

Case Study

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Award granted:	Good Practice Award
Project title:	Raising standards in writing

Project summary

- Through the school's self evaluation process, raising standards in writing was identified as a priority. Although the school's overall achievement in English was improving, evidence showed a noticeable difference between reading and writing standards.
- The Head teacher was familiar with the Ros Wilson Strategy, 'Raising Standards in Writing' and arranged a full day inset for teachers and teaching assistants.
- It was decided to adopt the strategy as a whole school priority. The tightly focused structure of the RW strategy became an integral part of the school's already established assessment for learning procedures.
- The children were enthused and empowered by the consistent, structured approach to writing, were very excited by the four key elements of the strategy and were keen to experiment in, 'up levelling' their work. Pupils were supported by displays and resources and responded effectively to teacher feedback.
- Setting individual, specific writing targets identified through the RW assessment process, together with the new effective teaching techniques has improved standards of achievement across school, as demonstrated by the school's tracking data.
- The key to the success was a consistent, improved approach to teaching writing skills by all staff and their belief in the effectiveness of the strategy. Present and future success is ensured through the continual collaboration, review and support between colleagues.

Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?

Raising standards of achievement in writing by providing teachers with relevant knowledge and understanding essential to effectively deliver the Ros Wilson strategy and provide pupils with a consistent, structured framework to develop the skills required for successful writing.



Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be healthy | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay Safe | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enjoy and achieve |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a positive contribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Achieve economic well-being | |

What were you hoping to achieve?

- Raise the profile of writing across the school.
- Improve standards of achievement in writing in all year groups.
- Staff to be confident and knowledgeable in providing a shared, consistent and structured approach to teaching writing skills.

How did you identify the need for this practice?

Through the school's self evaluation process it was identified that;

- Pupils had few opportunities to complete an extensive piece of writing.
- Staff felt under pressure to complete all objectives of the Literacy strategy.
- Staff lacked confidence in effectively teaching or modelling good writing skills.
- School had placed large emphasis on developing reading skills over 3 years, providing INSET for staff, extra guided reading sessions etc. Although achievement improved in reading, this did not have the expected knock-on effect of improving writing standards.
- KS 2 and Optional SATs results confirmed that standards in writing were considerably lower than reading.

What did you do?

- March 06 - HT attends Ros Wilson course in Leeds and INSET for staff was arranged.
- Aug 06 - Teachers and TAs attend full day, in school INSET, delivered by Ros Wilson, consultant on 'Raising Standards in Writing'. (Cluster schools in learning network were invited to the course. The school's learning network adopted 'Raising Standards in Writing' as their next project.).
- Sept 06 - in staff meeting, decisions were made about the best way forward for the school.
- All pupils completed a baseline writing test and results were recorded on the school's tracking database. This included the expected end of year target, 2 NC sub-levels by June 07 for each child.
- All resources were made and a consistent approach adopted for displaying in class the four key elements of the strategy.
- Head teacher delivered whole school assembly to the pupils, using a powerpoint presentation about how they were going to be helped to improve their writing and to encourage the development of a positive writing ethos.
- Launched a competition for pupils to make an anagram to help them to remember the four key elements of the strategy.
- Information for parents via the newsletter, website and at meetings to reinforce the drive to improve writing standards.
- Autumn 06 - interactive whiteboard teaching activities purchased. Some staff

trialled the resources and delivered the high impact lessons contained in the strategy.

- Feedback at staff meetings, review and evaluations made by the staff who were forging ahead and embracing the change.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work to ascertain the impact of the initiative, which showed that some staff had not fully adopted the changes.
- Walk through by Head teacher and Literacy Subject Leader to audit the use of the RW display material, table resources, and to ensure a consistent approach.
- CD players and scented candles were purchased for the 'Big Write'.
- Nov '06 - assessments of writing followed by moderation exercises using the RW criterion scale.
- Close liaison with the RW consultant to iron out any problems.
- Dec 06 - Directive to staff from Head teacher, for impact lessons to be delivered to all classes.
- Spring Term 07 - lesson observations focused on the RW strategy.
- Jan 07 – INSET delivered by school's Literacy Subject Leader on levelling pupils' writing using the criterion scale.
- Five assessments in writing, informing target setting and moderation exercises, took place throughout the year. Staff found these very useful in trying to arrive at a shared understanding of levelling pupils' writing.
- Summer term 07 - although staff had previously agreed to do an extensive piece of writing, 'Big Write', fortnightly with the pupils, school's self-evaluation process identified the need for this to become weekly.
- Working alongside this was the Shirley Clark strategy for marking pupils work, implementing the 'closing the gap' exercise and target setting.
- Throughout the year the Literacy Subject Leader met with the subject leaders from our cluster schools and together they shared good practice which provided her with excellent support and CPD.

Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?

- Led by the Headteacher and Literacy Subject Leader.
- All teachers and teaching assistants have been involved in delivering the strategy.
- The RW books and interactive resources were given to all teachers who were encouraged to use them in the effective delivery of the four key elements.
- RW consultant input.
- The pupils and, to a lesser extent, the parents.

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

- Although some staff were reluctant to embrace the change fully, they were supported and encouraged and all did deliver the 'high impact' lessons by the middle of the spring term.
- Pupils' work showing definite improvement was shared at staff meetings.
- The marking and levelling of the pupils' writing generated a lot of discussion and new guidelines, linked to assessment for learning were implemented.

- Whole school moved from a fortnightly 'Big Write', to a weekly session. In Sept '07 the timetable was organised to accommodate the 'Big Write'.
- Formal assessment of writing has been reduced to termly for 07 - 08.

What has been the impact of the project on pupils' learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

- Pupils are more confident and very keen to show their writing to the Headteacher. More pieces of writing are now shared in the whole-school Achievement Assembly.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their writing and are familiar with how to use the VCOP pyramid.
- Pupils are more familiar with self-assessment and can say what their next writing target will be.
- Pupils are empowered to improve their own writing.
- As pupils move from a year group to the next, they are familiar with the writing strategy as a consistent approach has been adopted.
- Writing assessment tracking data shows improvements.
- End of KS2 SATs results in writing show that the percentage of boys achieving level 4 has doubled.
- Opt SATs in Yrs 3, 4 and 5 have also shown a marked improvement in most classes.
- Lesson observations indicate that pupils use a higher level of language in both speaking and writing.

What are the next stages in the development process?

- The strategy is to continue across school and the challenge for staff is to ensure it sits comfortably with the renewed framework.
- New RW interactive resources have been ordered and staff will be supported to use these in their teaching.
- Ensure that the skills and understanding of good writing are applied in all subjects.
- Literacy Subject Leader will attend further training on the RW Day 2 conference and disseminate information to staff. Inset time will be used if necessary.
- Establish the effective induction and training of new staff.

What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?

- The RW strategy can be adopted in all primary schools.
- All staff must have a belief in the strategy and be well trained and supported to develop their understanding and skills.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of the strategy regularly.
- A whole school consistent approach to the strategy must be adopted.
- Good quality resources must be available for all staff
- Colleagues in primary schools could observe the strategy in operation.