



## **£81 Billion a Year - The Cost of Early Education Failure**

Is early literacy failure still the prime challenge for UK educators? If so, how do we confront it? These were the main questions asked when Mike Fischer, founder of Fischer Family Trust, partnered with school improvement charity, Success for All Foundation, to host a symposium in London on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March.

With FFT (Fischer Family Trust) data showing that children with a Literacy score at KS1 of 4 have only a 52% chance of achieving a Grade C at GCSE, the time is most definitely now to make this a top-talking point. Compare this to children with Literacy scores of 7 or 9 who have an 82% and 94% chance of achieving a Grade C and the enormity of the problem is clear.

So, is early literacy failure still the prime challenge for UK educators? The answer is yes – and it should be a top priority for all key decision makers in UK education.

The impact of not addressing early literacy failure is significant and continues beyond primary and secondary education – again, FFT data suggests that low levels of literacy cost the UK and estimated £81 billion a year in lost earnings and increased welfare spending (Reading Agency).

Leading a group of education leaders in discussion, Mike Fischer started with a thought provoking presentation which called on a new approach to learning – one which embraces and implements scientific and evidence based approaches made famous by industrial quality and continuous improvement guru's such as Deming and Juran.

Fischer drew attention to the tiny amount of time that is typically left to support individual students – especially those whom require vital support. He raised the issue that in 2015, 14% of children still have no better than a 50% chance of achieving a Grade C at GSCE level.

During a highly engaging and interactive discussion it seemed clear to all involved that failing to adapt and innovate is the first step towards failure itself. The group agreed that schools need the space to run significant programmes that can deliver continuous improvement – and want to see solutions that can support across all schools with the confidence that they are teaching proven and successful methods.

It was agreed that data is an important part of any evidence based approach but too often it is used as a prop; supporting where we are now rather than being used creatively as an aid to designing new approaches.

It's said that the 7 most expensive words in business are, "we have always done it this way" and this extends, dangerously, into teaching too. It is "this way" that will have to change if we want to achieve the improvements needed.

Headteachers need to find programmes for improvement that give them the freedom to contextualise, to localise, and allows their teachers to still bring their own everyday creativity into teaching and learning. To do this, they need a framework that gives them the confidence to invest 100% of a school's energy; something which will only be found in an approach with the rigour and proven track record that an evidence based programme provides.

To learn more or to register your interest in our future events, please contact Emma Cuddeford at [emma.cuddeford@successforall.org.uk](mailto:emma.cuddeford@successforall.org.uk).