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# Evaluating the impact of Every Child Counts

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Professor Carole Torgerson from the School of Education, has led a major evaluation of Every Child Counts (ECC), a numeracy programme that was introduced into English primary schools in 2008. The evaluation project, conducted by Researchers from the Universities of Birmingham, Durham and York for the Department for Education, has shown a positive short term effect on children's numeracy skills and equated the improvement to seven additional weeks' progress in numeracy skills for each child.

Every Child Counts (through the Numbers Count intervention) provides intensive support to the lowest-achieving Year 2 children. Children are taught on a one-to-one basis by a specialist teacher for half an hour a day over the course of a term. The programme is currently being provided to over 20,000 children in about 1700 schools.

A randomised controlled trial (RCT) involving 409 children in 44 schools across England assessed the effect of receiving Numbers Count (NC) teaching compared with not receiving the programme. Children receiving Numbers Count showed a greater level of improvement – when measured using the GL progress in Maths 96) test – compared with control children. This improvement was consistent across all groups irrespective of gender, free school meal status, age, and prior achievement.

Professor Carole Torgerson explained 'We conducted a rigorous evaluation of NC to give a robust assessment of the effect it has on children. Our trial showed that the programme made a moderate improvement in children's numeracy. However, this improvement needs to be assessed in the context of the programme's cost, which was high, and the fact that we don't know if the effect is maintained beyond a single term.

The DfE is to be congratulated for funding a large-scale independent evaluation of ECC using a randomised controlled trial design. Large scale randomised evaluations of educational initiatives have an important role to play in supporting policy in education.'

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