



## CASE STUDY REPORT

# Integrating Writing Across the Curriculum

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*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 develop a more personalised cross-curricular approach to improve engagement and progress in writing for pupils, and to embed successful pedagogies to support literacy learning across the curriculum for teachers.

**Aims:** The main aim is to improve pupil engagement and progress in writing by developing a more personalised cross-curricular approach.

**Methods:** The participants in this case study include governors, LA advisers, SLT, subject leaders, teachers, and pupils. Methods used include whole school INSETs, staff exploration during CPD sessions, collaborative work between staff, monitoring and evaluation processes, and ongoing evaluative discussions between staff and learners.

**Findings:** The main findings are that strong leadership, pre-allocation of time and resources, stakeholder commitment, and ongoing dialogue and evaluation have had a positive impact on pupil learning, teacher confidence, and school organisation and leadership.

**Implications:** The findings suggest that strong leadership, stakeholder commitment, and ongoing dialogue and evaluation are essential for successful curriculum development and improved pupil learning.

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

**Keywords:** Primary education; English - writing

## Introduction

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

The school identified the need to extend good EYFS practice in writing. Pupils in the EYFS were writing for an identified audience with a clear purpose. Integrating writing across the curriculum in a meaningful and engaging way was seen as central to continuing to raise pupil progress in writing. The school wished to unpick ways in which pupil independence and choice in writing could be supported and developed.

### Who might find this case study useful?

- Governor
- LA adviser
- Senior leadership team (SLT)
- Subject leader
- Teacher

## Description

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

- English - writing

### How did you intend to impact on pupil learning?

Develop a more personalised cross-curricular approach in order to improve engagement and progress in writing.

For pupils:

- Increase pupil engagement and motivation in writing
- Increase pupil ownership of the curriculum
- Increase pupil enthusiasm for learning

For teachers:

- Embed successful pedagogies to support literacy learning across the curriculum
- Develop a purposeful curriculum to meet the needs of the whole school learning community

### What were your success criteria?

- Raised progress in literacy
- Pupil engagement and enjoyment of learning
- Increased pupil ownership of the curriculum
- Raised profile of home school learning and valuing parents as partners in learning

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

- CVA data
- Learning walks / study visits
- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Pupil consultation data
- Pupils' work
- Test results

## Describe the CPD approaches you used

- Whole school INSETs to map curriculum and provide a common theme for each term
- Staff exploration during CPD sessions about how teaching and learning should look
- Development of collaborative work between staff, e.g. sharing good practice and lesson study
- Monitoring and evaluation processes aligned to provide feedback on impact and enable staff and leaders to explore next steps
- This work has been supported by other projects and developments in school such as the introduction of the Primary Framework, Talk for Writing, CLLD, Every Lambeth Child a Talker
- Curriculum development features on the School Development Plan. Progress is regularly reviewed and adjustments are made

## Who provided you with support?

- Senior management

## How were you supported?

Strong leadership has been central to this process. Development of the curriculum and ensuring literacy is embedded within The Big Picture has been led by the Senior Leadership Team who have actively promoted personalisation of the curriculum and use of professional judgement. The teachers have been encouraged to take risks and make professional decisions which suit the needs and interests of the learners. This remains a central part of the School Development Plan.

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## Impact

### What has been the overall impact on pupil learning?

- Raised attainment in writing. English results have improved by 11% (over five years) to 86%. Writing results 87%. Attainment in reading and writing demonstrate no gender gap
- Pupils are able to write in the range of text types to a high standard
- Pupils have a greater understanding of purpose and audience when designing and creating texts
- Increased pupil participation in planning, learning and evaluation of the curriculum
- Pupils are eager to participate and highly motivated in their learning
- Increased pupil independence and raised self-esteem

### Thoughts you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

- All stakeholders have a shared understanding and ownership of the curriculum which continues to evolve
- A whole school learning community has been developed. Staff work together to ensure and maintain consistent approaches
- Ongoing evaluative discussions between staff and learners

## Quotes you think are relevant to overall impact on learning

'The good curriculum motivates and engages pupils because it reflects their interests and the school's rich cultural diversity.' Ofsted, 2010

'We have a give-it-a-go club in the classrooms. If you can do it, you haven't actually learned anything... this is about creating the ethos where children are willing to have a go... you have to be willing to take a risk. It's crucial.' Assistant HT

'Children see experience as part of the big picture. We try to weave the threads together.' Assistant HT

'We wanted to develop the whole school as a learning community.' Assistant HT

'The link between reading and writing is absolutely vital. It must be made explicit to the children.' SL/ LT

'Children need to be engaged from the word go.' SL/ LT

'It is vital to give children opportunities to articulate their thinking and this takes time and must be planned for.' Assistant HT

## Quantitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- CVA data
- Periodic teacher assessment
- Test results

## Qualitative evidence of impact on pupil learning

- Learning walks / study visits
- Logs or interviews
- Observation outcomes
- Pupil consultation data
- Pupils' work

## Describe the evidence of impact on pupil learning

Pupil progress data has shown improvement and indicates progress in writing has risen 11% over five years. The gap between reading and writing attainment is minimal. Tracking data indicates that 84% KS1 and 64% KS2 pupils have made two sub levels progress in 2010.

## What has been the impact on teaching?

- Improved teacher confidence, enjoyment and commitment to the curriculum
- Flexible use of the Primary Framework and guidance to meet the needs of the pupils
- Increased ownership of the curriculum by all stakeholders
- Improvement in the quality of teaching and learning
- Increased subject knowledge and teacher confidence
- More effective use of AfL processes

## Quotes you think are relevant to the impact on teaching

'Lesson study is providing opportunities to talk and think about practice...Three different people with different strengths working together.' Assistant HT

'Teachers have an ownership of the structure of the day and lessons so that when the children are really into

something rather than enforcing a break they can choose to carry on and follow a line of enquiry through.'

Assistant HT

'Staff are highly motivated and committed to the drive for continuous improvement.' Ofsted, 2010

## Evidence of impact on teaching

- Evidence from observation and monitoring
- Evidence from planning
- Lesson study review

## Describe the evidence of impact on teaching

The impact on teaching has been observed during lesson study cycles, lesson observations, writing scrutiny, learning walks and planning scrutiny.

## What has been the impact on school organisation and leadership?

- Development of subject leadership within the school
- Reflective practitioners led by a reflective Senior Leadership Team
- Ongoing evaluative discussions between children, teachers and senior leaders
- Monitoring and evaluation systems align with the development focus, e.g. range of speaking and listening opportunities; modelled and shared writing

## Evidence of impact on school organisation and leadership

School Development Plan, teacher perceptions, staffing structure and leadership model.

## Summary

### What is the crucial thing that made the difference?

- Strong leadership
- Keeping the children at the heart of the changes
- Constant review and reflection on practice. High levels of professional dialogue as an outcome of coaching and lesson study
- Commitment to time: 'time to have a go'
- Commitment from all stakeholders

### What CPD session and resources were particularly useful?

- Ring-fenced time for staff meetings to review and adapt practice over time.
- Primary Framework
- Training from consultants: speaking and listening, Assessment for Learning
- Talk for Writing
- Links with Institute of Education, University of London
- Ongoing collaborative classroom based work

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

- Pre-allocation of time and resources in order to implement change
- Whole school agreement and commitment to developing the curriculum: stakeholder voices
- Continual revisiting, remaining focused and keeping the rational central to the process

- Celebrate successes
- Evaluate: discuss the benefits and barriers of approaches being trialled
- Clear communication of expectations
- Critical feedback – ongoing dialogue and an open exchange between staff and leadership
- Transparency and honesty
- ‘Being prepared to step back in order to move on.’ Assistant HT

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

- This work is ongoing, curriculum development remains a central focus of the School Development Plan
- Continued development of the lesson study model
- Continued development of subject knowledge using key materials to support, e.g. Support for Writing
- Continued implementation of periodic pupil assessment

## Supplementary Materials

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

- Year 4: The Big Picture termly theme with key questions posed by the pupils to guide planning, teaching and learning
- Year 6: The Big Picture termly theme with key questions posed by the pupils to guide planning, teaching and learning
- The expanded teaching sequence for writing underpinning the Primary Framework. Based on work by Bearne, 2002.
- Year 3 home learning linked to curriculum theme, displayed in the classroom
- Year 4 home school learning linked to curriculum theme, displayed in the classroom

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