

A Deep Dive into Literacy

Sarah Gumbs and Sam Wright



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Deep Dive; an in-depth examination or analysis of a topic.

A Deep Dive involves gathering evidence on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact over a sample of subjects, topics or aspects.

Both the Reading and Writing Deep Dive for Highbury school were conducted during the Autumn term 2021, as part of the Specialist Schools Cluster.



Everyone must be given
the opportunity to think,
read and write.

Lailah Gifty Akita



How is evidence gathered in school?

Staff & pupil questionnaires

Lesson observations & learning walks

Variety and quality of provision

Listening to readers & pupil interaction

Looking at progress in books & folders

Reviewing curriculum documents

Quality of planning & timetable coverage

Tracking assessment & data trends

School website

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Self-evaluation Framework (SEF)

Education Health Care Plans & Annual Review Documents

Homework & reading records

Pupil premium / catch up plan



Strengths in
practice...

Writing

Learning environments

- Scaffolded sheets to support teaching staff in provision areas for both mark-making and fine motor
- Interactive displays for children to create writing
- A range of tools available for children to make a choice of writing implement
- Visual reminders of what to include in writing available for all lessons



Lights, Cam

Fine Motor

Aims:

- To develop strength and functional skills (use of fingers, hands, arms, legs, body).
- Gain some independence in certain tasks (once access is facilitated).
- To discover out how to make things work.

Teaching Points:

- Model skills by demonstrating and working co-actively. Reduce prompts over time.
- Ensure stimuli is highly motivated and accessible to pupils, considering any sensory impairment, handedness, physical difficulties.
- Cue in activities with use of objects of reference.
- Use simple nouns (names of objects/activities) and verbs (doing words) to describe stimuli and action, whilst modelling.
- Work in conjunction with physiotherapy plans and advice.

Learning Objectives

- | | |
|---|---|
| Reaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Touch stimuli with fingers / hands / feet• Bring hands to midline• Touch stimuli in midline / on left / on right• Squeeze hand / fingers around stimuli• Bend and straighten arms / legs• Reach for object with hand / two hands• Reach for object and bring close (not necessarily grasping)• Reach / aim with feet / legs | Releasing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow someone to take object• Let go of object• Put down object• Hold object with two hands, then take and away• Swap object between hands (combine grasp and release)• Pick up and put down repeatedly |
| Grasping: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Larger object with hands / feet• Open and close hands• Close fist around an object• Intentionally hold object• Locate object and try grasp it• Hold object with primary grasp• Hold object with whole hand• Release grip when hold object• Grasp an object that is unseen | Manipulating: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take object to mouth• Use hands or tools to manipulate malleable materials, including squashing, rolling, cutting• Use whole hand / several fingers to explore or make something happen• Group mark-making tools• Drop objects in containers• Rotate objects in hands• Push or pull objects• Use scissor block• Throw and catch a ball |
| Finger Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stack objects of varying sizes• Put rings off / on rod• Put / take and insert puzzle pieces• Put and take off tabs on boxes and containers• Put objects• Pour and tip with accuracy• Thread using hand-eye coordination• Use a pin or clip to pick up small objects• Use tweezers to pick up objects of varying sizes• Use a digger / pin or rod prior to hold a tool and make marks | |

Differentiation and learning pathways

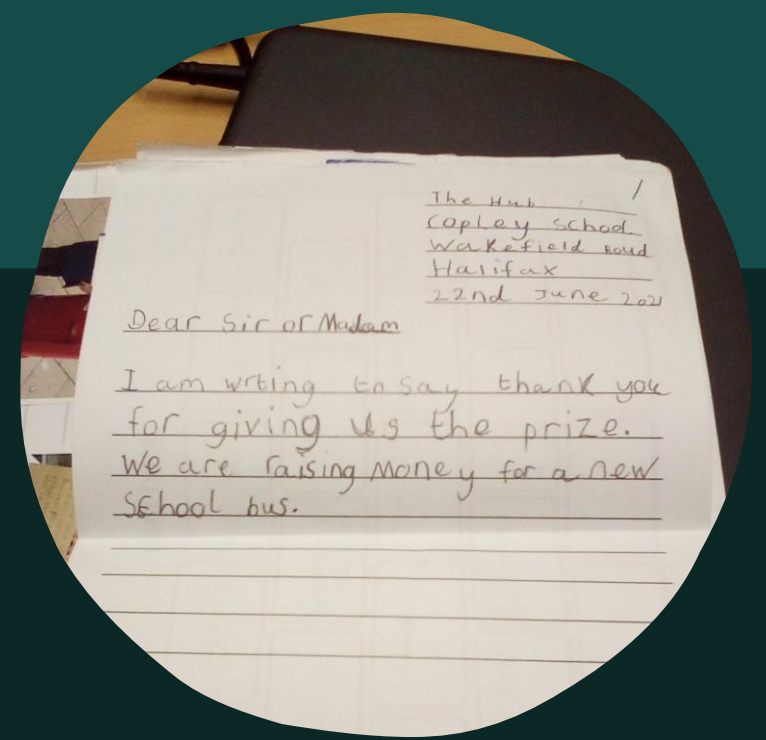
- Children are identified on relevant pathways in their personal case study*- Eye-gaze, switch use, fine motor development, mark-marking, typing and writing
- Pupils given opportunities to explore different transcription skills (writing/typing/making intentional or exploratory marks)
- Differentiation across classes is a real strength, Literacy is highly personalised, resources are created to reflect this



**a case study is an on-going report displaying a pupil's needs, progress and achievement throughout their school life*

Transcription and Functional Writing

- Sentence structure and basic vocabulary is taught comprehensively across school
- Classes have a wide range of coverage (invitations, letters, lists etc.), as well as story-based comprehension
- Opportunities for functional writing can be observed in provision areas (extension on focused sessions)



Pupil ownership

- Pupils have a good understanding of where they sit in their progression of learning
- Ample opportunities for pupils to take pride in their work through formally produced pieces, to displaying work
- Support tools given to promote further independence such as word banks and visual prompts



Cross-curricular opportunities

- Writing is embedded throughout the curriculum at appropriate levels and linked to EHCP targets
- Children are given opportunities to 'compose' and 'transcribe' throughout the day
- Pre-cursors to writing are ample and evidently planned in timetables with a thematic approach to sessions
- Evidence of transcription in Literacy, Numeracy, Science, Independence sessions etc.





Strengths in
practice...

Reading

A love of Reading

- Reading is embedded throughout the curriculum with ample opportunities for children to engage and enjoy
- Stories chosen are highly motivating and linked to topic where appropriate
- Staff are enthusiastic when teaching and are great role-models for the pupils
- Texts are chosen based on the needs of the children and are always at an appropriate level



Part of everyday life in all classes

- Reading is embedded throughout the day, enhanced by a total communication approach (sign, symbols, touch cues, objects of reference, visuals, key vocabulary)
- Cross-curricular links are made through both core and foundation subjects
- Labels used consistently to encourage independence
- Focussed interventions, whole group/small group teaching, 1:1 focused work
- ICT software used where appropriate



Teaching of Phonics

- Phonics taught by skilled practitioners
- Consistent approach taught across school using Read, Write, Inc.
- Pupils have appropriate challenges and are supported with a multi-sensory approach based on individual needs
- Resources used and teaching practice promotes engagement
- Phonics is taught as soon as pupils begin school dependent on needs, if pupils are unable to access a phonics program, they will be offered an alternative pathway
- Progress is clear and tracked discretely in all classes



Learning Environments

- Classes have designated spaces for pupils to access focused sessions, with appropriate visuals to scaffold learning
- Displays showcase a range of reading-based materials, with appropriate visuals across different classes in which the pupils can access
- Core boards are used in continuous provision areas to extend learning opportunities for reading
- Resources and items in the classroom are clearly labelled
- Where appropriate, children have continuous access to literacy materials to encourage independence such as sound cards and core boards





WHAT'S
NEXT

?

Literacy Action Plan...

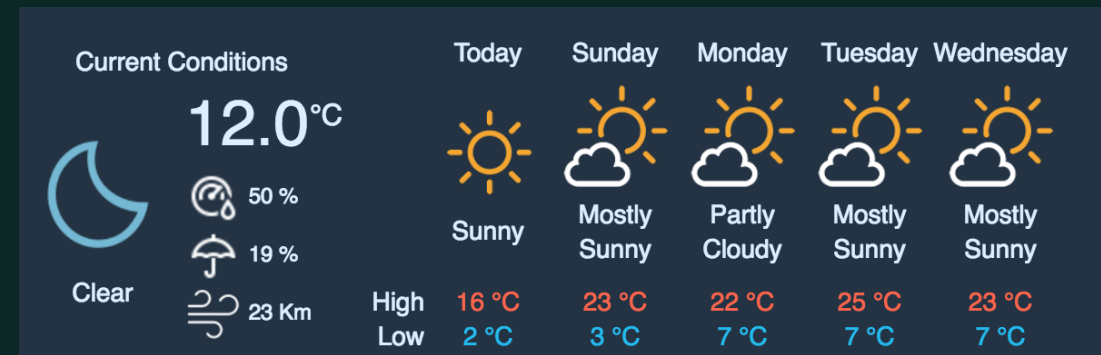
Teaching and Learning

- More shared reading and writing opportunities (both whole class and small group work)
- Modelled reading and writing needs to be more explicit
- Letter formation to be consistent from all staff members across the school day
- More opportunities for pupils to put their phonics in writing
- Use stories as a starting point to engage learning, linking this with a piece of functional writing
- Make sure pupils fully understand the context of phonics and use this functionally before moving on, to enable learners to have deeper comprehension skills



Broader coverage of functional reading and writing

- Ensure balance between vocabulary and sentence structure work (colour-coded sentences) and other genres across classes
- Comprehension for language- Make sure language is used functionally, for example in phonics- 'm a t', can pupils find a mat?
- Create long-term plan for classes to ensure complete coverage of both fiction and non-fiction texts





Pre-cursors to writing

Getting pupils ready to write:

- Warm-up before extended periods of writing
- Correct posture and alignment when ready to work
- A range of writing tools available and appropriate writing support (assessed if necessary)
- Hand-writing (and pre-writing skills) intervention programme to be developed
- Continuous provision areas always accessible and motivating

Evidencing reading and writing

- Ensure pupils are given opportunities to create on different pathways e.g. typing, writing, recording
- To ensure consistent teaching of pre-writing opportunities across classes, make sure sessions are clearly timetabled and evidenced appropriately for each pupil (e.g. fine motor and phonics)
- More teaching involvement with phonics sessions to ensure assessment is accurate
- Maintenance of a whole-school tracker for phonics





Maximise the cross-curricular approach and ownership of work

- Give all children a chance to take ownership and label, recognise and reflect on their work
- Utilise opportunities for reading and writing in subjects such as Science and Music

Phonological awareness

- **Pre-phonics-** More explicit teaching needed of phonological awareness
- Phonological awareness is the steppingstone to being able to read, children will begin on this level before they are ready for phonics teaching

Children will progress through the following skills:

- *Sound detection and location*
- *Sound discrimination (Recognising and identifying sounds)*
- *Phoneme isolation (Recognising alliteration, similar sounds, rhyme)*
- *Blending and Segmenting Phonemes orally (Syllables, blending sounds)*



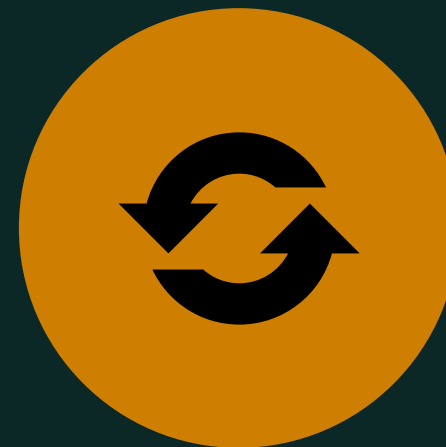
Training and Moderation



Phonics Champions- Weekly meetings to discuss the impact of phonics in school, delivering training to existing staff to develop engaging teaching methods and moderate effectiveness of practice



Stepping-stones (to writing)- Working group to develop a suitable pre-writing scheme, taking children from basic body awareness to legible handwriting



CPD Cycle- Up to date training for existing staff and new starters to ensure consistent quality first teaching, as well as opportunities to observe best practice. Skills audit completed each year to address any gaps in knowledge

Supporting documents and information...



The following documents and guidance have been used to inform judgements and develop fundamental teaching practice:

[National curriculum - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[The reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Literacy | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)

The reading framework

Teaching the foundations of literacy

July 2021



Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1

Eight recommendations to support the literacy of 5–7 year-olds

PREPARING FOR LITERACY

Improving communication, language
and literacy in the early years

'Lockdown' Literacy

Whilst Covid-19 had a huge impact on schools, we want to celebrate the success of making sure that children at Highbury School had ample opportunities to access the Literacy curriculum. Staff ensured that pupils were continually developing skills and no opportunities were missed throughout this time, this was done through:

- Virtual 1:1 phonics sessions
- See & learn support for parents and 1:1 Zoom interventions
- Sensory stories for groups and resource support for parents
- Fine motor skills sessions and activities sent home
- Learning packs home- Including appropriate writing and reading resources (symbols, mark-making tools etc.)
- Story-time- Read by different adults across school
- Utilising objects found at home to engage in core Literacy skills such as 'mark-making' and 'Sensory play'
- Explicit teaching of Literacy through a topic-based approach related to real world and functional opportunities e.g. 'going outside' 'cooking at home'



Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

– Albert Einstein

