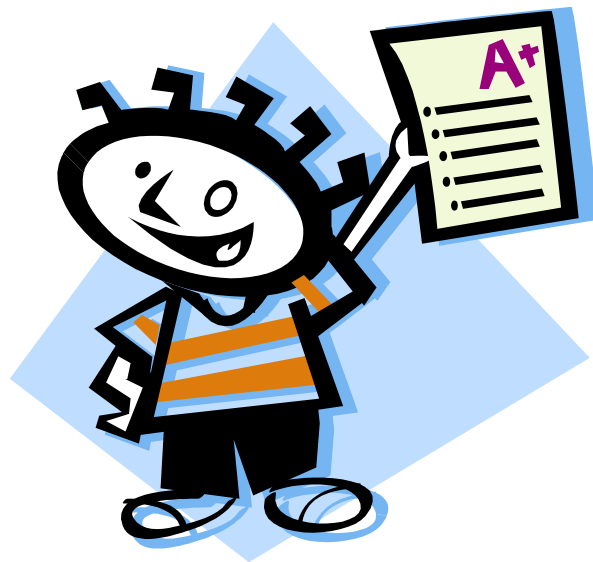


*Improving boys' writing
through visual literacy
and drama*



*Action research project
Developed by
Lancashire Literacy Team*

This project was developed by Sarah Sinclair, Pauline Tate and Nicola Tomlinson of the Lancashire Literacy Team.

We should like to thank the schools, pupils and teachers involved:-

List of schools and teachers

Janet Parker	-	Frenchwood Community PS
Vivien Eccles	-	Alston Lane Catholic PS
Anne-Louise Barden	-	Sacred Heart Catholic PS
Clare Eccles	-	Kirkham and Wesham PS
Jamie Wilson	-	Holme Slack Community PS
Elizabeth Wicks	-	Chorley St James' C of E PS
Stephanie Wade	-	Whittle-le-Woods Church of England PS
Jenny James	-	Chorley St Peter's Church of England PS
Sue Witts	-	The Parish of St Laurence C of E PS
Louise Whiteside	-	Adlington St Paul's C of E PS
Robert Allonby	-	Great Harwood St Bartholomew's Parish C of E VA PS
Katie Cranshaw	-	Great Harwood St John's C of E PS
Gwyn Roberts	-	Clayton-le-Moors Mount Pleasant PS
Catherine Faulkner	-	St Wulstan's Roman Catholic PS
Elizabeth Sharkey	-	Our Lady & St Huberts Roman Catholic PS

Lancashire Boys' Project Summer 2005

This project was established to respond to the research undertaken by the United Kingdom Literacy Association outlined in the booklet: "Raising Boys' Achievement in Writing". This research provided a model for other LEAs or practitioners to use to develop boys' writing. It is stated in the summary to this publication:

"Evaluation by the teachers/practioners, PNS colleagues and researchers, indicated remarkably successful project outcomes. The model which forms the basis for this research has great potential for influencing approaches to teaching writing. The combination of an extended approach to teaching which required specific attention to drama and/or visual approaches has proved thoroughly successful in raising boys' achievement in writing The research findings and model deserve wide dissemination".

Underachievement in boys' writing has been identified as an issue in many schools in Lancashire. One of the ICT focuses for the Literacy team for 2005 has been the use of still and moving image to support the development of writing. Both these issues provided the opportunity to develop a project based on the UKLA model.

INDEX

	Page
Chapter 1 Background to the project.....	1
Chapter 2 The Planning Process.....	2
Chapter 3 Planning – a case study.....	4
Chapter 4 Writing Samples.....	5
Chapter 5 Children’s questionnaires.....	12
Chapter 6 Teachers’ perceptions	15
Chapter 7 Conclusions.....	18
Chapter 8 Extracts used during the project.....	19
Appendices	20

Chapter 1 Background to the project

The project was aimed at children in year 5 and looked at strategies to raise attainment in writing, particularly for boys. The aims of the project were to consider the ways of using visual images and drama to stimulate boys' writing and to look at practical activities which could be developed in the classroom.

Fifteen schools, where boys' writing had been identified as an issue, were chosen. They were clustered into groups of five in the north, east and south of the County. An initial letter was sent to schools outlining the project and asking for commitment for the project from the Head teacher, the management team and the year 5 teacher. Each group of schools were supported by one of the Literacy Consultants.

To support the schools, a programme was devised to provide training and support and to enable the evaluation of the performance. Schools were provided with £500 to support the development of the project in the school. This would enable the teachers to attend the training and evaluation sessions and have some release time to develop the project in their classes:

- One day initial training – In this session the rationale to the project was discussed and an overview of the timescale and content of the project. Training sessions were given on developing the use of images and video and how to explicitly support the children to transfer their understanding of image into their writing. Teachers discussed how they would plan for literacy incorporating image and drama. A three week unit plan was devised and demonstrated to support the teachers in their planning.
- Half day follow up – teachers began planning supported by Consultants. A group of target boys in each class was identified.
- Each Consultant visited their schools to observe a lesson from the unit of work using the resources and approaches suggested. They were also able to discuss how the project was developing and identify any issues or problems they had encountered. The consultants discussed the work with the group of target boys.
- Twilight sessions for each cluster were arranged during the duration of the unit to enable teachers to feedback, share and discuss how they were finding the project deal and support each other with any queries, or problems.
- A final follow up day was organised to evaluate the project and discuss how the teachers would develop.

Developing the project in schools

The teachers identified a target group of underachieving boys in their class. These children were the focus group and their progress was tracked through the project. The children completed a piece of writing which was the base line for comparison and these were levelled. Samples of writing were gathered at the end of the project to analyse development/improvement.

The children were also given a questionnaire to examine their attitude to writing. This was followed up at the end of the project to identify how these children's attitudes had changed.

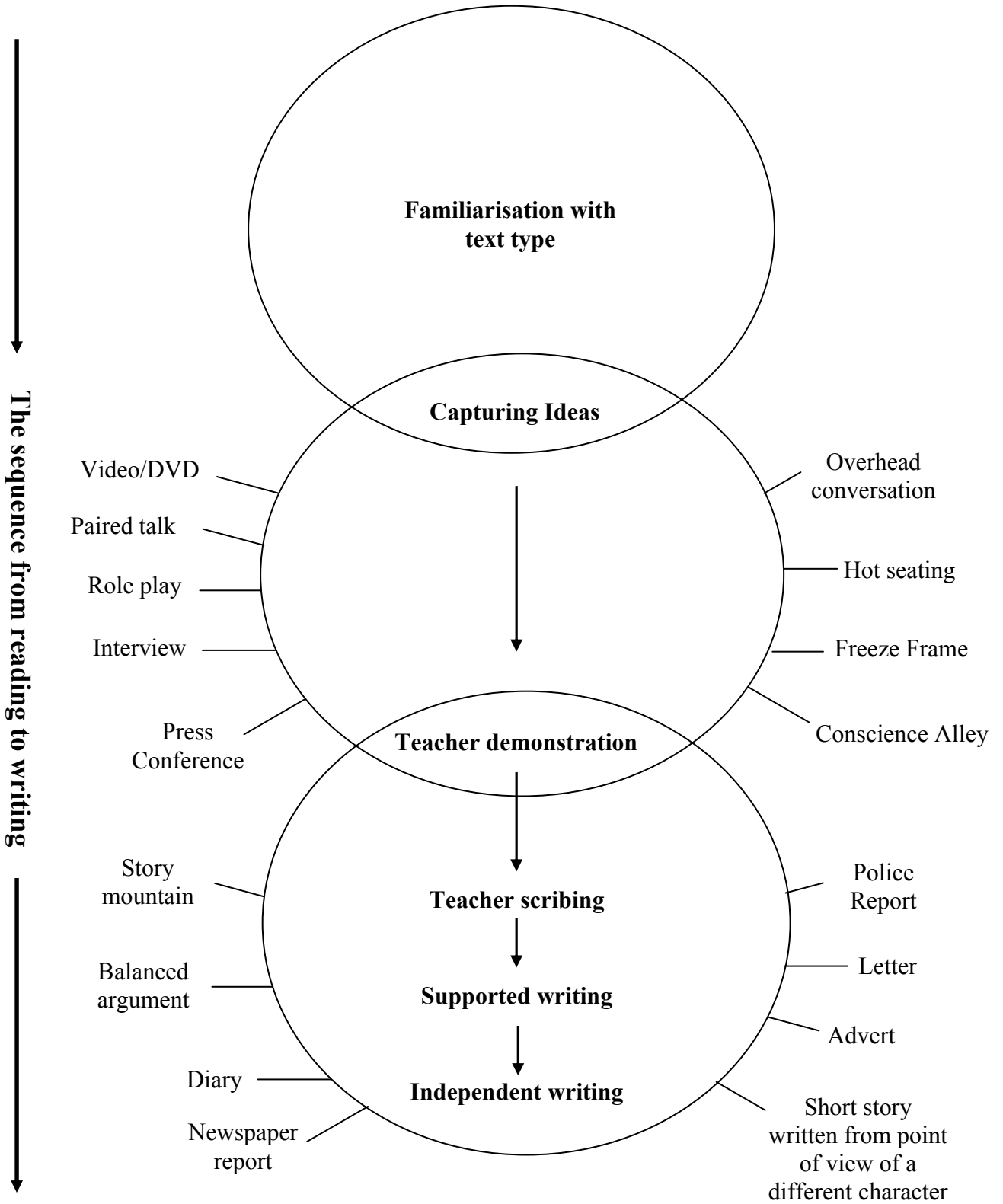
Chapter 2 The Planning Process

The initial training for the group had a clear focus on planning and the inclusion of video/image/drama into the planning process. The Literacy team provided an example three week unit for literacy which followed the teaching sequence from reading to writing incorporating aspects of video/image drama (Appendix 1). The three week units were based on the units of work from the literacy medium term plans. The opportunity was taken to complete training with this group of teachers to develop their understanding and knowledge of planning for literacy. Visual literacy and drama are useful tools to support children in developing their ideas and understanding. Planning for these opportunities ensure that multi sensory opportunities are provided for the children and that children have the time to explore and develop their understanding and ideas which will be used to support the development of the writing process.

The following diagram shows an example outline of the principles of planning in this way. The diagram outlines the process and principles through the planning moving from text level work to independent writing. It does indicate a linear path but the circles have been used to emphasise how the path may be developed. For example the video excerpt may be used at the beginning of the sequence of work followed by an examination of the relevant text. Sometimes the text may be examined first followed by a video observation. The video may also be used to gather ideas for writing and may be used towards the end of the unit to support the children as they write. The planning also illustrates the different kinds of writing outcomes which can be developed within a unit of work as children respond to the texts or images they read and see.

Most of the teachers did plan using this approach. Feedback from the teachers indicated that the planning in this way was very supportive in developing their own practice. Some were already planning in this way, others found this format useful and nearly all used the exemplar planning format for their planning for this unit of work.

Planning circles



Chapter 3 Planning – a case study

The example planning (Appendix 2) shows how one teacher developed her planning and indicates how the drama and visual literacy was integrated into the unit of work. Examples of the drama activities are shown: hot seating (Friday week 1, Tuesday week 2, Friday week 2). These activities are used to investigate characters and to gather ideas for independent writing activities. Freeze frame (Monday week 2), conscience alley (Tuesday week 2) and interview techniques (Monday week 2) are used to support the children's development and understanding of the characters in text and video.

Alongside this, opportunities are planned for discussion, prediction and role play – all activities designed to develop children's understanding and response. For some teachers these aspects were new approaches and whilst they felt that they needed to train some of the children to use them, they all reported that these opportunities were powerful in supporting the children in developing their responses to texts and supported their writing. In the feedback sessions, all children acknowledged that they needed to explicitly plan for these drama and speaking activities, clearly prepare the children in their use and develop throughout the year to ensure the children develop confidence.

This unit also exemplifies well the sequence from reading to writing. This example begins with shared reading of texts, followed by the drama, role play and visual literacy examples developing understanding and gathering ideas to move into writing in the last week of the unit. All teachers recognised that planning over three weeks ensured that the teachers and children had time for discussion and development of ideas which ensured that the children were more confident and ready for the development of writing in week three. The teacher clearly plans for a variety of ways to support the children – demonstration, shared and supported composition which further exemplifies to the children how to apply and develop the understanding they have established through the unit.

Finally, the unit also exemplifies the different opportunities developed to support children's responses. The focus on writing for different purposes (Monday week 1), Headline and short report of the tiger attack (Wednesday week 2), an informal letter (Thursday week 2). These support the focus in the last week of the completion of the children's own stories and also support the children's responses to the texts and video excerpts.

Thus the following recommendations for planning were suggested:

- Be flexible to develop the planning over two and three weeks ensuring there is enough time to explore and develop understanding, speaking and listening and discussion.
- Initially spend time training the children in new approaches eg hot seating; conscience alley; use of prompt questions when observing video to ensure they understand the approaches and are fully confident in their responses.
- Ensure the children are supported through demonstration, shared and supported composition to develop the understanding of the writing.
- Integrate the drama, discussion, video observation using the approaches flexibly to support the whole process – developing understanding of texts, gathering ideas, supporting the writing process.

Chapter 4 Writing Samples

In order to achieve a measure of comparability of progress during the course of the project, assessments of two writing samples occurred at the beginning and end of the project.

Teachers were asked to assess pupils' current writing levels using the Lancashire Levelling Narrative/Non-narrative document in March 2005. The samples were levelled with some degree of moderation; teachers were asked to bring samples of writing and level certain samples with another participant involved in the project and the final levels were all representative of either teacher assessment or optional tests during May 2005.

The levelling process took account of:

Sentence structure and punctuation
Text structure and organisation
Composition and effect
Spelling
Handwriting

according to the QCA strands of assessment and eight Assessment Focuses for writing in line with NC tests.

The pupils selected were a cohort of boys who were deemed to be underachieving within Year 5. For example, the brick wall (See Appendix 3) was one of the vehicles used to identify and track progress during the project and by using the current levels of teacher assessment, a cohort of boys could be chosen.

(Note – the Brick wall tracker can be used to indicate expected levels of progress of 2 sub levels per year).

Progress in writing throughout the project

After a period of approximately 3 months, the majority of pupils appeared to have made progress in all three strands of sentence structure and punctuation, text structure and organisation and composition and effect and had greater motivation in presentation and attempts at more accurate spelling. The most significant progress is evident in the three main strands with pupils having:

- Greater control of a variety of sentence constructions
- Clearer understanding and handle of narrative structure
- Wider use of vocabulary

Stimulus from drama and visual approaches has also resulted in a greater control of voice, style and pace, noticeable progress in sub-levels across the strands and a positive attitude to writing for specific purposes.

The following 3 case studies illustrate good/significant progress in writing.

Sample 1 – Pre-project writing

Fable

One day in a big city. There was two frogs granpa frog and grandson frog. Granpa frog could jump so high he could jump over a sky scraper. But grandson frog could not jump so High. He wants Granpa frog to teach him to jump so high. Granpa frog Would not help him. Grandson frog went away and cried for a very long time.

Moral: can't all ways get your own way

At this stage the pupil is clearly working at low Level 2.
The writing demonstrates:

- Some accurate use of capital letters and full stops
- An awareness of the structure of a fable
- Simple vocabulary choices

Sample 1 - Post Project writing

One character's point of view

"I was asleep with one ear open.
I heard a noise like rocks tumbling down the hill. "My dogs are barking!" I said to lia.
"I need to see what that noise was. I'm worried about the others. I'm going outside."
"Be very careful and don't wake Jay" whispered lia.
"I won't". I picked up my trusty spear and saw a big saber tothed tiger coming straight to wards me. I tride to stab the golden coloured tiger but its very strong. Loads came like a army of ants. They started to attack the rest of the village. I saw that a golden coloured tiger was sneaking into the tent then I saw my wife running towards the falls. That's the last time I ever saw her. I felt bad that I could not help them. I heard a great roar and the rest of the tigers went to the lead tiger at bullet speed. When they got near the other tiger we launched big spears at them. They ran away quickly. My dogs found a neclase at the bottom of a big stone – I thought that was it they were dead. I did not know what to do. To stay with my tribe or go and search for my wife and baby. But the tigers might come back. If I leave lia and Jay they might die and I would never forgive myself.

My people said go and look for them. "Thanks"
I ran off full of power and rage.

Following the unit of work the pupil is now deemed to be working within Level 3. Writing demonstrates improvements in:

- More adventurous use of sentence structure – simple/compound/complex
- Use of dialogue for opening and examples to develop characters
- Connectives
- Further examples in the use of punctuation
- Secure handling of narrative structure
- Effective ending, e.g. *I ran off full of power and rage.*
- Use of 1st person narrative with pace and voice development, e.g. *but the tigers might come back*
- More precise vocabulary choices, similes, metaphors, e.g. *at bullet speed* , adjectives, e.g. *trusty spear*, powerful verbs e.g.
- Greater clarity of ideas
- Increased fluency, quantity and control of viewpoint

Sample 2 – Pre-project writing

Story

One day on Halloween it was sam's birthday and he wanted to play hide-and-seek with his three friends Alex, simon and mark. "come on lets play hide-and-seek, me simon and Alex will hide and you can count to 100."
"okay" said mark. so of they went to go and hide while mark counted "one, two, three". meanwhile Alex had hid in the attic and simon hid up a tree and sam we dont no 99 100 ready or not here I come first he found Alex then simon but he can't find Sam nowhere we checked all over and then we heard a noise "help."
"what was that"
"I don't know lets go and see" so they started to run and fell down a hole and found Sam and they where trapped forever.

Writing is assessed at working within Level 2.
At this stage the writing demonstrates features of:

- Understanding of simple narrative structure
- Awareness of a range of punctuation
- Use of some connectives
- Simple vocabulary choices
- Dialogue and action

Sample 2 – Post-project writing

Point of view of a minor character within a narrative written in 1st person

I was standing in the corner of Shreks hut. I could smell the bad odor coming from Shrek it smelt like rotten eggs. I managed to find an old peg on the floor because even though I wear boots I am still the same as the other cats.

Shrek was eating a candle lit meal while donkey was popping up at the window. I was wondering why Shrek would not let him in. It was all peaceful until I heard a little scurrying across the floor. Then out of nowhere the three blind mice where in front of me. I pounced on them and nearly ate the but Shrek told me to drop them. At that point Shrek had barged through the door and yelled “What are you doing in my swamp”! there was a long stream of silence after Shrek yelled. Then he asked “does any body know where to find lord farquard.” Everybody was still quiet.

After Shrek had asked a few times still no body had answered except donkey but for some reason Shrek would not pick him. I couldn’t understand why not. After a while I remembered the I knew where he lived so Shrek picked me and donkey and off we went.

We walked though the dark forest you could see that donkey was scared and Shrek was trying to comfort him.

Following the unit, writing is assessed at working within Level 3

Features of the writing:

- More adventurous use of sentence structure – simple/compound/complex
- Development of characters through action, dialogue and description
- Balance of action, dialogue and description contributes to pace
- Connectives e.g. *Then out of nowhere.....*
- Accurate use of tense
- Further examples in the use of punctuation
- Secure handling of narrative structure
- Use of 1st person narrative with pace and voice development and 2nd/3rd person used effectively
- More precise vocabulary choices, similes, e.g. *like rotten eggs*, adjectives for description, e.g. *candle lit meal*, powerful verbs eg, *scurrying, pounced, barged*
- Greater clarity of ideas
- Increased fluency, quantity and control of viewpoint e.g. *even though I wear boots I am still the same as the other cats*

Sample 3 – Pre-project writing

Narrative

dog goes to robe the car. and the police come out. and goes After the car they take. him to animal care, the makes some new friends. and gets bulled by A big dog when he was on his own he used to come up to him And bark At him And growl At him so the cpper cAme And but the bully in his bed And the other dog goes back in his bed and get angry the bully comes and the dog barks At the dog run and run back and had a fight

Writing is assessed at working towards Level 2? Or 2c?

Features of the writing include:

- Use of phrases and simple statements
- Awareness of full stops and capital letters
- Simple narrative structure with events
- Vocabulary chosen to convey ideas

Sample 3 – Post-project writing

Narrative based on film clip

Mole and Ratty were having toast near Ratty smooth fire Ratty Told Mole to not go in The dark Scary Snowy cold wood. But when Ratty fell asleep he took advantage of all that Ratty said and he went in the dark scary frightening wild wood to see MR Badger. Mole was scared, cold and very hungry he was very tierd he heard leave crackling And creaking he saw eyes every time he walked he felt like he was going to get captured he kept on hearing people. Talking. He saw strangers eyes looking and was very frightened he heard feet crackling behing him They were getting nearer and the stranger came towards him he gets caught and gets blind folded! Took of he was is a dark room he saw 4 animals
he spoke to them and made a plan mole Tried To be very brave and said I will be in charge So They Made a new Plan They found A Secret window They climbed on top of each other And they get out some how but it was was a long so they tried to find a ladder but they couldnT Find but They tried to Think of Another way to get PAST The guards They Trey to dig a hole To get out the others. They had a mile to go. Before they got out they eventually got out they went to Rattys house and had some Toast it was lovely!

Writing assessed at working within Level 2

Features include:

- Awareness of capital letters and full stops and other punctuation
- Simple connectives eg, *but, when*
- Developing narrative structure with an opening, events and resolution
- Use of action, some dialogue and description
- Some words chosen for effect e.g. *advantage, captured, creaking*
- Developing narrative voice
- Descriptive phrases e.g. *he heard feet crackling behind him*

Percentage progress

The following figures are indicative of teacher assessments. Expected progress according to National Curriculum is one level over two years. There is obviously evidence to suggest the approaches used have had impact on pupils' writing.

The charts show the progress made over the 3 months of the project.

Total number of available levels following project – 69 pupils

	- 1 sub level	No change	+ 1 sub level	+ 2 sub levels	+ 3 sub levels	+ 4 sub levels
No of pupils	2	9	17	22	14	5
Percentage	2%	13%	25%	33%	21%	6%

(Note: Pupils who had dipped by one sub level had either had significant absence or joined the school during the project. Some of those who had not demonstrated improvement are SEN or had been withdrawn during certain lessons.)

Improvements in reading

Although the project primarily focused on improving standards in writing, there is some evidence to suggest reading levels improved also. Some data was available for consideration following the project.

25 pupils were levelled pre and post project in reading. The following information illustrates the outcomes:

	- 1 sub level	No change	+ 1 sub level	+ 2 sub levels	+ 3 sub levels	+ 4 sub levels
No of pupils	0	1	3	8	8	5
Percentage	0	4%	12%	32%	32%	20%

Summary

Following the delivery of the units of work all teachers reported that they felt the children had made progress in a variety of ways. Overall the movement to higher sub levels was evident. Although some pupils remained within the same level, specific aspects of writing had progressed . Teachers reported a intuitive feeling that the children had improved and noted that pupils required less adult intervention and support on task, pupils were writing at length and were more eager to proceed with activities, wanted to begin writing, sustain tasks and complete to produce a quality piece of work. In addition, they felt *all* children in the class had improved and not merely the target group. Teachers also commented that they would continue to use the approach in the future and wanted to monitor the sustainability of progress into Year 6.

Chapter 5 Children's questionnaires

Children were given questionnaires to complete at the beginning and end of the project. This was to see if any changes in attitude could be seen towards writing as a result of the different teaching approaches. The data is based on the return of 81 questionnaires, completed both before and after the project.

The first question asked if children enjoyed writing. 53% did not enjoy writing while 47% said they did. This was actually quite a positive response for the beginning of the project. The reasons for not liking writing included:

- difficulty of getting ideas
- taking too long
- problems with spelling and punctuation.

However, by far the biggest reason for not liking writing was the fact that it was boring (61% gave this as their main reason)

The main reason for enjoying writing was that it was fun (50%). Other reasons included:

- praise from the teacher (housepoints, stickers etc)
- it helps you get a good job
- it improves your work.

After the project this had changed slightly, 57% now said that they did like writing whereas 43% didn't. This was quite a large swing! Again the main reasons were whether it was boring or good fun. Children who didn't like writing often talked about the problems they had as writers, such as: *'I don't know how to start.'* *'I just can't get ideas,'* *'My handwriting is terrible.'* They often had poor perceptions of themselves as writers, for instance:

'I am rubbish'
'I'm just no good at it.'

When asked if they were good writers, quite a few children thought they were alright. Very few liked to admit they were good. Comments included: *'I am getting better,'* and *'I need to practice more.'*

One boy wrote:

'I am a good writer but the teachers think I am terrible because I don't listen'

23% of those who liked writing mentioned the creative side of it, *'I like having ideas,'* and *'I like using my imagination.'* One child specifically mentioned hotseating and video and said this made it easier.

When discussing genre, most children (64%) said they did not prefer any genre in particular. Of those who did express a preference, the favourite was by far stories (36%) Next came poems (14%). Myths and legends (10%) were also popular. This again seems to suggest that children enjoy imaginative creative writing. All the questionnaires analysed for this project were from boys. This would seem to challenge the theory that all boys prefer non fiction.

Interestingly, several children (12%) commented that handwriting was their favourite sort of writing. Other genres mentioned were 'action, violence, humour and instructions.'

Children were also asked what advice they would give about writing to other children. The answers to this were interesting. Before the project they tended to focus on secretarial skills and included suggestions like '*write neatly,*' '*practice your spellings,*' '*listen to the teacher,*' '*write smaller and neater.*' There were some encouraging remarks like '*Take your time*' (26%) and '*always do your best*' 29%. Other advice included, '*practice*' (18%) and '*read a lot*' (16%). A significant number of pupils (10%) didn't know what advice to give.

After the project had finished, this hadn't changed a great deal. The children still thought it was important to read a lot and practice. Handwriting and neatness still came over as very important. One piece of advice was '*Write faint so when you make a mistake you won't see it.*' However, many of the children wrote positive comments about writing like '*When you're writing a story just remember you can do anything.*' '*If you finish your work then check it*'

When asked if they could remember a piece of writing they had done when they were younger, there was a direct correlation between those who enjoyed writing and those who could remember.

68% of those who don't enjoy writing could not remember a piece of writing that they had done that they were proud of, whereas all children who enjoyed writing could think of a piece from an earlier time.

One example was a boy who had earlier in the questionnaire written '*I like fictional writing because it stimulates my mind*'. To this question about a piece of writing he had done when younger, he answered '*A day in the life of Emily the cat because I did a lot of work with good vocabulary*'

Another boy wrote '*I was very proud of a piece of writing in Y1 because the teacher said it was excellent and it was the three goats.*'

The best writing that they had done recently tended to focus on work done in class. Again, a high percentage of those who didn't enjoy writing chose not to answer this question fully, with 63% of those who don't like writing saying they didn't know about a good piece of writing they'd done lately. The fact that those who did give a positive answer referred mostly to work they'd done in class, shows that they see writing as a school based activity rather than something they often do at home.

When asked if they did writing at home, a large percentage (38%) said they never did. The children who did write at home mentioned things like homework, writing poems and writing about things that interested them, such as: fast cars, dogs, cheats for games. The most popular sort of writing that was done at home however was stories (36%) or poems (18%).

Quite a lot of the children who did writing at home said that someone else in their family also wrote. 32% said that no one wrote in their family. But of the rest, other people included mum, dad, brothers, sisters, grandads and step sisters and brothers. The most was mum at 34% but other family members were mentioned quite regularly.

Summary based on the questionnaires

Boys who are good at writing:

- Think it is fun and enjoy it
- Have a good image of themselves as writers
- Think they are quite good at writing
- Know how writing could be improved
- Tend to prefer fictional writing
- Often like writing at home
- See other people writing at home
- Can give advice to others about writing.

Boys who are less effective writers:

- See writing as boring
- Do not enjoy writing
- Do not see themselves as good writers
- Have no preference about types of writing because they don't enjoy any of it much
- Rarely write at home
- Rarely see other people write at home
- Are not sure how to get better at writing (apart from to write neatly, or other secretarial skills)
- Find it difficult to offer advice to others

Actions for the future

Motivation and self esteem is clearly very important to improve children's writing and encourage them to write. This is true for all children but would appear to be particularly relevant to boys.

Future projects and approaches to teaching need to continue to consider strategies to motivate boys and ways to improve their self esteem.

There also seems to be a preference towards imaginative, creative writing.

It would be useful to look at imaginative and creative ways to teach different genres.

Key points for action:

- Raise self esteem of boys
- Make writing fun
- Use interactive strategies
- Incorporate drama and speaking and listening where possible
- Encourage group work
- Look at creative strategies for teaching different genres.

Chapter 6 Teachers' perceptions

Schools for the project were identified as those where there was a large gap in attainment between boys and girls at the end of KS2. It was decided to focus on Year 5 children because:

- Teachers in a single age group could work together more effectively
- It wouldn't interfere with the children and teachers in Y6 who were preparing for SATs this year
- It would hopefully have a long term impact and benefit the children taking KS2 SATs next year.

A letter was sent to headteachers inviting them to take part in the project. An outline of the programme and all it entailed was included. However, many of the teachers who were involved had not received this information. At the initial meeting, most of the teachers were a little wary as to why they had been 'chosen' to attend. They weren't sure what the programme involved or what the expectations of themselves as teachers would be.

At the end of the first day, the teachers involved seemed a little more relaxed. By the end of the programme feelings had definitely changed. Teachers were positive and enthusiastic about the project. They appreciated the support that had been offered by the consultants and other colleagues. They welcomed the excitement that came as working as part of a group. They could also see the benefits of using the different approaches with the children.

A questionnaire was given to teachers at the end of the project to look at their feelings towards it. The first question wanted them to consider how they felt at the start of the project. The overwhelming feeling seemed to be anxiety that there would be a lot of work involved. Some of the teachers were excited and looking forward to it but at the back of their minds there was concern that it would be a lot of work.

Eight out of the fifteen teachers, more than half, felt quite negative at first and commented that they had felt:

'Very apprehensive – felt that it would involve more work than I was prepared to undertake'
'Concerned that it would be a lot more work'
'Fairly apprehensive – why boys again'
'Somewhat negative – why had I been sent?'

The second question compared their feelings at the end of the project with how they had felt at the beginning. All of the teachers were positive at this point, and felt it was a useful and worthwhile project to have taken part in. Comments include:

'I think the project has been really good. It did take more time to plan and prepare for it than usual, but it was worth it'
'I feel that it was very beneficial for teaching ideas and how to motivate the boys in my class'

There was a general feeling that it had taken quite a large amount of time, but that it was actually worth it and they could see the benefits:

'Gratified. Although it was extra work the engagement of the children was rewarding and I enjoyed delivering it'
'Glad I've done it. I've learned a lot about teaching Literacy'

The third question asked whether the project had had an impact on teaching and learning. Every teacher answered yes to this question and were very positive with their comments.

'The drama gave more of an insight into people's feelings which helped with their descriptive writing

'Definitely. A positive impact. Better focus on speaking and listening and writing for a purpose Yes a stimulating use of resources. Children have enjoyed the unit. A significant rise in attainment'

It was particularly gratifying to see that the project had had a positive impact on the motivation of teachers as well as children, with one colleague commenting that, *'Teaching it was fun!!'*

The fourth question asked whether the teachers had developed any new approaches to planning. The main feeling that came across here was that teachers felt happier to be more flexible. They enjoyed being able to carry out a three week unit and enjoyed blocking the work. Comments made included:

'Would now use more drama to enhance writing and use more video clips across different genres where applicable'

'Be more flexible with planning and incorporate more drama on a regular basis to support writing'

'Confirmed the need to be flexible.'

The final question was, 'Will it influence your teaching in the future?'

Again all teachers said a very definite yes to this question with comments like:

'Definitely. It already has!'

'I shall use similar approaches with other text genres'

Both drama and visual Literacy were mentioned by different colleagues:

'Absolutely. More drama will be used in appropriate genres'

'I will definitely use visual images in the future'

Overall the involvement of the teachers in the project was extremely good, They moved from being wary and unsure of what the project entailed to being extremely enthusiastic and involved. Everyone who took part was positive and commented on the positive impact it had had on their teaching and the children's learning.

All have said that they will continue to plan more flexibly in the future and will make greater use of visual images and drama.

Teachers in almost all schools said that they would share all they had learned from the project with colleagues back in school. Several of them were holding staff meetings. This might have been easier if they were the Literacy subject leaders.

Summary

- Most teachers were apprehensive at first
- All appreciated the more flexible approach to planning
- All saw positive benefits of using different teaching approaches
- There was general enthusiasm for use of drama and video clips
- Children were enthusiastic and motivated

Action for future projects:

- Involve teachers of different age groups so that approaches and activities could be varied according to age of children
- Involve subject leaders so that they can influence practice across the school more easily
- Send initial letter to teacher involved as well as to the headteacher.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

The project was a great success. Teachers involved were very positive. They took on board the ideas about visual Literacy and drama, adapted these and made them their own. The project had a real impact on the learning of the children. The writing showed significant improvement and their attitudes to writing also became more positive.

Teachers' planning showed a good understanding of the teaching sequence from reading to writing. Teachers appreciated the flexibility that the programme offered. There was some very creative thinking. Drama had often been seen as a separate lesson. All teachers said they felt it was beneficial to incorporate it as part of a unit of work and as part of the general teaching sequence, rather than as a separate lesson. They were also becoming more creative in the type of drama approaches they used. These included: freeze framing, hot seating and conscience alley.

Children too interacted fully with the programme. They enjoyed the different approaches and were particularly keen on the use of drama within Literacy lessons. They also enjoyed the use of video clips to support writing.

The visits into school were very useful. Teachers were pleased that the lessons were given to the whole class, even though we were measuring the impact on a group of boys. It was interesting and informative to observe this group of boys and also have a chance to discuss their attitudes with them.

In future it would be good to have more time. This was a limited programme. If each class could have carried out two units, one fiction and one non fiction it might have been even more useful.

Next steps

Future training / projects will be delivered to teachers of different year groups. Most of the teachers took the same objective because they were all using NLS plans and were doing it at the same time in the summer term. We would get a variety of approaches with different year groups.

Most teachers used our ideas and suggestions for the first unit of work. It would be good to have the time to plan for two units of work, so they could follow one that we devised and then draw up one for themselves.

Although the teachers were very involved and enthusiastic, it didn't go much beyond their own classrooms. Some of the teachers however delivered staff meetings to the rest of the school. In future projects we will work with subject leaders because they can develop an idea and then share it with colleagues more easily.

Chapter 8 Extracts used during the project

Within the project a range of DVD extracts were used. The following have been recommended to support writing aspects of narrative.

Ice Age

Point of view, characters, narrative structure
Clip showing invasion of tigers on the camp and chase

Shrek

Characters, structure, action, dialogue and description
Invasion of swamp by fairytale characters
Relationship between Shrek and donkey

Never Ending Story

Characters, structure, action, dialogue, description
Opening section where Bastian is bullied and breakfast with his father

Wind in the Willows

Setting and atmosphere, character, structure
Mole's walk in the wild wood

Iron Giant

Setting and atmosphere
Iron Giant walking through the wood

Finding Nemo

Characters, narrative structure
Nemo playing with his friends and being warned not to swim out in the ocean

The Secret Garden

Setting, character
Mary entering the garden for the first time

The Wizard of Oz

Setting, character, action
The whirlwind
Dorothy landing in Oz
Comparison with Secret Garden

APPENDICES

	Page
Appendix 1 Model 3 week unit	21
Appendix 2 Exemplar plan from a Year 5 teacher	23
Appendix 3 Brick wall tracking grid	26

APPENDIX 1

Literacy Unit Plan – example of planning for the sequence from reading to writing

Name:		Term:		Unit:		Texts/Resources:		This model is only one suggestion. It would need to be flexible, modified for different units, year groups and needs of the children.			
Year Group:		Class:		Week Beginning:		Sentence Level Obj's:		Word Level Obj's:			
Text Level Obj's:		Letters and numbers. Staple medium term plan to back for full objective.		Letters and numbers. Staple medium term plan to back for full objective.		Letters and numbers. Staple medium term plan to back for full objective.		Letters and numbers. Staple medium term plan to back for full objective.			
Speaking and Listening focus:		Class Target:		Class Target:		Class Target:		Outcomes:			
See new QCA/NLNS document.		To write a <name of outcome> by <date>		To write a <name of outcome> by <date>		To write a <name of outcome> by <date>		Listed on NLS medium term plans. Tell/show children. at start.			
Day		Whole Class Shared Reading and Writing		Whole Class Phonics, Spelling, Vocabulary and Grammar		Guided Group Tasks		Differentiated Independent Tasks			
1		<p>Shared Reading</p> <p>Introduce children to text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read, teaching reading strategies; - applying 'searchlights' model; - techniques to navigate texts; - comprehension strategies; - questioning to develop comp responses to texts - development of specific reading objectives 		<p>Spelling 1 Focus</p> <p>Teach the specific spelling conventions and rules. Develop investigation. Discuss the rules, model and develop prediction and involvement by the children</p> <p>Sentence level activities linked to the reading objectives – identify these aspects in the texts</p> <p>Spelling 2 – link to previous spelling focus. Revise practise and test words. Link to shared text where possible</p> <p>Grammar for writing activities – analysing sentence and text structures</p> <p>- showing the relevance and application in writing</p>		Well structured, focused reading pitched at the instructional level for the group. Plan for teaching a balance of reading strategies over time.		<p>Activities related to shared text objective or objective taught discretely at beginning of lesson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing Early Writing activities - Grammar for Writing related unit - Phonics activity - Spelling investigation - linked to the spelling convention taught on the same day - Reading Journals 		<p>Return to main objective.</p> <p>What did we want to learn? Have we met our objective? Do we need to reinforce it? Extend it? Next steps.</p> <p>Share word level investigations done in the ind. session. Any more? Rules.</p> <p>Share reading activities.</p> <p>Reinforce strategies/obj's.</p> <p>Collate features gathered for writing. Scribe on flip chart</p> <p>Collate features gathered for writing. Scribe on flip chart. Set the context for next week.</p>	
2											
3											
4		<p>Analyse texts (reading for writing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifying structures - language features - gather ideas and examples for own writing 						<p>Analysing/highlighting texts to gather features to use in own writing'</p> <p>Note ideas on flipchart, writing journal, writing books.</p>			
5											
6		<p>Gathering ideas</p> <p>Use of video - clear focus and opportunities to gather ideas through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaking and listening • hot seating • conscience alley 		<p>Word level work related to vocabulary and language features</p> <p>- gathering ideas for application in writing</p>				<p>Gathering and investigating ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • character descriptions • role play • vocabulary work • 			
7											
8											
9											

10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • role play • group work 	<p>Spelling 3 – Focus on spelling strategies. Develop independent approaches by the children to learning, revising and developing their spelling skills.</p> <p>Use of common words, cross curricular words or words identified which children find difficult</p>		<p>Independent spelling activity. Children investigate, practise and extend the independent spelling skills for learning and identifying difficult parts of words</p>	Spelling plenary
11	<p>Shared Writing Refer to text analysis</p> <p>Decide on form to match purpose and audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who is this for? - what structures should we use? - what language conventions do we need? <p>Model planning, using different techniques over time</p>	<p>Spelling 4 – practise, revise, extend spelling strategies from session 3</p>	<p>Either: support groups in working on their unit outcome so that they develop skills they may not achieve independently, or, identify groups of children with similar needs and teach aspects of writing they need to develop before they can move on. Groups may contain a different mix of children each time.</p>	<p>Children create their own plan Support less able and extend more able with this core task</p>	<p>Review the children's work. Have they met the objective? What do they need to do next? Use pieces of work to make teaching points in context of children's writing. Children contribute to review.</p>
12	<p>Demonstrate composition</p> <p>Refer to texts read in shared reading</p> <p>Shared composition</p> <p>Supported composition</p>				
13	<p>Demonstrate composition</p> <p>Shared composition</p> <p>Supported composition</p>	<p>Spelling 5 – Return to all spelling focus words and patterns for the week. Revise, test and practise. Apply in writing</p>		<p>Children write as modelled in the shared session applying objective to their own writing. Editing and revising whilst writing.</p>	
14	Demonstrate composition/Shared composition/Supported composition			Children edit, revise and complete outcome.	Present an review outcomes.
15	Demonstrate editing and revising/Shared editing and revising/Supported editing and revising	<p>Assessment for learning opportunities - use of marking ladders/prompts in the environment</p>			
<p>Cross Curricular Links:</p> <p>Can the text-type be used in another subject? Can the outcome be completed in history, geography, science, R.E?</p>		<p>Evaluation of Objectives/Next Steps:</p> <p>What went well? What needs reinforcing? What to do differently next time. Individual children causing concern/exceeding expectations</p>	<p>Blue represents reading activities Purple represents text analysis and text marking opportunities Black represents gathering ideas for writing through video/speaking and listening/drama Red represents writing activities Green represents spelling focuses. Spelling 2,4 and 5 sessions may be delivered in the first part of the session</p>		

**Year: 5 Term: Summer 1 Unit: Narrative (empathy/point of view)
Improving Boy's Writing Project – Week 1 of 3**

Speaking and Listening Hot seating Freeze frames Role play Paired/group talk Conscience Alley		Texts (& Objectives) 'Estelle's Reward' Big book 'Ice Age' DVD T1, T2, T3, T7, T8 Sentence S3 GfW 42, S5 GfW 27	Outcomes Short story written from point of view of different character
Days	Whole class work	Whole class work	Individual/guided work
Mon 1/15	T1, 6, 8 Shared read 'Estelle's Reward' to p.7. Searchlight strategies. Meaning, inference, deduction, characters, genre type etc. Predict what Estelle might see in cave. How is mood/mystery created?		S2 (GfW 35) Adopt writing for different audiences. (Use 'ActivPrimary2' version)
Tue 2/15	T1,6, 8 Continue reading to p.21. Predict ending. Identify adjectives to describe caves – real and imaginary. Use thesaurus to find synonyms for adjectives in text. (W11)		<u>Reading journal</u> Write ending using interesting objectives
Wed 3/15	T1, W9 Read story to ending. Discuss change in ending (in original version youth blinds Estelle). How many children's ideas of faeries changed in the light of this story?		<u>In pairs</u> Devise questions to ask Estelle (????? to Friday hot seating).
Thur 4/15	Sentence S3 Prepositions 'The cat sat on the mat'	Shared text. Read a section of text and identify prepositions. Which other prepositions would retain meaning?	S3 (GfW 42) Preposition game.
Fri 5/15	Introduce 'hot seating' Teacher hot seat as Estelle. Children ask questions to explore story/character.	Look at title of big book and discuss possible apostrophes	<u>Reading journal</u> Write Estelle's diary entry
			Share ideas of adjectives used – are they appropriate? (W11)
			Children share questions. Can children come up with any further local dialect words?
			(S3) Check/evaluate sentence changes from 'The cat sat on the mat' exercise
			Story mountain for 'Estelle's Reward'

Year: 5 Term: Summer 1 Unit: Narrative (empathy/point of view)
Improving Boy's Writing Project – Week 2 of 3

<u>Speaking and Listening</u> Hot seating Freeze frames Role play Paired/group talk Conscience Alley		<u>Texts (& Objectives)</u> 'Estelle's Reward' Big book 'Ice Age' DVD T1, T2, T3, T7, T8 Sentence S3 GfW 42, S5 GfW 27	<u>Outcomes</u> Short story written from point of view of different character
Days	Whole class work	Whole class work	Individual/guided work
Mon 6/15	Watch scene 5 of 'Ice Age' (x2) after intro. Discuss what happened, characters, genre, motives etc. Differences between texts and films.	Discuss what happened, characters, genre, motives etc. Differences between texts and films.	Group freeze frame activity to illustrate excerpt. Interview characters re feelings at that moment.
Tue 7/15	Watch scene 5 again. Teacher hot seat as man. Children think of, and ask, appropriate questions. Children form an opinion as to what man should do (stay or go?)	Children think of, and ask, appropriate questions. Children form an opinion as to what man should do (stay or go?)	Conscience Alley activity. Teacher act as man and walk the alley whilst children offer their advice.
Wed 8/15	Use cue cards re camera, sound and colour. Discuss meta language. Watch scene 5 and make notes on whiteboards. Discuss reasons for director's choices. Revisit 'who, what, why, where and when' in newspaper reports. Discuss formal language/past tense etc.	Discuss meta language. Discuss meta language. Watch scene 5 and make notes on whiteboards. Discuss reasons for director's choices. Revisit 'who, what, why, where and when' in newspaper reports. Discuss formal language/past tense etc.	Children write a headline and short report of Tiger Attack.
Thur 9/15	In groups, children plan and then role play Diego sneaking past fighting villagers, confronting baby/mother and chase. Act out roles. Discuss informal language. What verbs/adjectives might be used?	Diego sneaking past fighting villagers, confronting baby/mother and chase. Act out roles. Discuss informal language. What verbs/adjectives might be used?	Children write an informal letter, as Diego, to a friend detailing the events in the excerpt.
Fri 10/15	Collaborative story mountain for excerpt (to be used for next week's writing task)	Identify dilemmas of all characters. (Whiteboards)	Watch scene 4 up to Manny and Sid's meeting with Diego. Children make notes on whiteboards re relationships between the 3 characters. What dynamics are going on? What has director chosen to have disagreements between them? Hot seat director.
			Plenary Discuss value of freeze frame activity. How might this aid writing? Discuss what man's decision should be as a result of alley walk. Read reports. Have children used all features? Watch scene 6 to establish fate of mother/baby. Read samples of letters. Have feelings been included?

Year: 5 Term: Summer 1 Unit: Narrative (empathy/point of view)
Improving Boy's Writing Project – Week 3 of 3

<u>Speaking and Listening</u> Hot seating Freeze frames Role play Paired/group talk Conscience Alley		<u>Texts (& Objectives)</u> 'Estelle's Reward' Big book 'Ice Age' DVD T1, T2, T3, T7, T8 Sentence S3 GfW 42, S5 GfW 27	<u>Outcomes</u> Short story written from point of view of different character
Days	Whole class work	Whole class work	Individual/guided work
Mon 11/15	Intro week's task and link to previous work. (Narrative from man's perspective). Revise genre features (whiteboards).	Discuss what story openings should have (show 'ADD' slides and evaluate). Model story opening.	Children start to write their own story opening following genre features and 'ADD' model.
Tue 12/15	Model-write build up. Check genre features.	Review prepositions used and check own writing.	Re-read opening and write build up. Check features.
Wed 13/15	Present the problem – 3 paragraphs. Analyse for features.	Share-write problem.	Write the problem – check features. (Multi probs for more able).
Thur 14/15	Shared writing and supported composition of resolution.	Re-read whole story and add ending. Try different examples, use whiteboards for ideas. Make a final decision.	Complete story, response partners, illustrate, review etc.
Fri 15/15	Demonstrate editing and revising.	Shared editing and revising.	Children edit, revise and complete outcome.
			Plenary Review and evaluate story openings. Review and evaluate build ups. Read a sample. Ask questions of author. Response partners. Listen to samples of stories. Are genre features present? Present and celebrate outcomes.

APPENDIX 3

Primary School - Targets Tracker
Subject/Aspect: Literacy **Year Group/Cohort**

Y6	P7	P8	1	2	3C	3B	3A	4C	4B	4A	5C	5B	5A
Y5	P7	P8	1	2C	2B	2A	3C	3B	3A	4C	4B	4A	5C
	(Target level for FLS)												
Y4	P6	P7	P8	1	2C	2B	2A	3C	3B	3A	4C	4B	4A
	FLS In Y5												
Y3	P6	P7	P8	1C	1B	1A	2C	2B	2A	3C	3B	3A	4C
	ALS in Y4												
Y2	P5	P6	P7	P8	1C	1B	1A	2C	2B	2A	3C	3B	3A
	ALS in Y3												
Y1	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	1C	1B	1A	2C	2B	2A	3C	3A
	ALS in Y3												
R	FSP 1-3 ILS/ELS in Y1												
	Unable to assess using FSP- possibly use PScalcs/PIVATS ILS in Y1				FSP 4-7 ELGs					FSP 8-9			