



**Reading
Planet
Trial Schools
Review
2018-19**





Background

Prior to trialling of Reading Planet products during the academic year 2018-19, trials of the Reading Planet products were carried out in the academic years 2016-17 and 2017-18. These previous trials informed the publishing team on usage of the books and customer preferences and, in the second year, on usage of the first stages of the online library. 10 schools took part in the first year's trial and 5 schools in the second year. In 2018, 4 of the previous schools took part in the trialling and 4 new schools were added to extend geographical spread where possible.

The purpose of the 2018-19 trialling was to collect user feedback on the new publishing and on the fully-fledged online library, with a view to collecting qualitative and anecdotal evidence of impact on reading and to gauge pupil engagement in and schools' responses to the now extensive range of Reading Planet resources. Schools used Reading Planet books and online resources across EYFS and Key Stage 1 and, latterly, into Year 3. Most schools also used Reading Planet regularly with target groups of children whose reading ages were below their chronological ages. Some teachers have referred to some quantitative data in their feedback indicating pupils' progress in reading. It is not possible to draw validated conclusions that this progress is attributable only to the use of Reading Planet resources. However, where teachers' feedback on this data has been reported, it is within the context of the teacher having expressed their opinion that the use of Reading Planet resources has contributed to the progress they measured.



More than 900 pupils in schools around the country trialled Reading Planet on behalf of Rising Stars during the past academic year, in classes from Reception through to Year 3.

The majority of schools used Reading Planet for all of the following practices:

- guided reading, with groups of 5-6 pupils;
- one-to-one reading – pupil and an adult;
- large group or whole-class reading, using the Reading Planet Online books;
- and small group reading using the Reading Planet Online books.

Some schools allowed their pupils to take the books home whilst most kept them for use in school, sending some of their older reading scheme books home.

Some schools allowed their pupils access to the Reading Planet Online library at home.

All schools used the Reading Planet Online library in school to complement their teaching.



Teachers were asked what their main requirements would be of a reading scheme and, following trialling, gave their feedback on how well Reading Planet fits those requirements.

- 1) Engaging for children – interesting texts and illustrations
- 2) Builds on phonics base – works with Letters and Sounds
- 3) Strengthens comprehension
- 4) Good range of genres
- 5) Clear guidance and support for adults
- 6) Links to cross curricular topics
- 7) Digital version

When I moved to this school, I was so relieved that they had a good reading scheme in place – something fresh and modern. In terms of a reading scheme, it's brilliant – it really works. I use it for Guided Reading three times a week and for individual reading to an adult twice a week. Reading Planet has good texts, lots of variety of texts and good support activities – everything you want in a reading scheme, with very good guidance on Guided Reading.

*Vicky – Year 1 teacher,
Wilton CE Primary School*

Reading Planet is far more engaging than our other reading schemes and it links better with topics. The banded levels are more in line, even in the non-fiction, which is often an issue with other schemes. The Key Stage 2 books look mature and we like the chapter books. We use Letters and Sounds for phonics and the Rocket Phonics complement this nicely.

Gayle Berry, English & EYFS-KS1 Lead, Griffin Park Primary School, Blackburn.

We assessed our other reading books and book bands against Reading Planet and found that the other schemes didn't match up. Reading Planet was higher quality, better in levels of text, better stories, more relevant content and even better punctuation. We like that the expectations are linked to the end of Key Stage assessments. We love the linked phonics focus and the comprehension questions.

Hayley Footitt, English Lead, Ancaster Primary School, Lincs.

We really like the progression within the colours building up to independence. It allows children to develop confidence. Our children are much more engaged with Reading Planet and the staff find the teacher guidance and activities helpful. We use Read Write Inc for phonics input and have found that Reading Planet links in well with our phonics teaching.

Suzanne Gibbons, Headteacher, Tranmoor Primary School, Doncaster.

The children really enjoy the Reading Planet stories and characters – they gain a lot from them and [the books] spark interest. The Rocket Phonics books link well and the series is very good for Guided Reading. We love the assessment sheets – these are great to show parents where there are still gaps or whether the child should move up a level. Our TAs use these to check pupils are on the right levels.

Kyle Edwards, Phonics Lead, Downsway Primary School, Reading.

We have been trialling the books for 2 years and would like to continue with the Reading Planet Scheme as it has made a huge difference to our pupils' reading skills.

Mari Basson – previously Assistant Head at Foxborough Primary School, Slough.

The children like the Comet Street kids characters. I use the books for Guided Reading and individually [and] would like to start sending them home. The books link with our curriculum and the children love the online resources.

Carlos Sanchez, Year 1 Teacher, Foxborough Primary School, Slough.

We have [a well-established reading scheme] but have now chosen Reading Planet as our scheme going forward. The teachers prefer it and they feel it has contributed to our improved SATs results in Reading. We prefer high quality books and images. The children are engaged and the scheme is easy to use. It fits with Letters and Sounds. We're happy for other schools to talk to us about our use of the scheme.

Richard Boase, Headteacher, Wilton CE Primary School, nr. Salisbury.

Reading Planet is living up to all our requirements of a reading scheme. Great scheme. We love the digital versions for whole class teaching.

Stephen Booth, Headteacher, St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs.

We read the print books daily, in groups and for independent reading, and we also use the books in phonics intervention groups. We like the links with curriculum topics – it's apparent that the scheme reflects the content domains from the National Curriculum and the punctuation is in line with what's being taught in each year group, too. In Reception, we like that the books are decodable and that the children can move through the bands at a better pace.

Natalie Barney, Year 2 Teacher, St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs.



Teachers were asked what impact they felt Reading Planet had had on their pupils' reading skills, and they identified that Reading Planet was effective in helping their pupils in the following areas:

- ❖ Applying their phonics learning
- ❖ Retrieval of information
- ❖ Reading comprehension and inference
- ❖ Confidence in reading
- ❖ Confidence in discussing texts

We have been trialling Reading Planet for 2 years. Our SATs results were successful this year (2019) – 70% at Expected and 30% at Greater Depth – we were below national average last year (60%, and 50% the year before). I think using Reading Planet has contributed to this success – the questions are pitched right with inference questions not just retrieval questions similar to SATs questions.

Ben Gunn, Year 2 Teacher, Wilton CE Primary School, nr Salisbury

Year 2 progress has been really good. One boy in particular was on the blue books at the beginning of the year and is now on Gold. The books have really motivated him. This is a massive massive jump. I would have predicted he'd be Working Towards but he is now at Expected standard.

Natalie Barney, Year 2 Teacher, St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs.

We felt that the intervention group passed their phonics screening test with using Reading Planet and the reinforcement at home with the online has helped – they have been reading more at home when they wouldn't normally and they like doing the online quizzes and getting the stars at the end.

Sophie Wyatt, Year 1 Teacher, St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs.

We've really enjoyed using the Speech Rhythm activities, both in Nursery and especially with the children with SEN in Key Stage 1. We feel they are helping these children in their learning and would like extension of this.

Gayle Berry, English & EYFS-KS1 Lead, Griffin Park Primary School, Blackburn.

In Reception, I've had more children reading this year – they've been able to access the books and practise their phonics and this has had a knock-on effect in improving their literacy and their writing.

*Claire Lowden, Reception & Early Years Lead,
St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs.*

We have 20% EAL and 46% PPG. Reading Planet has made a big impact in Key Stage 1 over the last year. We have children moving through the book bands quicker. We tracked groups of target children, reading with Reading Planet books every day. One of the children with EAL had a starting reading age of 5 yrs 4 months in September and their reading age in July is 10 yrs 7 months. One of the target group progressed from reading age 4 yrs 9 mths to 8 yrs 11 mths; one was below 4 yrs 5 mths and is now at 6 yrs 2 mths; one was at 4 yrs 5 mths and now at 7 yrs 5 mths. SEN children in the target group all made over 1 year reading age progress.

Gayle Berry, English & EYFS-KS1 Lead, Griffin Park Primary School, Blackburn

I do think Reading Planet has helped with confidence in reading and therefore that helps children to feel more confident addressing assessments. The scheme has encouraged the children to want to move on and up. We had a child with EAL join in October with a low PIRA [Reading test] standardised score of 75, whose score is now 98 after only 9 months – Reading Planet has definitely helped her to build up her vocabulary and encouraged her engagement. She started on red books and is now on orange, soon to be turquoise.

Kyle Edwards, Phonics Lead, Downsway Primary School, Reading.

Reading Planet has had an extremely positive impact upon reading in KS1 here at St Barnabas. Our children are more positive in their desire to want to read to us and their parents. Parents tell us how excited their children are to read the online books using their iPads and to answer the comprehension questions when they have finished the story. Our KS1 Reading Attainment & Progress scores are improved and part of this improvement is due to our using the online Reading Planet resources in our Guided Reading sessions in class.

Stephen Booth, Headteacher, St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs.



Teachers were asked how they have made use of the Reading Planet Online Library. Their feedback identified the following areas in which they found the online library was particularly helpful:

- ❖ Engaging all children in whole-class or large group shared reading experiences, and keeping them focussed.
- ❖ Making texts accessible and engaging for children whose reading levels might be lower than the text being read.
- ❖ Building children's confidence in reading by using the audio-synced modelled reading first.
- ❖ Helping children track stories, predict outcomes and comprehend meaning better.
- ❖ Helping with applying phonics and spelling in shared reading.
- ❖ Helping children and parents to engage with reading experiences at home.
- ❖ Helping children with SEN to engage with and practise reading.

Using the online library for shared group reading with wide ability range has been fantastic for whole class sessions because even the less able can participate and repeat after the audio – the audio has been amazing and helps them to learn words by sight without needing lots of flashcards. It has been really good for allowing all children to enjoy a book together. Rather than it being a passive experience, the children come up to the whiteboard and answer quizzes, highlight text, move things around – all this enhances the shared reading experience.

Natalie Barney, Year 2 Teacher, St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs.

All children are motivated and engaged when the online library is used in class. The quizzes help the children to create those mental markers for what happens where in the book – essential reading skills that we later take for granted but which are difficult for many children to develop. Having the quizzes as checkpoints through the story allows the children to embed the order of events in their memories.

Deborah May, Literacy Lead, Tranmoor Primary School, Doncaster.

Reading regularly at home is a challenge for our school. Access to the books online supports the home-school relationship. We also use it in class for shared reading. It keeps children engaged.

Suzanne Gibbons, Headteacher, Tranmoor Primary School, Doncaster.

The children have enjoyed using the online books for shared reading in class. They love answering the questions as a group and using the quizzes. They like the stars. The reports give precious information about the children's reading.

Carlos Sanchez, Year 1 Teacher, Foxborough Primary School, Slough.

Reading Planet really engages the children with Special Needs. Having it on-screen, big bright and colourful, and being able to use the audio and quizzes really helps them to stay engaged or re-engage when their focus drifts. We use the online for shared reading – we discuss the pictures and the children love the characters – they feel they know them and like to see which character is going to be in the story this time. I use the Toolkit to highlight elements in the text on screen and this helps me to reinforce spelling and phonics.

Bev Davis, SENDCo, Wilton CE Primary School, nr Salisbury.

I like being able to search on the toolbar to find the topics that link with our themes, like Space, for example. I also like that the theme-linked key words from the new curriculum can be seen in context in the books by the children.

Natalie Barney, Year 2 Teacher, St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs

We use the online books in shared reading on the whiteboard. The children enjoy it as a bit more interactive – being able to circle and draw on the board is helpful. We also allocated books from the online library for reading over the summer holidays as we can't allow larger quantities of books to go home over the summer.

Danni Rackley, English Lead, Downsway Primary School, Reading.

The children really enjoy shared reading with the online books in the classroom. They look forward to the interspersed quizzes which help with their comprehension, prediction and inference skills. We want to get them logging on from home next.

Hayley Footitt, English Lead, Ancaster Primary School, Lincs.

The children in the intervention groups have really enjoyed using the online books at home as well as sharing them in class. They have one book a week allocated to them to reinforce what we're doing in school and their parents have loved using the books with their children.

*Sophie Wyatt, Year 1 Teacher,
St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs.*



Teachers were asked for their feedback on supporting materials – both on the inside covers of the books and in the Teachers' Guides. The consensus of opinion highlighted that:

- 1) The comprehension questions on the last page of the books are invaluable.
- 2) Having the key sounds and tricky words on the inside front covers are really useful for teachers and parents.
- 3) The 'before reading' and 'after reading' tips on the inside front cover have been helpful to parents.
- 4) The Teachers' Guide resources have been useful for teaching assistants and in interventions in particular.
- 5) The assessment sheets have been helpful in supporting teacher/TA judgements (especially when parents are pushing to move children up levels).
- 6) The Reading Record books have been very useful in steering parents and adults to make purposeful comments and how to focus on elements of reading.
- 7) The Parents' Guide to Reading has been useful in the first instance but may be more widely distributed now available freely in PDF.

Our Teaching Assistant uses the grapheme section and relates the sounds she's picking up on in the children's intervention to the books and uses the teacher support materials in the intervention. We use the Talk About the Story questions in our Guided Reading sessions. It's clear they use retrieval, inference, vocab and personal experience questions. Some of the parents have commented in the reading records that they have used those questions at home.

Natalie Barney, Year 2 Teacher, St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs

The Teacher's Guides are really comprehensive – very easy for anyone covering to pick up and use.

Gayle Berry, English & EYFS-KS1 Lead, Griffin Park Primary School, Blackburn.

We find the reading assessments in the Teachers' Guides super helpful. All of the teachers in Key Stage 1 really like those. They help back up the teacher's or TA's judgements and are useful if parents are querying why their child isn't moving up a book band. We want these assessments sheets higher up the school, too, when we're rolling out the scheme above year 3. Lots of parents comment that they ask the questions in the books. We use the questions in Guided Reading, too.

Danni Rackley, English Lead, Downsway Primary School, Reading.

Our Literacy Lead worked with Nursery to develop the Speech Rhythm activities and found them really useful – she worked with 2 year olds to see how we can think about using these activities in their settings. The Reading Record books are great – because they are glossy and look important, they seem to be better looked-after than others we've used – they tend to go missing less and get filled in more. We very much like the hints for parents on how to fill them in and what are useful comments.

Suzanne Gibbons, Headteacher, Tranmoor Primary School, Doncaster.

I like the support pages of key words – I discuss the words with the children and I can see that it helps in vocabulary development. I love the comprehension questions and the children have enjoyed the music, too.

Claire Gamble, Reception Teacher, Tranmoor Primary School, Doncaster.

We like the tricky words being listed in the front of the books and the phonics. The Teaching Assistants often complete the assessments sheets and then the follow-up dialogue with the teacher is really useful.

Kyle Edwards, Phonics Lead, Downsway Primary School, Reading.



Teachers were asked for their feedback on the range of titles and the genres – key points from this feedback include:

- 1) All teachers commented that the books had proved useful in complementing their foundation curriculum topics
- 2) Teachers generally felt all genres were covered
- 3) Teachers felt that the strands were appropriate and that the books were relevant to the target age levels

Great range of genres. We loved the links with Geography – these have grabbed the attention of the children. Also really like the Lift-off and Lift-off First Words.

*Gayle Berry, English & EYFS-KS1 Lead,
Griffin Park Primary School, Blackburn*

Many of the books link in with things we're doing and help to develop vocab – like the 'Café' one. I'd really like individual books on each of the seasons at the very lowest levels to help develop vocab on each season.

Claire Gamble, Reception Teacher, Tranmoor Primary School, Doncaster.

I really like the traditional tales lower down the school and then now to have those that the children are not so familiar with coming in in the higher levels is great, like *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*.

Kyle Edwards, Phonics Lead, Downsway Primary School, Reading.

We like the Geography titles – continents and wonders of the world. They've been good to link with our safari topic. We like the traditional tales and the Art titles – especially the Gaudi one for our famous artists project in year 2. We'd like some to link with RE – maybe cultural festivals or stories from different religions?

Natalie Barney, Year 2 Teacher, St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, Worcs.



Teachers were asked for any recommendations for additions or changes to improve Reading Planet. Key points from this feedback include:

- 1) All teachers were keen to have the Teacher's Guide resources available online for ease of access. *Actioned by Rising Stars*
- 2) Several teachers had suggestions for further additions to the range, including RE, more maths (stories around money, multiplications, operations), science (KS2), more poetry, graphic novels. *Actioned by Rising Stars*
- 3) Several teachers suggested high interest, low reading age strand. *Actioned by Rising Stars*
- 4) Several teachers said they would like the online quizzes to provide certificates at the end of the quizzes. *Actioned by Rising Stars*
- 5) One school asked for weekly emailed updates of which children had logged on that week. *Under consideration*
- 6) One teacher asked for index and glossary to be introduced in non-fiction from lower age levels. *Under consideration*
- 7) One SENDCo suggested a SEN Teacher Guide with strategies and possibly Speech Rhythm activities. *Under consideration*



Future involvement of schools that took part in this trial:

- 1) All schools enjoyed using Reading Planet.
- 2) All the schools are interested in trialling and feedback opportunities in the future.
- 3) All schools are open to being contacted for case studies.
- 4) All schools would be interested in hosting Reading Planet events for their local schools.
- 5) All schools are open to being contacted by other schools for reference regarding Reading Planet.



In conclusion:

Key Stage 1 and Year 3 have really enjoyed using Reading Planet. We're now investing in the scheme for Year 4 upwards. Before Reading Planet, we had lots of different schemes going. We're now really keen to have Reading Planet running all the way through.

Danni Rackley, English Lead, Downsway Primary School, Reading.

We're not using anything else as a scheme. We are looking to lose the older schemes and replace as funding allows.

Suzanne Gibbons, Headteacher, Tranmoor Primary School, Doncaster.

For access to quality reading books, there isn't anything else out there at the moment that compares.

Emma Mann, Deputy Headteacher, Penn Wood Primary School, Slough.