

Why was this study conducted?

- Adequate reading is crucial for accessing the curriculum and performing well in exams
- Secondary school teachers say:
 - Some pupils can't read well enough to access the curriculum (see also PISA 2015)
 - We lack knowledge of the 'science' of reading, materials, resources, time...
- We know that the adolescent brain continues to develop in important ways but we don't know what this means for reading and language abilities



Aims of the study

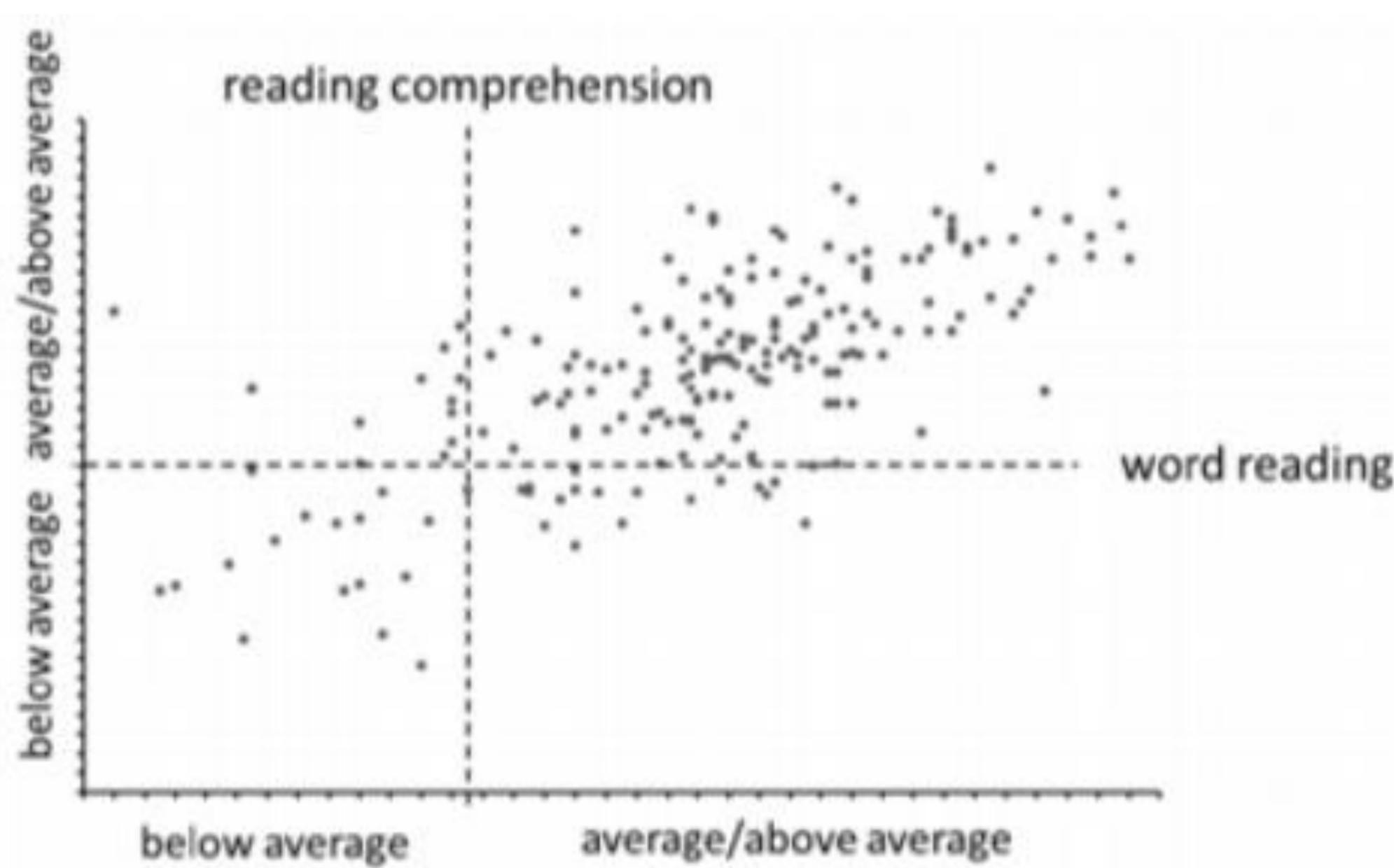
- This longitudinal study provides new information about reading skills in adolescence and how they change between the ages of 12 and 14 years
- We also measured spoken vocabulary knowledge as this is crucial for successful reading

How was this study conducted?

- Pupils were seen in Year 7, and then again 1 and 2 years later
- These pupils were representative, regionally and nationally
- Well-established standardised assessments were used to measure word reading, reading comprehension and spoken vocabulary knowledge

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
12.01 yrs (.33)	13.07 yrs (.34)	14.01 yrs (.33)
N = 208	N = 195	N = 186
48.6% girls	49.7% girls	48.4% girls

Results: wide variation in reading

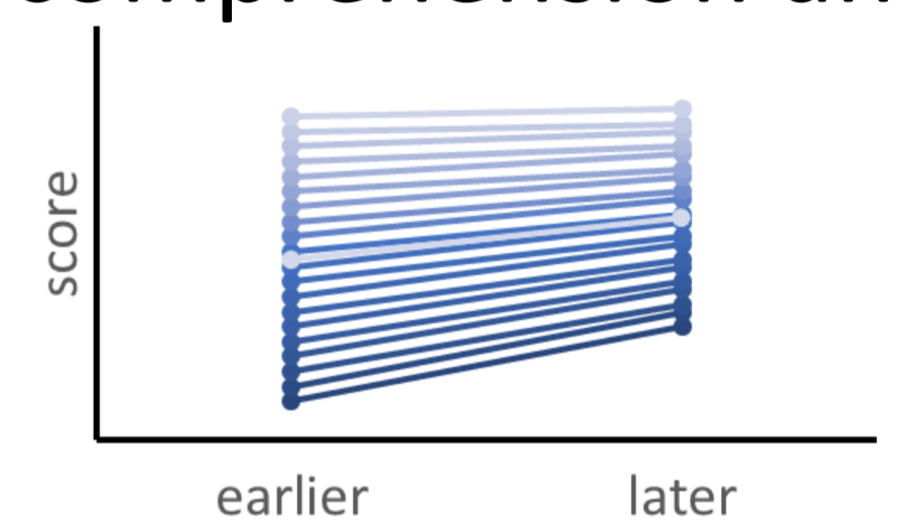


This study indicates that in a class of 30:

- Teachers are faced with a very wide range of reading abilities
- 4-5 pupils will show below average word reading and/or reading comprehension
- Below average means reading at the level that would be expected of a 6-9 year old, whilst expected to read material for ages 12+

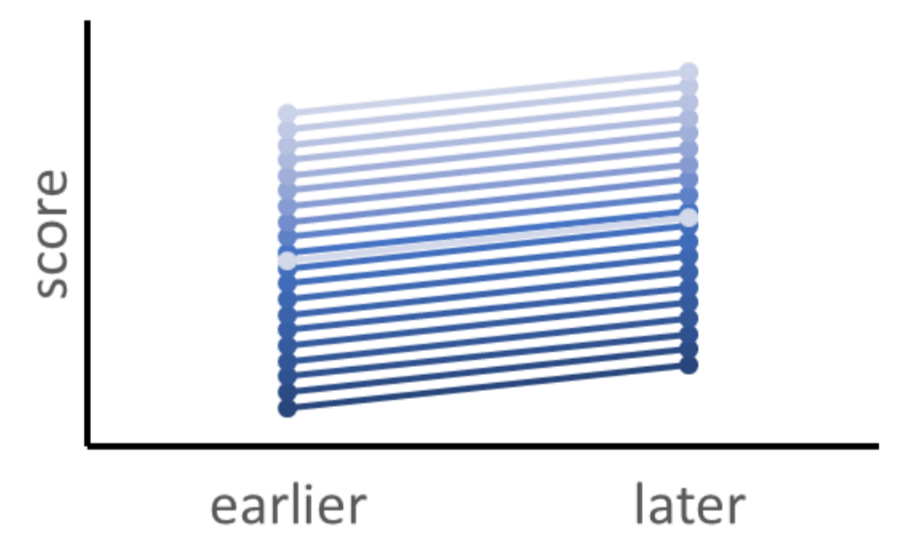
Results: reducing spread

- Performance gaps in word reading, reading comprehension and oral vocabulary weren't widening
- Instead, gaps were narrowing (though not closing), indicating compensation



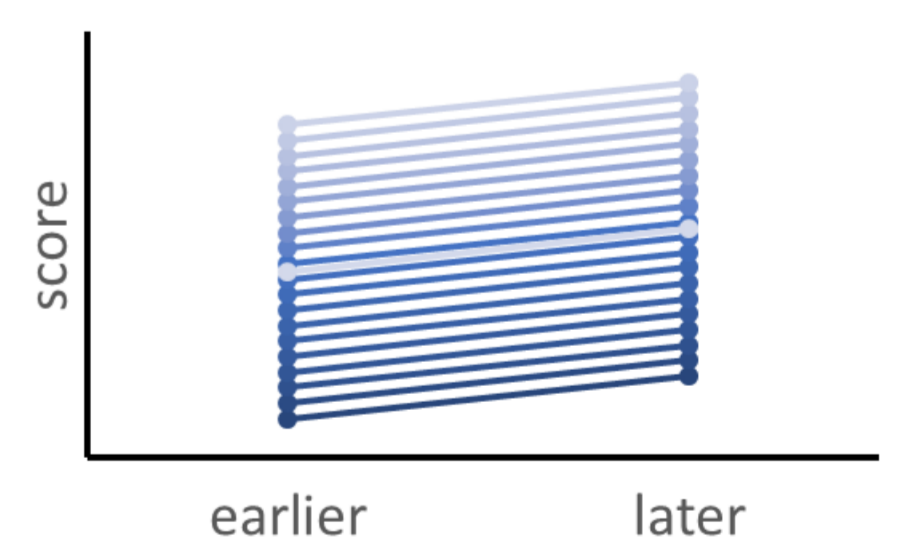
Results: high stability

- There was very high stability ie. the rank order amongst pupils was very consistent from 12-14 years



Results: growth

- Growth in word reading, reading comprehension and oral vocabulary was observed, though this was small in real terms



Conclusions and implications for teaching

- Wide variation poses challenges for teachers: extra training, support and resources are needed
- Continuing teaching of foundational reading abilities into KS3 may help to reduce spread further
- Although progress in reading and vocabulary in this period is small, this is still important
- We can't assume that all secondary school pupils can access the curriculum