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## Reducing over-reliance on adult scribing and building pupil ownership

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## Reducing over-reliance on adult scribing and building pupil ownership

### Rethinking support in writing lessons

## School/Background Context

Our setting is a three-form entry Junior school with 20% SEND, the number of children with EHCPs is 5% which is above average for a mainstream school and 32 in each class. PP proportions are currently at 18%. Our numbers in all areas are growing. The school has a SENCO who has been in post for six years and is also Deputy Headteacher. This means that there is a strong voice advocating for SEND on the senior leadership team. SEND is woven through school priorities each year, rather than being stand alone, meaning that there is always a focus on SEND no matter what the school might be prioritising. The school has an outstanding OFSTED report from 2023, but is restless in striving for best practice and continuous improvement.

## The Challenge

As with many schools, teaching assistant support is reducing due to financial constraints and this is having an impact on the amount of direct support that is available in lessons for each child. In essence, we are having to do more with less and we need to find creative solutions to support staff in ensuring progress for all children.

As a school, our priority this year is improving our writing provision as we recognise that, although our figures are above national average, we would like the numbers of children achieving expected to be higher. We hope that through making changes to writing processes and supporting the planning of lessons, there will be higher levels of independence and better outcomes for lower attainers. In addition to this, we want pupils to be able to enjoy the writing process – through pupil voice surveys over time, SEND pupils have commented that this was their least favourite activity to do. In addition, staff felt that this was an area that they felt less confident delivering to increasing numbers of higher needs students. Our highest priority is to ensure the well-being of our staff and pupils and knew that improving this would support confidence for all.

## What They Did

To start the process, I worked with the writing lead to evaluate what the different writing curriculums looked like for different learners through informal learning walks and book looks, as well as analysing attainment data over time. We found that there was a strong preference for teaching assistants to use whiteboards as scribes as the key strategy for supporting learners. This was despite having had training and guidance over the years to support other methods. Changing cohorts and needs were mostly responsible for this as well as it feeling like a 'safe' strategy. In addition to this, both teachers and teaching assistants reported that they felt they were struggling to make writing accessible to all learners, especially those with high needs.

After this review, we planned to deliver the change over the course of the Autumn Term. Staff training was delivered to both teachers and teaching assistants on our INSET day who were given models and simple guidance to start the initial changes to planning. Quite quickly after that, the writing lead and I were able to attend planning meetings to work with year groups directly to implement high quality writing scaffolding for different stages of the writing process. Staff were able to trial different methods of scaffolding and evaluate successes. One key non-negotiable was that staff were not to use scribing as a method of recording during English lessons. To keep staff on board, the writing lead and I went into lessons to model to staff, particularly teaching assistants, what could be achieved and how the newer strategies could be implemented with different needs in each classroom. Monitoring continued over the term and successes were naturally shared between year groups.

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## Outcomes and Anticipated Impact

We saw an immediate impact on lessons with children now writing more independently and they were making small steps of progress that we had not necessarily seen previously. There was clear feedback from children that they felt more success in lessons. Staff felt that they were able to provide inclusive support for children with less adult help. There was an initial burden of workload through increased planning, which the writing lead and I supported. This is something that we hope will be reduced as it won't need to be created each year.

One unforeseen barrier that we had to overcome was over-reliance on scaffolds and having the confidence to pull these back. However, there was a quick turnaround in the style of support that the children were accessing and higher levels of satisfaction with being able to deliver English lessons without having high levels of adult support.

Our most significant sign that we were being successful was that the end of term pupil voice surveys showed higher numbers of SEND pupils enjoying writing. We anticipate that this will continue through the academic year with dedicated time being given to supporting teachers, but also to ensure that they are confident in their ability to deliver a writing curriculum that meets the needs of their learners.



More inclusive ethos/culture in the setting



Better outcomes for learners with SEND



Increased engagement of learners with SEND