

# Evaluation of Lexonik Advance

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Anne Teravainen-Goff, Emily Best and Ariadne Brown

In September 2021, Lexonik commissioned the National Literacy Trust to help them evaluate the impact of Lexonik Advance on children and young people's reading. To do so, a decoding subtest of a standardised test called Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT5) was used to assess changes in students' skills and a staff survey was conducted to explore their perceptions of the benefits of the programme for their students and for their own practice. This report presents the findings of this evaluation, focusing on changes in students' reading attainment alongside changes in school staff's teaching and classroom practice.

## Key findings

### Changes in students' decoding skills

- The programme successfully improved students' decoding skills:
  - The average score on the test used is 100, with students scoring within 15 below or above this having an average score for their age. On average, students who took part in Lexonik Advance had a standardised score of 94.5 before taking part. After taking part in the programme, the average score had increased to 106.0. The changes were sustained long after the programme ended as students scored on average 105.8 several months after taking part.
  - The percentage of students who were decoding below the national average decreased four-fold, from 23.7% at the start of the programme to 6.9% at the end. At the same time, the percentage of children who were decoding above the national average saw a more than five-fold increase, rising from 4.5% to 24.0% at the end of the programme.
  - The programme was particularly beneficial for students who began with decoding skills below the national average ( $n = 89$ ). Their standardised scores increased from 78.0 before the programme to 91.5 afterwards, a slightly greater increase than we saw for the cohort overall (13.5 points vs. 11.5 points). Indeed, more than 2 in 3 (67.4%) had started decoding at the average level after taking part in the programme.

- There were no statistically significant differences in students' standardised decoding scores over time based on their gender, whether they receive pupil premium, or whether they speak English as an additional language. However, older students benefited from the programme more than younger students. On average, standardised scores increased by 7.8 for those aged 11 to 12, by 11.5 for those aged 12 to 13, and by 15.4 for those aged 13 to 14.
- The analyses also show that the median increase in reading age for participating students was 24 months over a 2.2-month period. However, findings based on reading age should be treated with caution (see full report for more details).
- These changes are also reflected in findings from the staff survey. When asked to compare the reading progress of participating students to students of the same reading level who did not take part, over 3 in 4 (77.4%) felt that participating students made more progress than their peers.
  - 4 in 5 (79.2%; n = 19) staff who were able to assess changes for students throughout the academic year said they had seen the impact continue.
  - More than 2 in 3 (67.4%) staff indicated that they had noticed students having a larger vocabulary after taking part in the programme. In addition, nearly 2 in 3 (64.0%) had noticed students being more confident readers and 3 in 5 (60.5%) said that their phonics skills had increased. 1 in 2 (50.0%) also said that students seemed more fluent in reading, while nearly 1 in 2 (45.3%) had noticed a positive change in students' comprehension skills.

### Changes in students' learning outcomes overall

- Staff noticed some changes in students' overall learning outcomes following the programme:
  - More than 1 in 2 (54.7%) had noticed a change in students' overall confidence, while more than 2 in 5 (44.2%) felt students' independence had improved. 1 in 3 (34.9%) also felt that students were more resilient following the programme.

### Changes in staff practice and confidence

- Staff members also benefited from the programme in terms of their own practice and confidence supporting students' reading: 9 in 10 (90.2%) felt that the programme increased their confidence to support struggling readers effectively, and nearly 9 in 10 (89.0%) thought the programme was valuable for their professional development.
- These outcomes were true for all staff, regardless of their job role or how long ago they trained.

We also explored the outcomes for staff's own understanding, knowledge and confidence for those who had personally attended the training provided (n = 91):

- More than 9 in 10 felt that they had a better understanding of how to support students' vocabulary development (95.6%) and increased confidence to support their phonological awareness (93.4%). 94.5% also felt the training improved their own understanding of morphemic analysis and vocabulary etymology (i.e., analysing parts of words and the origin of words).

The programme was also successful in creating a wider change in how reading is now taught in the schools:

- More than 9 in 10 (91.3%) felt that their school was better equipped to support students' reading overall after taking part in the programme and nearly 3 in 4 (72.6%) told us they had shared what they had learned in the training with their colleagues. This indicates that learning and strategies are being cascaded within the school, creating the potential for systematic change in teaching practice.

## Conclusion

This report has shown that Lexonik Advance has been beneficial for the students who took part. Indeed, we saw improvements in students' decoding skills that were sustained months after they participated in the programme. Staff also told us that the programme was beneficial for students' reading as well as their learning overall, including improving their confidence. In addition, the programme has been successful in supporting school staff's own practice and knowledge, as well as changing how reading is taught in the schools.

Staff had a positive experience with the programme and the students were generally engaged with it. Staff valued the resources and accessibility of the programme in particular, and many found the intervention easy to implement. The training was described as comprehensive and engaging.

Lexonik will reflect on the feedback contained within this report as they continually look at ways to improve their customer experience. Their professional-development offer to schools and other educational agencies, Lexonik Develop, continues to evolve, striving to support staff with all areas of literacy.