

**To: Headteachers of schools booked to take part in Better Reading Support Partners**

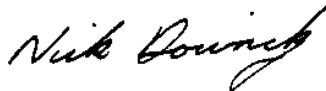
**SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR BETTER READING SUPPORT PARTNERS TRAINING**

Welcome to Better Reading Support Partners! Here is some information about the intervention and how to prepare for it before your Teaching Assistant and Link Teacher come to Day 1 of the training course. Please copy this for them.

BRSP is an Every Child Counts programme developed by Edge Hill University. Your local Every Child Counts (ECC) provider or the school/organisation that has arranged to host the training will tell you about the dates and venue of the course. If you need any more information, please do not hesitate to contact them or the ECC Team at Edge Hill University.

I do hope that your staff and pupils enjoy and benefit from Better Reading Support Partners.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Dowrick, Director of Every Child Counts

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**ABOUT BETTER READING SUPPORT PARTNERS**

Better Reading Support Partners is a 'light touch' reading intervention for pupils in Years 1 to 10 who have fallen behind at reading. The Partner is normally a teaching assistant or suitable volunteer who has been selected by a school and has attended a two-day training course; they are supported by a senior teacher within the school who acts as a Link Teacher.



The Partner provides a 10-week programme of three 15-minute one-to-one support sessions per week for selected pupils. The Partner uses simple and effective assessments to inform the selection of a carefully structured sequence of texts that are finely tuned to the pupil's skills and interests. Pupils read three texts in every session and the Partner provides a relaxed environment that gives them the time and space both to practise and apply their skills and to talk about their reading with an interested adult.

**What impact does it have?**

Over 1,000 pupils have been supported by Better Reading Support Partners in 200 schools.

- They made an average **Reading Age gain of 12 months** in only 3 months – four times the expected rate of progress.
- They made an average **Comprehension Age gain of 10 months**.
- Every pupil showed **more interest and confidence** in reading after BRSP.

*"BRSP has given each pupil the help that they need. For example, Mark has learned to slow down and think about the meaning of what he's reading while Jo has stopped sounding every word out and now reads fluently."*

Windermere Preparatory School, Cumbria

*“BRSP has been a great success in our school. It has been amazing to observe the confidence that children have gained in their reading skills. As a result of the quality training our teaching assistant received, we have a highly skilled human resource to support our children.”*

Longlands Primary School, Bexley

## **What training and support will we get?**

**Training** is delivered by an ECC Trainer accredited by the University and includes:

- a 2-day training course for Partners
  - selecting suitable texts and delivering BRSP sessions
  - understanding the reading process
  - talking with pupils about their reading and learning
- school Link Teachers attend the first half day and can opt to attend the full course
- detailed handbook guidance for Partners and Link Teachers
- an optional 1-day introduction to phonics for Partners

Schools also receive a **one-year ECC support package** including:

- online guidance and downloadable resources
- access to the ECC online data system, providing analyses of children’s progress to help schools to evaluate and demonstrate the impact of Better Reading Support Partners
- telephone and e-mail support
- an optional visit to the school by the Trainer (for a fee) to support the delivery, management and evaluation of BRSP  
*if you want to arrange this, please contact your ECC provider/host or Edge Hill University*
- opportunities for Every Child Counts accreditation

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## **THINGS TO DO BEFORE THE TRAINING BEGINS**

### **Identify a suitable person to be trained as a Better Reading Support Partner**

A suitable Partner will:

- be able to deliver a regular programme of support 3 times a week for 10 weeks
- be able to establish a supportive rapport with pupils
- be able to engage fully in training sessions about BRSP procedures and the reading process
- have a working knowledge of synthetic phonics upon which the training course can build
- be able to make independent decisions while supporting pupils’ reading, based on an understanding of their needs and with the support of the Link Teacher.

A teaching assistant with successful experience of supporting reading is likely to be an effective Partner. The school may also wish to select appropriate parents or volunteers to become Partners; they may need initial phonics training from the school or from a BRSP Trainer before undertaking BRSP training. A half-day *Introduction to Phonics* training session is available from Edge Hill University; for further details please contact Every Child Counts.

### **Identify a Link Teacher to manage BRSP**

The Link Teacher will:

- provide the strategic leadership for the programme
- be suitably experienced to give support with the teaching of reading
- have time to support the teaching assistant and liaise with the class teacher(s), senior managers, SENCo, and other professionals as necessary
- attend at the first half-day of training with the teaching assistant; if you want the Link Teacher to attend the whole course, please arrange this in advance with your ECC provider or host.

We recommend that the Link Teacher is normally a senior member of staff. If the school prefers to nominate a class teacher who will liaise closely with the teaching assistant, then a senior manager can provide the leadership and additional support that will maximise the impact of the intervention.

## Set up a BRSP area

BRSP requires an area away from the classroom in which the Partner can support pupils without disturbing or being disturbed by the work of the school. It is helpful if the area has comfortable chairs and provides an attractive environment.

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## THINGS TO DO AFTER THE FIRST DAY OF TRAINING

The training will include guidance on these steps. You may wish to prepare them beforehand.

### Choose the pupils to take part in Better Reading Support Partners

BRSP works best if the right pupils are chosen to take part in it. It is designed for pupils in Key Stage 1 who have fallen slightly below the level of their peers and for pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 whose reading age is below their chronological age.

BRSP is particularly suitable for:

- a pupil who stands out in a guided reading group as the one who always needs the most support
- a pupil who seems likely to make significant gains with a little support.

BRSP is NOT designed for:

- a pupil who is one of the hardest to teach in the class
- a pupil who has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or requires SEN Support in respect of a learning difficulty.

The selection process should involve a dialogue between class teachers, the Link Teacher and the Partner. The final decision should be approved by the senior leadership team.

### Prepare a timetable

Every pupil should receive a minimum of 30 BRSP sessions. This is best timetabled as 10 weeks of 3 sessions a week. Effective timetabling for BRSP would involve:

- allocating 30 minutes for each child. This allows the Partner to prepare thoroughly, collect and return the child to the class teacher, and to run a 15 minute session
- protecting the timetable where the Partner is a TA, so that the children receive BRSP sessions on a regular basis
- building in regular time for the Partner to liaise with the class teacher and the Link Teacher.



### Make baseline assessments of the pupils

Testing the pupils is optional in BRSP but we strongly advise schools to do so. Measuring the progress that they make will help you to plan for their subsequent support and to evaluate the impact of BRSP. Parents, the senior leadership team, governors, and Ofsted may all want to know how effective it has been.

We recommend that the class teacher or Link Teacher gives children a standardised reading test at the start and end of their BRSP intervention.

The school can use the secure Every Child Counts online data system to record data about pupils' progress and to download and print out reports. Each report analyses the support that pupils received and the progress that they made, both individually and as a group, and enables the school to compare its own outcomes with national benchmarks. You can view sample reports on the ECC website.

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