

Wednesday, 16 September 2026

Parent/Guardian Information Sheet

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to request your child's help in a research study on the early stages of learning to read in primary school, that Professor Kate Cain and I are beginning at Lancaster University. In this information sheet, I will explain the aims of the study, what data would be collected, how the data would be used, and what to do if you want to participate.

Please take time to read this information sheet and discuss it with your child. If you have any questions, please contact me on the email address provided at the bottom of this letter.

Project title: Tracking the early stages of reading in primary school

What is the project about?

We are interested in how children learn to read in year 1 of primary school. Children learn at different rates, and in different ways, and we want to find out the ways in which children differ, so we can better support them in their learning journey.

What will my child be asked to do if they take part?

Each child will read from a book for 10-15 minutes each week in school time. The books are part of the Oxford Owl reading scheme, which are designed for children learning to read. While children are reading, their speech will be recorded, so we can figure out what parts of the book are easier and harder for children to read. Children will also take part in some general tests of their speaking and reading skills. Children's experience of reading in this project will be just the same as their usual reading in the classroom.

With your permission, the school will also provide us with scores for your child from the standard assessments that the school conducts, such as the Early Years Framework in reception year, and the phonics screener.

Your child's name will be stored separately from their reading data, the individual data will be anonymised, and it will not be possible to identify your child from these data.

What will I be asked to do to take part?

We would like to link up children's reading to the different language backgrounds that children have. We would like you to help us out by filling in two questionnaires, about your child's age, gender, what your child likes to do at home, whether they have had any issues with their physical development, and which languages are spoken in your home.

Who can participate?

Any child in year 1 is welcome to take part in the study.

**What are the possible benefits from taking part?**

The findings from this work will help us understand how children learn to read, and how children vary in what they find easier and harder when learning to read. The benefits of the study mean we can find better ways to support children learning to read, especially those that find it difficult.

Does my child have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you and your child to decide whether or not your child takes part. Your child's participation is voluntary and you and your child are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. Your child's learning or assessment in school will not be affected in any way by your decision to participate or not participate in the study. Your child will be asked before each session if they are willing to read in that session, and if they don't agree then they can return to their class. If your child repeatedly prefers not to take part then we will stop including them in the study.

What if I change my mind?

You can contact us at any point to withdraw from the study, up to the end of Year 2, at which point we will stop the reading sessions with your child. It will not be possible to remove any anonymised data from the study, but we will remove any identifying information about your child from the study.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Taking part in this study requires you taking about 30 minutes to fill in the questionnaires.

There are no disadvantages or risks for your child in taking place, as they will be reading just as they do in the normal classroom situation. Children will be tested on a set of language assessments twice per year, but we will ensure that these fit around their classroom schedule so that they do not miss any schooling.

Will my child's data be identifiable?

Your child's personal data will be stored separately from their reading data. The reading data will be transcribed (written down) and anonymised by removing any words that might identify your child. The transcribing will use some computer programming, and these will be run at Lancaster University on secure, password-protected computers.

We would also like to keep the audio recordings of their reading, and these will be kept separately from the other data collected in the study, and it will not be possible to link these audio recordings to your child's name or their school.

How will my child's data be stored?

Your child's data will be stored in encrypted files and on password-protected and university-approved cloud-service, accessible to only myself and the research team employed directly on this project. The data storage follows the University guidelines. For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research



purposes and your data rights please visit our webpage: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/participate-in-research/data-protection-for-research-participants/>.

How will we use your child's data and what will happen to the results of the research study?

Your child's data will be used for academic purposes. This will include being written up for publication in an academic journal article. The anonymised data will also be shared publicly for future studies. The audio recordings will also be made available subject to screening by researchers who want to use these recordings for research. Their use is restricted to non-commercial use and agreements to not share or make available the recordings. A summary of the results of this study will be sent to school to share with parents.

Who has reviewed the project?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Lancaster University Faculty of Science and Technology Research Ethics Committee.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your child's participation in the study, please contact me as the Lead Investigator of this study, Prof. Padraic Monaghan (address below). In case of any concerns or complaints, you may contact Dr. Patrick May as the chair of the Ethics Committee (address below).

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What happens next?

If you and your child are happy to participate in this study, then please read, sign, and return the consent form to school.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Yours sincerely,

Padraic Monaghan
Department of Psychology
Lancaster University

Wednesday, 16 September 2026

Department of Psychology**PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM****Project Title:** Tracking the early stages of reading in primary school

Name of Researchers: Padraic Monaghan, Kate Cain

Email: p.monaghan@lancaster.ac.uk

Please read the statements below and initial the boxes before signing.

- I have read the information sheet for the above study. ☐
- I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐
- I am aware that if I have any questions I can ask for information at any stage, or for a researcher to talk me through this. ☐
- I understand that any data collected from my child will be used for research purposes only, and the individual data will be stored anonymously. We will act according to the GDPR data protection regulations. The anonymised data will also be shared publicly for future studies. ☐
- I give permission for the school to provide my child's Early Years Foundation Stage and phonics screener scores to the researchers. ☐
- I understand that my child's audio recordings will be made available on request to other researchers who will be pre-screened and will be required to keep these audio recordings secure. ☐
- I understand that all information from me will be kept in completely anonymised fashion, and in accordance with GDPR data protection regulations. ☐

Name of Child: _____

Name of School: _____

Date: _____

My name: _____

Signature: _____