



Fruit Drink Study

What was this study about? Last year, some of the children from Years 3, 4 and 5 took part in the Fruit Drink Study run by the Nutritional Psychology Lab from the University of Reading. This study investigated whether a particular fruit drink could improve children's memory, attention and reading.

Why did we do this study?

The fruit drink used in this study was made from wild blueberries. Wild blueberries contain a large number of a particular nutrient called flavonoids. This nutrient has been shown to improve memory and attention in older adults and younger adults, but research has only just started to investigate whether flavonoids can improve memory and attention in children.

Researchers from the Nutritional Psychology Lab have shown that this fruit drink can maintain and improve different aspects of 7-10 year olds' memory and attention up to 6h after having the drink.

In this current study, we were particularly interested in what happens when children are given this drink in the morning.

What did the study involve?

To begin with, all children taking part completed a practise of some memory, attention and reading games, as well as completing some extra attention, intelligence and reading tasks in a one-off practise session.

The main test sessions were completed on the following day. All children met with the researcher to play the memory, attention and reading games. They then drank either the special fruit drink or a sugar-matched placebo. Two hours later they played the games again to see if the fruit drink had improved their scores. These test sessions took place in the morning.

What did we find?

This study found some very promising results similar to our previous findings. The flavonoid drink helped children to maintain their memory for words and improved their accuracy on an attention game 2h after having the fruit drink. In this study, the special fruit drink did not improve reading ability.

What will we do now?

We believe that reading is a hard skill to learn and having just a single flavonoid-rich drink may not be enough to improve reading. The researchers now plan to look at whether having the special fruit drink every day for 4 weeks can improve reading ability in 7-10 year olds. Another future study will also look at whether the special fruit drink can help specifically with learning new words; the building blocks for how children learnt to read.

Thank you to all the children who took part in the Fruit Drink Study, and to the staff for all your support. Thank you Thameside Primary School!