

CASE STUDY

A Reading Doctor pupil in a special school setting

The Reading Doctor removes barriers to becoming a successful reader by building learning pathways that enable the child to become a confident and capable reader, who reads for pleasure and reads to learn.

A Reading Doctor pupil in a special school, typically has a reading age significantly below age-related expectations and presents a range of barriers to learning. The Reading Doctor specialises in working with the individual child to achieve reading success.

BACKGROUND, EHCP

2020, prior to specialist provision

- Articulate
- Adhd diagnosis 2015
- Asd/c diagnosis 2017
- Irlens syndrome
- Phonological processing challenges
- Social communication/emotional literacy challenges

The school employs a 'Reading Doctor' who works with all pupils with a reading age of less than eight. This intervention has been extremely positive and over the last nine months, on average, these pupils' reading ages have improved by nearly two years. One pupil proudly told the inspector that a year ago he was on reading 'stage one' and he is now on 'stage five'.

OFSTED (2019)

CHALLENGES

Learning difficulties
Low self-esteem
Behavioral issues

BACKGROUND

Little progress
Multiple diagnoses
Literacy challenges

APPROACH

Identifying strengths
Age-sensitive
Multi-sensory

RESULTS

Raised attainment
Higher self-esteem
Independence



STRENGTHS IDENTIFIED IN EHCP

Communication and Interaction

Articulate, verbose, can talk at length on topics of interest, seeks clarification

Cognition and learning

High attendance rate, motivated, responds positively to quiet praise, good attention in quiet 1:1 environment, average visual processing speed, attention to detail, processes information in visual rather than auditory form

Social Emotional & Mental Health

Keen to be 'good'/follow class rules, shares problems with parent, affectionate towards family members, keen to develop friendships

DIFFICULTIES IDENTIFIED IN EHCP

Communication and Interaction

Literal understanding of language, poor awareness of the listener, significant difficulties- verbal communication (cognitive assessment), immature behaviour, difficulty interacting with peers, encountering new adults a challenge, rigidity of thinking- very hard to accept other viewpoints, sensory processing – sensitivity to noise, struggles with crowds, sensitive to some materials/clothing

Cognition and learning

Significantly below age expectations, learning gap between self and peers continues to grow, struggles to maintain attention, difficulty sitting still, phonological processing challenges- unable to decode basic words, low range verbal comprehension, low average spatial awareness (although refused to continue assessment), extremely low spelling/word reading, short attention span, becoming demotivated to learn

Social Emotional & Mental Health

No meaningful/reciprocal friendships, does not see peers outside of school, vulnerable to negative peer influences, social interaction on own terms/lacks perspective taking skills, still developing understanding of appropriate social behaviour, easily provoked, struggles to maintain focus- significant barrier to establishing meaningful engagement, communication difficulties- limited friendships (may become increasingly aware), social naivety (vulnerable), not seeking freedom/independence, developing ability to recognize emotions in others, does not readily use words to express emotions, mood can fluctuate quickly- minor triggers, frustration when struggling to complete tasks, can throw items, struggles to manage emotions when denied access to something of interest, rigid thinking- struggles with change of structure & routine, can be defiant & self-directed in behaviour, transition/ unstructured times can be difficult, lacks resilience to cope with mistakes/setbacks, annoyance when receiving constructive feedback from adults, low mood, negative self-statements, worries in unfamiliar settings/situations, difficulty establishing between reality and fantasy, can develop fixations, impulsive behaviour- lacks safety awareness.

THE READING JOURNEY

This case study tells the story of a teenager, who after years of mainstream education, moved to a Special School. It was here in June 2020 where we met and began The Reading Doctor Intervention. The initial face-to-face assessment revealed a very negative view of self as a reader and a lack of skills and strategies necessary to read with fluency, comprehension and accuracy. As a result, the pupil was reading 5 years below age-related expectations. He was angry and frustrated at not being able to read. Subsequent lessons began in June 2020 and took place initially online.

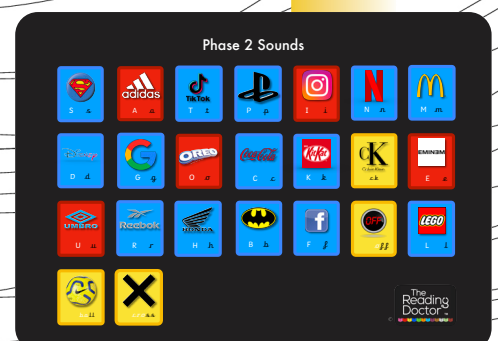
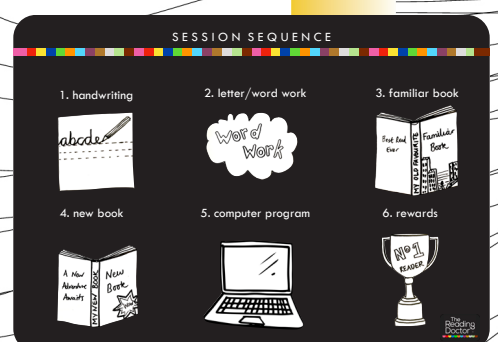
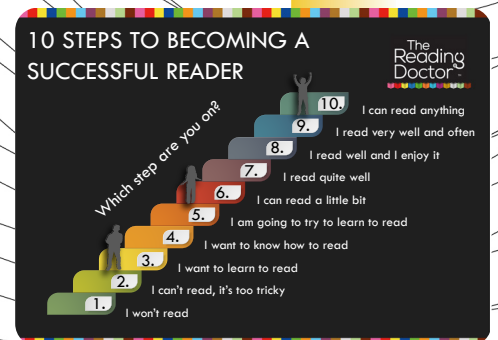
During the initial sessions, self-assessment showed a pupil who placed themselves as 'I won't read.' on the 'Steps to becoming a successful reader' chart. The pupil's only strategy for attempting unknown words was decoding using phonics. For this particular learner, this approach caused much frustration as this is an area of weakness. Challenges around phonological awareness, make the decoding strategy less effective.

After only a few sessions, attitudes to reading began to change and the sessions were embraced, as was the opportunity to improve and learn new strategies. This new range of approaches to tackling unknown words, provided the pupil with a toolkit for problem-solving when reading, which over time has resulted in increased accuracy, independence, self-correction rate and pleasure for reading. We continued to develop phonics knowledge and skills using age-sensitive and multi-sensory resources to aid learning retention, combining this with the pupil's existing knowledge of language structure, the meaning of the text and general knowledge, resulting in reading for meaning and pleasure.

On the ninth lesson, we were able to meet again face-to-face. Always engaged and focused in the sessions, they are a pleasure. This pupils enthusiasm and creative flair have made a valuable contribution to The Reading Hub. 18 months on, 31 sessions later, the view of 'self' on the 'Steps to becoming a successful reader' chart has moved up 6 levels to, 'I can read quite well' and the gap to meeting age-related expectations is closing with an increase in reading age of over 2 years.

Deborah Salsbury, The Reading Doctor

METHODS



PUPIL VOICE

How was your reading at your old school?

- I could barely read.
- I didn't want to do it.
- I felt like I wanted to run away and hide when I had to read.
- I once locked myself in the toilet because I had time to check the timetable, I refused to come out and read.
- They couldn't help me read.

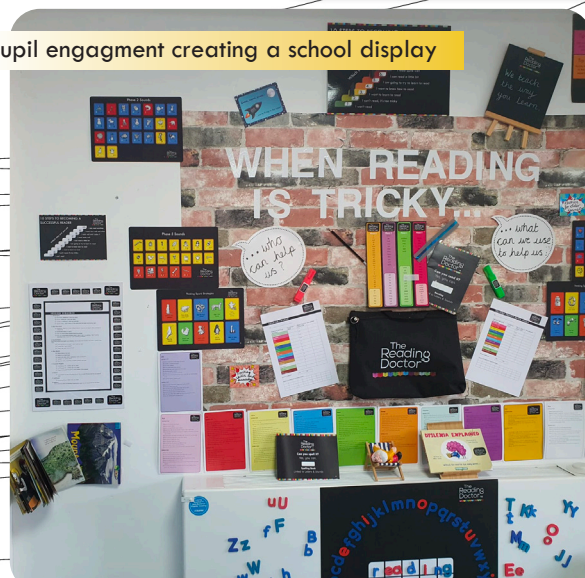
What happened when you starting reading with The Reading Doctor?

- The books you picked were always perfect and similar to me and my personality...like the funny detective one.

What do you think about your reading now?

- Now I just can't get enough of reading.
- I use other things when I get stuck - Thinking Sparks
- I'm starting to read everywhere, on £10 notes, subtitles, I can't stop!
- 'My reading has improved because of all your crazy, weird methods.'

Pupil engagement creating a school display



3rd place in a school art competition for a jewelled model of a book, representing personal progress in reading.

SCHOOL LEADERS

Over the past two years Deborah has worked with us at St Anthony's providing 1:1 reading support for pupils with a variety of special needs. Deborah is particularly good at patiently building trust with young people so that she can then effectively use her expertise to deliver high quality interventions. She has had remarkable success with some of our most challenged students.

Antony Curry
Deputy Head, St Anthony's

www.st-anthonys.kent.sch.uk/the-reading-doctor

READING PROFILE - ENTRY LEVELS

Pupil progress tracking against Entry Levels

| Book Band/Entry Level/Reading Age (PM Benchmark Assessment) | Current Year Group | Phonics-Letters & Sounds Phase | Date achieved |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Entry level 1 pink 5.0yrs | | 1/2 | |
| Entry level 1 red 5.3yrs | | 2/3 | |
| Entry level 1 yellow 5.6yrs | | 3/4 | |
| Entry level 1 blue 5.9yrs | | 5 | |
| Entry level 1 green 6.2yrs | | 5 | |
| Entry level 1 orange 6.5-7.0yrs | | 5 | |
| Entry Level 2 turquoise 7.0-7.5yrs | 8 | 6 | Sept '20 |
| Entry Level 2 purple 7.5-8.0yrs | 8 | 6 | March '21 |
| Entry Level 2 gold 8.0-8.5yrs | 8 | 6 | June '21 |
| Entry Level 2 white/silver 8.5-9.0yrs | 9 | 6 | Dec '21 |
| Entry Level 3 lime/emerald 9.0-10.0yrs | | | |
| Entry Level 3 Brown 10.0-11.0yrs | | | |

Dyslexic tendencies? **Yes/No**
The Reading Doctor Intervention? **Yes/No**
S&L Intervention? **Yes/No**