Evaluation Findings

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4 July 2024

EVALUATION FINDINGS PRESENTATION CONTENTS

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PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

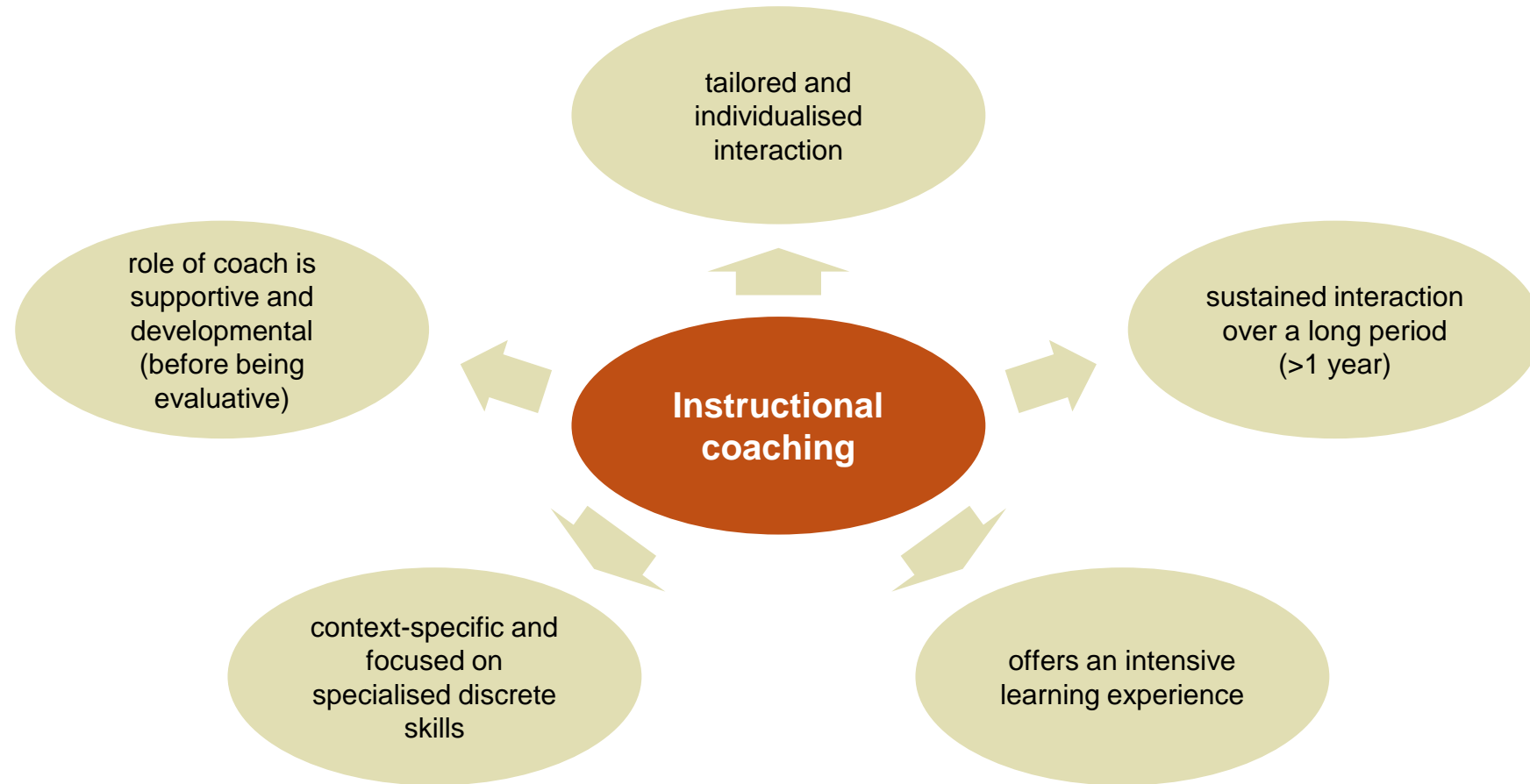|			
GPLMS (2011 -2014)	Quasi-RDD Natural Experiment	Can the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) lead to effective system-wide improvement in early grade numeracy?	Intervention schools had higher average early grade numeracy scores
RCUP (2014)	RCT	Can a reading catch-up programme for Grade 4 learners who have fallen behind positively impact their endline evaluation scores in literacy?	Instructional coaching was found to be effective though the whole project had no impact
EGRS I (2015-2017)	RCT + Case Studies	Which of these interventions—coaching, parental intervention, or teacher training—can improve learner reading outcomes cost effectively?	There were changed instructional practices. External Coaching is effective BUT Expensive
EGRS II (2016-2018)	RCT	Grade 1, 2 & 3 English literacy	External coaching was effective in another province and language BUT virtual coaching has limitations
EGRP I (2021-2023)	RCT + Case Studies	Can DH coaching accomplish the same or part of reading outcomes as external coaching?	**Is DH coaching a more cost effective form of coaching?**
EGRP II (2024-2025)	RCT + Qual Case Studies	Grade 1, 2 & 3 Setswana & English literacy	

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Background| Key Concepts
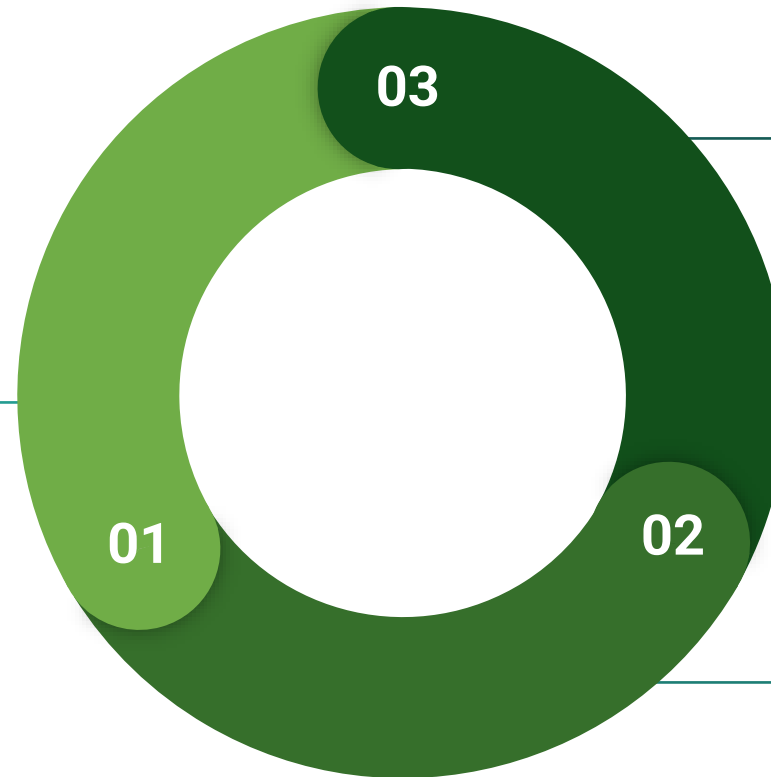
Instructional Coaching Characteristics

tailored and individualised interaction

role of coach is supportive and developmental (before being evaluative)

Instructional coaching

sustained interaction over a long period (>1 year)

context-specific and focused on specialised discrete skills

offers an intensive learning experience

Background| Key Concepts

Department Head (DH)

Take up general administrative duties
- Could be part of the SMT
- Planning and management of school stock and department equipment

Foundation Phase Educators
Trained alongside other FP teachers and receive all programme materials

School-level instructional leaders
In charge of Foundation Phase
- Develop policy for the phase
- Manage performance
- In charge of internal moderation

01

02

03

1

INTERVENTION DESIGN | PROGRAMME ELEMENTS

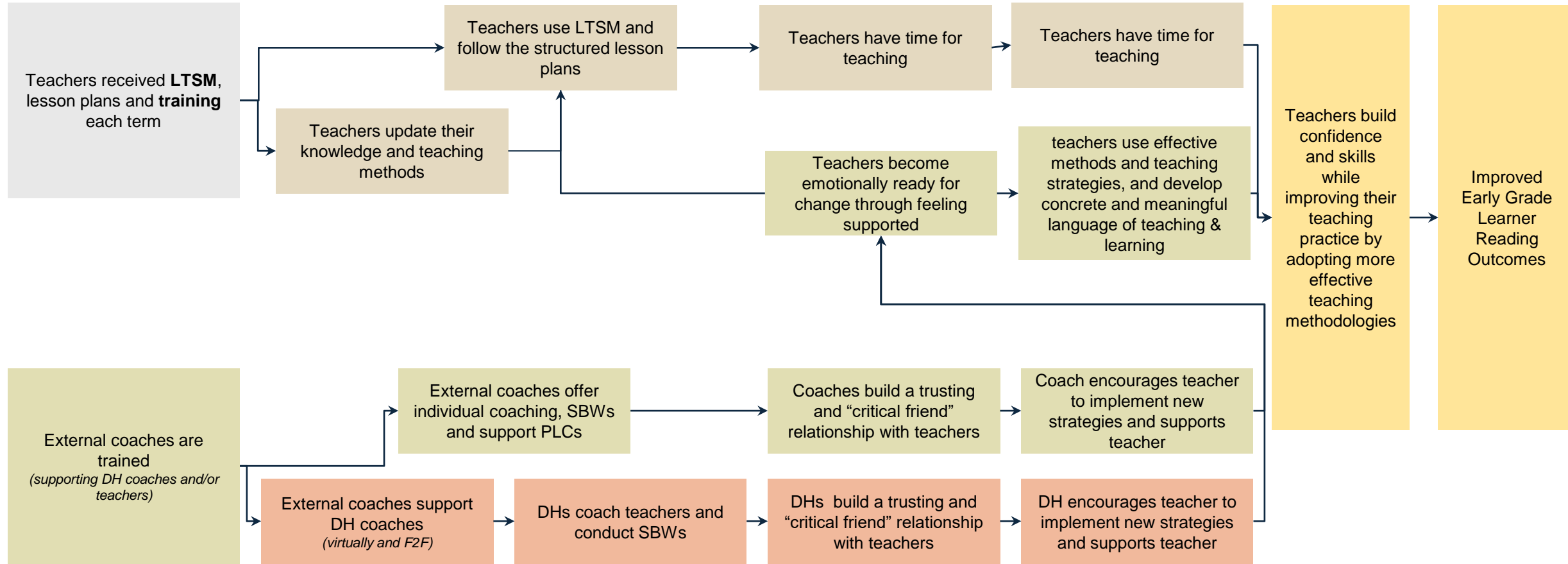|	**Year 1 2021**	**Year 2 2022**	**Year 3 2023**
Control (60 schools)	Base Programme (LTSM, Teacher Training)	Base Programme	Base Programme
External Coaching (40 schools)	Base Programme — External Coaching	Base Programme — External Coaching	Base Programme — External Coaching
DH Coaching (40 schools)	Base Programme — External Coaching	Base Programme — DH Coaching	Base Programme — DH Coaching

Can **DH coaching achieve (part of) what external coaching can?**
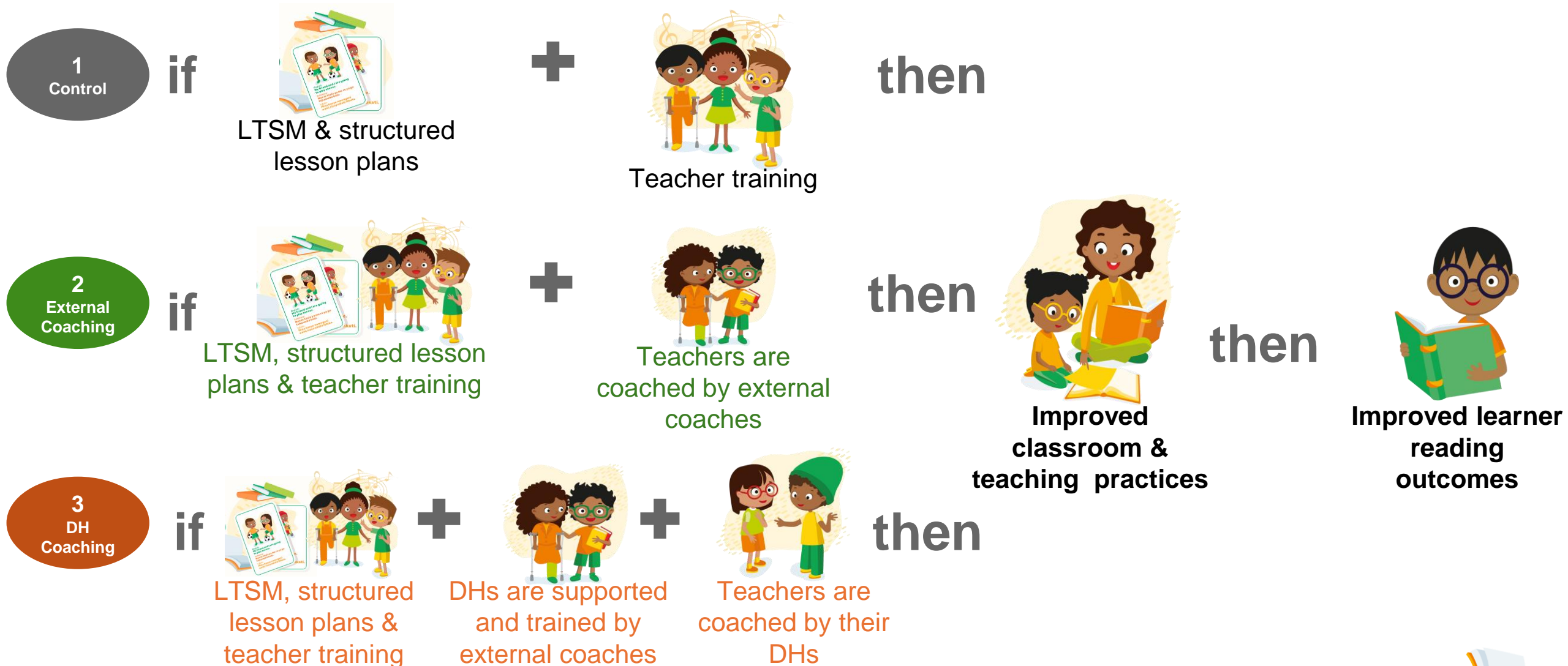- We are *testing* **if DH coaching is better than control.**

- We *expect* **external coaching results to be better** than control results.

2

INTERVENTION DESIGN| DETAILED THEORY OF CHANGE

BASE PROGRAMME

Teachers received **LTSM**, lesson plans and **training** each term

Teachers update their knowledge and teaching methods

Teachers use LTSM and follow the structured lesson plans

Teachers have time for teaching

Teachers have time for teaching

Teachers become emotionally ready for change through feeling supported

teachers use effective methods and teaching strategies, and develop concrete and meaningful language of teaching & learning

Teachers build confidence and skills while improving their teaching practice by adopting more effective teaching methodologies

Improved Early Grade Learner Reading Outcomes

COACHING STREAMS

External coaches are trained
(supporting DH coaches and/or teachers)

External coaches offer individual coaching, SBWs and support PLCs

Coaches build a trusting and "critical friend" relationship with teachers

Coach encourages teacher to implement new strategies and supports teacher

External coaches support DH coaches
(virtually and F2F)

DHs coach teachers and conduct SBWs

DHs build a trusting and "critical friend" relationship with teachers

DH encourages teacher to implement new strategies and supports teacher

2

INTERVENTION DESIGN| SIMPLIFIED THEORY OF CHANGE

1 Control

if — LTSM & structured lesson plans + Teacher training — then

2 External Coaching

if — LTSM, structured lesson plans & teacher training + Teachers are coached by external coaches — then

3 DH Coaching

if — LTSM, structured lesson plans & teacher training + DHs are supported and trained by external coaches + Teachers are coached by their DHs — then

Improved classroom & teaching practices

then

Improved learner reading outcomes

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EVALUATION DESIGN

1. Is the programme **implemented as intended**?

2. What are the **implementation challenges, constraints and opportunities** of delivering teacher **coaching through DHs**?

3. Did the programme **result in the intended outcomes and impacts**?

How do learner results compare across the control group, DH and external coaching arms?

4. Which **context factors influence learner reading performance** and lead to differential intervention impacts?

Understand interactions of various system components:
- Capacity and resource constraints
- Lack of pedagogical and subject knowledge
- Time and workload constraints faced by DHs, teachers and SA

EVALUATION DESIGN| EVIDENCE GENERATION

Year 1
2021
(Midline)

Year 2
2022

Year 3
2023
(Endline)

Implementation Fidelity Monitoring Data (incl. app data)

Qualitative case studies (6 schools in DH coaching stream)	DBE Training Quality Assurance Report Review	Qualitative case studies (returned to 5 of the same schools)
External Coach Interviews & Training Observations	External coach interviews	DH Coach Observations (DH stream) External Coach Obs (External stream)

Quantitative Data Collection
- Learner assessments
- Teacher and DH survey
- Principal Survey
- School data sheets and environment tool

(139 schools)

Quantitative Data Collection
- Learner assessments (same learners assessed (Cohort A & B)
- Teacher and DH survey
- Principal Survey
- School data sheets and environment tool

(same 139 schools)

COHORT A	Gr 1	→	Gr 3
COHORT B	Gr 2	→	Gr 4
COHORT C (NEW WAVE)			Gr 2

3

Learner Programme Exposure and Assessment Cycles

	2020	**Year 1 2021**	**Year 2 2022**	**Year 3 2023**
Cohort A (3 years of programme exposure)	Grade R	**Grade 1**	**Grade 2**	**Grade 3**
Cohort B (2 years of programme exposure)	Grade 1	**Grade 2**	**Grade 3**	Grade 4
Cohort C (2 years of programme exposure)	Pre-Grade R	Grade R	**Grade 1**	**Grade 2**
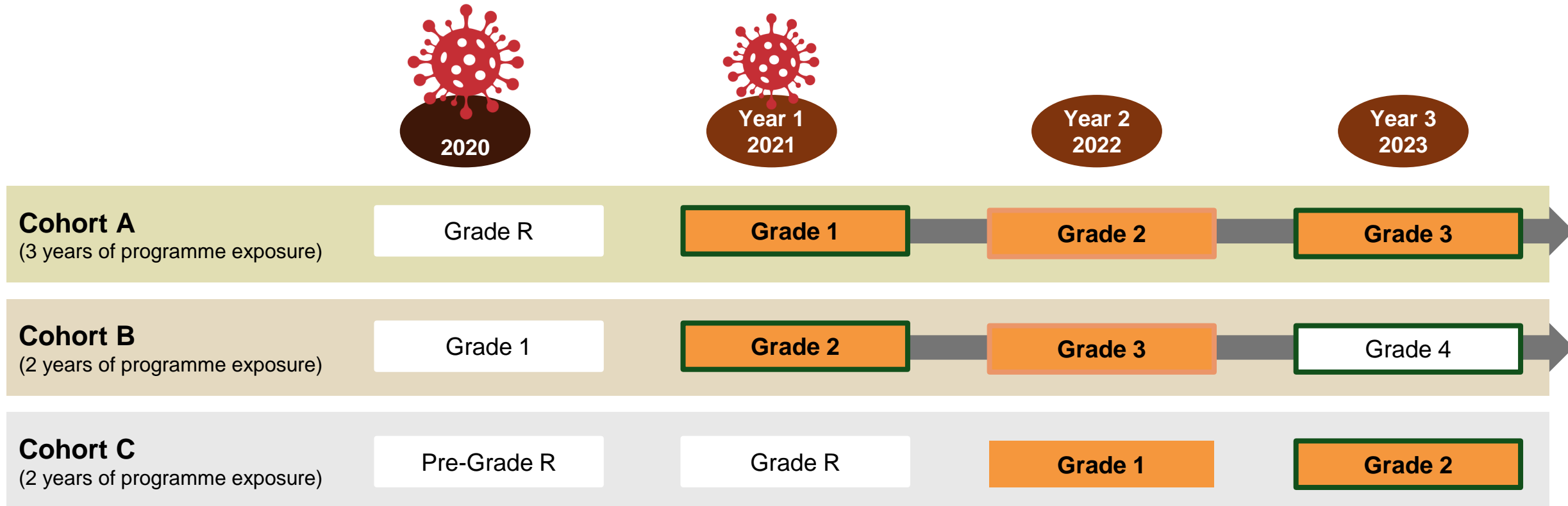
Learners assessed at this point

Teachers exposed to the programme

3

DATA SOURCES AND NUMBERS REACHED

Coach Observations 13

Teacher Surveys 575

DH Surveys 250

Training Observations 5

Lesson Observations 34

Learner Assessments 1 61

Teacher Interviews 23

Workbooks Analysed

Coach Interviews 6

Attrited/ Not assessed | Present, Grade 3 | Assessed, Repeater

	Cohort A	Cohort B
Attrited/ Not assessed	21.5%	20.6%
Present, Grade 3	6.4%	7.4%
Assessed, Repeater	72.1%	72.0%

3
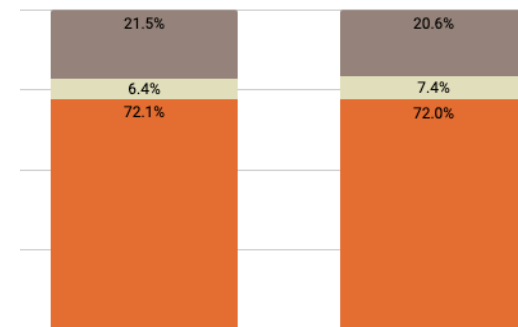
What do the learner assessment results tell us about reading skills in general?

Learner Results Against Reading Benchmarks I Cohort A
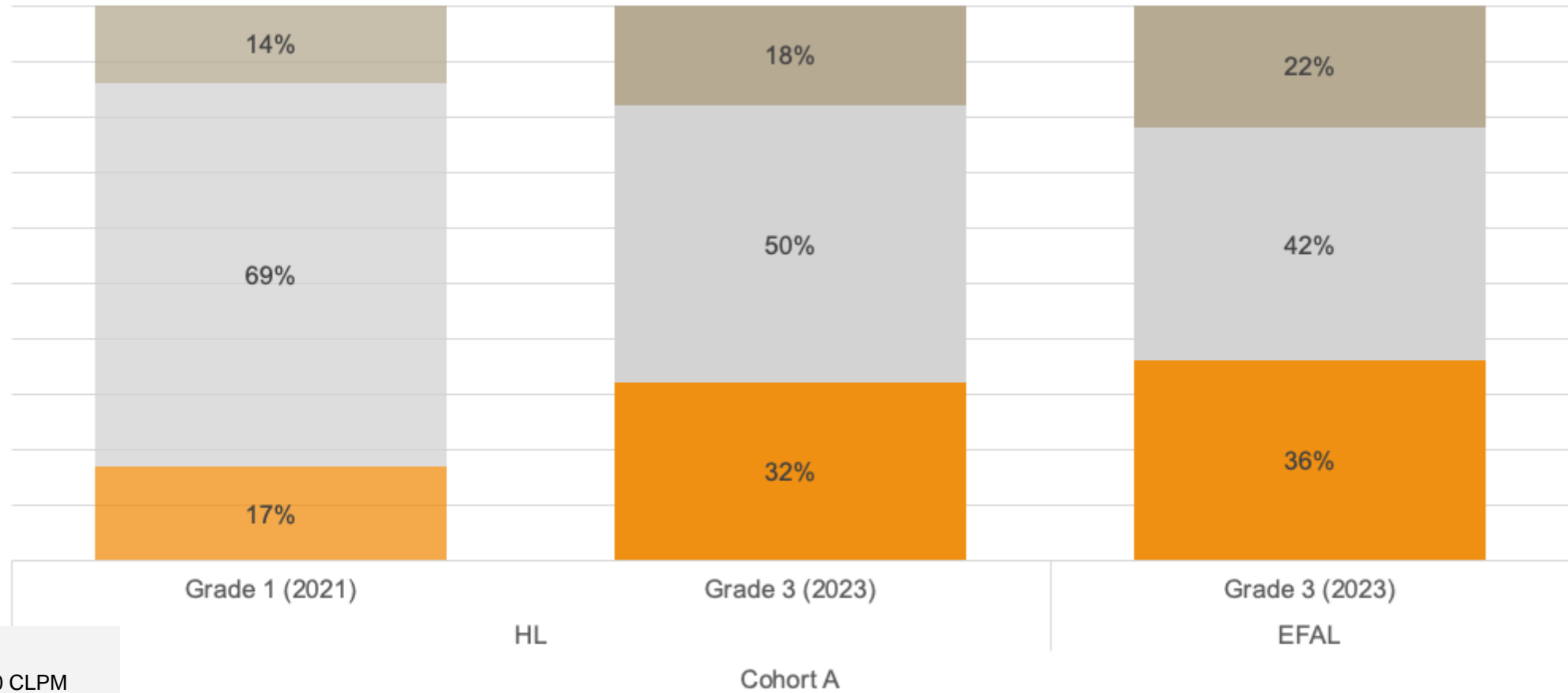
Benchmark
- Grade 1 (HL) - 40 CLPM
- Grade 3 (HL) - 60 CWPM
- Grade 3 (EFAL) - 50 CWPM

CWPM = Correct Words Per Minute
CWLP = Correct Letters Per Minute

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Learner Results Against Reading Benchmarks I Cohort B

59%	74%	33%
26%	17%	44%
15%	9%	23%
Grade 2 (2021)	Grade 2 (2021)	Grade 4 (2023)
HL	EFAL	

Cohort B

■ At or above benchmark. ■ Under benchmark. ■ No letters or words.
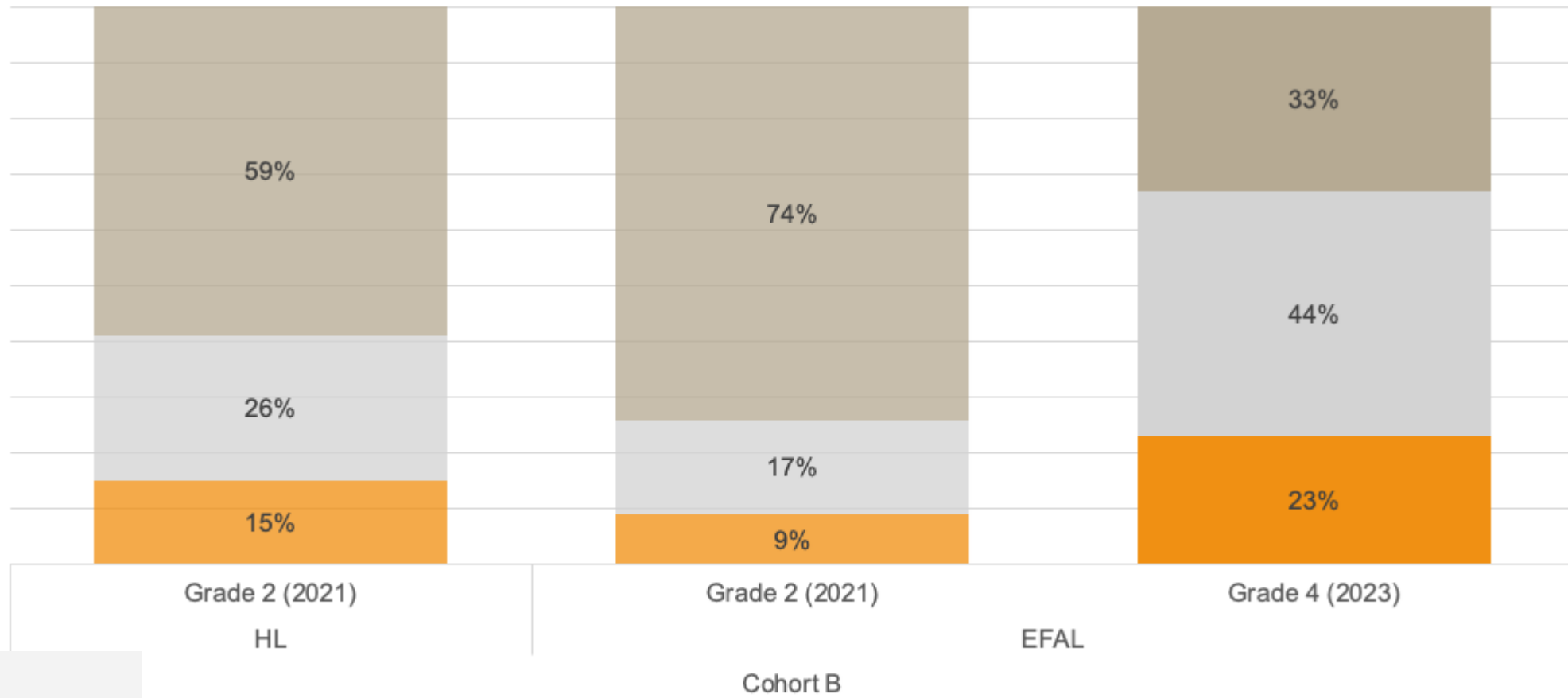
Benchmark
- Grade 2 (HL) - 40 CWPM
- Grade 2 (EFAL) - 30 CWPM
- Grade 4 (EFAL) - 70 CWPM

Learner Results Against Reading Benchmarks I Cohort A vs Cohort C
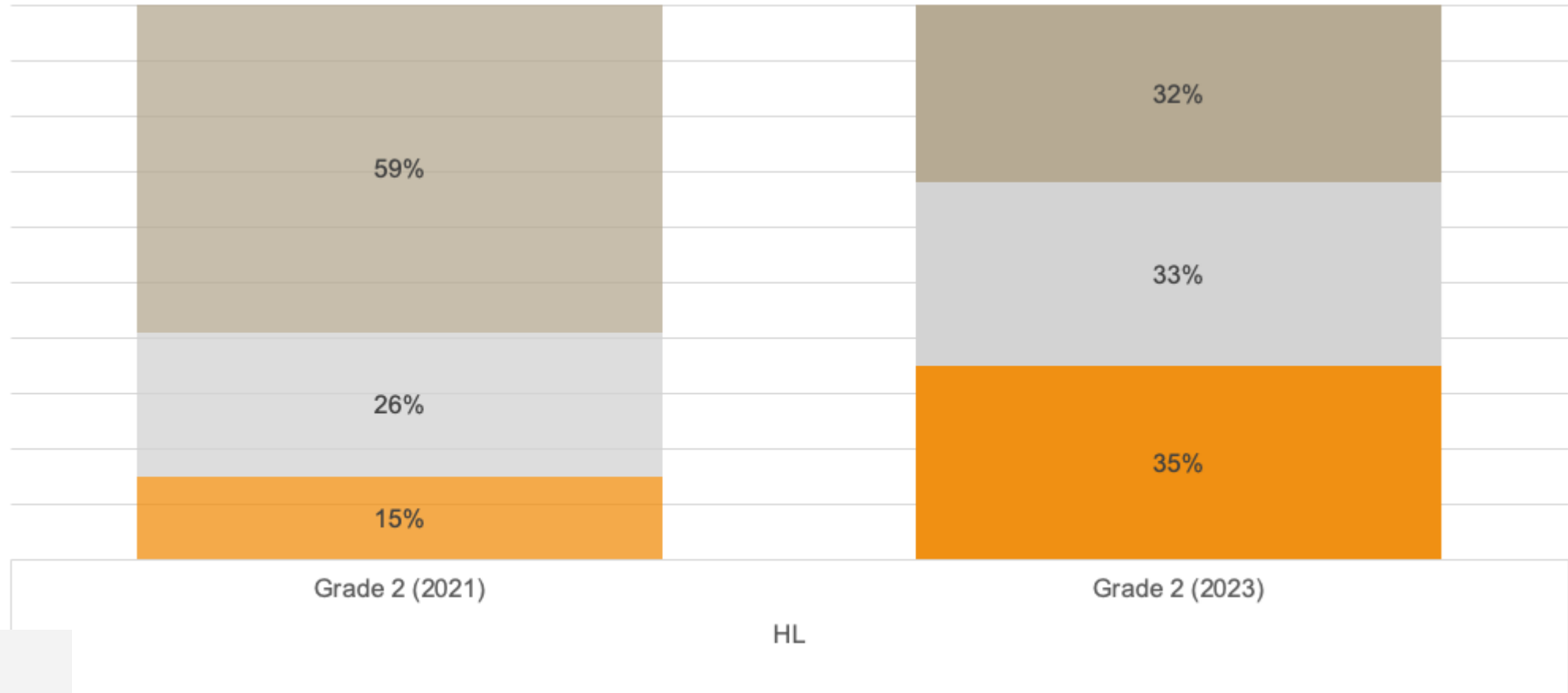
Benchmark
● Grade 2 (HL) - 40 CWPM

■ At or above benchmark.   ■ Under benchmark.   ■ No letters or words.

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IMPACT LEVEL FINDINGS | Density Plot
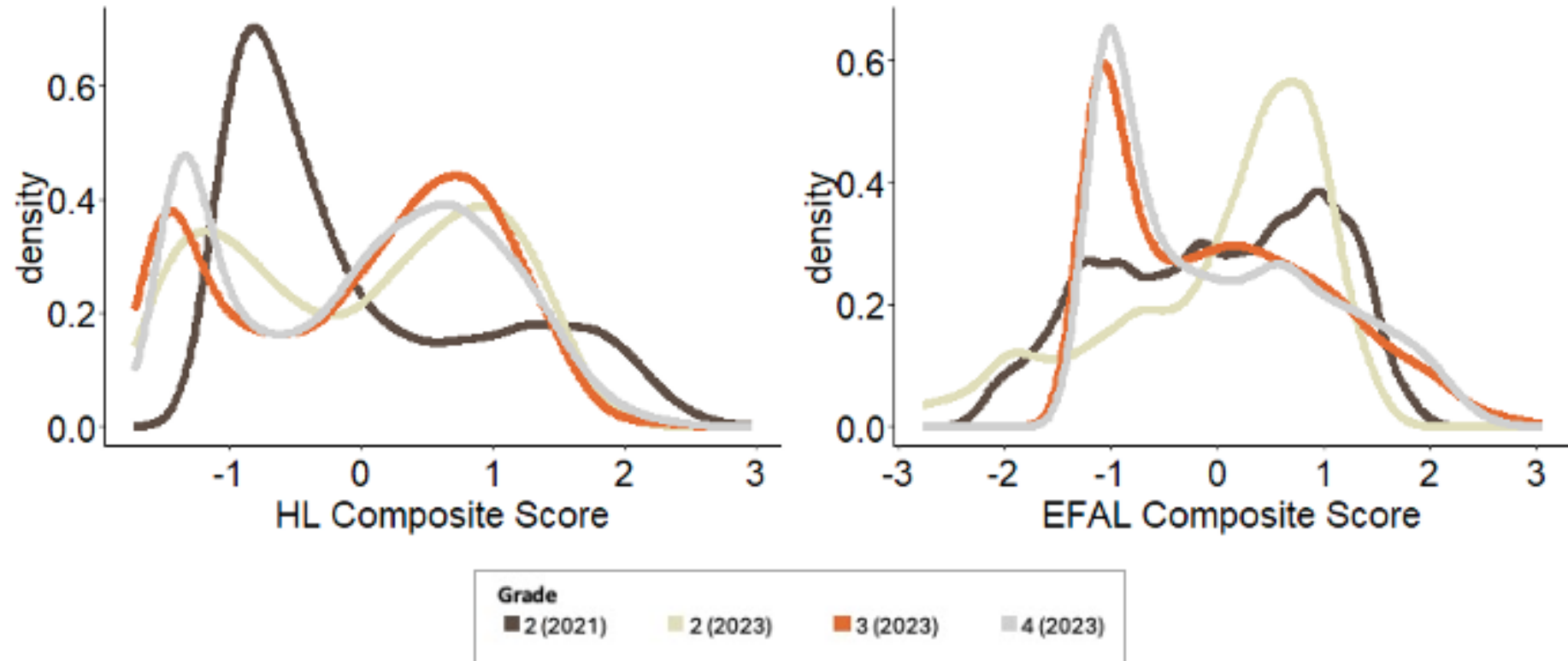
Did the programme impact learner EFAL and HL scores as intended?

IMPACT LEVEL FINDINGS | Regression Results

Dependent variable: Each Language Composite Score, OLS Clustered Standard Errors

	Grade 2, Wave 2 COHORT C (NEW) Grade 2 in 2023		Grade 3 COHORT A Grade 3 in 2023		Grade 4 COHORT B Grade 4 in 2023	
	HL	EFAL	HL	EFAL	HL	EFAL
External coaching	0.255***	0.323***	0.128	0.175**	0.068	0.064
	(0.088)	(0.090)	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.077)	(0.082)
DH coaching	0.090	0.038	0.046	0.011	0.029	0.014
	(0.105)	(0.096)	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.068)	(0.068)
Observations	1,057	1,057	2,249	2,249	2,260	2,260
R^2	0.106	0.089	0.125	0.093	0.101	0.094
Adjusted R^2	0.094	0.076	0.119	0.087	0.095	0.088

Note: All regressions include individual, strata and district controls.
Statistical significance is indicated as follows $*p<0.1$ $**p<0.05$ $***p<0.01$

IMPACT LEVEL FINDINGS | Regression Results Meaning

Grade	Language	Effect Size (SDs)	Years Gained	Months Gained
Grade 2	HL	**0.255**	0.85	10.2 months
Grade 2	EFAL	**0.323**	1.08	12.9 months
Grade 3	EFAL	**0.175**	0.58	7 months

Median effect size in low and middle income countries is **0.1 SDs**

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Main Impact Question: How do learner results compare across the control group, DH and external coaching arms?

Grade 2 HL

	Grand Total	External Coaching	DH Coaching	Control
No words read	32%	28%	33%	34%
Under benchmark	33%	34%	35%	32%
Benchmark met	35%	38%	32%	34%
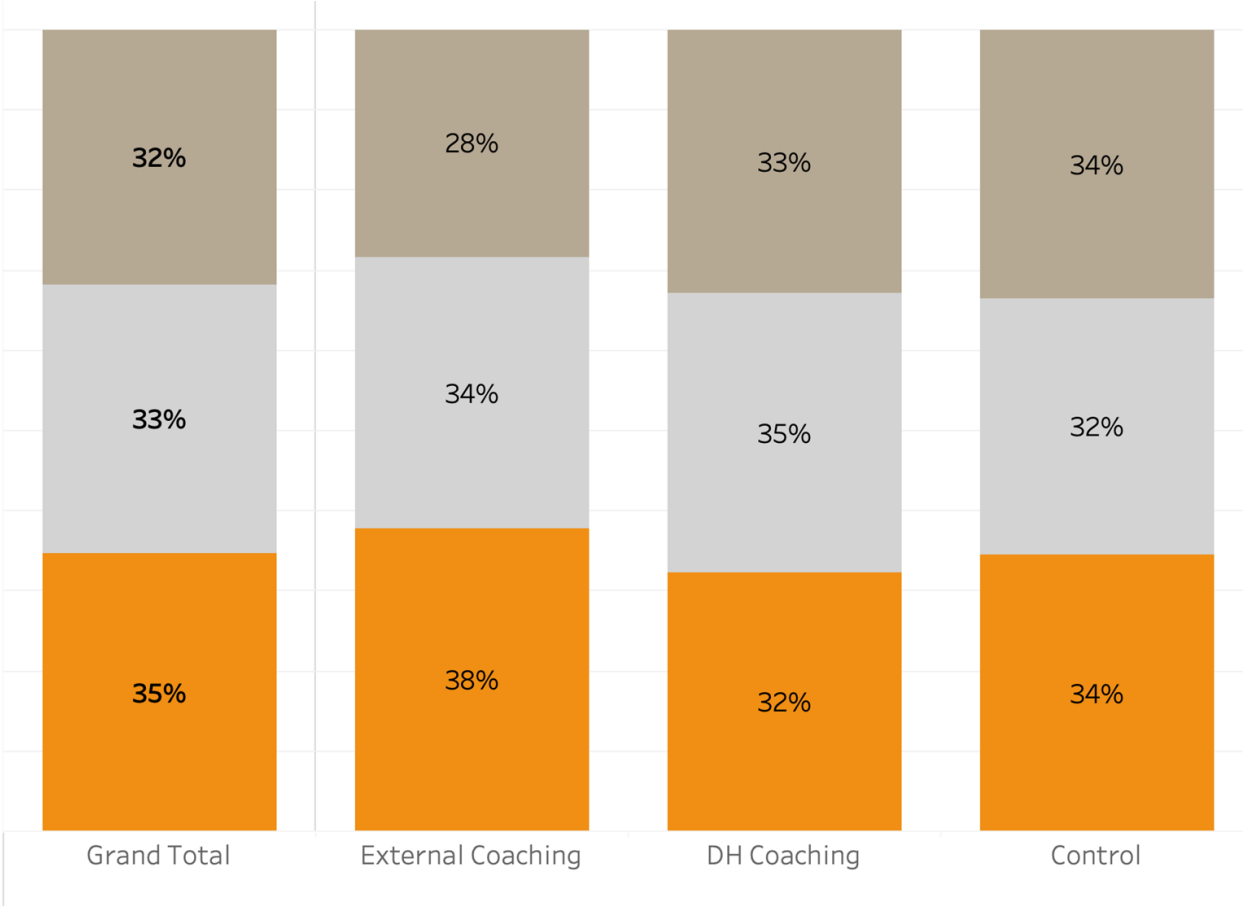
Legend:
- No words read
- Under benchmark
- Benchmark met

Benchmark
- Grade 2 (HL) - 40 CWPM

4

Main Impact Question: How do learner results compare across the control group, DH and external coaching arms?

Grade 3
EFAL

	Grand Total	External Coaching	DH Coaching	Control
No words read	22%	21%	21%	24%
Under benchmark	42%	41%	45%	41%
Benchmark met	35%	38%	34%	35%
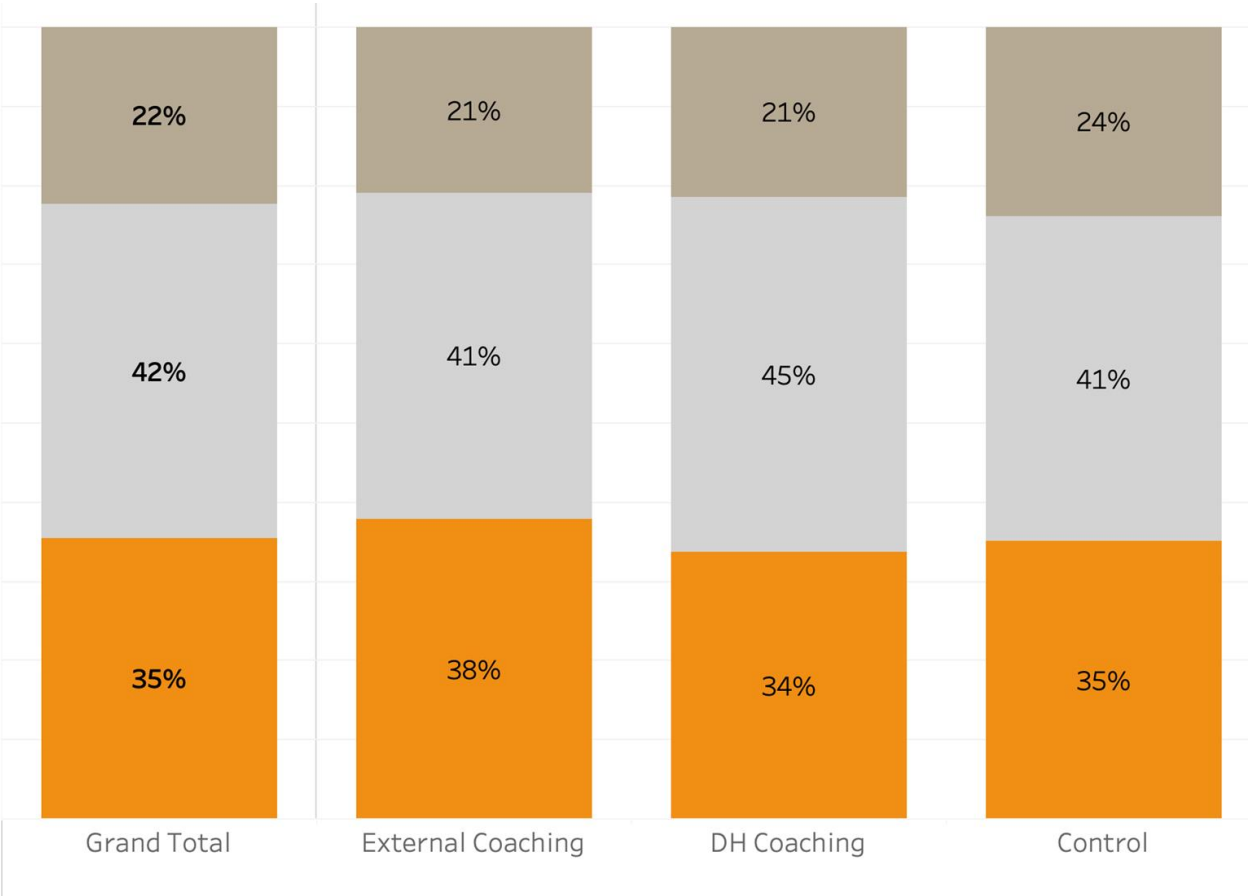
Legend:
- No words read
- Under benchmark
- Benchmark met

Benchmark
- Grade 3 (EFAL) - 50 CWPM

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IMPACT LEVEL FINDINGS | Who did the external coaching intervention affect the most?

External Coaching Grade 2 HL quantile plot
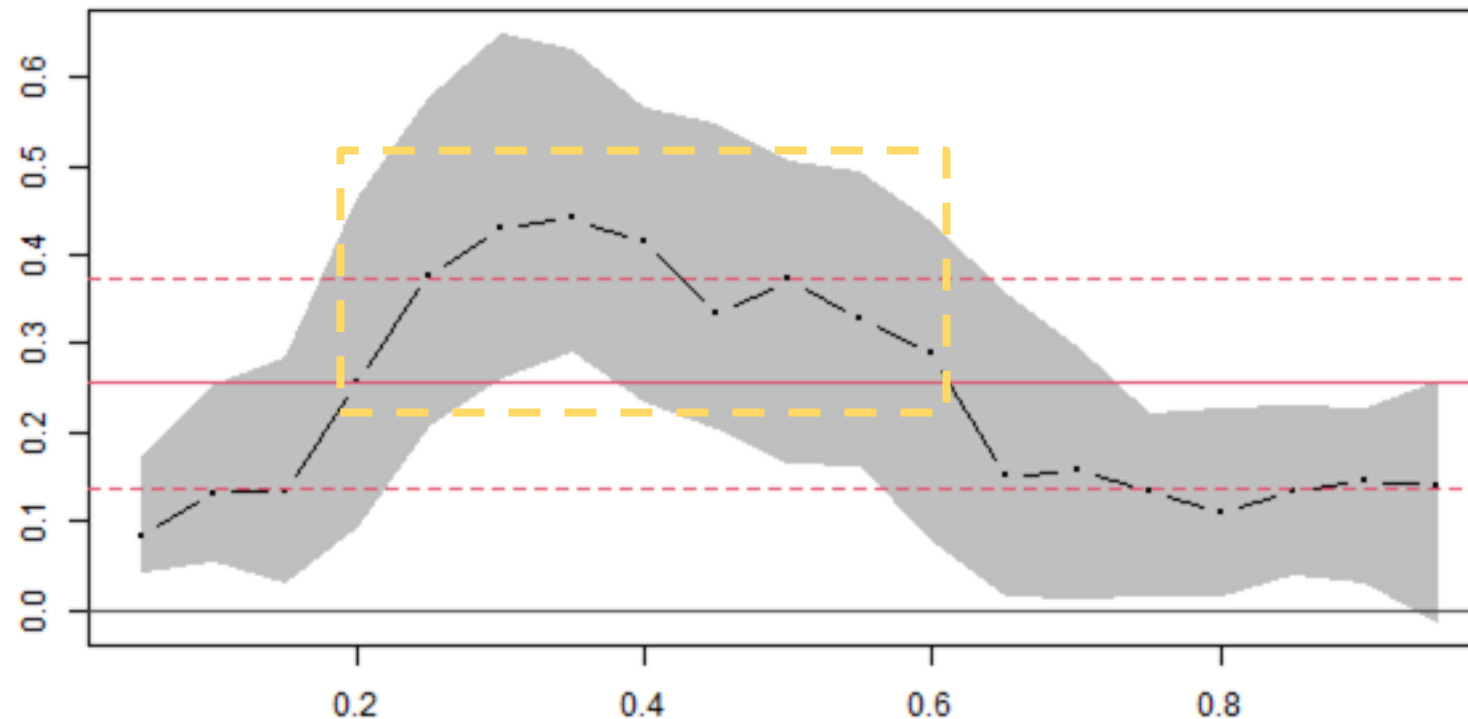
Performance Level

Was the programme implemented as intended?

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL FINDINGS
Was the programme implemented as intended?
BASE PROGRAMME
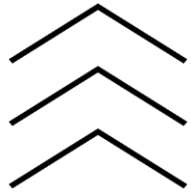
| LTSM & Teacher Training | The base programme elements were implemented with sufficient fidelity and quality. |

Training implementation	2021 (n=371)				2023* (n=309)			
	External Coaching	DH Coaching	Control	**Overall**	External Coaching	DH Coaching	Control	**Overall**
Coverage ≥ *100% of teachers attend at least 1 training session*	99%	98%	96%	**98%**	99%	100%	97%	**98%**
Dosage ≥ *90% of teachers attend all training sessions*	81%	70%	67%	**72%**	89%	87%	86%	**87%**
Catch up trained ≥ *95% of teachers who miss training receive catch-up training*	63%	55%	41%	**51%**	70%	60%	47%	**58%**

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL FINDINGS
Was the programme implemented as intended?
COACH TRAINING
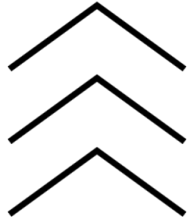
External Coach Training

- Dosage and coverage: delivered with sufficient fidelity
- Training prepared external coaches adequately to train teachers. However in 2021 (Term 2 and 3) no time was spent on how to coach teachers/DHs but in subsequent sessions this was covered
- Takeaway from training was about compliance
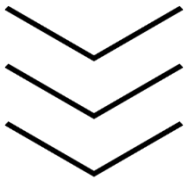
Training of the 2 External Coaches Supporting DH coaches

- Coverage: target achieved (coaches attend the training offered)
- Dosage: target not achieved
- Modules covered include literacy coaching, integrating coaching with DH planning, DH roles as a coach, building confidence managing teachers and other relevant topics

DH Coach Training

- Late commencement of DH coach training
- Focus on compliance rather than empowerment of teachers

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IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL FINDINGS
Was the programme implemented as intended?
COACHING
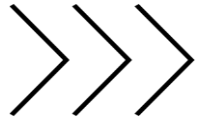
External Coaching

- External coaching had uneven dosage
- Limited vision of what could be achieved through post-lesson conferencing, PLCs and the schools based workshops
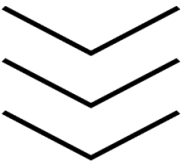
DH Coaching

- Training dosage was inadequate for them to fulfil coaching role
- DH coaching limited by late commencement of the DH coaching components
- Motivation of DH is key
- Support from external coach was limited
- Ability to coach was based on availability of EAs

The DH & External coaching approach **did not fulfil the key characteristics of 'instructional coaching'**

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL FINDINGS
Was the programme implemented as intended?
SBWs
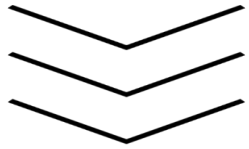
School Based Workshops

Dosage and coverage of SBWs was very low in 2021 but gradually improved in 2022 and 2023, though it remained below the targeted dosage and coverage.

This represented a missed opportunity to support teachers with how to deal with COVID-19 backlogs & learning losses, in addition to other issues they were facing in their classrooms.

SBWs comparison by intervention arm and year

Intervention	To a large extent	To a limited extent	Not at all	Refused to answer
My DH coach conducted SBWs regularly (2022)_4.2.9	41% / 24	31% / 18	12% / 7	16% / 9
My DH coach conducted SBWs regularly (2023)_4.2.9	47% / 27	29% / 17	12% / 7	12% / 7
My EGRP coach conducts SBWs regularly (2022)_4.2.9	58% / 34	24% / 14	19% / 11	
My EGRP coach conducts SBWs regularly (2023)_4.2.9	71% / 42	17% / 10	7% / 4	5% / 3

Legend:
- Refused to answer
- Not at all
- To a limited extent
- To a large extent

5

Did the programme result in the specified outcomes?

OUTCOME LEVEL FINDINGS

Teaching Outcomes
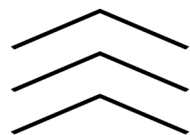
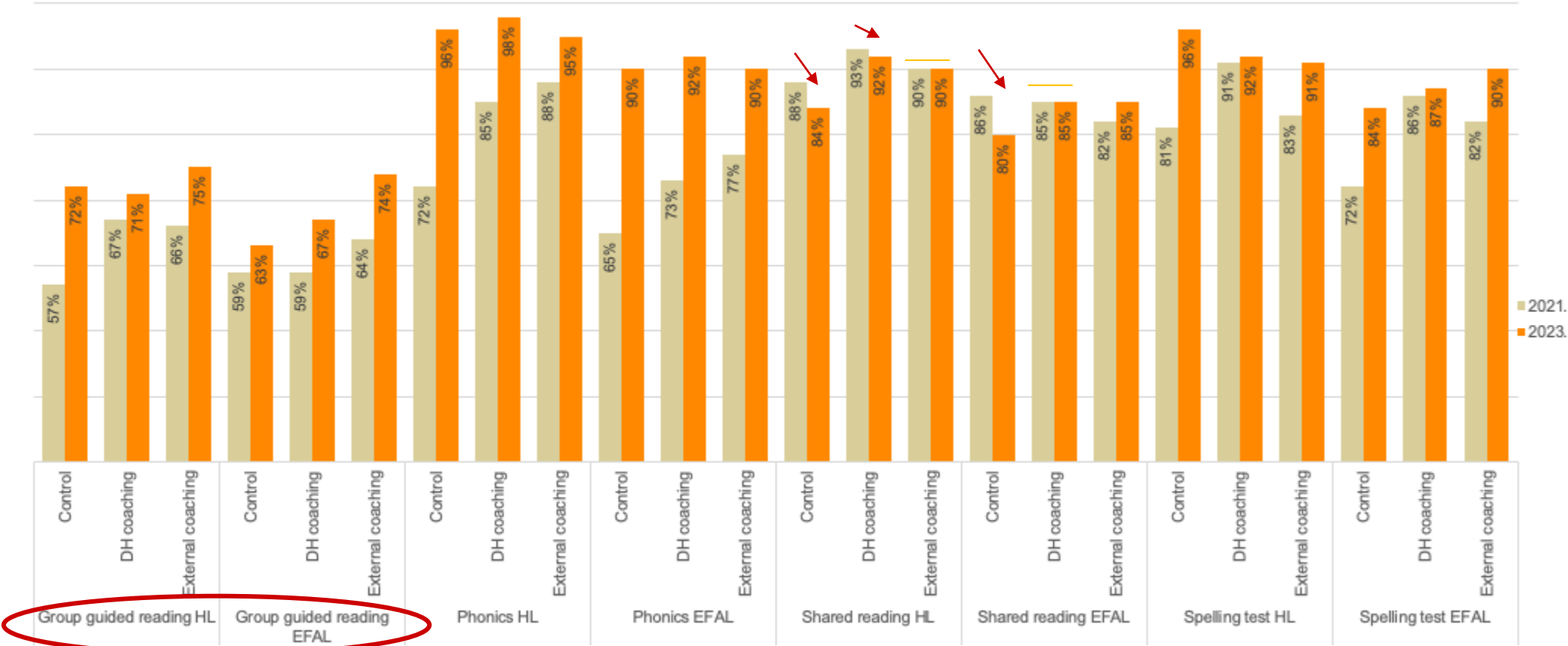|		
Teacher Confidence	Increase in teacher confidence & feeling supported	
Classroom Practice	Improvements in curriculum coverage, lesson pacing, a variety of activities during lesson, better use of lesson plans and classroom management however, Differentiated teaching to handle diverse needs still a challenge	
EGRP Methodologies	Advanced reading methodologies like shared and group guided reading, core to the EGRP design, remained challenging for teachers in both coaching streams, and some teachers struggled with use of tablet	
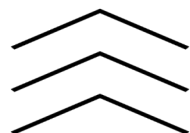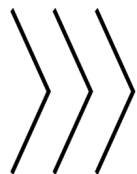
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Teaching Outcomes | Ease delivering EGRP methodologies

Coaching Outcomes
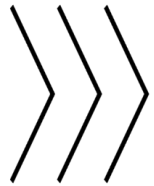
External Coaching Practice

External coaches were consistently observed to be technically competent in the EGRP literacy methodologies,
however,
their coaching was generally not instructional and developmental.
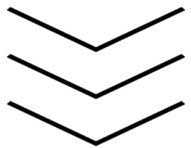
DH Coaching Practice

DH coaches who used a more developmental approach showed greater confidence than those who focused on compliance.

While DH coaches were generally more pragmatic and open to innovation than external coaches, they also inherited a standardised approach to coaching.

DH coaching, thus, focused less on development, neglecting to prioritise teacher self-reflection and problem-solving in its approach

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CONCLUSIONS

The EGRP could not show, at an impact level, if DH coaching could achieve similar results as external coaching, less because of design but due to…

- Contextual factors such as COVID-19 and presence (or not) of Education Assistants attached to the DH
- Implementation constraints e.g. inadequate dosage of the DH coaching
- Processes by which DHs were informed of their enhanced role and are appointed
- Failure of DH training to emphasise power of building teacher capacity to self-reflect and build skills sequentially, reduce teacher-centred lessons and emphasise learner understanding when reviewing lessons

CONCLUSIONS

So, we conclude that if the following conditions are in place... then
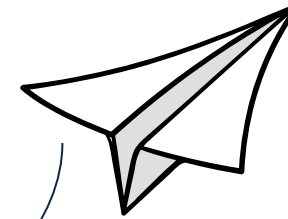
MORE SUCCESSFUL DH MODEL

EFFECTIVE SUCCESSION PLANNING

Transferring of coaching role

INTEGRATION OF COACHING REQUIREMENTS INTO DH RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION PROCESSES

REGULAR TRAINING, SUPPORT AND MONITORING

DH TIME CONSTRAINTS ARE ADDRESSED

via trained EAs attached to Foundation Phase DHs

CONDUCIVE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Subject Advisor buy-in, provincial recognition of the DH coaching role, supportive SMT

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CONCLUSIONS

External coaching was effective in conducive learning contexts such as normal post COVID-19 learning and teaching, however,

● It could not reverse the adverse effects of COVID-19 related learning losses on Cohorts A and B, and the consequent learning deficits for these cohorts

7

RECOMMENDATIONS I Base Intervention

1. Enhance the EGRP App and its adoption by teachers & coaches

1. Review the support given to teachers in methodologies they have found challenging in different iterations of the early grade studies. These include GGR and SR

1. Build on the successful use of WhatsApp groups to share information, innovations and success stories

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RECOMMENDATIONS I Coaching - All models

Choose external coaches with care and closely monitor their work to ensure they are fit for purpose. Remove weak external coaches quickly

Encourage a developmental and instructional approach to coaching and particularly conferencing after lesson observations

Refine the structure of school-based workshops to ensure they serve as platforms for peer learning without duplicating content and interactions already addressed elsewhere in the programme

Focus coaching and school based workshops explicitly on improving learner performance

8

RECOMMENDATIONS I School- and System-level Enablers

1. Review the recruitment of DHs into new coaching roles

1. Adapt the DH promotion and succession processes to take coaching potential and skills into account

1. Integrate Education Assistants into the design of DH coaching models

RECOMMENDATIONS I Large scale intervention implementation design

Spread implementation capacity across a consortium of implementing agencies: 'Triple cocktail' requires a wide range of distinct implementation skills which are rarely found equally strongly in a single implementing agency

Make sure key **Department of Basic Education policies are concretised**, including deployment of EAs to support foundation phase DHs, emphasis on early grade reading, and professionalisation of appointment of DHs

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Thank you