

CASE STUDY REPORT

Embedding principles of Every Child a Writer in whole school approach to Literacy

Dominic Davis

This study was originally published in 2010 as part of the 'What Works Well' initiative, part of the National Strategies for Education in England.

Abstract

Background: The purpose of the study was to improve the writing skills of children in Y3/Y4, develop a whole school approach to writing, deliver tightly focussed CPD for improving writing, embed guided writing, use AfL to inform planning, teaching and learning, continuous assessment of pupils to identify areas for development, use 1:1 tuition to increase progress of individuals, continue ECaW programme, establish KS1 writing support programme, cascade knowledge and experience of current Y3/Y4 teachers further, and establish more writing opportunities with a 'clear purpose for writing', cross curricular writing opportunities, and experiential learning leading to writing.

Aims: The main aim of the development work was to improve children's writing skills, teacher confidence in teaching writing, and assessment of writing through the use of AfL and guided writing, deliver tightly focussed CPD for improving writing, establish lesson study and team teaching for individual CPD, embed guided writing, use AfL to inform planning, teaching and learning, continuous assessment of pupils to identify areas for development, use 1:1 tuition to increase progress of individuals, allowing them to attain national age related expectations, continue ECaW programme, establish KS1 writing support programme, cascade knowledge and experience of current Y3/Y4 teachers further, and establish more writing opportunities with a 'clear purpose for writing', cross curricular writing opportunities, and experiential learning leading to writing.

Methods: The participants included senior leaders, subject leaders, two Y3/Y4 teachers, a 1:1 tutor, a literacy coordinator, LA consultants, National Strategy staff, and a lead teacher to deliver tightly focussed CPD for improving writing, establish lesson study and team teaching, embed guided writing, use AfL, continuous assessment, 1:1 tuition, ECaW programme, KS1 writing support programme, and more writing opportunities.

Methods used included CPD, AfL, guided writing, SfW and TfW materials, 1:1 tuition, lesson study, team teaching, ECaW programme, KS1 writing support programme, cascading knowledge and experience, and continuous assessment.

Findings: The main findings of this case study are that the use of AfL, Talk for Writing, and personalised CPD for teachers have had a positive impact on pupil learning, teaching, and school organisation and leadership. Pupils have made at least one sub-level of progress across the year, and teachers have become more confident in assessing writing and using strategies to teach writing. The School

Improvement Plan has been updated to include principles of ECaW, such as delivering tightly focussed CPD for improving writing, establishing lesson study and team teaching for individual CPD, embedding guided writing, using AfL to inform planning, teaching and learning, continuous assessment of pupils to identify areas for development, and using 1:1 tuition to increase progress of individuals. Further developments are planned, such as continuing the ECaW programme, establishing a KS1 writing support programme, cascading knowledge and experience of current Y3/Y4 teachers further, and establishing more writing opportunities with a 'clear purpose for writing', cross curricular writing opportunities, and experiential learning leading to writing.

Implications: The findings suggest that a whole school approach to writing, including CPD, AfL, guided writing, lesson study, team teaching, continuous assessment, 1:1 tuition, ECaW programme, KS1 writing support programme, and writing opportunities with a clear purpose, can lead to improved writing skills and increased progress for pupils.

This abstract was generated by Camtree using a large language model (LLM) and added to the original report in 2023.

Keywords: Primary education; Assessment and target setting; English - writing

Introduction

What were your reasons for doing this type of development work?

- To improve progress of children in Y3/Y4
- To develop whole school approach to writing
- To develop assessment of writing and use of AfL across the school

Who might find this case study useful?

- Senior leader
- Subject leader

Description

What specific curriculum area, subject or aspect did you intend to have impact on?

- Assessment and target setting
- English - writing

How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

- Improve children's writing skills, and the application of those skills in independent work, which would be evident in writing across the curriculum and through improved progression.
- Improve teaching of writing, and teacher confidence in the teaching of writing, evident through observation/in class support.

What were your success criteria?

- Increase proportion of children achieving age-related expectations.
- Increase proportion of children making two levels of progress across KS2.
- Deepen teachers' understanding of the range of teaching strategies relevant to writing and to develop guided writing as precision intervention to address the specific needs of children.
- Establish APP for writing to inform teaching and learning.

What information or data did you use to measure progress towards your success criteria?

- Observation outcomes
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Pupils' work
- Test results

Describe the CPD approaches you used

Whole school CPD on Support for Writing, Talk for Writing, Planning a unit, writing strategies, creative approaches to teaching writing, APP for writing (including moderation). These INSET sessions were informed by the training provided to the lead teacher by National Strategies and the LA as part of ECaw. The school improvement plan for literacy had a key focus on improving writing, through improving quality first teaching, establishing shared and guided writing, improving the assessment of writing by establishing APP and using findings to inform planning.

The two teachers in Y3/Y4 received 2.75 days of support, as well as CPD days provided by National Strategies and the LA.

1:1 tutor attended LA training.

In school support consisted of classroom support and discussion/follow up time. In class support focused primarily on the use of writing strategies, and the use of AfL to inform teaching and learning. Strategies were modelled for the teachers, who then tried them out in class between supported sessions.

Team teaching also took place, as well as supporting the teacher when they were involved in guided writing.

The follow up time was used to carry out assessments of targeted individuals using APP and creating targets/plans to meet the needs of these learners. Some moderation of assessments took place. Time was also used to explore SfW and TFW materials in more detail. Video footage of guided writing, taken from the primary framework, was explored allowing the teachers to see what guided writing before writing, at the point of writing, and after writing, looks like in the classroom and to provide ideas on possible approaches to guided writing. They then carried out similar activities in class. Next steps were then identified, with appropriate support identified if required.

Cluster meetings with four other Y3/Y4 teachers from two other schools who were being supported by the leading teacher, and an LA consultant, were held to explore strategies to improve writing, share experiences, joint assessments of writing. One cluster meeting was held in each school, with a cluster meeting held each term. This also allowed teachers to observe different learning environments, and see how writing was being prioritised in a range of settings.

1:1 tutor and literacy coordinator observed a tuition session delivered by excellent practitioner from another leading school, fostering links across schools and widening the focus for discussion.

Who provided you with support?

- Local authority staff
- Senior management

How were you supported?

- LA Consultants – LA led training days focused on APP, SfW, TFW, planning units, provision of resources, supporting cluster meetings, being available to provide advice when required.
- National Strategy events – sharing of key messages, provision of resources, opportunities to share experiences and approaches to improving writing.
- SMT – ensuring that principles of ECaW were central to whole school approach to improving writing. Time given for INSET focussed on writing, including feedback to whole school from Y3 and Y4 teachers, to share their development and experiences.

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development and experiences.

Impact

What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

Year 3 All children have made at least one sub-level of progress across the year. 87% have made at least two sub levels of progress across the year. 5 children (17%) made 3 sub levels of progress across the year. Year 4 All children have made at least one sub-level of progress across the year. 80% have made at least two sub levels of progress across the year. 2 children made 3 sub levels of progress across the year. 3 children made 4 sub levels of progress across the year. 1 child made 5 sub levels of progress across the year.

Children receiving 1:1 tuition Of the six children receiving 1:1 tuition, four made 2 sub levels of progress, and two made 3 sub levels of progress across the year.

Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

- Rigorous use of AfL was key to identifying development points for individuals and groups of children, and planning adjusted to meet these needs through whole class and guided teaching and learning. Guided groups were flexible to accommodate and target individuals with similar developmental needs. Guided teaching and learning took place throughout the teaching sequence and across unit phases, and included guided talk, for example to aid planning. Guided sessions also drew upon modelled, shared and supported writing/composition.
- Children were aware of targets and how these can be met in their written work.
- Teachers were aware of next steps for learning and how to move children forward. Support for Writing materials were used to inform teacher's planning, etc, and approaches to writing, for example techniques, use of texts, etc were selected to maximise opportunities for progression.

Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

- "Because my teaching is more focused the children are picking up more skills and incorporating a range of different ideas in their writing. The standard of writing they produce is high." (Y4 teacher)
- "We targeted children who were achieving below national expectations. Through target teaching and the use of APP and steps in learning, children have made good progress and are now meeting national expectations. The children experienced a range of strategies throughout their literacy lessons introduced through the ECaW programme. We encouraged the children to see themselves as writers, and to promote the enjoyment of writing. They responded well to the techniques and strategies and enthusiasm was seen in many lessons." (Y3 teacher)
- "I have learnt how to make my writing better. I am good at writing." (Y3 boy)
- "I am good at writing stories." (Y3 boy, SEN)
- "I like literacy because we get to do writing." (Y3 boy)
- "I've learned that you can start sentences in different ways." (Y4 girl, who had using a range of sentence openers as a target)
- "I think writing in class is good because you can get ideas that are completely different from your own." (Y4 boy)

Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Periodic teacher assessment

Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Observation outcomes
- Pupils' work

Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Pupil progress data.

Pupil comments. (See quotes above)

What has been the impact on teaching?

- One supported teacher moved from Satisfactory to Good, the other supported teacher from Good to Outstanding, based on observations of teaching and learning as part of performance management procedures.
- Practitioners have cascaded their experience and skills across school.
- 85% of teaching of writing within the school was judged to be good or better.
- Practitioners are more confident with assessing writing, and using findings to inform future teaching and learning.
- Practitioners are more secure using a range of strategies to teach writing.
- Guided writing is established across the school.

Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

- "I have become a lot more focused and precise during guided teaching. I also do a lot more modelling of writing, and focus on specific skills during a lesson. I use ideas from TfW like magpie ideas from texts, story maps, writer talk, boxing up. The video clips from National Strategies have been useful to see ideas in action." (Y4 teacher)
- "The support provided gave me ways to implement strategies and improve my planning and delivery of literacy. It has given me greater confidence with modelled and guided writing, and I now feel very confident in these areas and previously had not! It has given me time to look at individuals, through tracking and cluster meetings. Discussing children and their issues in literacy enabled targeted teaching and implementing new strategies to support and encourage specific children to make progress." (Y3 teacher)

Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning
- Teacher perceptions

Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

Evidence from observations and monitoring, evidence from planning and book scrutiny, teacher perceptions.

What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

The School Improvement Plan for improving writing includes action and development points based on the principles of ECaW, i.e. ensuring faster and more consistent progression in writing, establishing modelled, shared, supported and guided writing throughout the teaching sequence, using assessment to inform teaching and learning, and enabling more a creative approach to the teaching of writing through, for example, experiential

learning and use of quality texts.

Staffing for next year allows for further cascading of experience to other members of staff as one supported teacher is working alongside an NQT in Y4, and the other is moving to Y1 to support improvements in writing, and ECaW programme will continue next year, with both Y3 teachers being supported, along with a similar programme for KS1, where the two Y2 teachers will be supported. Lead teacher has been involved in writing projects in Y5 and this will also continue next year.

Literacy coordinator not class based to allow for targeted intervention (group and 1:1) for writing across the school, and to help facilitate team teaching and classroom based support for CPD.

1:1 tuition to be extended across the school to enable more children to be supported in this way as the approach has proved successful through ECaW. Additional staff have been recruited to provide 1:1 tuition, and lead teacher will also be involved in this process, including quality assurance and monitoring of tuition sessions.

Planning policy adjusted to encompass principles of ECaW, for example, guided sessions to be included throughout the teaching sequence, WOW starts to be included, inclusion of experiential learning, AfL used to inform unit planning and guided sessions.

Framework units adjusted to include creative approaches to teaching writing, and to meet the needs of 'real' learners.

Guided learning embedded across the school.

Schools, both supported and other leading schools, sharing good practice and working collaboratively on projects and moderation of writing, for example lead teachers were involved in multi-school moderation of final Y6 assessments.

Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

Approach to planning literacy reviewed and updated. Planning shows inclusion of daily guided teaching. Increased networking between schools. Subject leader developing colleagues within and beyond own school.

Summary

What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

- Head teacher and SMT support and drive.
- Use of AfL to inform planning, teaching and learning.
- Establishment of guided writing and learning.
- Use of SfW and TfW materials to support teaching.
- Quality CPD for all staff to establish a whole school approach to writing.
- Personalised CPD for individual staff members.
- Including more opportunities for writing within the planning cycle for literacy, and across the curriculum.

What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

- Personalised CPD for supported teachers as part of ECaW. During the autumn term, both teachers had an initial session together with the lead teacher. This session was focussed on outlining the aims of the programme, and identifying starting points for support/CPD. The next visit involved in class support/coaching for each teacher (with a focus on writing), and time afterwards to review learning, planning and progress. A final visit during the autumn term focused on reviewing planning and

progress, and identification of pupils for 1:1 tuition. During the spring term, each teacher had two sessions of in class coaching/support, and two follow up sessions to review progress, etc. The focus of these sessions depended on the needs of the teacher, but involved modelling approaches to teaching writing, planning units of work, using assessment to inform planning, etc. During the summer term, each teacher had a final classroom based support session, and time to review progress. A review meeting was also carried out during this last session, involving both supported teachers, the lead teacher and the HT to identify impact of programme for children, teachers and the wider school community, and to identify next steps for development. There was also a cluster meeting each term, involving all supported teachers from the lead and supported schools, the lead teacher and a LA consultant. The focus of these cluster meetings were to share experiences and approaches, etc. The teachers also attended NS ECaW CPD days.

- Talk for Writing
- Creativity in Literacy session (see ppt)

If another individual or school was attempting to replicate this work, where would they start and what would the essential elements be?

- Identify areas for development in relation to writing and include in School Improvement Plan.
- Devise and deliver tightly focussed CPD for improving writing.
- Establish lesson study and team teaching for individual CPD.
- Embed guided writing.
- Use AfL to inform planning, teaching and learning.
- Continuous assessment of pupils to identify areas for development.
- Use 1:1 tuition to increase progress of individuals, allowing them to attain national age related expectations.

What further developments are you planning to do (or would you like to see others do)?

- Continue ECaW programme.
- Establish KS1 writing support programme (Using a similar model to ECaW with two teachers in Y2 being supported in class and through review meetings. As in ECaW, the lead teacher will also support two Y2 teachers in two other schools, again, following the ECaW model of support.
- Cascade knowledge and experience of current Y3/Y4 teachers further (Y4 teacher to support NQT working in Y4 next year, Y3 teacher working in Y1 next year to establish approach to writing in phase 1). Establish more writing opportunities with a 'clear purpose for writing', cross curricular writing opportunities, and experiential learning leading to writing.

Supplementary Materials

This report is accompanied in the library by the following supplementary material:

- Presentation: Assessing Pupil Progress - Writing
- Presentation: Creativity in Literacy
- Presentation: Planning a Unit (Literacy INSET)
- Presentation: Support for Writing - an introduction
- Progress data

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This case study was originally published as part of the 'What Works Well' section of the National Strategies for Education in England. The National Strategies were professional programmes aiming for improvements in the quality of learning and teaching in schools in England. 'What Works Well' involved teaching practitioners from all phases and areas of education sharing accounts of real developments which had improved learning and teaching, and made a difference to pupil progress. 'What Works Well' case studies were designed to support practice transfer and include sufficient detail and resources to enable others to implement the effective practice described. They were reviewed by experts prior to publication as 'User Generated Content' (UGC) under a licence which encouraged reuse and derivative works, but which precluded commercial use.

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