis and main reporting phase which is estimated to end in December 2027. The researchers will anonymise interview, questionnaire and field note data at the end of the project to be archived and will destroy all personal data about school staff they hold by July 31st 2029. Anonymised data will be held indefinitely for future research.

Contact details

For queries about the Power of Reading intervention contact Jonny Rodgers at: por@clpe.org.uk.

For questions about the evaluation please contact Dr Steph Ainsworth, at Manchester Metropolitan University, via email: s.ainsworth@mmu.ac.uk, or telephone: 0161 247 2344.

[Follow this link to register](#) your interest in participating in the Power of Reading project.