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Institute for Employment Studies

Closing the Vocabulary Gap

Project evaluation report

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July 2023

Report 598

Institute for Employment Studies

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Acknowledgements

The report authors would like to thank all the teachers who gave up their time to participate in this evaluation, as well as the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education and The Sutton Trust for their help and support in facilitating this work. The authors would also like to thank other members of the IES research and support team who contributed towards this project including Georgie Akehurst, Alexandra Nancarrow and Zoe Gallagher.

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1 Summary

Closing the Vocabulary Gap is a programme designed by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) to improve early reading and writing in pre-school children.

The project has the overarching aim of **improving young children's vocabulary** in early years settings and **reducing the attainment gap** between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. It seeks to achieve this by delivering **a sustained CPD programme to early years teachers**, enhancing teachers' subject and pedagogic knowledge of how texts can support the development of literacy and language. A key element of the project is a **book gifting programme** where children receive books into their homes and the same books are delivered to their schools.

This three-year project began in April 2020 and finished at the end of the 2022/23 academic year. It was co-delivered by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and funded by The Mercers' Company Early Years Special Initiative. The project was delivered to 30 schools in three London boroughs reaching 88 teachers and 1,200 pupils. The schools were selected because they all had high indicators of social deprivation.

This report presents the findings from a joint evaluation by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and the Sutton Trust of the Closing the Vocabulary Gap (CVG) project. This evaluation report covers the first two years of delivery up to the end of the 2021/22 academic year.

The research methods for this study included two components: in-depth qualitative interviews with teachers participating in the project and the collection and analysis of pupil outcome data. Both research methods spanned the first two years of CVG project delivery in the academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The Theory of Change (ToC) for the CVG project outlined that a well-designed CPD programme that supported teachers to adopt creative pedagogical approaches and provided ideas for helping pupils to develop reading habits, combined with access to high-quality books at home and school, would ultimately support children's engagement in reading and enhance their vocabulary. Over time, this would help improve attainment in literacy among children in participating schools and reduce the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Projected **short-term outcomes** were centred around improving teachers' confidence in teaching literacy, language and communication; their subject and pedagogic knowledge; and supporting them to make more frequent use of high-quality texts and teaching materials in the classroom.

The project was also anticipated to increase the number of conversations that teachers have with children and their parents/carers about books and learning, and to enable knowledge sharing around evidence-based approaches to literacy teaching within participating schools, leading to new literacy, language and communication practices being embedded across the whole institution.

In the **long-term** it was anticipated that these changes would help improve attainment in literacy among children in participating schools and reduce the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

1.1 Summary of evaluation conclusions

The evidence collected as part of this evaluation showed that the **short-term outcomes** anticipated by the Closing the Vocabulary Gap project were broadly achieved.

1. **Overall the teachers interviewed felt that the project had introduced greater variety into their teaching practice** and made them consider how their current teaching approaches could be enriched further.
2. **Teachers were using new pedagogical approaches** to build children's engagement, excitement, and immersion in the quality texts they had been given by CLPE.
3. **Teachers were more confident in their teaching of literacy, language, and communication** as they had more tools at their disposal and could see that these worked. One common area where teachers had grown in confidence was in the teaching of poetry.
4. **Teachers were able to make more frequent use of the CLPE texts and resources in the classroom over the course of this project**. However, in some cases this was moderated by the teaching approach stipulated by the school's senior leadership team, which created other competing priorities.
5. There was evidence that teachers were working to enhance the reading environments within their classrooms and were creating more reading opportunities in the school day as a result of the project. This helped to **increase the number of conversations children had with teachers about books**.
6. The **book gifting element** was also seen to support these conversations. Teachers noted that there was shared excitement whenever they or the children chose to read an Imagination Library book that they had recently been gifted.
7. Several teachers commented that **children in their class were now showing more excitement and engagement around books** than they had at the start of the academic year. This was evidenced by **children talking about books and**

their illustrations more; spending time looking through books independently; as well as teachers observing children retelling stories to their peers and families.

8. In terms of **improving levels of communication between parents/carers and teachers about reading**, some teachers noted that they had been encouraging quality reading time at home since the book gifting scheme started.
9. **Knowledge sharing within schools** on evidence-based approaches to teaching literacy was also evident in some schools by year two of the project.
10. A final short-term outcome anticipated by the theory of change was that the project **would introduce and embed new literacy, language and communication practices across the whole school**. This was partly evident by year two of the project within a school federation, which included eight schools participating in the project.

The long-term outcomes anticipated by the project over the course of its delivery were to improve attainment in literacy among children in participating schools through improved EYFS profile and end of Year 1 phonics scores, and to reduce the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

The analysis of pupil outcomes completed as part of this project provided some partial evidence of improvements in attainment in literacy among participating schools.

The results from the data analysis showed that pupils in Cohort 2 had lower EYFS scores than the wider local population. This could be reflective of the criteria used to select schools for inclusion within the project, which focused on those settings with the greatest need.

However, within participating schools, **the proportion of pupils at the expected level across all 10 ELGs was higher for Cohort 2 than Cohort 1.** This may have been due to changes to teaching practice that were gradually embedding as part of the project. Other possible explanations could be that the pandemic had more of a disruptive effect on the EYFS scores of Cohort 1 during the 2020/21 academic year. It should be noted however that the EYFS profile changed between these year groups, so any direct comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

In terms of reducing the attainment gap, encouragingly**, the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers was smaller in project schools compared to all pupils within the local area**. In addition, **the Year 1 phonics screening check results were higher for participating schools within Tower Hamlets and Hackney compared to the local population**. Again, despite having more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, participating schools in these areas had smaller achievement gaps compared to the wider area.

This emerging evidence of promise that the project may have particular benefits for disadvantaged pupils in some local areas, suggests that **there is value in**

continuing the targeted recruitment of schools based on indicators of disadvantage for the CVG project.

The findings from the evaluation of the CVG project provide some **points of learning for the wider early years sector, in the delivery of literacy interventions.**

The unique combination of elements delivered as part of the CVG project has been successful in creating a positive reading culture within participating schools. This included sustained CPD training introducing new pedagogical approaches to several teachers within a single school, the provision of high-quality texts and supporting resources, as well as book gifting to children by the Imagination Library. Together, these elements helped to provide teachers with a flexible framework for considering how they could enhance pupils' engagement and enjoyment of books throughout their teaching practice. The selection of texts provided to teachers and the Imagination Library books gifted to children were key supportive elements of this process. The project was seemingly successful in supporting children's continued engagement with books at home as well as in the classroom. **These wide-ranging benefits indicate there should be continued funding and delivery of the CVG and similar projects.**

The findings from the evaluation also point to the effectiveness of a sustained programme of CPD, which trains multiple teachers within a single school over three years. This approach creates valuable peer support that enhances delivery and outcomes and allows sufficient time for new knowledge and practices to be embedded. **Similar future CPD programmes should take this approach, with funders offering multi-year grants to facilitate this, as The Mercers' Company Early Years Special Initiative did in this instance.**

To enhance delivery, the evaluation also highlighted the importance of buy-in from school senior leadership teams for the CVG project. To make full use of CLPE's texts and resources, it was critical that teachers did not have too many competing priorities in terms of the literacy curriculum and had the opportunity to integrate these materials into their planning for the year. **In future projects of this nature, senior leadership teams should support teachers to make full use of available provision to strengthen delivery and enhance outcomes.**

Based on the feedback from teachers, **the delivery of the CVG project could also be strengthened in future with extra funding to purchase additional resources for participating schools.** This would include the provision of Imagination Library books for nursery age children as well as additional copies of CLPE's selected Power of Reading (PoR) texts for participating schools. These additional resources would help create more reading opportunities for pupils and enhance delivery for teachers receiving the training across different year groups.

2 Introduction

This report presents the findings from a joint evaluation by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and the Sutton Trust of the Closing the Vocabulary Gap (CVG) project. The project had the overarching aim of improving young children's vocabulary in early years settings and reducing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. It sought to achieve this by delivering a sustained CPD programme to early years teachers across selected schools. The programme was designed to enhance teachers' subject and pedagogic knowledge of how texts can support the development of literacy and language. A book gifting programme also ran alongside this training, giving children access to books in their home.

This three-year project, which began in April 2020 and will finish at the end of the 2022/23 academic year, is being co-delivered by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. This evaluation report covers the first two years of delivery up to the end of the 2021/22 academic year.

Grant funding for both the project and the evaluation came from The Mercers' Company Early Years Special Initiative, which supports projects aiming to improve numeracy, literacy and language skills in the early years of a child's development (2-5 years old).[1]

2.1 Background

In developing the Closing the Vocabulary Gap project, CLPE highlighted the importance of vocabulary development in ensuring children's future literacy success, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are less likely to have an extensive vocabulary. Research evidence has shown that a child's vocabulary development and language comprehension can be supported in the early years by helping them to build the foundations needed to develop as readers and read for pleasure, for example, through storytelling and shared reading activities (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

A child's experience at home and in education has a significant influence on their communication, language, and literacy capabilities in the early years. The level and quality of parental involvement, for instance, had been shown to improve outcomes for children in these areas (EEF, 2023). In education, meanwhile, the presence of

[1] https://www.mercers.co.uk/philanthropy/young-people-and-education

qualified teachers, with early years specific subject knowledge, has been associated with effective pedagogical practice and greater developmental progress among children (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). More generally, a well-designed CPD programme can also have a positive influence on pupil outcomes, providing it supports teachers to develop both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, is curriculum aligned, of substantial duration, and actively involves teachers in learning and reflection (Cordingley et al., 2015).

CLPE and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library drew on this evidence base in designing the Closing the Vocabulary Gap project, to ensure all these elements were present. The intervention they designed, together with their approach to delivery, is detailed below.

2.2 The intervention

At the beginning of the Closing the Vocabulary Gap project, the evaluation team met with CLPE to develop a Theory of Change for the intervention. A Theory of Change is a comprehensive description of how and why a desired change is expected to happen within a particular context. The Theory of Change for this project is presented below.

In terms of the delivery model, the project is being delivered over a three-year period to 30 primary schools in three London boroughs: Camden, Hackney and Tower Hamlets. Schools were selected based on indicators of pupil disadvantage (i.e. where 50% of pupils were in receipt of the Pupil Premium); as well as levels of need in terms of their speech, language and communication skills (i.e. more than 20% of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL); more than 12.6% of pupils have a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)).

In yearly cycles, the project offers four days of CPD to one EYFS teacher in each school (starting with a Reception teacher). The training is based on CLPE's long running Power of Reading (PoR) professional development programme.[2] For this project, its aims were to support EYFS teachers to consider how they can use high-quality texts and creative pedagogical approaches to support Reception pupils' engagement in reading, as well as their language and literacy development. The main themes of each session were: identifying a high-quality text; poetry and storytelling; roleplay and drama and non-fiction texts; and a final evaluation and action planning session. The training was initially intended to be delivered face-to-face at CLPE's Literacy Library in Central London. It was designed to take place over a period of 12 months with gap tasks for teachers to complete in-between sessions.

[2] https://clpe.org.uk/books/power-of-reading/about

To support this approach, teachers were provided with a series of age-appropriate, high-quality texts to use in the classroom, all of which were selected by CLPE for their Power of Reading programme.[3] Accompanying each book is a teaching sequence, which aims to provide teachers with ideas for how they can work through the text with their class and structure their literacy curriculum.[4]

These ideas are linked to relevant areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework. The sequences also provide teachers with suggestions for how they can link the text to wider curricular areas, as well as their continuous provision.

Alongside the training, Reception pupils within each participating school were gifted a series of 16 books, on a yearly basis, by Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for their own personal collection. These were intended to support continued engagement in reading in the child's home environment and ensure age-appropriate books were available within their reach.

[3] https://clpe.org.uk/books/power-of-reading

[4] https://clpe.org.uk/teaching-resources/power-of-reading-teaching-sequences

RATIONALE / NEED FOR INTERVENTION

Evidence that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have an extensive vocabulary and that vocabulary development is critical for future literacy success.

There is a need for qualified staff in EY with EY-specific subject knowledge.

Schools do not have a consistent approach to literacy between year groups, and there is a lack of focus on early years

Assumptions: Children can progress through single institution (from Nursery to Reception); Project will take 3 years to achieve impact

Long term impacts

Improved attainment in literacy among children in participating schools measured by improved EYFS profile scores, end of Y1 phonics scores and end of KS1 scores

Reduction in the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers

Theory of change

Well-designed CPD programmes can have a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

CPD combined with access to high quality books at home and school offers added benefits and helps to 'level the playing field'

High quality texts and creative approaches in the classroom (alongside a phonics approach) are key for literacy development.

Evidenced that developing habits around reading for pleasure in the early years helps develop vocabulary and improve comprehension

Inputs

Mercers funding

1 year subscription to Dollywood for reception class in participating schools

1 year subscription to CLPE website and Power of Reading (PoR) resources for participating schools

Administrative support from CLPE

Target Group

30 schools in Camden, Hackney and Tower Hamlets: 50% of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium, >20% speak English as an additional language, >12.6% SEND.

Repeated every year, for 3 years

Activities

Partnership working between CLPE and Dollywood (twice yearly meetings and Dollywood attend 2 training days)

30 EYFS teachers from 30 schools take part in 4 day CPD programme + gap tasks over 12 months: identifying a high-quality text; poetry and storytelling; roleplay and drama and non-fiction texts; evaluation and action planning session.

Monthly book-gifting for families for one class from Imagination Library

Teachers receive: 16 books for classroom from Imagination Library; PoR texts, teacher readers and access to members website from CLPE for the whole school which will also be used by Y1 and Y2 teachers with cohort 1 and 2 of pupils.

At least 1 meeting every term with project leads to discuss project administration

Targeted follow-up visits/support by CLPE where appropriate including identifying best practice schools

Outputs

30 teachers per year complete programme (90 in total)

90 teachers in participating schools plan an early years language and literacy curriculum

750 children and their families per year participate in the book-gifting programme (2250 in total).

Short term outcomes/ Mediators

Teachers have improved subject and pedagogic knowledge, including improved understanding of how high quality texts can support literacy and language

Teachers are more confident in their teaching of literacy, language and communication

Teachers make more frequent and creative use of high quality texts and teaching materials in classroom

Increase in conversations about books and learning between **teachers and children**: **children** expect to talk about books at school and have higher levels of engagement with texts

Improved communication between **parents/carers** and **teachers** about reading

Improved evidence base around excellence in literacy teaching with extensive knowledge-sharing and dissemination within participating **schools**

New literacy, language and communication practices embedded across the whole **school** and sustained

Enabling factors / conditions for success

Internal: Knowledge/evidence from the existing CVG initiative informs this programme; Strong leadership and project management from within CLPE; Strong partnership working between Dollywood and CLPE; Capacity to deliver CPD sessions remotely if necessary; CLPE using most experienced early years trainers to deliver CPD sessions; Availability of texts for schools; Gap task fits into existing practice

External: Good attendance at CPD sessions; Senior leadership buy-in and engagement with project within school including a good relationship with the project lead and; Experienced teacher leading project; MoU and cash incentive for schools to meet requirements of project; 3 year period mitigates effects of any staff turnover; Schools remain open, avoiding the risk that children's literacy progression is impeded by school closures

2.3 Adaptations to the delivery model over the Covid-19 pandemic

The delivery of the project started in the 2020/21 academic year. This coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic and associated public health measures. Under these conditions, CLPE delivered the CPD programme to the first cohort of teachers entirely online. The one-day training sessions were split into half-days to support attention and engagement.

In the second year of delivery (2021/22), the second training session was delivered online as two half-day sessions during January 2022 when Covid-19 cases were rising. All the other training sessions for this second cohort, however, were delivered as intended: face-to-face as a one-day session at CLPE's Literacy Library.

Despite these changes and the disruptive effect of the pandemic on educational settings, the vast majority of participating schools and teachers remained engaged with the project throughout this period, with a high level of attendance at all the training sessions.

2.4 Methods

The research methods for this study included two components: in-depth qualitative interviews with teachers participating in the project, and the collection and analysis of pupil outcome data. Both research methods spanned the first two years of CVG project delivery in the academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22.

2.4.1 Teacher interviews

In-depth qualitative interviews with teachers involved in the CVG project were completed over the first two years of delivery. Several schools were sampled for inclusion in the interviews based on their geographic location, with an aim of getting a spread across the three London boroughs where delivery was taking place.

- For Cohort 1, interviews were completed with 10 Reception teachers and three senior leaders from May-July 2021.
- For Cohort 2, interviews were completed with nine Reception teachers from April-June 2022.

Interviews were completed in the summer term to provide teachers with a chance to reflect on their training and delivery experiences over the course of the academic year. The interviews provided teachers with an opportunity to provide their views and feedback on:

- the structure, content and delivery of the CLPE training session
- the Power of Reading resources and teaching sequences;

- any changes in practice they made as a result of the project;
- the perceived impacts of these changes on pupil's enjoyment and engagement in reading, and their language and literacy development; and
- how the delivery of the project could be improved (if at all).

A thematic analysis of the interview findings was completed to identify the salient themes and issues put forward on each of these topics.

2.4.2 Pupil outcome data

In terms of the pupil outcome data, teachers receiving the training were asked to submit data on their Reception class to gain an insight into their literacy and language development. This was done for two cohorts:

- Cohort 1 - the Reception classes that entered the programme in the 2020/21 academic year;
- Cohort 2 - the Reception classes that entered the programme in the 2021/22 academic year.

The main measures used to assess the potential influence of the programme were the early years foundation stage (EYFS) profile results.[5] The EYFS profile results are national teacher assessments of children's development at the end of the academic year in which they turn 5. This is typically the summer term of Reception year. It consists of a series of early learning goals (ELGs) across seven areas of learning. Since September 2021, children are assessed by whether they have achieved these 17 ELGs and are at the 'expected' level of development in each area. Where they do not meet the expected level, this is characterised as 'emerging'.

For this study, the areas of learning that were relevant to the CVG project and where the evaluation and delivery team expected to see progress were:

- communication and language;
- literacy;
- personal social and emotional development; and
- physical development.[6]

[5] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results

[6] Physical development was included in the list of ELGs considered for this study, as variations in this measure might explain some of the observed differences in children's outcomes, if this is taken as a proxy for socio-economic status. Personal social and emotional development was included as this is an expected outcome of children engaging with texts, imagining themselves in a story and developing empathy for characters.

For both cohorts, the EYFS profile data was collected at the beginning and end of their Reception year. For Cohort 1, schools were also asked to collect the end of Year 1 results from the phonics screening test for the same group of pupils.[7] The phonics screening check is a national assessment to see how well children can decode certain words. During the assessment they are asked to sound out an unfamiliar written word. This requires the children to be able to recognise letters and the sounds they represent. This is a necessary component of a child's reading development and so was deemed an appropriate measure to use in this current study to assess the impact of the CVG project over the long-term.

Both the EYFS profile scores and Year 1 phonics screening results were compared to national and local averages, where possible, to see if the CVG project had a potential influence on pupil outcomes across these measures. Data on pupil characteristics was also collected as part of this project (i.e. gender, ethnicity, free school meal (FSM) eligibility, whether the child has a Special Educational Need and whether English is their first language). This information was used to assess the potential impact of the CVG project on reducing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. These types of demographic information are also published as part of the EYFS profile data and Year 1 phonics screening check, which allowed comparisons of attainment gaps in participating schools to national and local figures.

An analysis was also completed of pupil's EYFS profile scores at the beginning and end of their Reception year. This was completed to gain an insight into pupil progress over time, across both cohorts and between different groups of pupils. A similar analysis was completed using bespoke measures developed by CLPE for the purposes of this evaluation. These measures were again based on teacher assessments of pupils at the beginning and end of the Reception year and recorded:

- the frequency with which pupils read aloud either at home or at school;[8]
- pupils' attitudes towards reading (i.e. whether they were positive, negative or ambivalent);
- pupils' engagement with reading;[9] and
- pupils' engagement with rhyme and song (i.e. whether they do or don't engage with rhyme and song).

[7] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-1-and-phonics-screening-check-attainment

[8] The categories included: daily at both home and school; daily at school only; daily at home only; 2–3 times/week at both home and school; 2–3 times/week at school only; 2–3 times/week at home only; occasionally at home or school; none.

[9] The categories included: can and does read; can but doesn't; can't but tries; can't and doesn't.

2.5 Limitations

There are several limitations to this study that should be considered when interpreting the research findings:

- The evaluation does not include a matched comparison or a control group. As such, none of the observed outcomes can be attributed to the CVG project with any certainty. Rather, this evaluation outlines the *potential* impact of the project on pupil outcomes in participating schools. However, it should be noted that when this evaluation was designed, it did not expect to find any notable evidence of impact at the child level at such an early stage of delivery (i.e. by the end of the second year). Rather, the focus of the project was on supporting teacher practice development.
- The EYFS profile data for Cohort 1 is not directly comparable to any national data sources. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its disruption to educational settings, national EYFS profile data was not collected for 2020/21. In addition, the EYFS profile was changed in 2021, and so more recent data for 2021/22 is not directly comparable to previous years. Historical data comparisons for this cohort of pupils are not possible either. Given the unprecedented disruption this group of pupils faced to their education over this period, we would expect their profile results to be lower than in previous years.
- The evaluation does not have access to complete data from all participating schools. The Cohort 1 EYFS pupil outcome data reflects 29 out of 30 schools; the Cohort 2 EYFS pupil outcome data reflects 23 out of 30 schools; and the Cohort 1 Year 1 phonics data reflects 20 out of 30 schools. In addition, for Cohort 2, seven out of the 23 schools that returned EYFS profile data were for Nursery classes.[10] Comparisons with other Reception classes and national data was not possible in these cases, given the younger age of these pupils, so this data was excluded from the analysis. Longitudinal analysis of pupil progress from Reception to Year 1 for Cohort 1 was also not possible for two schools that submitted both sets of data, as they did not include the correct tracking information.
- In terms of the in-depth interviews with teachers, the views put forward are not representative of all teachers participating in the project. Participation in the interviews was entirely voluntary.

[10] In the second year of delivery, CLPE offered the CPD training to other early years teachers in participating schools. Nursery teachers typically took part in cases where there was only one Reception teacher in the school.

2.6 Report structure

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 3 presents a summary of feedback provided by participating teachers.
- Chapter 4 presents the findings from an analysis of pupil data provided by schools participating in the project.
- Chapter 5 presents a summary conclusion and key points of learning from the CVG project.

3 Feedback from teachers

The following chapter presents a summary of feedback provided by teachers participating in the project. It covers their views on the CLPE training they received; their experiences of delivery; any changes in their teaching practice that occurred as a result of the project; and the outcomes observed among pupils that teachers attribute to these changes. It also puts forward teachers' suggestions for how the CVG project can be improved in future.

This qualitative information was collected through a series of in-depth interviews completed with teachers across both cohorts 1 and 2. The interviews took place in the second half of the academic year when teachers were engaged in delivering the project. Where findings differ noticeably between cohorts, this is highlighted in the text.

3.1 Views on training

Participating teachers were asked to provide feedback on their experiences of the training events facilitated by CLPE. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these training sessions were delivered online for Cohort 1, while Cohort 2 was able to attend face-to-face training sessions at CLPE's centre in central London (excluding one session in January 2022).

Overall, the teachers interviewed were positive about the structure and coverage of the training sessions. Interviewees felt that the balance between interactive and listening elements was good and provided them with space to share their own reflections and ideas. Some teachers from Cohort 2 stated that they were more comfortable interacting with others in-person than online, and the face-to-face training allowed them to feed off the excitement and enthusiasm of other teachers in the room.

For Cohort 1, due to the online nature of the training, this was more challenging to achieve. Interviewees from this cohort recognised that the interactive elements would have worked better in-person, and that this was CLPE's preferred delivery method, but appreciated it was not possible during the height of the pandemic.

Some of the interactive elements involved teachers working through the Power of Reading texts with the trainers, as if they were reading or acting out the stories with their class. Across both cohorts, teachers valued having the texts physically in front of them while they engaged in these exercises. Several teachers noted how this

approach gave them new ideas and strategies for working through the texts with their class, which they had seen applied and which they could put into practice almost immediately.

> *It's really great that the content links directly to the texts that they've given to us. We can have it in front of us while they're delivering it, and if it's not something we've already put into practice, we can do that the very next day.*

Other teachers provided more specific examples, with some noting how the training had prompted them to revisit a text they had previously used within Reception and consider how they could build pupils' engagement with the book further:

> *I have done Bedtime for Monsters and it's one of the most amazing books to do with Reception children. They always absolutely love it. I just reflected we could get even more out of this and maybe we're not allowing enough time to really build that anticipation up before we fully read it. [The training] allowed me to reflect on how we plan for those opportunities.*

Other approaches and ideas that teachers said they took away from the training and practical activities, included how to engage pupils in early years settings in poetry. Again, by practising the delivery of appropriate poetry texts suggested by CLPE, several teachers left feeling more confident in trialling these approaches with their class. Another common message that teachers absorbed from the training was the importance of creating an inviting reading environment in their class and that they were responsible for this. Some attendees reflected that it was valuable to be prompted to think about the layout of their reading corner and the texts available via this project, which emphasised the importance of this to children's enjoyment and engagement in reading, as often this could be low on their list of priorities as a teacher.

Teachers were also complimentary about the training notes and presentation slides they were provided with after each session. These were useful resources to go back to later as a refresher. The timing between training sessions was another positive feature of the training from a practical perspective. Interviewees noted that a break of several weeks gave them sufficient time to put their new ideas into practice and reflect on how this was working for their class.

In terms of the approach of the trainers, teachers across both cohorts commented that they were knowledgeable about the subject matter and their passion for the topic of early years literacy clearly came through. This gave teachers confidence in the experience, training and expertise of the trainers, and left them feeling inspired. In a similar vein, interviewees were positive about the tailoring of the training to Reception teaching. Some teachers remarked that in primary settings, CPD that is focused specifically on the practice of Reception teachers is rare. Here as well, interviewees valued that CLPE trainers were able to draw on their own experience of teaching in Reception, to inform the training and provide real examples. For the

teachers concerned, this made the training feel very bespoke and relevant to their current practice.

The only common criticism of the training made by interviewees was that occasionally a lot of content was covered in a short space of time, which could make it challenging to digest. Among Cohort 1, this was particularly notable during the half-day online sessions where there was more time pressure. However, these half-day online sessions were adaptions to delivery made during the Covid-19 pandemic and were not part of CLPE's original delivery plan (which was to deliver one-day training sessions in person at their centre).

3.2 Experiences of delivery

Prior familiarity with resources

Teachers' experiences of delivery differed between cohorts. For Cohort 1, the ability of teachers to incorporate the Power of Reading texts and teaching sequences into their curriculum planning varied depending on their level of familiarity with these resources. For example, a small number of teachers had prior experience of engaging with the PoR resources. This was often facilitated by a colleague who had attended the PoR training and obtained access to these materials in a previous year. This group described working through a high number of PoR texts (around 6–9) and teaching sequences over the course of the academic year. As well as being able to make an earlier start with delivery in the autumn term, they were already working within a school environment where the use of these texts was supported. As a result, interviewees highlighted that they had already started integrating these texts into their curriculum prior to the beginning of this project.

As the delivery of the training started part way through the autumn term, some teachers who were previously unfamiliar with PoR resources were waiting until the Spring term to start incorporating PoR texts into their teaching. As the project and CLPE approaches were new for these schools, this had not been factored into their curriculum planning for the academic year 2020/21. However, the partial closure of educational settings in January and February 2021, as part of the third UK national lockdown, disrupted these plans and resulted in teachers delivering fewer texts and sequences over the course of the year than they had originally hoped.

Embedding CLPE approaches and resources into school practices

Part of the differentiation in delivery (that was evident from the interviews with teachers) was an intentional part of the project design. As set out in the Theory of Change, it was expected that the new practices and approaches adopted by participating teachers would be disseminated more widely throughout their school and become embedded over time. This would be supported by other teachers in the school attending the CLPE training in subsequent years of the project.

The interview findings provided evidence for this. Teachers from Cohort 2 spoke of having discussions with Reception teachers from Cohort 1 about their experiences of delivery, the texts they covered, and what activities worked well. In some schools, this went further. Eight schools participating in the project formed part of a school federation in Hackney. The federation had been looking at their overall approach to literacy development prior to this project and were considering how their curriculum and supporting core texts could be altered to better support learning outcomes. In year one of the project, teachers in these schools were encouraged to adapt their curriculum plan at the start of the academic year to incorporate PoR texts and ensure alignment with the different themes and topics they would cover.

By year two of the project, across these schools, the curriculum had been redesigned and a shared teaching plan put in place, which incorporated CLPE Power of Reading texts alongside lesson plans informed by CLPE's teaching sequences. These steps helped support a more in-depth and consistent incorporation of CLPE resources into teachers' everyday practice. Teachers in these schools were working through 2–3 Power of Reading texts every half term as a result of these changes.

Competing teaching and school priorities

The extent to which teachers were able to bring CLPE approaches and resources into their practice, was also affected by competing teaching priorities and the support of senior management for the initiative. This applied across both cohorts.

Some teachers commented that their school also expect them to cover other literacy programmes with their class, such as Talk for Writing. This can affect their text selection. One teacher commented that sometimes they need to use other core texts, outside of those provided by CLPE, which are easier to sequence to support this approach. The teacher felt that this was a point of tension within the school and their preference would be to make greater use of CLPE's recommended texts and resources to support the children's full immersion in these stories. In their view, this alternative approach would ultimately lead their class to produce richer pieces of writing. At the time of the interview, they felt that the competing approaches split the class's attention between two books, with the teacher only giving the Power of Reading texts half as much attention as they would like.

In other school contexts, the approach of senior management affected how many CLPE texts they were able to introduce to their practice. In year two of the project, one school was in the process of joining a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The teacher spoke of the challenges in balancing CLPE's recommended approaches with the MAT's way of doing things, where they expect Reception children to be writing every day. This was again seen to detract from the practice encouraged through the CLPE training, of slowly immersing pupils in a given text and building their engagement in the book and its characters through creative activities, before producing a writing

outcome. In the teacher's view, the MAT's approach made it more challenging to maintain the children's enthusiasm for writing when it became a daily activity.

> *If I had it my way, I would completely follow the CLPE programme because I can see it works. When children are slowing down to write and not just being forced to write every day. We want writing to be more purposeful and meaningful, and I feel like the CLPE way is the way forward.*

Other teachers faced similar challenges. For example, one teacher noted that their senior leadership had stipulated the core texts they would be using in the 2021/22 academic year. Only two of the CLPE PoR books featured in this list for Reception. The interviewee also commented that in their experience, it was challenging to convince senior leadership of the benefits of the CLPE approach, which requires teachers to slow their rate of progression through texts to build children's engagement, excitement and immersion in the book and the themes presented. For the teacher concerned, it is clearly an approach that works and is supported by evidence but may seem counter-intuitive to senior leadership.

3.2.1 Views on Power of Reading texts and teaching sequences

Views of Power of Reading texts

Commenting on the PoR texts they had received to support delivery, several teachers noted that they were very high-quality. Interviewees across both cohorts praised the cultural diversity of the texts and their relatability to pupils' own backgrounds and experiences. A few teachers spoke of how in the past they had to do their own research to identify suitable texts for their class, which were more culturally representative. This was done in a very ad hoc fashion, and so they appreciated receiving a complete set of CLPE selected texts that had been strategically selected for their diversity and representativeness. Teachers were also positive about the quality of the illustrations that featured in the PoR texts, and the vocabulary used, both of which were seen to engage and excite pupils.

Finally, the texts provided were seen to cover a wide range of themes and topics relevant to early years settings (even within a single text). This in turn allowed teachers to pursue a variety of different learning opportunities, which went beyond literacy development to support full text immersion and other learning goals. This intentional selection was seen to be beneficial in helping teachers to identify opportunities to incorporate these books into their curriculum for the year. Teachers were also complimentary about the nature of the themes covered and their natural fit with the early years curriculum and a child's transition points throughout Reception year. For example, several teachers in Cohort 2 had decided to work through *Hello, Friend!* at the start of the academic year given its focus on the theme of making new friends and how to go about it.

Views on teaching sequences

Overall, teachers' views on the PoR teaching sequences that accompany each text were very positive, once they had time to engage with and use these resources in the way that was intended. Initially, some teachers felt on first glance that the teaching sequences appeared to be quite long, with a few noting that they found the number of suggested activities around a given text overwhelming. However, this view changed after attending the training. This made clear that the sequences could be used flexibly, and teachers had complete discretion over which activities they delivered based on what they think would work best for their class.

Teachers responded well to this approach. Interviewees commented that they liked the flexibility and creative licence it offered in responding to their children's needs and what they were interested in. One teacher commented that once they understood how the teaching sequences were designed to be used, it was easier to identify what activities they should focus on and were important for them to deliver to their class. Other interviewees highlighted the value of the teaching sequences as planning and idea generating tools, given that the suggested activities make explicit links with other curriculum areas and aspects of a child's development.

Activities teachers took from the teaching sequences that they felt their class could benefit from included children discussing a book, illustration or its ideas with a talk partner to develop their speaking and listening skills. Activities that involved role play were also popular among teachers. This was seen to provide a fun and exciting way for children to embody different characters and immerse themselves in a particular world linked to a text, while also supporting their physical development.

Other teachers described the ideas presented in the teaching sequences as a means of enhancing what they already do. One teacher gave the example of the role on the wall activity. The teacher concerned already engaged in story mapping with their class. They saw the more frequent use of the role on the wall technique, as well as role playing characters in general, as an obvious way of encouraging pupils to further develop and flesh out characters in their mind before producing a story, resulting in a richer piece of writing.

3.3 Changes in teaching practice

Based on their experiences of delivery up until the time of the interview, interviewees were asked to identify changes in their teaching practice prompted by the project. Overall, interviewees felt that the project had introduced greater variety into their teaching practice and made them consider how their current approaches could be enriched further. This had supported them to deliver more fun, engaging and informative literacy lessons since becoming involved in the project, and supported the development of a more positive culture around books, reading and

sharing ideas in their class. The most frequently identified changes in practice discussed by teachers are presented below.

The slow reveal

Several teachers highlighted how the slow reveal was a new pedagogical approach they implemented as a result of the CVG project. They liked the idea of piquing their children's interest in a particular text or the ideas surrounding it before they have even opened the book. Examples included the children discovering a mysterious large footprint in class as a precursor to reading *Bedtime for Monsters*, and the class receiving a letter from an earthworm before covering the nature storybook *Yucky Worms.*

In using this approach, teachers also allowed the children more time than in their usual practice to spend with a story and get to know the characters, illustrations and plot in-depth before moving on to produce a piece of writing. Interviewees commented that their children are more immersed in the text and are excited by this approach, which ultimately results in better writing outcomes.

> *It's been really beneficial: I'm seeing teaching and storytelling in a different way. I would literally spend a day, maybe two days on a story. […] I spend a lot longer reading a story and teaching a topic now. The whole point is, you don't just read a story and brush it off, you can really explore something for about two weeks. […] You do not need to open the book straight away. There are other things you can find out and bring. Children want to explore, so why aren't we exploring as teachers as well? […] I'm now finding different ways of allowing children to access a text.*

One teacher provided a detailed example of how they implement this approach in practice. They explained that, when they introduce a new text to the class, they may start building their curiosity by showing a short video on a related topic and getting children to discuss what the book may be about. They will then present the front page of the book (with the title redacted) and ask the children questions about the illustration, such as who the characters might be, what they are thinking and feeling as well as what their relationships are with one another, all while modelling the language they would like their class to use. In the next lesson they always provide an opportunity for the children to use their creative skills and draw. They will work on describing the main character in the story and what they think and feel, drawing on a bank of words given to them by the teacher. The children start with singular words and build these up into sentences. The teacher will allow them to draw this character, so the activity is accessible for all children regardless of their level of literacy. The teacher will also build in physical activities related to the book's theme, such as role play or going on a monster hunt in the school garden. Again, this supports the full immersion of the children in the text and aids their physical development, while also providing opportunities to engage and excite children with additional needs in the themes around a book as well.

One teacher spoke about the positive impact that this extended process of spending time with a book to explore characters and themes has on a child's ability to engage in creative writing:

> *That true understanding of character. That true understanding of why something's happening. The feelings behind the characters. How they change throughout the story. I think when they've got such a good understanding of that, they can talk about it. And then that leads to more meaningful and detailed writing.*

Greater use of poetry

Another common change in teaching practice among interviewees was making greater use of poetry texts Teachers across both cohorts spoke of how prior to the training they were either unsure that children aged 4–5 years would be interested in engaging with poetry or lacked the confidence and skills to work through these texts in early years settings. However, the training session on poetry, rhyme and song provided interviewees with the opportunity to hear about how other teachers use poems to support transitions in class. They also had the opportunity to model how poems from the PoR texts can be acted out, to engage and excite children. This provided attendees with ideas and practical steps to embed poetry in their day-to-day activities and expressions with pupils.

The feedback from teachers indicated that their classes have responded well to these changes and have enjoyed reciting poems together on an almost daily basis. As well as the training, teachers attributed this to the choice of high-quality poetry texts provided as part of this project and their accessibility for young children; in particular, the Michael Rosen book, *A Great Big Cuddle.* Some teachers noted that children in their class with SEND have also been able to enjoy these activities and have engaged well with these texts, their repeating patterns and accompanying actions. In this way, they felt the choice of PoR poetry texts was inclusive for children with a range of different needs.

In terms of their literacy development, the teachers that had introduced more poems into their classroom - revisiting and repeating these during class transitions, for example - stated that they now saw the value of poems as tools for memorisation (e.g. learning consonant-vowel-consonant or more complex words).

> *It's stuck as a way of getting them ready for Year 1. These are the words we need to know, this is a way to learn them, this is a fun way to learn them, take it home, teach your parents, show them!*

Others felt that it supported pupils to model and recast the language they are hearing through repeated exposure.

Rethinking how learning outcomes are evidenced

A few interviewees noted that their involvement in the project had prompted them to reconsider how they evidence learning outcomes from literacy lessons. Many previously believed that every literacy lesson should result in pupils producing a piece of writing, which is recorded in a workbook. Some interviewees worked in schools where this practice was supported and encouraged. Their attendance at the training prompted them to reconsider this approach, and see the value of practical, creative activities in producing talking points and supporting language development.

Most often, interviewees highlighted the use of the role on the wall technique as a means of facilitating these outcomes. They felt this technique provides a means for pupils to develop their own characters or imaginary friends, supports persona talking and role play in class, and encourages them to make greater use of adjectives. It supports the exploration of more abstract parts of a character's identity and internal life, such as their hopes and dreams. As noted, this character development and exploration can then be used to support the development of a story map and later a piece of writing with more fully realised characters.

One teacher recounted their experience of coming to this realisation when working through the PoR text *Hello, Friend!* and supporting their class to develop their own imaginary friends using the role on the wall technique.

> *This is a literacy lesson, but actually the focus isn't on having to write. It's on having to create something and to invent something. The practicality of that was fab because it made me realise, I didn't have to actually evidence this as a piece of writing or a worksheet, we can just evidence this as a picture because children are creating and freely using their imaginations to create this friend and this is great for a talking point. We've got time to have a discussion now, we can have a bit of carpet talk and we can discuss and use adjectives, and now we can go a bit further and make a whole class mind map, which provides our points for writing and then we can bring it back [to a writing focus].*

Generating multiple learning opportunities from one text

Interviewees also spoke of how using the PoR resources in class had generated multiple learning opportunities and supported other aspects of a child's development beyond their literacy. Some of these other learning opportunities were planned and stemmed from the range of suggested activities contained within the teaching sequences, while others happened spontaneously with teachers responding to pupils' direction and where they wanted to take things.

As noted, the teaching sequences were viewed as useful planning tools given their layout and the clear links made between the suggested activities and other curriculum areas. Some teachers commented that in this way none of the content

feels standalone, there are always more ideas and themes to explore, so it never feels like there are any missed learning opportunities when it comes to working through these books in class.

The training and content of the teaching sequences also supported some teachers to change their approach to covering different themes and topics with their class over the course of the year. Prior to the project, interviewees noted that they would cover multiple story books with their class, related to a particular theme. Now they make a single text their main focus, with multiple learning opportunities and topics branching off from this. As well as the ideas presented in the teaching sequences, techniques such as the slow reveal were also facilitators to this new approach and enabled the teacher to spend more time with a single book.

> *It's the ideas and strategies to get children immersed in the story and where you might go with it. That's what's really useful about CLPE. You might do one thing and it's not lost in this one moment, you can continue it. […] In my previous practice, it was always up to me to think of these things. It's a lot to think about. Now I'm doing it so much more thoroughly. It's a much deeper cross-curricular understanding of a text. Before everything else could just kind of take over.*

Teachers also recalled more spontaneous diversions and learning opportunities that were created from presenting and discussion of the PoR texts with their class. For instance, while covering *Astro Girl*, one teacher commented that when they introduced this book to pupils by presenting a single page and asking them questions about the character, it sparked a whole discussion around gender identity and skin colour. The teacher noted that this was an unexpected but welcome diversion. Had they planned to cover this content in a PSHE lesson they would have selected a more standard, well-known text on equality and diversity issues, so it was refreshing to be able to approach these topics from a different angle.

Completing a classroom book audit

As part of the project, teachers were encouraged to complete an audit of the book corner in their classroom. They were prompted to reflect on how the reading corner is currently used, how they could make it a more inviting space, and to take stock of the quality and range of texts they have available to pupils. From the interviews it was clear that there were far more examples of teachers engaging in this activity as part of Cohort 2. This may reflect the greater amount of time they were able to spend in the classroom over the course of the academic year, compared to Cohort 1.

Some teachers commented that they were already looking to update their reading corner prior to the programme (e.g. as part of a school-wide initiative to develop an anti-racist curriculum) but noted that the CVG project prompted them to make this

more of a priority and gave them additional ideas for how their reading corner could be organised.

Several interviewees noted that following their book audit, they threw away books that were old and worn or that they did not feel were particularly exciting to read. They wanted to create the impression that books were something to be valued and treated with respect. Teachers also spoke about introducing a range of texts into the book corner to enhance their classes' engagement and interest in what was available (i.e. comics, magazines, newspapers and books without words). A few teachers noted that they had also made poetry, rhyme and song books available, which was a direct influence of the project, and these were resources they may not have had the confidence to introduce otherwise. Some were clear that, in introducing new texts into their book corners, they wanted to ensure that there was diverse character representation, reflecting different cultural perspectives, like the PoR texts they had been given.

Other changes that teachers made following this audit included labelling their book corner and organising the texts either by type or theme. This extended to teachers' book cupboards in some cases, where books were organised by the different themes they would cover throughout the year. Some teachers also decided to reduce the number of texts available in the book corner at any one time. One teacher commented that by reducing the selection of texts available to 10, and rotating these on a weekly basis, they had made the process of selecting a book easier and less overwhelming for their class.

Finally, teachers made changes to the physical layout of their book corner in order to make it a more inviting space for children to read. One teacher commented that prior to the project, their book corner was situated in the middle of the classroom and so could be easily disturbed by other children. They have since moved this small library to the corner of their classroom to create a quieter, calmer reading space for their class. Other teachers spoke about making ad-hoc, temporary changes to their book corner to increase engagement. For example, they hung a large sheet over the reading corner to make a den and provided their class with torches, telling them that they could only enter if they sat and read a book. In their view, these changes had been effective in encouraging more children in their class to read independently as well as with each other.

Exposing pupils to more texts

While a few teachers interviewed had worked through a small number of PoR texts alongside their accompanying teaching sequences, as part of literacy lessons, many noted that they had used most, if not all of these books as part of class story time. They reflected that the provision of these resources, the Imagination Library books and the messages coming through from the training, had encouraged them to create more reading opportunities in the school day. Examples included finishing

each day with a short story time session or introducing stories during school break times.

3.3.1 Views on Dolly Parton's Imagination Library book gifting and family engagement

Views on book gifting

The teachers interviewed were very positive about the book gifting element of the project supported by the Dollywood Imagination Library. Overall, interviewees felt the book gifting was a valuable scheme as it provides each child with their own personal collection of 12 high-quality books. Interviewees noted that the scheme was particularly beneficial for children from less advantaged backgrounds in their class, who do not have their own collection of books at home and are not being read to. Other teachers stated that the book gifting was valuable for the parents of children who are non-native English speakers, who may not have a good understanding of UK children's authors and appropriate English language texts to buy.

The excitement and interest that children felt around the books they had been gifted was mentioned by several teachers. They stated that pupils were visibly excited whenever they chose to read these during a carpet session, as they recognised the text and would always comment that they had the same book at home. Some teachers had a voting system or reading basket that pupils could place their own books in, which they used each day to select a book for story time. They noted that each time the children received a new book in the post, this text would be selected to be read aloud that week. A few felt that the fact that pupils received these texts in the post rather than through the school added to their excitement.

Teachers observed that based on pupils' reactions to these texts in class, the scheme had created a bonding experience for the children by providing them with shared access to a book they enjoy and know well. One teacher also felt the success of the scheme in getting children more interested in books was clear from the fact that at least five of the children they characterised as 'can't and don't read' at the beginning of the project, were bringing their books into school to be read during story time.

The only criticisms of the scheme were that it was not available for the nursery age children whose teachers were receiving the CVG training in year two. One teacher did note that their school had the option to purchase these resources for their class, but unfortunately this was not affordable within their school budget. The teacher felt this was a downside in the design of the project, as they had heard about the positive impact of the book gifting for their school's Reception class in the previous year.

Family engagement

Teachers were asked about the extent to which they had engaged with parents and carers as part of the project, both in relation to the book gifting element and more generally.

For the book gifting scheme, some teachers commented that they had been pushing the need for quality reading time among parents and carers since it started. To take this further, some noted that they would like to find out when the books are going to be posted so that they can map out the key touch-points with parents and carers over the course of the year, as well as link the themes of the gifted books with what they are covering in class where possible.

Others noted that they had received positive feedback on the scheme since it started, with parents and carers commenting that it had been lovely to receive these books in the post and that they could not believe these resources were free of charge. Based on the level of enthusiasm for the scheme, one teacher explained that they had put together a read and response book for parents and carers to use to support the child's reading at home. If they wanted to, they were encouraged to support their child to draw an associated picture based on the story, develop a story mountain mapping out the structure of the story, or just note down anything their child said about the text. The teacher subsequently asked parents, carers and their children to bring this read and response book into class to share what they had done. There was no pressure to complete it and parents and carers did not have to engage if they did not want to; the teacher wanted to encourage reading for pleasure and did not want this to feel like homework. The teacher estimated that about half of the parents and carers of children in their class had engaged with this resource and were actively reading with their child at home.

In a few cases, however, parent and carer engagement was more challenging. Teachers in Cohort 1 struggled to engage parents during periods of national lockdown and while various Covid-19 restrictions were still in place. More generally, interviewees also felt that parent and carer engagement could be difficult due to workload pressures, which meant they had less time to discuss these texts. Additionally, language barriers could impact engagement for those parents and carers who do not speak English.

In terms of their more general engagement in the project, several teachers noted that they had made efforts to keep parents and carers up to date on what their child is covering in class. One teacher stated that every time they switch to a new PoR book, they send a photocopy or video link of someone reading the story to parents and carers, so they can go through it with their children at home, with the teacher sometimes setting them a task or activity to complete alongside this.

Others took the engagement of parents and carers further. One teacher, for example, introduced the idea of Family Fridays to their school. This is where parents

and carers can come into their child's class on a Friday morning and read stories either with their child or with a group of children. The teacher felt that this idea had been positively received, with several parents engaging over time and enjoying the experience (including male parents and carers who they find more difficult to engage). They hoped the initiative would help emphasise the importance of reading among parents and carers and show it is valued as an activity within the school.

Those interviewees delivering the project to children in nursery, however, highlighted the innate challenges in attempting to engage with parents and carers in these settings. One teacher reflected that, as nursery is non-compulsory, it can be difficult to get parents and carers to take this part of their child's education seriously, and not just see it as a play environment. Another nursery teacher stated that some of their class only attend part-time (i.e. 15 hours a week). This can compound the difficulty and also increases the amount of time children spend in home settings where they may not have access to books. Some schools were taking steps to address this, which they hoped would engage parents and carers more in their child's nursery education. This included setting up an after school book club, as well as introducing new IT systems that would enable teachers to regularly share examples of their teaching content and samples of children's work with parents and carers online. Interviewees hoped that these changes would show parents and carers that their child's learning and development at this age is valued by staff at the school.

3.4 Perceived outcomes

The teachers interviewed were asked to identify any changes in their class's reading ability and engagement with books, which they felt could be attributed to the CVG project and the training and resources they had received.

Engagement with books and attitude towards reading

In terms of children's engagement and enjoyment of reading, the project was seen to have had a positive influence. Several teachers commented that children in their class were now showing more excitement around books than they had at the start of the academic year. This was evidenced by children talking about books and their illustrations more; spending time looking through books independently; as well as teachers observing children retelling stories to their peers and families. Some teachers were clear that this included children who previously showed little engagement and interest in books and reading. As well as their own skill and experience as a practitioner, teachers felt that these changes had been influenced by the quality of the PoR and Imagination library resources provided, the new teaching approaches they had integrated into their everyday practice over the course of the year through a sustained programme of CPD, as well as the work they had done to make their book corners more inviting.

The big impact is children picking up books and exploring on their own.

> *I think there's more of a love for reading now. The children are a lot more excited about wondering, 'what new book do we have today?' and 'what new book are we going to look at as a whole class?', so they are responding a lot more positively to wanting to hear a story and wanting to share it with their friends.*

A few teachers noted that the changes to their teaching practice that encouraged the class to share their ideas around a text and its illustrations, also had a positive effect on pupils. Where this culture had become embedded over time, teachers observed that most of their class had become familiar and comfortable with contributing towards these discussions. This included children for whom English is an additional language as well as children with SEND. For these teachers, this highlighted the inclusivity of the PoR resources, as it drew a focus to children's own responses and the value of their individual ideas in relation to a text, empowering all children to feel that they can engage with books. It was felt that these approaches in turn were supporting their class to continue to develop their communication skills.

> *Even the children I work with who have speech and language issues, they really, really love the books and get excited about the different activities we're doing. They really enjoy joining in with the role play we're doing around the books and talking about the pictures. I think it was the Last Wolf, the pictures are really interesting for the children to look at and talk about afterwards. I noticed that the children, after a carpet session, will want to come and look through the book with their friends, which is always a good sign that they've enjoyed the teaching session.*

Reading ability and literacy

In general, it was challenging for teachers to identify the impact of the CVG project on their children's reading ability and levels of literacy. In most settings, the PoR resources and approaches were delivered alongside other programmes designed to support these aspects of development, so it was difficult for teachers to isolate the impact of changes in their teaching practice on these outcomes.

In addition, the impact of the project over the academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22 has been heavily mediated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The level of disruption caused to children's early years education over this period was significant. As a result, many teachers stated that children in their class had lower levels of development overall than they would typically expect to see in Reception year. This made any comparison with previous academic years challenging and presented further difficulties to teachers isolating the impact of changes in their teaching practice on these aspects of development.

Despite these overall difficulties, the teachers interviewed were able to pick out examples of where the project had benefitted individual pupils. Often these were EAL or SEND children who had made clear progress in terms of their development since the start of the year. In this respect, a few teachers identified children who had

made progress in their story telling ability over the course of the year, which they attributed to the positive attitudinal changes prompted by changes in their teaching approach. One example was given of a pupil who would initially only write stories about their parents, but who was now thinking more imaginatively and including other characters in her stories. Another teacher had a pupil in their class who would only play with toys at the beginning of the year and never visited the reading corner. However, they noted that since they covered the PoR text, *The Naughty Bus* as a class, this child had become very engaged in story books and reading.

Some teachers also stressed that the PoR texts clearly supported language acquisition. For example, several of the texts follow repetitive patterns. When read aloud frequently, discussed, or used in role play, teachers noticed children acquiring new words and phrases present in these texts and observed them using this vocabulary independently in other contexts (e.g. in play). In some cases this included EAL children, which teachers again saw as indicative of the inclusivity of the CVG project and its focus on class and partner talk as well as writing.

3.5 Suggested improvements

Based on their experiences of being part of the project, interviewees were asked whether they felt its delivery could be improved in future years. While many teachers felt that no improvements were needed, several put forward the following suggestions:

- **Teaching sequences:** While the teaching sequences accompanying each text were generally viewed as useful tools, some teachers suggested that their layout could be made more consistent. Some of the sequences were viewed to be lengthy (i.e. more than 20 pages), this adjustment would help teachers navigate them more easily at speed, although they appreciated that the approach needed for each book would differ. Other teachers wanted more ideas for how to differentiate the content for children with SEND to better support the needs of their class. Some teachers also stated that in future these resources could be enriched through the inclusion of images that other children had produced for some of the suggested activities (e.g. story maps, role on the wall, and other creative activities).
- **More active engagement of parents:** A few teachers felt that the project could include a more active parental component to support their engagement. One teacher suggested encouraging schools to run a parental workshop to enable teachers to share ideas about how parents could present and discuss texts with their children to make them more engaging, linking them to the Imagination Library texts for example. They noted that even where parents might not speak English, this discussion can be based around the pictures in a book. This type of engagement would be valuable in their view in supporting the overall aims of the project.

It's about getting children and parents to talk, and parents to talk to their child, and read a story and show them how to read a story. That's the biggest thing for me,

- **Guidance on 'successful' reading corners:** Some teachers (mainly from Cohort 1) felt it would be useful to have tutorials or videos on to how to set up a successful reading corner to support this aspect of the project. They felt they would again benefit from seeing some physical examples of how teachers had made reading corners more inviting and accessible, to help inform their own practice. This suggestion was less prevalant among Cohort 2, suggesting that the ability of teachers to share and show each other examples in person, of changes they had made, had partly addressed this need.
- **Access to PoR and Imagination Library texts for pupils:** Some teachers had the resources available to purchase additional copies of the PoR texts for their reading corner or enlarge some of the images provided in the texts, so they could ensure they were visible to all pupils and could be used for wall displays, for example. However, a few interviewees stated that they would have liked to have these resources provided by CLPE, due to limited resources within their school.
- **Support in how to deliver CVG project alongside exisiting phonics programmes:** Several teachers noted that they occassionally struggled to deliver different elements of this project alongside existing phonics programmes. This was more of a difficultly for those teachers in Cohort 1 who were previously unfamiliar with CLPE and the PoR resources. They felt they did not gain an insight into what the project would entail until the training started part way through the autumn term. As a result, their pre-existing phonics programme was already embedded in their teaching plan for the year and sat apart from the core texts provided as part of the CVG project. Cohort 2 meanwhile had greater familiarity with the project overall and a greater insight into what delivery would involve at the beginning of the academic year, which eased these pressures somewhat. However, a few interviewees reflected that some support in navigating these competing pressures would be beneficial, particularily where they are seen as coming from the school leadership team.
- **Earlier communication of PoR and Imagination Library book list:** Similar to the views presented above, some teachers also stated that if they had received the resources and book list (for both the PoR and Imagination Library texts) towards the end of the previous academic year, this would have supported their teaching planning and enabled them to further embed and maximise the benefits of these resources. As well as enabling them to embed these texts in their curriculum and establish stronger cross-curricular links with different topics, teachers noted that they could have also purchased toys and materials to accompany these texts and support small world play around these topics in the classroom. Again, this comment was largely limited to Cohort 1, which

suggested that the project had embedded and was more familiar to teachers in the subsequent year.

4 Pupil data: quantitative findings

The following chapter presents the findings from an analysis of pupil data provided by schools participating in the project. The data covers the two cohorts that have passed through the programme by the end of the 2021/22 academic year. In the analysis, Cohort 1 refers to the Reception classes that entered the programme in the 2020/21 school year, and Cohort 2 refers to the Reception classes that entered the programme in the 2021/22 school year.

- For Cohort 1, data is available for 836 pupils at the start of their Reception year and for 801 pupils at the end of their Reception year – data was available for 777 of these pupils from both time points.
- For Cohort 2, data is available for 423 pupils at the start of their Reception year and for 429 pupils at the end of their Reception year - data was available for 423 of these pupils from both time points.[11]

The analysis reported in this chapter includes descriptive statistics of the demographic characteristics of both cohorts with comparisons to regional and national averages. It also provides a comparison of pupil outcomes with national and regional statistics. Finally, the chapter presents an analysis of the progress made by the two cohorts across their Reception year. This analysis draws on the EYFS profile data and bespoke measures developed by CLPE for this evaluation to track pupil progress over time.

4.1 Key findings

The key findings from the analysis of pupil data are presented below. As this study lacked a matched comparison group, these findings are only indicative of the potential impact of the project.

- For the EYFS profile, pupils at schools participating in the CVG project generally had lower EYFS scores than students within roughly the same geographic area. This could be reflective of the criteria used to select schools for inclusion within the project, which was based on indicators of deprivation and levels of need.

[11] As noted, the CPD training was extended to nursery teachers for Cohort 2 where there was not another Reception teacher within the school. Collected data on nursery pupils was excluded from the final analysis given the lack of comparative data at a national, regional or local level. Data was excluded for 148 and 157 pupils in nursery classes in September 2021 and July 2022 respectively.

- Encouragingly, the difference in scores between CVG participants and all pupils in the borough was lower for the ELGs within the Literacy Area of Learning (Comprehension, Word reading and Writing) than for all the other ELGs (10.5 percentage points for the Literacy ELGs compared to 11.8 percentage points for all other ELGs).
- The proportion of students at the expected level across all 10 ELGs was higher for Cohort 2 than Cohort 1. This may be due to changes to teaching practice that were gradually embedding as part of the project. Other possible explanations could be that the pandemic had more of a disruptive effect on the EYFS scores of Cohort 1 during the 2020/21 academic year. It should be noted however that the EYFS profile changed between these year groups, so any direct comparisons should be interpreted with caution.
- Across both cohorts, and reflecting patterns in national data, males, pupils eligible for FSM, those with EFL and those with SEN provision were more likely than their counterparts to have lower EYFS scores.
- For the Year 1 results, similar proportions of pupils in Cohort 1 met the expected standard in the Year 1 screening check, compared with all pupils across three London boroughs involved in the study (77.1% vs. 77.9%).
- Breaking the screening check results down by local area, higher proportions of pupils attending CVG project schools in Tower Hamlets (78.6%) and Hackney (84.1%) met the expected standard in their phonics screening check than all pupils in these boroughs (Tower Hamlets, 75.6%; Hackney, 82%). They were more likely to meet the expected standard by 3.0 and 2.1 percentage points respectively.
- This is despite Cohort 1 schools in these areas having higher proportions of pupils in receipt of FSM and SEN compared with the wider local population, which can be used as indicators of disadvantage and levels of need. Looking at the results by pupil characteristics, lower achievement gaps between disadvantaged groups and their peers within participating schools in Tower Hamlets and Hackney, compared to the wider population, may help explain these positive results.
- However, lower proportions of Cohort 1 pupils attending schools in Camden achieved the expected phonics standard compared with all pupils in this area, with a gap of 10.0 percentage points.

4.2 Pupil characteristics

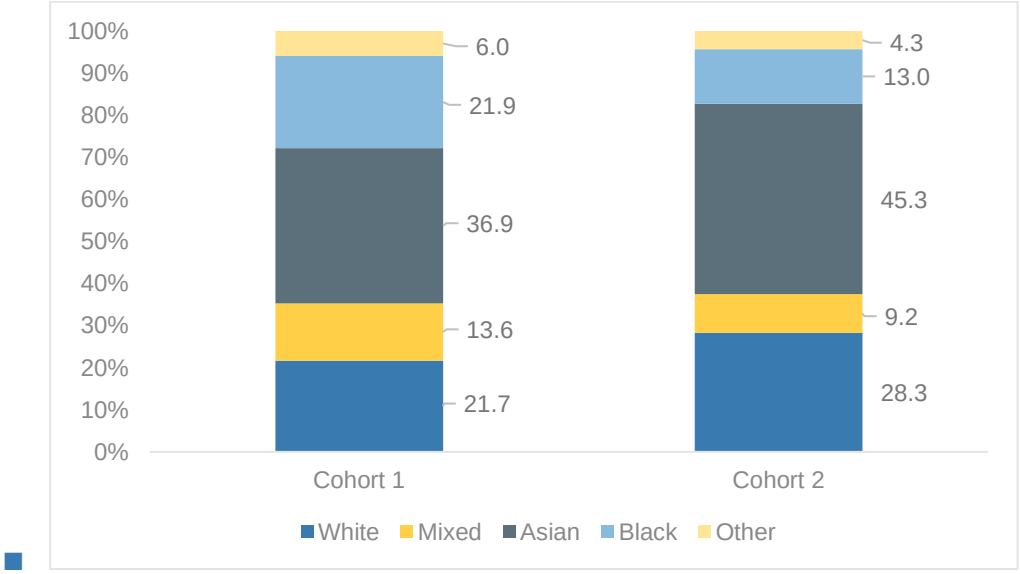
This section outlines the characteristics of pupils in participating schools. It covers their term of birth, gender, ethnicity, Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility, whether the pupil has Special Educational Needs (SEN), whether English is their First Language (EFL), and whether they engaged in some form of pre-school provision. These data

were used in subsequent analyses to look for differences in outcomes by pupil characteristics.

The statistics presented are based on pupils with records at the end of their Reception year, given that this is the point at which EYFS profiles can be compared to the national and regional data. Data was collected from 28 schools for Cohort 1 (with an average class size of 26.7). Fifteen of these schools were in Tower Hamlets, nine were in Hackney and four were in Camden. For Cohort 2, data was collected from 16 schools (with an average class size of 26.8). Nine of the schools were in Tower Hamlets, four were in Hackney and three were in Camden.

In terms of pupils' personal characteristics, just over half (51.2%) of all Cohort 1 pupils were female, while for Cohort 2 just under half (48.3%) of all pupils were female. Figure 4.1 shows the breakdown of participating pupils by ethnic group. The largest ethnic group in each cohort was Asian, constituting more than one-third (36.9%) of Cohort 1 pupils and roughly nine in twenty (45.3%) of Cohort 2 pupils. The next largest ethnic group in each cohort was white (21.7% of Cohort 1, 28.3% of Cohort 2) followed by black (21.9% of Cohort 1, 13.0% of Cohort 2), mixed (13.6% of Cohort 1, 9.2% of Cohort 2) and pupils of other ethnicities (6.0% of Cohort 1, 4.3% of Cohort 2).

Figure 4.1 Percentage of participating pupils by ethnic group.



Source: CVG project data. Base = 789 pupils in Cohort 1, 424 in Cohort 2.

Table 4.1highlights the other main pupil characteristics recorded as part of this study, while Table 4.2 presents available comparative data at a national, regional and borough level for 2021/22, Cohort 2's Reception year. While the data points may not be directly comparable to the data provided for this evaluation due to differences in how and when they were collected, this gives some idea of how pupils

in schools that took part in the project compare to others, on average, at different geographic levels.

Table 4.1: Percentage of participating pupils by characteristic by borough and cohort

	Camden		Hackney		Tower Hamlets		Total	
Cohort	**1**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**2**
Female	53.7	41.9	52.2	52.0	49.9	48.6	51.2	48.3
FSM	35.5	50.0	46.9	30.4	33.5	43.5	37.9	41.0
SEN	11.6	21.6	23.5	11.8	21.3	15.4	20.3	15.3
EFL	47.1	66.1	71.0	66.7	37.9	51.4	49.2	57.3
Autumn term	29.8	39.7	36.9	44.1	34.0	34.7	34.3	37.9
Spring term	23.1	30.1	25.5	25.5	30.0	33.1	27.5	30.7
Summer term	47.1	30.1	37.7	30.4	36.1	32.2	38.3	31.4
No PSP	3.5	9.9	6.4	15.7	9.0	15.9	7.3	14.8

Source: CVG project data. Base = minimum of (1) 115 and (2) 51 in Camden, (1) 232 and (2) 101 in Hackney, (1) 356 and (2) 251 in Tower Hamlets and (1) 675 and (2) 406 total.

Table 4.2: Reception pupil characteristics at national, regional and borough level, 2021/22

	England	London	Inner London	Camden	Hackney	Tower Hamlets
Female	49%	49%	49%	48%	50%	49%
White	71%	41%	35%	41%	44%	16%
Mixed	7%	13%	14%	16%	13%	10%
Asian	12%	22%	20%	20%	10%	62%
Black	5%	14%	19%	13%	24%	7%
Other	2%	6%	6%	7%	5%	3%
EFL	78%	53%	50%	43%	50%	39%
FSM eligible	18%	18%	24%	35%	24%	26%
SEN	10%	11%	12%	13%	13%	12%
Autumn-born	34%	34%	34%	34%	30%	34%
Spring-born	32%	32%	31%	30%	30%	31%
Summer-born	34%	34%	35%	36%	40%	35%

Source: Calculations based on GOV.UK data available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-catalogue/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results/2021-22. EFL is the proportion of students whose first language is known or believed to be English. FSM eligible is the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals. SEN is the proportion of students with any SEN provision.

- In terms of the cohort characteristics, the analysis showed that:

- A high proportion of pupils across both cohorts were FSM eligible, although slightly more were in Cohort 2 (41.0%) than Cohort 1 (37.9%).
- In Cohort 1 one-fifth (20.3%) of all pupils have SEN compared to approximately 15 per cent of all pupils in Cohort 2.
- Just under half of all students had EFL (49.4%) in Cohort 1, while 57.3 per cent of students in Cohort 2 had EFL.[12]

Looking at pupils participating in the CVG project within each borough, these pupils were more likely to be eligible for FSM and have SEN than pupils at the borough-level overall. This reflects the project's school selection criteria, which was based on indicators of deprivation and levels of need and suggests the project has been successful in reaching its intended target groups.

The proportions of students that are EFL meanwhile appears to be broadly higher than the respective borough averages. However, these proportions are still lower than national averages and are again reflective of the selection criteria for schools within this project (schools were selected that had more than 20% of students that speak English as an additional language).

In terms of the other characteristics, for term of birth, pupils in Cohort 1 were most likely to be born in the summer term (38.3%) while in Cohort 2 pupils were most likely to be born in the autumn term (37.9%). Across both cohorts, pupils were least likely to be born in the spring term (27.5% of Cohort 1, 30.7% of Cohort 2). In addition, over nine in ten (92.7%) of Cohort 1 received some form of pre-school provision (either attending nursery, pre-school or a childminder), while 85.2 per cent of Cohort 2 pupils received pre-school provision.

4.3 Outcomes

This section presents the findings from the analysis of pupil outcomes for both cohorts. The main outcome measures used across both cohorts were the EYFS profile scores, and the Year 1 phonics screening check for Cohort 1.

These data are compared to national, regional and local averages to provide an indication of how they compare. As noted, national and regional EYFS profile data

[12] These figures are based on the valid responses. All pupils at schools in Tower Hamlets and Hackney in Cohort 2 had EFL coded as either yes or no, but 12 of the 74 pupils at schools in Camden had information on whether they have EFL missing, which given that missing information may be more likely to be a familiar to record the negative rather than the affirmative for binary response variables, may make this an overestimate of the true proportion of pupils with EFL in Cohort 2. Given though that the proportion of all pupils at schools in Camden is relatively small, this does not significantly affect the overall figures.

was not collected for 2020/21 as its collection was not mandatory,[13] which would be the natural comparison for Cohort 1's Reception year. The most relevant comparative data sources were therefore the 2021/22 EYFS profile data and Year 1 Phonics Screener results.

In places, findings are presented separately for the eight schools participating in the project that formed part of a school federation in Hackney. The federation reviewed its early years literacy curriculum following the start of the project, and worked to embed CLPE's PoR resources and teaching sequences throughout each school's teaching plans. The adoption of PoR materials in these cases appeared to be far more extensive than for other schools participating in the project, and so in places the outcomes from these schools were analysed separately to see if this may have influenced pupil outcomes.

4.3.1 EYFS profile results

Several changes were made to the EYFS framework at the beginning of 2021,[14] which affects the comparability of the EYFS profile data between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2. Most relevant are the changes to the early learning goals (ELGs). These are the areas in which the pupil's development is assessed. Table 4.3 lists the old and new categories within the Areas of Learning (AoL) that pupil outcome data was collected on.

Table 4.3: 2021 changes to the EYFS framework

Area of Learning	Pre-2021 categories	2021 and onwards categories
Communication and Language	Language and attention Understanding Speaking	Listening, attention and understanding Speaking
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-confidence and self-awareness Managing feelings and behaviour Making relationships	Self-regulation Managing self Building relationships
Physical Development	Moving and handling Health and self-care	Gross motor skills Fine motor skills
Literacy	Reading	Comprehension

[13] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-in-england-2020-to-2021

[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-framework/changes-to-the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-framework#:~:text=The%20change,birth%20to%203

Area of Learning	Pre-2021 categories	2021 and onwards categories
	Writing	Word reading Writing

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-framework/changes-to-the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-framework#important-documents

Given these changes, it is not possible to directly compare Cohort 1's EYFS results in 2020/21 with the available national data for 2021/22 across the individual ELGs (as is possible for Cohort 2). Comparisons to data from earlier years is also not possible due to the disruptive effects of the pandemic on this cohort's education. Where comparisons are made in the following analysis for Cohort 1, it is therefore at the aggregate level across the 10 ELGs that make up the four AoL selected for inclusion in this study.

Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 display the proportion of pupils at the end of Reception at the expected level across each ELG by pupil characteristics for Cohort 1[15] and Cohort 2 respectively.

Table 4.4: Proportion of pupils at the end of Reception at the expected level across each ELG by pupil characteristics, Cohort 1.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Total	67.3	68.1	64.8	68.6	65.4	70.7	75.1	75.6	55.8	52.7
Borough										
Camden	77.2	76.3	71.1	73.7	69.3	76.3	79.8	84.2	45.6	32.5
Hackney	69.6	73.3	69.6	75.1	69.2	73.3	83.8	82.1	61.4	60.2
Tower Hamlets	63.0	62.8	60.1	63.5	62.0	67.6	68.6	69.3	55.2	53.9
Gender										
Male	62.4	63.5	59.8	63.1	58.5	63.2	71.2	69.0	53.3	48.0
Female	71.8	72.6	69.5	73.8	72.1	77.9	78.9	82.0	58.1	57.3
Ethnicity										
White	69.1	72.8	71.6	72.5	67.3	69.8	77.8	75.9	59.9	57.4
Mixed	66.0	65.1	62.3	63.5	63.2	67.9	69.8	69.5	47.6	44.8
Asian	68.3	67.3	64.1	69.3	69.4	74.0	75.8	77.9	61.6	57.5
Black	65.3	65.3	60.5	64.7	58.1	67.1	73.1	76.7	49.7	46.7

[15] One school for Cohort 1 did not record any students as being at the expected level across ELGs. Instead, a proportion that would be appropriate to be at the expected level were coded as 40–60+ months. In this case, we assumed that pupils at 40–60+ months were actually at the expected level. Given that this level overlaps with the expected level, and all other schools used both categories, it was felt this was a more appropriate assumption than using the data in its raw form, as this would imply an unrealistic level of performance for this school.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Other	63.0	67.4	60.9	68.2	63.0	67.4	76.1	65.2	52.2	52.2
FSM eligible										
No	71.9	71.6	68.7	70.7	72.1	75.7	76.1	79.1	59.9	56.1
Yes	61.4	63.2	59.6	65.8	59.9	66.5	73.9	70.5	51.3	48.2
Has SEN										
No	76.2	77.0	74.6	76.7	73.3	79.7	82.3	85.1	59.6	56.4
Yes	26.4	27.1	20.7	28.4	27.1	28.6	40.0	33.6	22.9	20.0
EFL										
No	63.5	63.0	58.0	63.9	63.3	68.8	70.6	71.9	53.3	50.3
Yes	70.6	73.0	71.2	73.2	67.2	72.5	79.4	79.1	57.8	54.4
Term of birth										
Autumn	75.3	76.8	71.9	76.6	73.8	77.9	81.3	86.5	65.8	64.3
Spring	67.6	67.1	66.2	69.2	63.9	70.4	73.7	70.9	59.2	56.1
Summer	59.6	61.0	57.2	60.7	58.9	64.4	70.6	69.2	44.2	39.7
Pre-school provision										
No	58.7	56.5	52.2	56.5	58.7	63.0	76.1	71.7	50.0	47.8
Yes	69.7	70.8	67.3	72.0	67.7	72.6	76.1	79.2	58.8	55.4

Source: CVG project data. ELGs: (1) Language and attention (2) Understanding (3) Speaking (4) Self-confidence and self-awareness (5) Managing feelings and behaviour (6) Making relationships (7) Moving and handling (8) Health and self-care (9) Reading (10) Writing.
Base = minimum of 754 in total, 114 in Camden, 229 in Hackney, 410 in Tower Hamlets, 369 for Male, 385 for Female, 160 for White, 104 for Mixed, 280 for Asian, 156 for Black, 44 for Other (ethnicity), 44 for No (FSM eligible), 270 for Yes (FSM eligible), 531 for No (Has SEN), 134 for Yes (Has SEN), 379 for No (EFL), 362 for Yes (EFL), 261 for Autumn (Term of birth), 208 for Spring (Term of birth), 285 for Summer (Term of birth), 46 for No (PSP) and 585 for Yes (PSP).

Table 4.5: Proportion of pupils at the end of Reception at the expected level across each ELG by pupil characteristics, Cohort 2.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Total	67.4	67.1	72.2	71.7	74.2	79.9	69.6	68.6	59.9	60.5
Borough										
Camden	68.1	66.7	72.2	75.0	75.0	73.6	72.2	68.1	67.6	62.5
Hackney	80.2	85.2	86.1	77.2	83.2	89.1	73.3	89.1	58.4	67.3
Tower Hamlets	61.2	58.9	65.8	68.1	69.9	77.6	67.1	59.4	58.0	56.6
Gender										
Male	61.0	61.5	64.0	62.5	67.5	74.0	60.0	62.5	54.8	54.0
Female	74.0	72.9	80.7	81.5	81.3	85.9	79.7	75.0	65.1	67.2
Ethnicity										
White	71.4	71.4	69.6	67.0	70.5	76.8	68.8	74.1	58.0	58.9
Mixed	64.5	74.2	64.5	61.3	74.2	74.2	64.5	71.0	58.1	58.1
Asian	66.5	63.1	74.3	76.3	77.1	82.7	72.1	64.3	61.8	61.5

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Black	67.3	69.2	75.0	69.2	73.1	80.8	69.2	73.1	57.7	61.5
Other	42.9	50.0	64.3	76.9	64.3	71.4	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0
FSM eligible										
No	68.0	69.0	75.3	72.2	74.0	80.8	71.7	69.9	60.7	62.1
Yes	66.2	64.2	66.2	68.2	71.5	76.8	64.9	65.6	55.6	55.6
Has SEN										
No	73.6	73.3	77.5	76.5	78.8	83.9	74.0	74.0	64.0	65.3
Yes	29.3	29.3	34.5	33.9	39.7	50.0	37.9	36.2	27.6	25.9
EFL										
No	63.9	59.4	72.9	70.6	71.0	81.3	69.0	64.5	55.5	56.1
Yes	68.4	71.1	70.7	71.0	75.1	78.2	68.9	69.8	60.7	62.2
Term of birth										
Autumn	79.3	79.3	82.1	79.2	82.1	87.6	80.7	81.4	72.4	73.1
Spring	62.3	64.0	70.2	67.3	71.1	77.2	62.3	63.2	50.9	54.4
Summer	62.4	60.0	67.2	71.0	72.0	78.4	68.0	62.4	56.5	55.2
Pre-school provision										
No	55.6	55.6	66.7	67.3	66.7	79.6	61.1	57.4	40.7	40.7
Yes	69.2	68.9	73.1	72.4	75.5	79.9	71.0	70.4	62.9	63.5

Source: CVG project data. ELGs: (1) Listening, attention and understanding (2) Speaking (3) Self-regulation (4) Managing self (5) Building relationships (6) Gross motor skills (7) Fine motor skills (8) Comprehension (9) Word reading (10) Writing.
Base = minimum of 389 in total, 71 in Camden, 101 in Hackney, 216 in Tower Hamlets, 199 for Male, 189 for Female, 112 for White, 31 for Mixed, 177 for Asian, 52 for Black, 13 for Other (ethnicity), 219 for No (FSM eligible), 148 for Yes (FSM eligible), 310 for No (Has SEN), 56 for Yes (Has SEN), 153 for No (EFL), 224 for Yes (EFL), 144 for Autumn (Term of birth), 113 for Spring (Term of birth), 124 for Summer (Term of birth), 52 for No (PSP) and 333 for Yes (PSP).

To provide the closest comparison to students attending schools participating in the programme, we pool together the EYFS profile data for schools in the boroughs in which the programme takes place. Table 4.6 displays the proportion of EYFS pupils at the expected level across each ELG by pupil characteristics for pupils attending schools in Camden, Hackney and Tower Hamlets.[16]

[16] It should be noted that for these and the other borough, regional and national statistics, that the outcomes of the programme participants will be included in these statistics. There were 7,731 total EYFS students in Camden, Hackney and Tower Hamlets combined. Based on this figure, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 constitute approximately 10.6% and 7.4% of the EYFS population in these boroughs combined respectively.

Table 4.6: Proportion of EYFS pupils at the expected level across each ELG by pupil characteristics, for pupils attending school in Camden, Hackney and Tower Hamlets.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Total	79.4	79.1	82.8	84.6	85.9	89.3	83.9	76.9	73.4	69.9
Gender										
Male	73.8	73.2	77.0	79.2	81.2	85.5	76.9	71.6	68.2	63.6
Female	85.1	85.2	88.7	90.1	90.7	93.2	91.1	82.5	78.8	76.4
FSM eligible										
No	81.1	80.7	84.2	85.8	87.0	90.3	85.4	78.9	75.7	72.5
Yes	74.7	74.9	78.8	81.4	83.0	86.5	79.9	71.5	67.1	62.8
EFL										
No	75.4	74.2	81.6	83.2	84.2	87.7	82.2	72.4	71.0	66.9
Yes	84.4	85.1	84.6	86.5	88.5	91.6	86.2	82.9	78.5	75.1
Term of birth										
Autumn	84.4	84.1	86.8	88.4	88.9	92.8	88.9	83.1	81.1	78.2
Spring	79.6	79.0	83.2	84.8	86.5	89.5	84.1	77.2	73.5	70.2
Summer	74.9	74.9	78.8	81.1	82.7	86.1	79.3	71.4	66.7	62.5

Source: IES analysis of EYFS profile results, available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results/2021-22 ELGs: (1) Listening, attention and understanding (2) Speaking (3) Self-regulation (4) Managing self (5) Building relationships (6) Gross motor skills (7) Fine motor skills (8) Comprehension (9) Word reading (10) Writing.

Table 7.1 and Table 7.2 in the appendix display this data split by borough and for Inner London, London and England. Inner London is used as the comparison for EYFS profile scores by ethnicity and SEN status, as data is not available to this level of granularity at the borough level.

Cohort 2 individual ELG analysis

Pupils at the schools participating in the CVG project generally had lower EYFS scores than students within roughly the same geographic area. Again, this could be reflective of the criteria used to select schools for inclusion within the project, with a focus on those settings with the greatest need. Focussing on Cohort 2 for this analysis, across all ELGs, pupils at participating schools were on average 11.4 percentage points less likely to be at the expected level than all pupils across the three London boroughs.

The ELGs with the biggest gaps were:

- fine motor skills (14.2 percentage points);
- word reading (13.6 percentage points); and
- managing self (12.9 percentage points).

The ELGs with the smallest gaps were:

- comprehension (8.3 percentage points); and
- writing and gross motor skills (9.5 percentage points each).

The demographic groups in Cohort 2 with the largest average gaps across all ELGs compared to the local population were certain ethnic groups. This included pupils of other ethnicities (19.6 percentage points), of mixed ethnicity (18.4 percentage points) and white pupils (17.9 percentage points).

Encouragingly, the difference in scores between CVG participants and all pupils in the borough was lower for the ELGs within the Literacy Area of Learning (Comprehension, Word reading and Writing) than for all the other ELGs (10.5 percentage points for the Literacy ELGs compared to 11.8 percentage points for all other ELGs).

This gap is also relatively smaller among certain groups of disadvantaged students, including those that are:

- FSM eligible (8.2 percentage points versus 11.6 percentage points);
- black pupils (7.9 percentage points versus 9.8 percentage points);
- pupils with SEN (6.4 percentage points versus 7.9 percentage points); and
- pupils born in the summer term (8.8 percentage points versus 11.3 percentage points).

Cohort 1 and 2 AoL analysis

We also analysed relative EYFS scores across the different AoLs for both cohorts. A pupil is deemed to be at the expected level for the AoL, if they are at the expected level for each of the individual ELGs that comprise it. In cases where data is missing for an ELG, we determine whether the student is at the expected level for the AoL using the available data for the other ELGs within that AoL. Table 7.3, Table 7.4, Table 7.5 and Table 7.6 in the appendix report the performance of Cohort 1, Cohort 2, and comparison students by borough and nationally and regionally across the four AoLs of interest respectively.

The proportion of students at the expected level across the ELGs was higher for Cohort 2 than Cohort 1, although this may be explained by the likely greater impact of the pandemic on the outcomes of Cohort 1 in their Reception year, as well as changes to the EYFS framework. Across both cohorts, and reflecting patterns in national data, males, pupils eligible for FSM, those with EFL and those with SEN provision were more likely than their counterparts to have lower EYFS scores.

For schools that formed part of the school federation, despite broadly being more likely to have various disadvantage characteristics (including higher FSM eligibility,

higher prevalence of SEN, more pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, more summer born students, and less access to pre-school provision), pupils attending these settings had higher EYFS outcomes than other pupils within Hackney in Cohort 2.

Within the school federation, 85.2 per cent of pupils at member schools were at the expected level for Communication and Language compared to 66.0 per cent of pupils at non-member schools in Hackney, with this pattern continuing across the other AoLs:

- 68.5 per cent versus 38.3 per cent for Literacy;
- 85.2 per cent versus 61.7 per cent for Personal, Social and Emotional Development; and
- 87.0 per cent versus 57.5 per cent for Physical Development.

4.3.2 Year 1 Phonics Screening check

This section presents the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check for pupils from Cohort 1 as they progressed in their education. While Year 1 teachers did not receive CLPE's CPD training, this approach was taken to gain a sense of the long-term influence of the project, and its wider dissemination within the school, on their language and literacy development. The analysis presents the screening check results for Cohort 1 pupils by their demographic characteristics, before comparing the scores for this cohort to national, regional and local figures.

The records of Cohort 1 pupils across Reception and Year 1 were matched using a unique pupil ID. Only pupils that were matched correctly by schools were included in this analysis.[17]

Table 4.7 displays the proportion of Cohort 1 pupils meeting the expected standard for the Year 1 Phonics Screener by pupil characteristics.

Table 4.7: Proportion of Cohort 1 pupils at the Year 1 Phonics Screener expected level by pupil characteristics.

	All	Camden	Hackney	Tower Hamlets
Total	77.1	67.3	84.1	78.6
Gender				
Male	75.4	62.2	78.9	81.1
Female	78.6	71.4	89.1	76.5
Ethnicity				
White	77.7	76.9	75.9	80.0

[17] 38 pupil records had to be excluded where their demographic details were not consistent between these two time points.

	All	Camden	Hackney	Tower Hamlets
Mixed	81.5	66.7	91.7	87.5
Asian	74.6	61.8	83.3	78.6
Black	77.9	68.8	86.1	66.7
Other	80.0	66.7	90.0	50.0
FSM eligible				
No	82.3	72.6	90.3	83.5
Yes	71.4	59.0	75.6	77.6
SEN				
No	80.9	71.4	87.8	83.1
Yes	52.8	30.0	57.1	58.6
EFL				
No	77.8	57.1	100.0	81.3
Yes	76.4	76.9	78.2	73.1
Term of birth				
Autumn	81.5	75.9	92.7	75.9
Spring	75.3	54.2	81.5	82.6
Summer	74.7	68.8	76.9	78.0
Pre-school provision				
No	65.0	50.0	62.5	75.0
Yes	78.6	68.5	87.6	79.0
EYFS: Communication and Language				
Emerging	55.6	41.7	66.7	58.7
Expected	88.3	81.5	89.9	91.7
EYFS: Literacy				
Emerging	61.8	58.3	70.3	61.0
Expected	92.8	89.7	91.3	95.1
EYFS: Pers., Soc. & Emo. Dev.				
Emerging	60.0	52.6	68.2	61.4
Expected	86.4	76.2	88.1	92.1
EYFS Physical Development				
Emerging	56.8	50.0	72.7	56.6
Expected	83.5	72.7	85.3	89.6

Source: IES analysis of EYFS profile results, available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-1-and-phonics-screening-check-attainment/2021-22

Table 4.8 displays the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard for the Year 1 Phonics Screener by pupil characteristics across the three boroughs that the programme takes place in, as well as Inner London, London and England.

Table 4.8: Proportion of pupils at the Year 1 Phonics Screener expected level by pupil characteristics at the national, regional and borough level.

	All	Camden	Hackney	Tower Hamlets	Inner London	London	England
Total	77.9	77.3	82.0	75.6	77.8	78.2	75.5
Gender							
Male	78.6	74.9	78.9	71.3	74.6	75.2	72.2
Female	77.9	79.7	85.0	80.0	81.1	81.4	78.8
Ethnicity							
White	81.0	81.8	84.8	73.4	81.2	79.1	75.6
Mixed	80.7	81.8	84.8	76.5	79.4	79.8	77.3
Asian	77.7	74.7	84.6	77.2	79.2	82.0	78.6
Black	77.5	75.0	78.9	75.5	74.5	75.2	75.6
Other	70.0	65.7	75.6	64.4	73.3	73.9	71.0
FSM eligible							
No	81.3	82.8	84.6	78.3	81.1	81.0	79.3
Yes	71.8	68.9	76.2	70.1	70.0	68.7	62.0
SEN							
No	85.7	86.1	89.0	83.0	85.0	84.7	82.1
Yes	45.7	41.8	49.5	44.8	44.8	45.1	38.4
EFL							
No	79.3	78.0	81.1	76.4	77.8	78.1	75.1
Yes	78.0	78.3	83.2	75.6	79.1	79.7	76.2

Source: IES analysis of EYFS profile results, available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-1-and-phonics-screening-check-attainment/2021-22

For Cohort 1, similar proportions of pupils met the expected standard in the Year 1 screening check compared with all pupils across three London boroughs involved in the study (77.1% versus 77.9%). These proportions are higher than for England as a whole (75.5%).

Breaking these results down by local area, higher proportions of pupils attending CVG project schools in Tower Hamlets (78.6%) and Hackney (84.1%) met the expected standard in their phonics screening check than all pupils in these boroughs (Tower Hamlets, 75.6%; Hackney, 82%). They were more likely to meet the expected standard by 3.0 and 2.1 percentage points respectively. This is despite Cohort 1 schools in these areas having higher proportions of pupils in receipt of FSM and SEN compared with the wider local population, which can be used as indicators of disadvantage. However, lower proportions of Cohort 1 pupils attending schools in Camden achieved the expected phonics standard compared with all pupils in this area, with a gap of 10.0 percentage points.

Higher proportions of Cohort 1 pupils from certain demographic groups reached the expected phonics standard compared to their peers in the local area. This included:

- Pupils of other ethnicities across all areas (10.0 percentage points). Within Hackney, a higher proportion of black pupils in Cohort 1 met the expected standard compared to their peers in the area (7.2 percentage points)
- Pupils with a SEN across all areas (7.1 percentage points). In Hackney, the gap was 7.7 percentage points, while in Tower Hamlets it was 13.8 percentage points.
- FSM-eligible pupils from Cohort 1 in Tower Hamlets also had a higher proportion meet the expected phonics standard (7.4 percentage points) compared to their peers in the local area. However, across all the boroughs, lower proportions of FSM-eligible pupils from Cohort 1 met this standard compared to all pupils.
- Higher proportions of Cohort 1 pupils who do not speak English as a first language met the expected standard, compared to their peers attending schools in Hackney (18.9 percentage points) and Tower Hamlets (4.9 percentage points).
- Taken together, these lower attainment gaps for pupils within Cohort 1 in Hackney and Tower Hamlets (who at a local level generally have lower proportions meet the expected Year 1 phonics standard, compared to their peers) may help explain why participating schools within these areas achieved higher overall results.

4.4 Progress made across the academic year

Next, we look at the progress made by pupils in their Reception year across both cohorts. The different levels of progress between certain groups may give us some indication of which groups the programme had more of an effect on.

This section reports pupil progress first by the bespoke measures used for this evaluation. This includes how often pupils read aloud, their attitudes towards reading, their engagement with reading and their engagement with rhyme and song. It then sets out pupils' progress, in terms of their level of development, from the start to the end of Reception year across the EYFS ELGs adopted for this project.[18]

Across all measures, pupils made significant progress over the course of the academic year. In several areas, pupils within disadvantaged groups (i.e. those eligible for FSM, or who do not speak English as a first language) saw larger improvements compared to their peers. With respect the EYFS profile scores, pupils

[18] CLPE changed the scope of the age categories between Cohorts 1 and 2

within Cohort 2 saw larger increases in their development age overall compared to Cohort 1.

4.4.1 Reading aloud

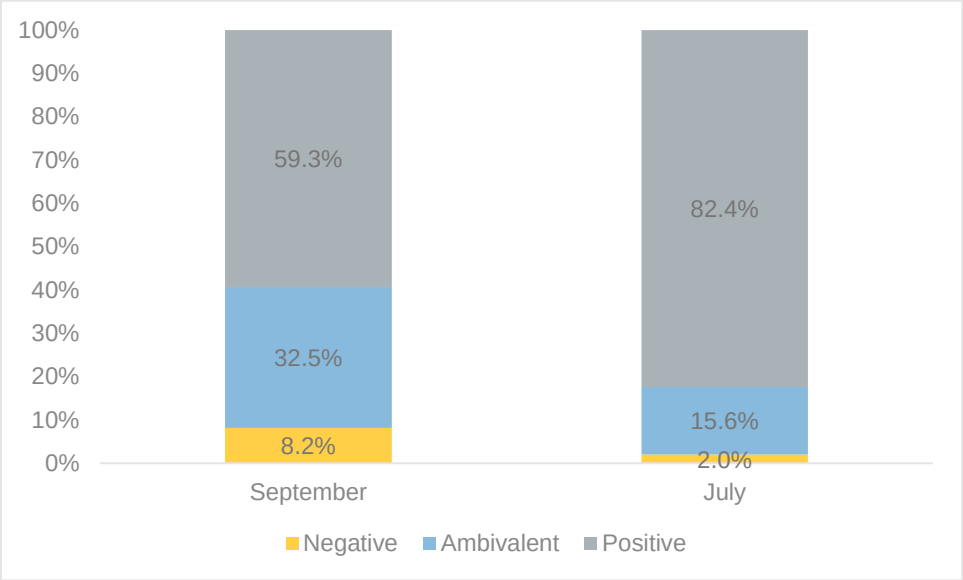
Across cohorts, **the frequency with which pupils read aloud increased for most pupils.**

- In Cohort 1, almost one-quarter (24.2%) of those that at the start of the year read daily only at school, reported reading daily at both home and school at the end of the year.
- In Cohort 2, this proportion was higher, with almost one-third (32%) of those that read daily at school at the start of the year, reading daily at both school and home by the end of it.
- Twenty-nine of the 32 Cohort 1 pupils that read occasionally at the start of the year increased their frequency of reading at home to some degree. For Cohort 2, this applied to 48 out of 55 pupils.
- Of the six Cohort 1 pupils that never read aloud at the start of the year, only one reported never reading aloud at the end of the year. In Cohort 2 however, all three of the students that never read aloud of the start of the year, still did not by the end of the year.
- The proportion of FSM eligible pupils reading aloud daily at both home and school more than doubled (9.1% to 19.0% in Cohort 1; 16.8% to 38.5% in Cohort 2), a larger relative increase than for non-eligible students (20.7% to 35.7% in Cohort 1; 36.6% to 49.4% in Cohort 2).
- This proportion also increased among EFL students (24.4% to 31.0% in Cohort 1; 41.2% to 54.1% in Cohort 2) but less than among non EFL students (13.9% to 28.1% in Cohort 1; 15.0% to 35.3% in Cohort 2).

4.4.2 Attitudes towards reading

Attitudes towards reading improved substantially across the year across both cohorts, as shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Attitudes towards reading across Cohorts 1 and 2



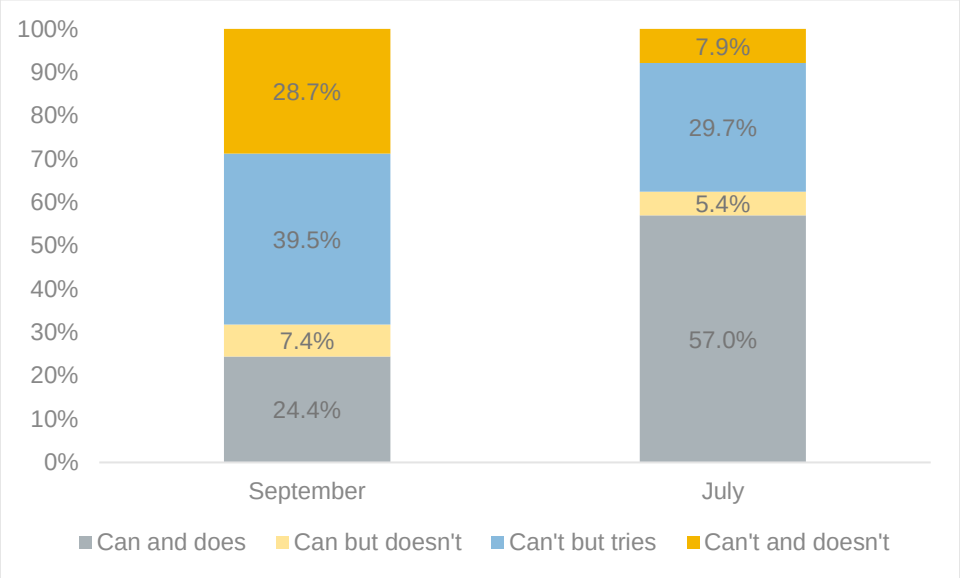
Source: CVG project data

- Across both cohorts, of the 115 pupils that had negative attitudes towards reading at the start of the year (8.2%), only 27 (2%) had negative attitudes at the end of it.
- The proportion of pupils that were ambivalent towards reading also decreased over the course of the year: from just under one-third to roughly 15 per cent of all pupils.
- The proportion of pupils with positive attitudes towards reading meanwhile increased by 23.1 percentage points over the course of the year: from roughly three-fifths (59.3%) to just over four-fifths (82.4%) of all pupils.
- The gap in positive attitudes towards reading between non-EFL and EFL students improved – positive attitudes went from 58.5% to 80.3% among non-EFL versus 70.9% to 87.4% for EFL students in Cohort 1, for example.

4.4.3 Engagement with reading

Engagement with reading also dramatically improved across the year across both cohorts, as shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Engagement with reading across both cohorts



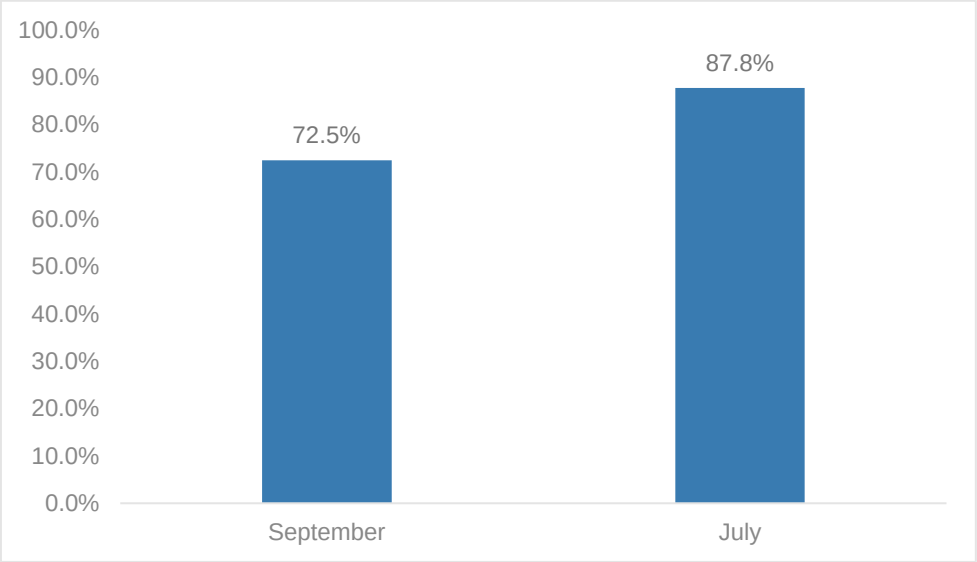
Source: CVG project data

- Across both cohorts, 404 (28.7%) of all pupils could not and did not engage with reading at the start of Reception. By the end of the year, this has reduced to 104 (7.9%) of all pupils.
- The proportion of pupils that could not read but try to and those that can read but choose not to also reduced over the course of the year, by roughly 10 percentage points and 2 percentage points respectively.
- The number of pupils who can and do read, meanwhile saw an increase of 32.6 percentage points: from almost one-quarter (24.4%) to just under three-fifths of pupils.

4.4.4 Engagement with rhyme and song

- There were also **strong improvements in engagement with rhyme and song across both cohorts, as shown in Figure 4.4.** Across both cohorts, the proportion of pupils that engaged with rhyme and song increased over the course of the year by 15.3 percentage points from 72.5 per cent to 87.8 per cent.

Figure 4.4: Engagement with rhyme and song across cohorts



Source: CVG project data

4.4.5 Progression across EYFS ELGs

Across the ELGs, there were also **broad increases in pupils'[19] developmental age across the year**. Higher rates of improvement across the year may be in part due lower baseline levels, which would provide greater room for improvement.

- In **Cohort 1**, 18 out of 20 pupils at the 16–26 months level for the *Language and attention* ELG were assessed as being at a higher level by the end of it – three of these pupils met the expected level by the end of the year.
- Within the same area of learning, 90 of the 99 pupils at the 22–36 months level for the *Understanding* ELG at the start of the year were at a higher level by the end of it.
- For the *Reading* ELG, 92 of 101 of pupils at the 22–36 months level progressed to a higher level by the end of the year. In addition, approximately nine in ten of the pupils at the 22–36 months and the 30–50 months level for *Writing* made progress across the year.
- Meanwhile for **Cohort 2**, two of the 12 (16.7%) pupils at 2–3 Years Emerging and eight of the 26 pupils at the 2–3 Years Secure level for *Listening, attention and understanding* at the start of the year were at the expected level by the end of it.

[19] For Cohort 1: 0–11 months; 8–20 months; 16–26 months; 22–36 months; 30–50 months; 40–60+ months; ELG Achieved; ELG Exceeded. For Cohort 2: 2–3 Years Emerging; 2–3 Years Secure; 3–4 Years Emerging; 3–4 Years Secure; 4–5 Years Emerging; 4–5 Years Secure; ELG Achieved.

- Three pupils went from 2–3 Years Emerging to the expected level across the year for *Speaking*. Just over seven in ten (71.2%) of those at the 3–4 Years Secure level for *Comprehension* at the start of the year, were at the expected level by the end of the year.
- Against the ELGs included in this study**, the developmental age of all pupils increased** by between 1.40 and 1.48 levels in Cohort 1. For Cohort 2, the size of the increase was larger: between 2.06 and 2.20.
- **In terms of ethnicity**, Asian pupils within Cohort 1 saw the largest increases in their development age across all the ELGS included in this study (1.48), while mixed ethnicity pupils saw the smallest increase (1.33).
- Within Cohort 2, differing rates of progress between ethnic groups were more notable. The other ethnic group saw the largest increase in their performance across all ELGs (2.52) while white pupils within participating schools saw the smallest increase across the course of the year (1.82).
- **Cohort 1 FSM-eligible pupils** had a slightly larger increase in their level of development in the *Understanding* (1.47) ELG compared to non-eligible pupils (1.46), although across all the other *Communication and language* and *Literacy* ELGs their increases were lower.
- In Cohort 2 however, FSM-eligible pupils saw a greater increase in their development level compared to non-eligible pupils for each ELG, as did those pupils with SEN and those that did not have EFL, compared to other pupils.
- Pupils at schools that were **members of the school federation in Hackney** that redesigned their literacy curriculum around the CLPE resources also had a higher rate of improvement across the ELGs compared to non-members – ranging from an increase of 2.48 to 2.94 compared to 1.83 to 2.00 for all other schools across both cohorts.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

The Theory of Change for the CVG project outlined that a well-designed CPD programme (which supported teachers to adopt creative pedagogical approaches and provided ideas for helping pupils to develop reading habits) combined with access to high-quality books at home and at school, would produce a range of **short-term outcomes** that would ultimately support children's engagement in reading and enhance their vocabulary development over time.

These short-term outcomes were centred around improving teachers' confidence in teaching literacy, language and communication; their subject and pedagogic knowledge; and supporting them to make more frequent use of high-quality texts and teaching materials in the classroom.

The project was also anticipated to increase the number of conversations that teachers have with children and their parents/carers about books and learning; and to enable knowledge sharing around evidence-based approaches to literacy teaching within participating schools, leading to new literacy, language and communication practices being embedded across the whole institution.

In the **long-term** it was anticipated that these changes would help improve attainment in literacy among children in participating schools and reduce the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

5.1 Short-term outcomes

The evidence collected as part of this evaluation showed that the short-term outcomes anticipated by the CVG project were broadly achieved.

Overall the teachers interviewed felt that the project had introduced greater variety into their teaching practice and made them consider how their current teaching approaches could be enriched further.

Teachers were using new pedagogical approaches, such as the 'slow reveal', to build children's engagement, excitement and immersion in the texts they had been given by CLPE, which they viewed as high-quality. For several teachers, these changes were now a regular part of their teaching practice, because of the benefits they had seen.

In this way**, teachers were more confident in their teaching of literacy, language and communication** as they had more tools at their disposal and could

see that these worked. One common area where teachers had grown in confidence was in making greater use of poetry texts in class. The training and resources provided by CLPE left teachers with ideas, practical steps and accessible texts that they could use to embed poetry in their day-to-day activities with pupils, which their classes had responded well to.

As is evident from the above descriptions, **teachers were able to make more frequent use of the CLPE texts and resources in the classroom over the course of this project**. However, in some cases this was moderated by the teaching approach stipulated by the school's senior leadership team, which created other competing priorities and reduced the amount of time teachers had available to cover the CLPE teaching materials and texts.

The in-depth interviews also provided evidence that teachers were working to enhance the reading environments within their classrooms and were creating more reading opportunities in the school day as a result of the project. This helped to **increase the number of conversations children had with teachers about books**.

The book gifting element was also seen to support these conversations. Teachers noted there was shared excitement during carpet time whenever they, or the children, chose to read an Imagination Library book that they had recently been gifted.

As a result of the above changes, several teachers commented that **children in their class were now showing more excitement and engagement around books** than they had at the start of the academic year. This was evidenced by **children talking about books and their illustrations more**; spending time looking through books independently; as well as teachers observing children retelling stories to their peers and families. Teachers were positive about the inclusivity of the suggested texts and activities in supporting the engagement of pupils with SEND and EAL and had observed the same outcomes across these groups as well.

While the teaching sequences were seen to work well for pupils with additional needs, some teachers wanted greater differentiation in these resources, so that they could cater for their needs even more. In several cases, teachers made their own judgements about how the activities would need to be modified to meet the needs of their pupils. In future, it may be beneficial for CLPE to provide more examples in the teaching sequences of how activities can be differentiated, to further assist teachers in this task.

In terms of **improving levels of communication between parents/carers and teachers about reading**, some teachers noted that they had been encouraging quality reading time at home, since the book gifting scheme started. Several interviewees stated that they had since received positive feedback on the scheme from parents and carers, who were grateful that their child was being gifted texts for their own collection and that the scheme was free. Some teachers sought to take

their engagement with parents further, recognising their importance to a child's reading experiences. Examples included creating a read and response book for parents and carers to complete with their child, to capture their thoughts about a text, and facilitating reading mornings for parents and carers within the school.

Parent and carer engagement was recognised as important by all interviewees in supporting a child's reading habits and some wanted the project to have a greater emphasis on this element. CLPE should consider sharing the examples described above with future trainees, to provide additional ideas for how teachers can support parent/carer engagement in reading, where time and resources allow.

Knowledge sharing within schools on evidence-based approaches to teaching literacy was also evident by year two of the project. While the knowledge sharing did not seem to be extensive at this stage, several teachers within Cohort 2 stated that they had discussions with Reception teachers from Cohort 1 about their experiences of delivery, the texts they had covered and what activities worked well, which they could incorporate into their own practice.

A final short-term outcome anticipated by the ToC was that the project **would introduce and embed new literacy, language and communication practices across the whole school**. This was partly evident by year two of the project within a school federation, which included eight schools participating in the project. At this stage, the early years literacy curriculum had been redesigned across the school federation and a shared teaching plan had been put in place, which was centred around CLPE's texts and teaching sequences.

Similar changes were not evident in any of the other participating schools when teachers were interviewed in year two of the project. However, at this point the project still had another year of training to deliver to an additional teacher in each school.

5.1.1 Long-term outcomes

The longer-term outcomes anticipated by the project over the course of its delivery were to improve attainment in literacy among children in participating schools, through improved EYFS profile and end of Year 1 phonics scores, and to reduce the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

The analysis of pupil outcomes completed as part of this project provided some partial evidence of improvements in attainment in literacy among participating schools.

The results from the data analysis showed that pupils in Cohort 2 had lower EYFS scores than the wider local population. This could be reflective of the criteria used to select schools for inclusion within the project, which focused on those settings with the greatest need.

However, within participating schools, the proportion of pupils at the expected level across all 10 ELGs was higher for Cohort 2 than Cohort 1. It may be that this was due to changes to teaching practice that were gradually embedding as part of the project. Other possible explanations could be that the pandemic had more of a disruptive effect on the EYFS scores of Cohort 1 during the 2020/21 academic year. It should be noted however that the EYFS profile changed between these year groups, so any direct comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

In terms of reducing the attainment gap, encouragingly**, the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers was smaller in project schools compared to all pupils within the local area**. In addition, the Year 1 phonics screening check results were higher for participating schools within Tower Hamlets and Hackney compared to the local population. Again, despite having more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, participating schools in these areas had smaller achievement gaps compared to the wider area.

This emerging evidence of promise that the project may have particular benefits for disadvantaged pupils in some local areas, suggests that **there is value in continuing the targeted recruitment of schools based on indicators of disadvantage for the CVG project**.

5.2 Recommendations

The findings from the evaluation of the CVG project provide some clear recommendations for the wider early years sector, in the delivery and funding of literacy interventions.

The unique combination of elements delivered as part of the CVG project has been successful in creating a positive reading culture within participating schools. This included sustained CPD training introducing new pedagogical approaches to several teachers within a single school, the provision of high-quality texts and supporting resources, as well as book gifting to children by the Imagination Library. Together, these elements helped to provide teachers with a flexible framework for considering how they could enhance pupils' engagement and enjoyment of books throughout their teaching practice. The selection of texts provided to teachers and the Imagination Library books gifted to children were key supportive elements of this process. Teachers reflected that the cultural diversity of these high-quality resources allowed children to see themselves reflected in these stories. They also supported children to build their own collection of books and provided opportunities for bonding experiences and shared excitement over the texts between classmates. In this way, the project was seemingly successful in supporting children's continued engagement with books at home as well as in the classroom. **These wide-ranging benefits indicate there should be continued funding and delivery of the CVG and similar projects.**

The findings from the evaluation also point to the effectiveness of a sustained programme of CPD, which trains multiple teachers within a single school over three years. This approach creates valuable peer support that enhances delivery and outcomes and allows sufficient time for new knowledge and practices to be embedded. **Similar future CPD programmes should take this approach and funders should offer multi-year grants to facilitate this as The Mercers' Company Early Years Special Initiative did in this instance.**

To enhance delivery, the evaluation also highlighted the importance of buy-in from school senior leadership teams for the CVG project. To make full use of CLPE's texts and resources, it was critical that teachers did not have too many competing priorities in terms of the literacy curriculum, and had the opportunity to integrate these materials into their planning for the year. **In future projects of this nature, senior leadership teams should support teachers to make full use of available provision to strengthen delivery and enhance outcomes.**

Based on the feedback from teachers, **the delivery of the CVG project could also be strengthened in future with extra funding to purchase additional resources for participating schools.** This would include the provision of Imagination Library books for nursery age children as well as additional copies of CLPE's selected PoR texts for participating schools. These additional resources would help create more reading opportunities for pupils and enhance delivery for teachers receiving the training across different year groups.

6 References

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7 Appendix

Table 7.1: Proportion of EYFS pupils at the expected level across each ELG by pupil characteristics, in England, London and Inner London.

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
England											
	Total	82.2	82.6	85.1	87.1	88.6	92.1	85.8	80.3	74.7	69.5
	Gender										
	Male	77.3	78.2	79.6	82.3	84.3	89.4	79.4	76	70.3	63.6
	Female	87.2	87.1	90.8	92	93.1	95	92.5	84.8	79.2	75.7
	Ethnicity										
	White	84.1	84.8	86.1	88.1	89.7	92.9	86.5	82.5	75.7	70.5
	Mixed	83.1	84	85.6	87.6	88.8	93	86.9	81.6	76.4	71.3
	Asian	78.2	77.2	84.4	85.7	86.9	89.8	85.3	75.2	74.1	69.3
	Black	75.6	75.9	79.4	82	83.1	88.8	81.9	73.8	72	66.1
	Other	71.3	69.3	80.2	82.3	83.9	89.7	83.2	67.2	65.7	60.4
	FSM eligible										
	No	84.3	84.7	87	88.8	90	93.1	87.8	83	78.1	73.1
	Yes	72.4	73.1	76.8	79.5	82	87.7	76.9	68.5	59.3	53.2
	SEN										
	Yes	36.4	36.2	38.8	43.2	47	59.6	45.2	37.7	36.3	26.9
	EFL										
	No	74.5	72.5	82.4	84.3	85.5	90.4	84.9	71.1	70.1	65.1
	Yes	84.5	85.6	86.1	88	89.6	92.7	86.3	83.1	76.4	71.1
	Term of birth										
	Autumn	86.9	87	88.2	89.9	90.6	93.9	90	85.6	81.5	77.8
	Spring	82.7	83	85.5	87.4	88.8	92.4	86.5	80.8	75.2	70.1
	Summer	76.8	77.6	81.5	83.8	86.2	89.9	80.9	74.4	67.2	60.3
London											
	Total	81.7	81.5	85.3	87	88.1	91.9	86.5	79.7	76.4	72.3
	Gender										
	Male	76.8	77	80	82.2	83.7	89.1	80.6	75.3	72.3	66.9
	Female	86.8	86.2	90.9	92	92.6	94.9	92.6	84.2	80.6	77.8
	Ethnicity										
	White	85.2	85.1	87.9	89.4	90.6	93.8	88.4	83.3	78.5	74.3
	Mixed	84.6	85.2	86.5	88.2	89.3	93.2	87.5	83	78.7	74.6

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	Asian	81.4	80.5	86.3	87.5	88.2	91.1	87.2	79.2	78.5	75.1
	Black	76.9	77.3	79.7	82.4	83.7	89	82.1	75.4	73.1	67.9
	Other	74.1	72.4	81.4	83.3	84.7	89.8	83.8	70.6	68.7	64.3
	FSM eligible										
	No	83.2	82.9	86.7	88.2	89.2	92.7	87.9	81.5	78.7	74.8
	Yes	74.8	75	79.1	81.5	83.1	88.6	80	71.4	65.6	60.7
	SEN										
	Yes	35.5	35.1	39.4	43.3	46	59.6	46.2	36.4	40.2	31.3
	EFL										
	No	78	76.6	84.1	85.8	86.9	91.1	86	75.1	74	69.8
	Yes	85.7	86.5	86.9	88.6	89.7	93	87.3	84.4	79.7	75.5
	Term of birth										
	Autumn	86	85.7	88.1	89.6	90.1	93.6	90.1	84.7	82.4	79.6
	Spring	82.5	82.1	86	87.5	88.5	92.6	87.4	80.4	77.2	73.2
	Summer	76.8	76.8	82	84	85.8	89.8	82	74.1	69.7	64.2
Inner London											
	Total	80.9	80.8	84.4	86.2	87.3	91.3	85.8	79.3	76.2	72.3
	Gender										
	Male	76.1	76.2	79	81.4	82.8	88.4	79.8	74.9	72.3	67.2
	Female	85.8	85.5	89.9	91.1	91.8	94.3	92	83.7	80.2	77.6
	Ethnicity										
	White	86	86	87.9	89.4	90.5	93.5	89	85.1	81	77.3
	Mixed	84.2	84.4	86	87.5	89.1	93.4	87.9	83	78.3	74.7
	Asian	78.5	77.7	83.7	85.1	85.8	89.1	83.9	76.1	75	71.6
	Black	77	77.3	79.7	82.9	83.7	89.2	82.4	75.2	72.7	68
	Other	72.2	70.4	81.3	83	84.5	89.2	83.4	68.9	68.5	64.2
	FSM eligible										
	No	83	82.7	86.1	87.7	88.6	92.4	87.6	81.7	79	75.4
	Yes	74.2	74.4	78.8	81.4	82.8	87.9	80.2	71.7	67	62.7
	SEN										
	Yes	35.4	35.4	39.5	43.9	46.5	61.2	48.3	36.9	40	32
	EFL										
	No	77.1	76	83.2	84.9	86	90.2	85	74.9	73.7	69.7
	Yes	85.1	85.8	85.9	87.9	88.9	92.5	87	84.2	79.8	76.1
	Term of birth										
	Autumn	85.2	85	87.5	89.2	89.4	93.4	89.7	84.3	82.1	79.4
	Spring	81.7	81	85	86.5	88	91.9	86.7	79.9	76.8	73.1
	Summer	76.2	76.4	80.8	83.1	84.6	88.7	81.3	74	69.9	65

Source: IES analysis of EYFS profile results, available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results/2021-22. ELGs: (1) Listening, attention and understanding (2) Speaking (3) Self-regulation (4) Managing self (5) Building relationships (6) Gross motor skills (7) Fine motor skills (8) Comprehension (9) Word reading (10) Writing.

Table 7.2: Proportion of EYFS pupils at the expected level across each ELG by pupil characteristics, by borough.

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Camden											
	Total	81.6	80.8	84.6	88	88.7	92.6	86.6	80.5	75.9	69.8
	Gender										
	Male	76.6	76.2	78.3	83.1	84.7	89.7	79.7	75.5	70.4	64.1
	Female	87.1	85.7	91.3	93.3	92.9	95.8	94	85.9	81.8	75.9
	FSM eligible										
	No	85.9	85.1	88.4	90.9	91.9	94.5	89.5	84.9	81.5	76.2
	Yes	73.9	72.9	77.6	82.8	82.8	89.2	81.3	72.6	65.7	58
	EFL										
	No	77.5	76.4	83.2	86.8	86.8	90.7	84.3	77	74.5	67
	Yes	86	85.1	86.2	88.6	90.4	94.1	88.8	84.2	77.7	73.1
	Term of birth										
	Autumn	83.8	84	84.8	88.7	89.9	94.9	89.7	83.2	81.1	75.6
	Spring	83.4	82.1	86.2	89	90.3	93.7	89.8	81.9	76.5	71.1
	Summer	78.1	76.7	83.1	86.6	86.2	89.5	81.1	76.8	70.6	63.2
Hackney											
	Total	81.5	81.9	84.8	85.7	86.8	89.5	86	79.8	76.7	74.6
	Gender										
	Male	75.7	76	80	81	82.5	85.3	80.7	74.3	70.8	67.4
	Female	87.2	87.7	89.4	90.3	91	93.6	91.3	85.2	82.5	81.6
	FSM eligible										
	No	82.6	83.1	85.5	86.4	87.1	90.2	86.4	81	77.4	75.4
	Yes	77.9	78.2	82.3	83.4	85.5	87.2	84.9	75.8	74.4	71.7
	EFL										
	No	77.4	76.6	85	85.2	85.6	88.2	85.4	75.7	76.3	73.8
	Yes	85.2	86.6	85.9	87.2	89.3	91.8	88.2	84.6	81.8	78.7
	Term of birth										
	Autumn	87.6	87.5	89.7	90.3	90.3	94.3	92.4	87.5	86	84.6
	Spring	81.3	81.8	85.5	86.4	87.5	89.3	85.7	80	77.9	75
	Summer	77.2	78	80.5	81.8	83.6	86	81.6	74	69	66.8
Tower Hamlets											

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Total	76.7	76.1	80.3	82.1	83.9	87.7	80.9	73	69.6	66.2
Gender										
Male	71.1	69.6	74	76	78.6	83.8	72.5	67.6	65.1	60.3
Female	82.6	82.8	86.9	88.4	89.4	91.7	89.6	78.7	74.3	72.3
FSM eligible										
No	78.1	77	81.5	83.2	84.9	88.8	82.9	74.9	72.1	68.6
Yes	72.8	73.6	76.9	78.9	81.1	84.3	75.1	67.7	62.5	59.1
EFL										
No	73.6	72.1	79.3	80.8	82.4	86.2	79.7	69	67	63.4
Yes	82.8	83.5	82.4	84.7	86.6	90.2	82.9	80.4	75.5	72.4
Term of birth										
Autumn	82.4	81.8	85.5	86.8	87.5	90.6	86.1	79.8	77.5	74.8
Spring	76.6	75.4	80.2	81.6	84.1	87.8	80.3	73	68.8	66.1
Summer	71.4	71.2	75.3	78	80.3	84.7	76.4	66.5	62.8	58

Source: IES analysis of EYFS profile results, available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results/2021-22. ELGs: (1) Listening, attention and understanding (2) Speaking (3) Self-regulation (4) Managing self (5) Building relationships (6) Gross motor skills (7) Fine motor skills (8) Comprehension (9) Word reading (10) Writing.

Table 7.3: Proportion of Cohort 1 pupils at the expected level across each AoL by pupil characteristics, by borough.

	Communication and language	Literacy	Personal, social and emotional development	Physical development
Total	61.0	50.5	60.1	70.2
Borough				
Camden	65.8	31.6	64.0	76.3
Hackney	65.6	57.7	64.8	77.7
Tower Hamlets	56.9	51.4	56.2	64.0
Gender				
Male	55.8	45.6	54.0	63.8
Female	66.0	55.1	66.0	76.4
Ethnicity				
White	67.3	54.9	65.4	72.2
Mixed	60.4	41.0	53.8	64.2
Asian	60.5	56.6	64.4	73.3
Black	57.5	43.1	51.5	67.1
Other	54.4	50.0	56.5	63.0
FSM eligible				

	Communication and language	Literacy	Personal, social and emotional development	Physical development
No	65.8	53.6	66.2	72.3
Yes	54.4	46.5	54.4	67.3
Has SEN				
No	70.2	53.9	68.0	79.2
Yes	17.9	17.9	19.3	26.4
EFL				
No	54.6	48.3	57.2	66.9
Yes	66.9	52.0	62.4	73.3
Term of birth				
Autumn	69.3	61.7	70.0	79.8
Spring	61.5	54.9	59.2	66.7
Summer	53.1	37.0	51.7	64.0
Pre-school provision				
No	52.2	45.7	52.2	69.6
Yes	63.9	53.0	64.3	73.8

Source: CVG project data. Base = minimum of 771 in total, 114 in Camden, 246 in Hackney, 411 in Tower Hamlets, 377 for Male, 394 for Female, 162 for White, 105 for Mixed, 281 for Asian, 167 for Black, 46 for Other (ethnicity), 444 for No (FSM eligible), 271 for Yes (FSM eligible), 542 for No (Has SEN), 140 for Yes (Has SEN), 381 for No (EFL), 377 for Yes (EFL), 266 for Autumn (Term of birth), 213 for Spring (Term of birth), 292 for Summer (Term of birth), 46 for No (PSP) and 602 for Yes (PSP).

Table 7.4: Proportion of Cohort 2 pupils at the expected level across each AoL by pupil characteristics, by borough.

	Communication and language	Literacy	Personal, social and emotional development	Physical development
Total	63.5	54.9	66.3	69.4
Borough				
Camden	66.7	59.7	70.8	70.8
Hackney	76.2	54.5	74.3	73.3
Tower Hamlets	56.6	53.4	61.2	67.1
Gender				
Male	57.5	49.0	57.5	60.0
Female	69.8	60.9	75.5	79.2
Ethnicity				
White	69.6	53.6	64.3	68.8
Mixed	64.5	54.8	61.3	64.5

	Communication and language	Literacy	Personal, social and emotional development	Physical development
Asian	60.3	55.9	68.7	71.5
Black	63.5	53.9	65.4	69.2
Other	42.9	42.9	57.1	50.0
FSM eligible				
No	64.4	55.7	67.1	71.2
Yes	61.6	51.7	62.9	64.9
Has SEN				
No	69.8	58.8	71.7	73.6
Yes	24.1	25.9	25.9	37.9
EFL				
No	56.8	51.6	64.5	69.0
Yes	66.7	55.6	66.2	68.4
Term of birth				
Autumn	74.5	67.6	75.2	80.0
Spring	61.4	46.5	64.0	62.3
Summer	56.8	51.2	62.4	68.0
Pre-school provision				
No	51.9	38.9	61.1	61.1
Yes	65.3	57.2	67.1	70.7

Source: CVG project data. Base = minimum of 786 in total, 114 in Camden, 261 in Hackney, 411 in Tower Hamlets, 383 for Male, 404 for Female, 172 for White, 107 for Mixed, 283 for Asian, 168 for Black, 46 for Other (ethnicity), 219 for 457 (FSM eligible), 273 for Yes (FSM eligible), 556 for No (Has SEN), 141 for Yes (Has SEN), 390 for No (EFL), 384 for Yes (EFL), 273 for Autumn (Term of birth), 217 for Spring (Term of birth), 296 for Summer (Term of birth), 46 for No (PSP) and 617 for Yes (PSP).

Table 7.5: Proportion of EYFS pupils at the expected level across each AoL by pupil characteristics, by borough.

		Communication and language	Literacy	Personal, social and emotional development	Physical development
Combined					
	Total	78.6	68.6	82.4	85.6
	Gender				
	Male	73.2	62.7	76.1	78.2
	Female	84.4	74.8	89.1	93.5
	FSM eligible				
	No	83.3	74.6	86.7	88.8
	Yes	70.0	57.5	74.4	79.7
	EFL				
	No	74.2	65.4	80.9	83.0
	Yes	83.1	72.3	84.3	88.0
	Term of birth				
	Autumn	82.3	75.0	83.8	88.7
	Spring	80.1	70.0	84.0	88.8
	Summer	73.9	61.2	79.6	80.0
Camden					
	Total	78.6	68.6	82.4	85.6
	Gender				
	Male	73.2	62.7	76.1	78.2
	Female	84.4	74.8	89.1	93.5
	FSM eligible				
	No	83.3	74.6	86.7	88.8
	Yes	70.0	57.5	74.4	79.7
	EFL				
	No	74.2	65.4	80.9	83.0
	Yes	83.1	72.3	84.3	88.0
	Term of birth				
	Autumn	82.3	75.0	83.8	88.7
	Spring	80.1	70.0	84.0	88.8
	Summer	73.9	61.2	79.6	80.0
Hackney					
	Total	78.7	72.6	82.1	84.9
	Gender				
	Male	71.8	65.3	76.2	79.1
	Female	85.4	79.6	87.8	90.6
	FSM eligible				

		Communication and language	Literacy	Personal, social and emotional development	Physical development
	No	79.5	73.0	82.5	85.2
	Yes	76.0	70.9	80.5	83.7
	EFL				
	No	75.4	72.3	82.9	84.6
	Yes	83.3	78.1	84.7	87.7
	Term of birth				
	Autumn	85.6	83.8	88.2	91.9
	Spring	79.6	73.3	83.6	85.2
	Summer	72.8	63.6	76.4	79.5
Tower Hamlets					
	Total	73.2	63.8	78.1	79.8
	Gender				
	Male	66.8	57.9	71.5	71.8
	Female	79.8	69.8	84.9	88.1
	FSM eligible				
	No	74.3	66.1	79.3	81.7
	Yes	70.0	57.0	74.5	74.3
	EFL				
	No	69.6	60.6	76.7	78.6
	Yes	80.2	70.5	80.9	81.9
	Term of birth				
	Autumn	80.0	72.5	83.5	85.5
	Spring	72.4	63.3	77.9	79.2
	Summer	67.4	55.9	73.1	74.8

Source: IES analysis of EYFS profile results, available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results/2021-22

Table 7.6: Proportion of EYFS pupils at the expected level across each AoL by pupil characteristics, regionally and nationally.

		Communication and language	Literacy	Personal, social and emotional development	Physical development
England					
	Total	79.5	68.0	83.0	84.9
	Gender				
	Male	74.3	62.0	77.2	78.4
	Female	85.0	74.3	89.1	91.6
	Ethnicity				
	White	81.6	69.2	84.1	85.6
	Mixed	80.8	69.8	83.7	86.0
	Asian	75.2	67.2	81.9	84.0
	Black	73.0	63.7	77.2	80.8
	Other	67.0	57.9	77.4	82.1
	FSM eligible				
	No	82.0	71.7	85.1	86.9
	Yes	68.6	51.7	73.7	75.7
	Has SEN	30.9	23.8	34.9	42.3
	EFL				
	No	70.5	62.5	79.9	83.7
	Yes	82.3	70.0	84.2	85.4
	Term of birth				
	Autumn	84.9	76.5	86.8	89.3
	Spring	80.1	68.6	83.5	85.6
	Summer	73.5	58.7	78.8	79.7
London					
	Total	79.1	70.4	83.3	85.6
	Gender				
	Male	73.9	64.8	77.5	79.6
	Female	84.5	76.2	89.3	91.8
	Ethnicity				
	White	82.7	72.8	86.0	87.7
	Mixed	82.6	73.1	84.8	86.7
	Asian	78.8	73.0	84.1	86.1
	Black	74.3	65.4	77.7	81.1
	Other	70.3	61.9	78.9	82.8
	FSM eligible				
	No	80.7	72.9	84.8	87.0
	Yes	71.7	58.7	76.4	78.9

		Communication and language	Literacy	Personal, social and emotional development	Physical development
	Has SEN	30.8	26.2	35.4	43.4
	EFL				
	No	74.6	67.4	81.9	85.0
	Yes	83.9	74.1	85.2	86.6
	Term of birth				
	Autumn	84.0	77.9	86.7	89.4
	Spring	79.9	71.4	84.0	86.7
	Summer	73.6	62.1	79.2	80.8
Inner London					
	Total	78.4	70.5	82.4	84.9
	Gender				
	Male	73.3	65.1	76.7	78.8
	Female	83.6	76.0	88.2	91.2
	Ethnicity				
	White	83.7	75.8	86.1	88.1
	Mixed	82.1	73.3	84.6	87.1
	Asian	75.6	69.3	81.4	82.8
	Black	74.5	65.7	77.9	81.4
	Other	68.6	61.9	79.2	82.6
	FSM eligible				
	No	80.6	73.5	84.2	86.7
	Yes	71.5	60.7	76.5	79.1
	Has SEN	30.9	26.9	35.9	45.3
	EFL				
	No	74.0	67.4	81.1	83.9
	Yes	83.3	74.7	84.4	86.3
	Term of birth				
	Autumn	83.3	77.7	86.2	89.1
	Spring	79.0	71.3	83.1	86.0
	Summer	73.1	62.8	78.1	79.9

Source: IES analysis of EYFS profile results, available at: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results/2021-22