

## FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad Evaluation

### Parent/Guardian information Sheet

Dear Parent / Guardian,

We are writing to let you know that your child's school is participating in the Evaluation of FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad. This reading catch-up programme is being delivered by Fischer Family Trust (FFT) and is being evaluated by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). The programme and evaluation are funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

#### 1. About the programme

FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad is an online reading catch-up programme which aims to help pupils improve their reading skills. It is specifically targeted at pupils that are below age-related expectations in reading. Initial- research indicates promise that pupils taking part in the programme make significantly more progress in their reading development and reading fluency.

Children selected to take part will work in pairs with the support of a trained member of school staff through a series of activities and stories with the aim of building their confidence and enjoyment of reading alongside improving their reading skills.

#### 2. What does the evaluation involve?

The evaluation will consist of a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) to assess the impact of FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad and will involve pupils in years 3 and 4 from September 2025 to July 2026.

Children will be selected to take part in the evaluation based on their reading ability. In September 2025, around 30 children each from year 3 and year 4 in participating schools will complete a short reading assessment. Based on this assessment, your child's school will select eight children to take part in the trial from each year group.

In October 2025, your child's school will be randomly assigned to one of two study arms.

- In arm 1, pupils in year 3 will receive FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad. Pupils in year 4 will not receive tutoring and will continue with their regular teaching and/or catch-up support
- In arm 2, pupils in year 4 will receive FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad. Pupils in year 3 will not receive tutoring and will continue with their regular teaching and/or catch-up support.

The year groups that do not receive the programme will form the control year groups and continue with their usual practice.

Schools will follow the assigned approach with selected pupils across the 2025-26 academic year.

If your child is one of the 30 children in their year group nominated by the school, they will be asked to complete a reading assessment in Autumn 2025.

If your child's year group is selected to receive the Tutoring with the Lightning Squad programme and they are one of the eight children selected to take part in the programme, they will:

- Complete the FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad initial assessment to work out their starting point in the programme and pairing.
- Attend 3-5 weekly 30-minute sessions of FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad for at least 16 weeks.
- Work in groups of 4 (two pairs) during these sessions with a trained tutor. Your child's school will provide further information about when these sessions will take place.

If your child is one of the eight selected pupils in year 3 or year 4 (i.e. in the intervention or control year groups), they will also complete the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (WRMT-III) to measure their reading progress in June/July 2026. This will help us understand that the impact of the programme.

In addition, the eight selected pupils in year 4 (both those receiving tutoring and those assigned to the control group) will be asked to complete a short survey in September

2025 and again in June/July 2026. The survey will look at how pupils feel about reading and if this has changed over the academic year.

In a small number of schools delivering the FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad programme, one tutoring session will be observed by a NFER researcher. One pair of pupils will also be audio recorded during this session. This will help us understand the pupils' process of learning and whether sessions ran as expected. The pupils taking part in the session will be invited to participate in a focus group, sharing their experiences of the programme and attitudes towards reading. Participation in these activities is not obligatory, and parents will be provided with an opt-in consent form in advance of these activities.

### 3. Data protection and Privacy

FFT will collect data about your child from your child's school for the purposes of administering the programme. Some of this data (e.g., name, gender, date of birth, unique pupil number) will be shared with NFER for the purposes of the evaluation. For further details about the data FFT will be collecting to administer the programme please refer to the [FFT privacy notice](#).

For further details about the data NFER will be collecting for the purposes of the evaluation please refer to the [NFER privacy notice](#).

If your child is one of the 30 children in their year group nominated by the school, FFT will collect data on your child's reading skills using the Reading Assessment Programme. In addition, if your child is one of the eight pupils receiving the programme, FFT will also collect the following data:

- Reading skills and starting point via the FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad initial assessment
- FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad online platform usage data (e.g., attendance at the tutoring sessions, their starting story level, current story level etc. A full list of data variables is available [here](#))

FFT will securely share this data with NFER.

All data for each child will be kept strictly confidential and only used for delivering and evaluating the programme. All parties will comply with GDPR requirements and have robust GDPR procedures in place.

No child or school will be named in any report arising from this work.

Further information about this evaluation can be found on the [project web page](#).

The [privacy notice](#) explains what data will be collected about your child as part of this evaluation. If you do not wish this data about your child to be shared, please return the withdrawal form to your child's school (see below).

You can find more information about the data collected about your child by FFT [here](#).

#### **4. How can I withdraw my child from the evaluation?**

If you are happy for your child's data to be used for this research, you do not need to do anything. Although we value their participation in this evaluation and its contribution to important findings, you can withdraw your child from data collection activities at any time before July 2026. After that, we will remove all identifiers from your child's data and will not be able to identify your child's data. If you withdraw your child from the project, we will use any data we have collected up to that point in our analysis unless you ask us to delete it. If you wish to withdraw your child's data during the trial, please contact the evaluation team at: [TWLtrial@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:TWLtrial@nfer.ac.uk). Note that withdrawal from the evaluation will not impact your child's involvement in the tutoring programme, just their inclusion in the evaluation.

If, at this stage, you would prefer your child's data not to be shared, stored and used for this research, please complete the form on the following page and return it to your child's school.

#### **Who can I contact for further information?**

If you have any queries, please contact us via email at: [TWLtrial@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:TWLtrial@nfer.ac.uk)

Yours sincerely,



Sophie Ainsby

Research Operations Lead

National Foundation for Educational Research

## Evaluation of FFT Tutoring with the Lightning Squad - Withdrawal form from data processing for parents

You only need to complete this form if you **DO NOT** wish your child's data to be shared, stored and used for this evaluation.

I **DO NOT** give permission for data about my child that is collected as part of the trial to be stored or used for research purposes.

Your child's name.....Name of  
school.....

Name of class.....

Your full name.....

Your signature.....

Date.....