## Case Study: Mersey Vale Primary School

Every pupil should be able to reach for the stars without their reading difficulties holding them back. But how can teachers be sure they have identified exactly which children in their classrooms need extra support with reading? And what about those children who are just about managing but who could make so much more progress if their reading improved?

These were the questions that the outstanding Mersey Vale Primary school set out to answer when they introduced the Lexplore Analytics reading assessment programme.
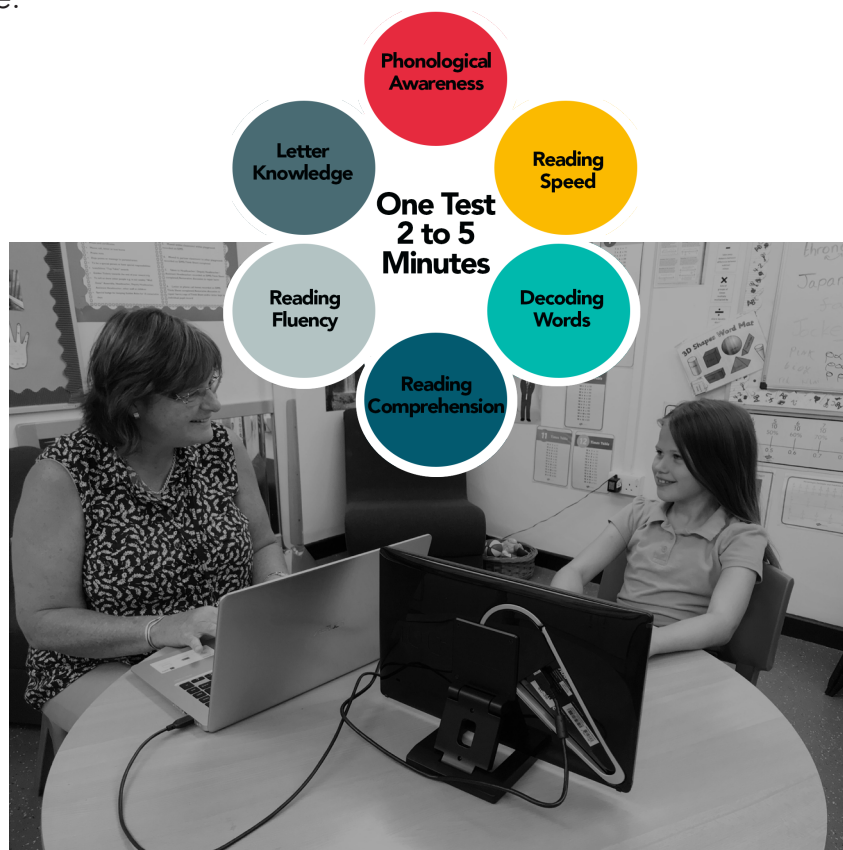
A sharper focus on reading

Reading is fundamental to a child's education,so Mersey Vale was determined to make sure every pupil with a reading difficulty could be identified and provided with targeted support, so that everyone fulfils their potential.

But the reading assessments the school used to evaluate its pupils only told part of the story, as Jayne Mullane, headteacher, explains. "What we needed was an approach that could offer us a greater degree of focus so that we could set interventions for the individual child, meaning that no one gets left behind."

So over a period of two days, every child from Year 2 to Year 5 took the Lexplore analytics assessment.

A revolutionary approach

The Lexplore Analytic's tests use eye tracking technology to monitor the way a child's eyes move while they are reading a piece of text aloud and silently.

This information provides startling insight into the cognitive processes a child goes through while reading, by recording how long the eyes rest on one word, and how quickly they move forwards or backwards across a series of words, the assessment can identify a child's reading attainment based on their eye movements, and thanks to machine learning, the technology pinpoints which pupils may be having difficulties with their reading.

While the concept is highly technical and based on years of research, the tests themselves are fun for pupils to do, as Jayne explains. "The children read a short paragraph from a computer screen and no writing is involved, so the assessment is focused purely on reading. The great thing is that it's fun and the content is interesting so the children really enjoyed completing the test."

"The screening process takes just a few minutes for each pupil. It is quick, straight forward and easy to manage within the day-to-day routine of the school," explains Jayne.

> *"It's amazing to see such detail, and it's very clear from Lexplore's results how you can give targeted support."*
>
> **Jayne Mullane, Headteacher, Mersey Vale Primary School**

The insight to make a difference

Mersey Vale had secure online access to the results of the tests, and a meeting was arranged with the Lexplore Analytics team to discuss the findings.

"The results are given clearly in the portal and Lexplore provided us with an overall picture of how our children performed in the tests compared with other schools.

"You can drill down into an individual pupil's results and understand from their eye movements how that child is reading so you can give targeted support."
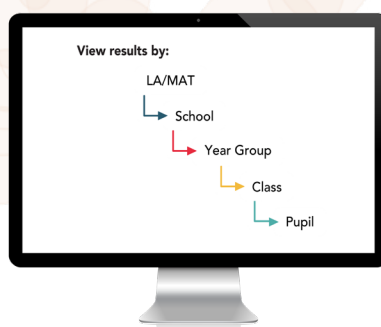
View results by:

LA/MAT
→ School
→ Year Group
→ Class
→ Pupil
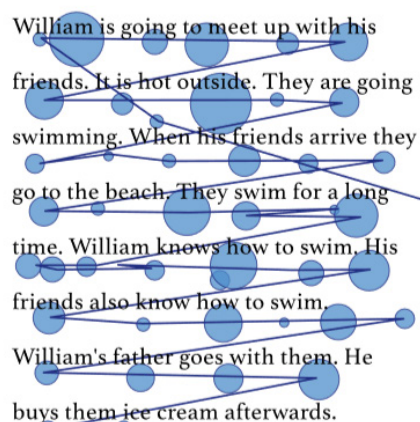
Making an impact on performance

The results from the Lexplore Analytics assessment are already making a positive impact on Mersey Vale School.

"Our special educational needs coordinator has been using the results to build into pupils' individual plans and to set interventions that we can monitor over time. The assessments are helping us give pupils the boost they need to learn more effectively."
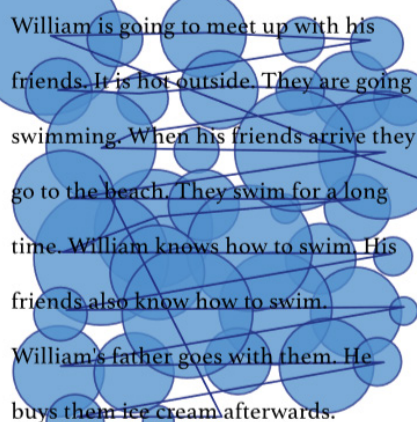
But one of the most astonishing outcomes of the testing was that it has helped the school to uncover examples of children who were not previously identified as having reading difficulties.

"The tests showed that one of our Year 5 girls was finding reading difficult, but this was something we hadn't spotted before," says Jayne. "Because she had developed effective coping strategies to manage those difficulties, we hadn't realised that she needed support."

"This pupil is very capable, so now we make sure we give her reading material with a high interest level but a simpler text that she can follow more easily."

Next steps

The assessments are most effective if used on an ongoing basis to monitor the progress of pupils, and Jayne plans to build Lexplore Analytics into the school's regular assessment programme.

"We have already started to retest the pupils who are at risk of reading difficulties to check the progress of specific interventions that we put in place.

"We are also planning to share the results in transition meetings where class teachers discuss pupils' progress before they move up a year," Jayne continues.

"I am hoping to build the results into our discussions with parents, so they can see the specific difficulties their child is having with reading, and we can start conversations about how parents can support their child at home.

"Lexplore Analyitics gives us a powerful tool to help pupils of all reading attainment levels make the most of their learning and prepare them for the next stage of the education journey."

Mersey Vale Primary School

- Rated outstanding by Ofsted.

- Around half of Mersey Vale pupil speak English as an additional language.

- 11% of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs.