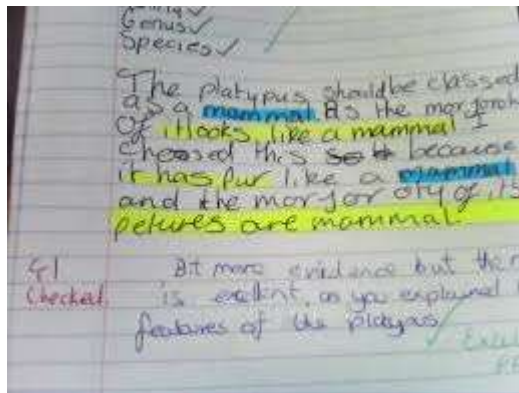


# St Luke's Primary

## A Research-Based Community

*PRACTITIONER Research*

Lower attaining writers



Summer 2015

‘The unfortunate collateral damage of the increasing pool of students labelled low achievers is the interpretation of these results as indicative of these students’ incapacity for high levels of thinking.

The underestimated( or totally ignored) reality is that these students are not incapable of high levels of thinking and performance. Instead it is the mental processes and habits of mind requisite for high levels of thinking and intellectual performance that are underdeveloped in these students.’ (*Research Psychologist R. Feuerstein*)

# SLP Circle of Learning

Lower attaining writers were more likely to:

- Lack engagement with learning attitudes
- Lack stamina / be tired
- **Be less resilient**
- Not understand task
- **Struggle with the mechanical process of writing**
- Lack organisational ability (self and work – not use the resources provided)
- **Be slow to start**
- Concentrate for shorter periods (age +5?)
- Make links
- **Seek challenge**
- Be under the radar (not SEN) – eg passivity in whole class learning conversations and less likely to learn from others
- **Not be able to 'keep up' (eg in TTT; content /context)**

## Lower attaining writers were more successful when ...

- They were strategically partnered (positive dynamic; with less familiar HA children)
- There was personal engagement with Learning Attitudes
- Content of writing well understood/context relevant to experience
- Return to previous year's example to start new module
- Clear self-set targets
- Oral rehearsal – use of talking tins
- Clear models visible - expectation you use them- they are a sign of successful learning – not of being stuck
- Well seated on carpet; regularly actively engaged with opportunities to process the learning-active listening.
- Learning journey (bigger picture) visible, understood. The child can describe it.
- Marking and response a tight loop.
- They were not 'over-scaffolded'
- Teaching vocabulary was clear/screens simple/language layered

## IoE Research Review

- The poor effect of streaming/within-class grouping
- Boys and reading (impact on writing)
- Academic self-concept as a predictor of adaptive or maladaptive learning approaches
- Wide range of writing experiences and very regular writing
- Writing for a purpose and audience (writing about topics they care about; having control of writing process and topic)
- Need for explicit modelling vs over-reliance on frames
- Discrete grammar teaching ineffective; contextualised grammar teaching effective (embedded grammar; sentence combining)
- Formative assessment placed at centre of children learning to write (feedback; co-construction of success criteria and target setting)

Philosophy session- 'Is handwriting important'

Regular timetabling of h/w across the year group. This would entail 4 morning sessions of approximately 20 minutes.

Adopt an adapted decomposition for assessment/target setting.

Opportunities in quiet reading for h/w related activities.

We will formulate a checklist poster to cover the 4 ps (processes as described in 'Handwriting Today') for prominent display and regular reference in Literacy sessions.

Create self-assessment stickers comprising a maximum of 5 of the 'Handwriting Today' 5 Ss (skills).

Create more practise opportunities to apply learning. E.g. Dictation opportunities in phonics sessions; free writing at prepared 'writing tables' at Golden Time.

# **The Research In School**

# Reception

Reception -How can we develop a growth mindset towards writing for key LA children in Early Years?



D

### Activity

Write 6 CVC or CVCC words from pictures. Variety of resources available on table for D to choose from without prompt: sound mat; 'can do' puppet; pencils; paper and pictures.

Final observation:

D came to the activity with no hesitation and started straight away, choosing a pencil and paper. (Didn't use sound mat or puppet throughout)

He verbalised each picture first and then chose the first one that he wanted to write.

D sound-talked each word independently. He wrote all 6 without any distraction, only a positive, energised attitude!

At the end of the task D asked "George, can I have a 'can do' sticker?!"

A

Attitude to writing has remarkably improved. Initially A became very distressed if he could not write a word and used to say, "I can't do it' and get quite angry with himself. With the consistent use of 'can do' this behaviour has stopped. He now seeks writing tasks independently. Something that did not happen previously. (See writing assess and independent writing on display)

E-L

E uses 'can do' during phonics to help her. She often self corrects now as she goes to say ..'I Can't do it". She then says "I can" and goes and gets a dinosaur. As a result she is now persevering with her handwriting at phonics time when she writes the phoneme/ digraph. This has also translated into E's guided activities. Prior to this action research being conducted E was reluctant to come to the guided writing table and would also often say, 'I can't do it.". I have seen a huge shift in attitude. (See Spring 2 writing assess and display)

# Year 1

Can we develop a growth mindset in the classroom by changing our approach to attainment groupings, differentiated tasks, how adults support children's learning and by developing learning meta-cognition?

- Focus on learning dispositions:

Explicit teaching of:

Can do

Have a go

Not giving up

Challenge

- No groups
- No TA targeted to groups – TA targeted to specific curriculum area e.g. adjectives/key children from assessment
- No scaffolding/writing frames
- Expectation that they will write full sentences independently – no capping
- Expectation they will organise themselves
- No differentiation by sentence type
- Teaching through collaborative learning
- Early setting of own success criteria

## Year 1 writing results

Level	2014	2015
P	5	3
1c	14	7
1b	37	23
1a	20	36
2c	13	20

## Handwriting and LA writers

International research suggests that automatic letter writing is the single best predictor of written composition in primary years

If handwriting is not automated, both quality as well as quantity of texts will be reduced.

*Graham et al., 1997; Connelly & Hurst, 2001; Dockrell, Lindsey & Connelly (in press)*

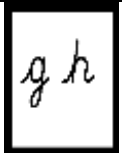




The data suggests that attention to teaching handwriting speed in KS2 could have a significant impact on writing performance (below 22 ALPM at risk of not achieving 2B in writing) [Christensen,2005]

There is a clearly established link between handwriting difficulties and the progress of low attaining writers: improving its automation reduces demand on working memory (Torrance & Galbraith 2006) and improving legibility allows easier recording of ideas and (crucially) checking/editing (empirically).

# Year 2

Can explicit decomposing of the handwriting product, to enable regular self-assessment, target setting and 'small hop' development, improve the legibility, presentation and automation of handwriting for LA children?

- Ensure consistency in the regular timetabling of h/w across the year group. This would entail 4 morning sessions of approximately 20 minutes.
- Adopt an adapted decomposition for assessment/target setting
- Include HW evaluation in general writing evaluation.
- Opportunities in quiet reading for h/w related activities.
- We will formulate a checklist poster to cover the 4 ps (processes as described in 'Handwriting Today') for prominent display and regular reference.
- Create self-assessment stickers comprising a maximum of 5 of the 'Handwriting Today' 5 Ss (skills).
- Create more practise opportunities to apply learning. E.g. Dictation opportunities in phonics sessions; free writing at prepared 'writing tables' at Golden Time.
- Philosophy session- 'Is handwriting important'

Letters well shaped		
Sit on the line		
Joins		
Speed		
Small, tall and tails		



- Attitude:

Our conferencing threw up some interesting views. Broadly speaking there were notable worries about handwriting for a number of our sample in the initial dialogues. These were almost entirely absent in the final conferencing with only two expressing a concerned attitude. Anecdotally, we all reported a very positive attitude across the year group but particularly from those, largely LA children, who had made the most progress.

- Levelled writing changes:

All but one of these children were assessed as working within level 1 (the other at 2c) at the beginning of this project. We saw a one sub-level improvement in 6 of the children which equates to an average improvement of .67 (6/9) of a sublevel. This compares very favourably with an average of .48 (42/88) of a sublevel across the year group. We all felt that this improvement was at least in part attributable to the fact that they are now able to organise and reread their writing much better. This is though only our considered opinion and we have no further data that can isolate this feature from other aspects of the writing process.

- Overall, following a 6 week programme, we have seen some excellent results and there have been notable improvements in handwriting across the year group which are clearly shown by our focused LA children.
- The children have got increasingly better at making judgements and are far more likely to apply these newly gained standards in all their writing and not just in HW sessions. The decomposition to readily understandable components has been crucial to enabling the children to monitor and improve their handwriting autonomously.

# Year 3/4

Yr 3 and 4 - Does writing my own stories help me improve as a writer?

Week	Story telling session – content and focus
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**Scaling outside of session.**

1	<p>Introduce idea- what do we mean by storytelling?            What titles could we have- own titles/known stories- children’s ideas            Children to write- and maybe teacher to write or to scribe            Read/ share story with partner            Read a story</p>
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**Teacher scribing each week – this can be the basis for 3 focus children per session to have a 1:1 writing time with where you co construct the writing**

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with the writing- T scribe for focus child</li> <li>• Use some of the stories we have heard to make a list of what we like in stories- what makes them good? Start to collect ideas for (success criteria)- key thing is to include general ideas that can be broken down later on</li> <li>• Time to share with partner- this can be a time when teacher can listen to any story that is ready</li> <li>• Story telling/ performed if it had been practised at playtime- (2 stories)- what did we like about ...story? Add to list of top tips if need be.</li> </ul>
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Child	Literacy book			Storybook			Sub-Level
			%inc			% inc	
<b>K</b>	4	8	100%	3	6	100%	<b>1</b>
<b>S</b>	4	7	75%	6	13	116%	<b>2</b>
<b>J</b>	3	8	166%	3	8	166%	<b>2</b>
<b>H</b>	5	10	100%	3	8	166%	<b>2</b>
<b>L</b>	6	9	50%	3	5	66%	<b>1</b>
<b>O</b>	6	15	166%	9	23	155%	<b>2</b>
<b>L</b>	9	20	122%	10	35	250%	<b>2</b>
<b>M</b>	6	13	116%	11	31	180%	<b>2</b>

# Year 5

What is the impact of making the motivation and audience for the writing of lower attaining children more central to their own experience; i.e. by giving them more scope to choose the context for their writing, and by using a carefully selected talk partner as a more concrete audience?

	How much do you enjoy writing in Literacy (Scale of 1-10)			How much do you get to write what you want to write in Literacy (Scale of 1-10)			How often do you write at home (Scale of 1-10)			Do you prefer to work with a talk partner when writing, or alone			How many Literacy units do you remember from Year 5 (Scale of 1-10)			How many Literacy units do you remember since you started at the school			Who reads what you write?	
	0-3	4-7	8-10	0-3	4-7	8-10	0-3	4-7	8-10	With partner	On own	Depends on who	0-1	2-4	5+	0-1	2-4	5+	0-2 people	3+ people
HA	0	1	4	0	3	2	1	2	2	1	0	4	0	4	1	2	2	1	3	2
LA	4	4	0	3	5	0	5	2	1	5	1	2	6	2	0	8	0	0	8	0

# General Findings

Freedom for LA to choose context:

- Increase in quantity and general quality
- Increase in quality of handwriting
- More engagement
- More willingness to apply themselves further to the task

Use of partner writers/reviewers

- Regular oral rehearsal/reading led to far fewer errors spelling/grammar
- Greater willingness to get it right
- Greater 'magpieing' of ideas

# Year 6

Can buddy target setting and reviews  
have greater impact than teacher  
targets on LA



Finally:

Peer Tutoring

Co-Learning

Self-referral