Background

This innovative project, supported by the Education Endowment Fund, focused on raising the achievement and confidence of vulnerable Y6 children not achieving Level 4 by the end of key stage 2 through combining Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Achievement for All (AfA) programme. Both RTI and AfA have been shown to be highly effective in raising children's achievement (Humphrey & Squires, 2011; Vaughn & Fletcher, 2012). Impact was evaluated through assessment of pupil's literacy prior to and after the intervention, an independent randomized controlled trial and tracking the progress of the control group pupils participating in the intervention after the trial.

Focus

This paper explores similarities and differences between the experiences and outcomes for pupils participating in RTI at the end of the Summer term and pupils who experienced RTI during the Autumn and Spring terms.

Methods

The comparison draws upon pupil assessments, confidence surveys and evidence arising from qualitative enquiry and development tools created by CUREE to support RTI.

Analytical framework

The full trial was unable to provide conclusive evidence, chiefly because of problems in drop out arising, to a significant degree, from the break down in on-line testing during the last week of term and from difficulties in aligning the requirements of the trial and those of the intervention, both of which made specific requirements regarding the identification of pupils. But the evidence from schools that did complete is sufficiently promising for the Evaluator to recommend a further trial over a longer timescale. This exploration of the differences between the experiences and outcomes for the intervention and control group for whom the intervention was delayed is intended to inform consideration of a further trial.

Findings

Key messages reported in the paper focus on:

- the extent to which a longer RTI intervention period and one that takes place at a more manageable time of year benefits pupils
- the extent to which timing of the intervention (Autumn/ Spring compared with Summer) impacts on the way RTI is used during the intervention period and subsequently by the school