

Interventions to influence best practice and secure strong outcomes for children within the EYFS



Introduction

Over the spring and summer terms of 2018 a range of teachers took part in a Year R working party. The aim of the group was to explore interventions that were effectively being used to move children's learning and development forwards.

Some of the schools who took part have written case studies to illustrate how they targeted groups of children and used a range of strategies to develop learning, predominantly in the area of communication, language and literacy.

We thank the following schools for writing their case studies which we have compiled into this interventions guide document:

- Arundel Court Primary Academy
- Cottage Grove Primary
- Devonshire Infant
- Flying Bull Primary Academy
- St George's Beneficial Primary
- St John's Catholic Primary
- St Paul's Catholic Primary

The Early Years Advisory Team will be taking some of these interventions out to targeted schools, where you have told us about the specific challenges you face *e.g. engaging parents, tackling low reading levels, supporting children eligible for pupil premium*. If you feel your team and children would benefit from using one of these interventions and you would like to discuss them further, please contact us at eyinclusion@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or email directly to Ella.Harbut@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

This document has been created to support Year R practitioners and the intention is that it will evolve and grow. If you have an intervention that works effectively to develop the skills and learning of your Year R children and you would like to share this with others, please do get in touch.



Our school: Arundel Court Primary Academy

Our intervention: New phonics program

Our EYFS challenges

Making the teaching and application of phonics stronger in reception.

What have we done?

Year 1 have started a new program that we have bought into this year.

We have used Year 1 TA's and all our EYFS staff to spread phonics teaching over 10 adults to ensure small group teaching targeting ability/phase of children.

Close monitoring and assessment to regroup and flag up the needs of the children.

Year 1 - a new phonics scheme with planning for 1 - 3 days of each letter of each phase depending on the needs of the small group.

We have sent alien words/real words home for the children to practise with their parents - parent involvement.

The impact it has had...

On children

Most children now know all of phase 2 apart from a handful of SEN children across the cohort.

On teaching

Small group teaching allows more accurate teaching and assessment from each lesson. Children have more opportunities to apply their knowledge and have built in confidence.

On the environment

We are beginning to have areas for the small groups to work around the classroom. Whole pack resources have been made for each T/TA to use.

What we have learnt

Small group teaching has a massive impact on the teaching and learning of phonics. Different phases can be taught at the pace the group are working at.

Resourcing has taken time but with games, flashcard etc. made, each teacher/teaching assistant can take their own group and can use what they need, when they need them.

Parent involvement is such an important part of this scheme. Getting parents involved and understanding what is happening makes a huge impact. We will be starting this from September this year. Asking small groups of parents to come in and learn about phonics.



Our school: Cottage Grove Primary

Our intervention: Objective Lead Planning

Our EYFS challenges

From looking at previous data, it is clear that writing was one of the key areas that children were missing out on for their GLD. This is due to many factors. We have a high proportion of EAL children in our cohort meaning that a child needs to crack the English Language before he/she can write in English. This means that our EAL children, although making excellent progress, are missing their GLD because of writing. We also have a challenging cohort this year due to the differing needs and issues which children have.

What have we done?

To try and improve the writing in Reception, we have introduced Objective Led Planning whereby the children navigate their own learning and we use their interests and desires to inform areas of the classroom. Our learning objectives are open ended so that children can access these regardless of which area of the classroom they are using.

As we are heading towards September we have introduced small group activities so that children can complete an adult led activity, but during our discovery time, children are given the choice about what they want to do. This freedom is key for children to truly want to work and learn.

The impact it has had...

On children

Children are a lot more engaged in their learning and are willing to write and take part in counting activities because they are doing something that interests them. Boys are a lot more enthusiastic about writing as they have a desire to tell you about what they are doing.

On teaching

The pressure has been taken off small group activities which wouldn't have worked with our particular cohort of children, especially at the beginning of the year. The beauty of Objective Led Planning is that now we are drawing closer to September and Year 1, small group activities enable those children who are ready for the structure to work in a set activity.

On the environment

The classroom environment is appealing to children and is actually being used now – children decide what they are interested in and the role play areas etc. reflect this.



Our school: Devonshire Infant

Our intervention: Letter Lingo

Our EYFS challenges

The quality of boys writing is an issue to be tackled. Our aim was to get boys more interested in mark making initially on entry into reception, with the intent of later embedding handwriting with the correct formation and encouraging their interest.

What have we done?

We have developed a 'lingo' based set of instructions for the correct formation of cursive handwriting with a visual recall element.

The letters are put into four families and are based on the movements over and around a hill. Large A3 sheets of the hill were made (see lingo sheets on following pages) so that the children could play with cars and trains on the sheets going up and over the hill.

First, the positional language was introduced during play. The children became familiar with the hill shape and the 'lingo' as they were shown each letter formation whilst they were introduced during phonic sessions. The children were then able to use smaller A6 hills to create their own letters of their names and subsequently recalling all the letter shapes by visualising the hill when asked to write letters.

The impact it has had...

On children

The children found the hills bright and enticing to play with. The boys seemed drawn to them and were happy to play with the trains and cars, moving them around to the lingo instructions. It engaged the boys more quickly to the letter shapes and movements in a 'gross motor' way before using a pencil. It then became easier to transfer those skills when using a pencil later.

On teaching

The active 'kinaesthetic' part of using the hills with cars and trains with a purpose gave the teaching staff a way to make early connections with the boys which fostered good working relationships later.

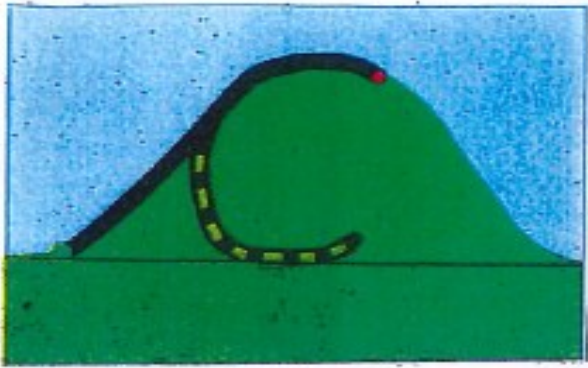
On the environment

The hills were easy to make and could be used anywhere within the classrooms and stacks of little letter hills could be made to be placed in all areas for improvised writing opportunities.

What we have learnt

Pre-teaching the language was key to the success with some of the boys this year. It engaged them and helped them as a multi-sensory style of learning. They could later visualise the letters on the hill and remembered which way to go up embedding the hand movements. Ensuring the same language throughout the reception classes was important so as not to cause any confusion. Staff had to work hard to remember the correct lingo and be consistent. The intervention was focused on summer born boys who had no pencil control or mark making interest on arrival. The data shows that these boys have currently, on average, at least 50% of letter shapes correctly formed. We will look at this data at the end of the year and then repeat next year to have a comparison. When looking at the work from the same group characteristics from last year, it seems more progress has been made at this current time. A future development will be to involve parents with the 'letter lingo' at home.

x-based letters



x

- up the hill
- peep over the top - STOP!
- come back, curl around

o

- up the hill
- peep over the top - STOP!
- come back, curl around
- make a circle
- tag at the top

a

- up the hill
- peep over the top - STOP!
- come back, curl around
- make a circle
- drop down
- flick

d

- up the hill
- peep over the top - STOP!
- come back, curl around
- make a circle
- climb up, up high
- drop down, flick

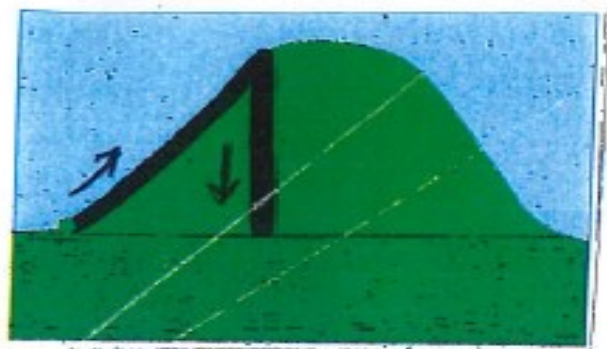
g

- up the hill
- peep over the top - STOP!
- come back, curl around
- make a circle
- drop down, down, down
- make a loop

q

- up the hill
- peep over the top - STOP!
- come back, curl around
- make a circle
- drop down, down, down
- and kick up

Letter lingo - i-based letters



- up the hill
- drop straight down
- flick
- dot

i

- up the hill
- drop straight down
- curly bottom
- up again
- drop straight down
- flick

u

- up a HIGH hill
- drop straight down
- flick

l

- up a HIGH hill
- drop straight down
- curly bottom
- then...cross

t

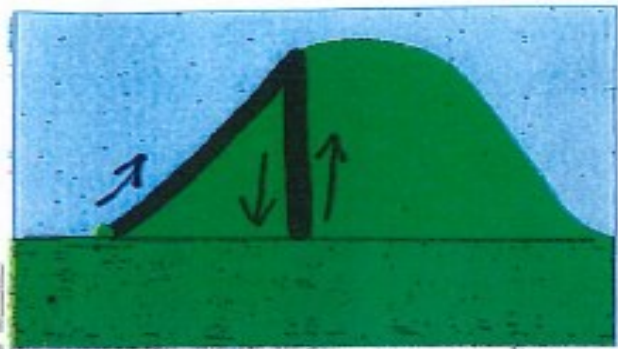
- up the hill
- drop down, down, down
- make a loop
- dot

j

- up the hill
- drop straight down
- curly bottom
- up again
- drop down, down, down
- make a loop

y

r-based letters



r

- up the hill
- drop straight down
- climb back up
- peep over the top

n

- up the hill
- drop straight down
- climb back up
- make a tunnel
- flick

m

- up the hill
- drop straight down
- climb back up
- make a tunnel
- climb back up
- make another tunnel
- flick

p

- up the hill
- drop down, down, down
- climb back up
- over the top
- make a circle
- and...smile

h

- up a HIGH hill
- drop straight down
- climb up half way
- make a tunnel
- flick

b

- up a HIGH hill
- drop straight down
- climb up half way
- make a circle
- and...smile

k

- up a HIGH hill
- drop straight down
- climb up half way
- make a little circle
- and a kick



- up the hill
- peep over the top - STOP!
- come back
- make a snake
- and...smile



- up the hill
- peep over the top - STOP!
- come back
- drop down, down, down
- make a loop

Finally - the leftovers - don't fit the other groups!



- up the hill
- back flip
- curl around



- up the hill
- down the slide
- up the slide
- tag at the top



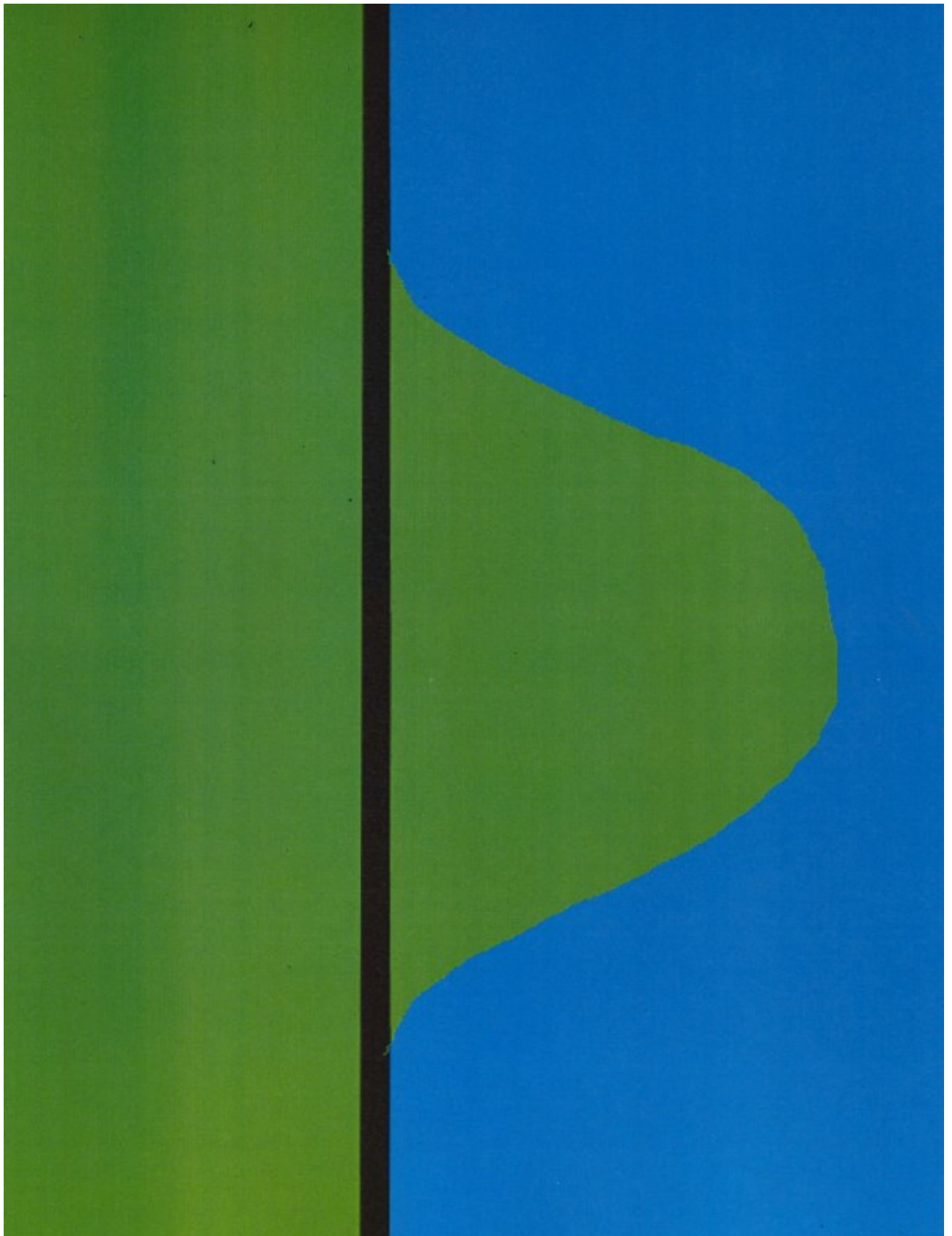
- up the hill
- down the slide
- up the slide
- down the slide
- up the slide
- tag at the top

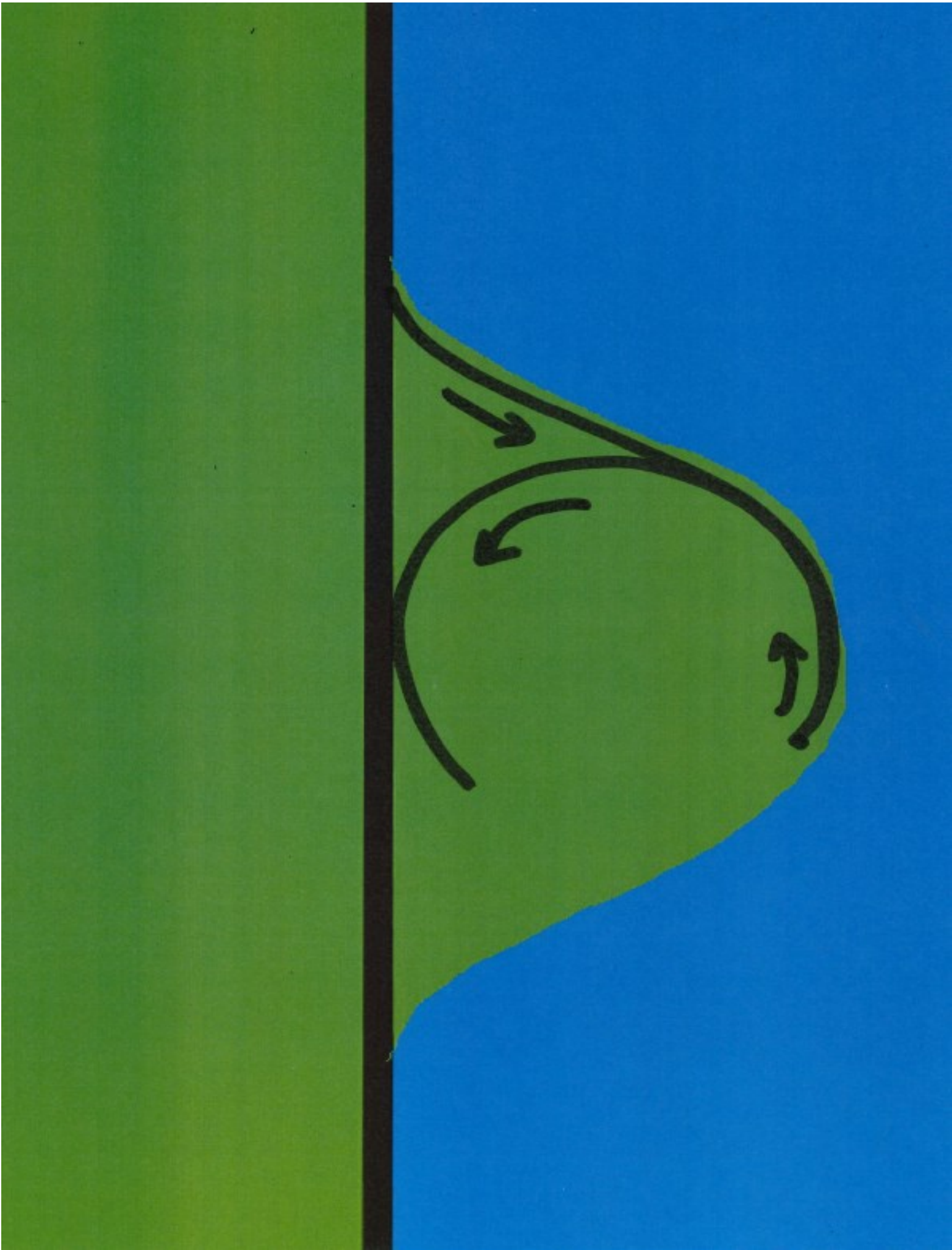


- up the hill
- down the slide, flick
- and ...cross



- up the hill
- along the top
- back down a slide
- along the bottom
- flick





Our school: Flying Bull Primary Academy

Our intervention: Reading Impact Initiative

Our EYFS challenges

Parental engagement and progress of boys (specifically Summer born).

What have we done?

Autumn 1: Invited **all** parents in to work with their child during a phonics session (six parents per day for a week). After the session we met with parents to outline our expectations for supporting children with reading at home. We discussed phonics and some of the technical vocabulary they had observed. Reading Journals were introduced and explained as well as strategies to support reading development at home.

Spring 1: We identified 15 boys who were borderline for meeting the Reading ELG. We invited those parents into school and asked them to be part of our reading project. We asked the parents involved to sign a contract and discussed the importance of a consistent approach at home in enabling the children to make accelerated progress.

We then modelled four phonics games that the children would be taking home (one game per week). We asked that the parents played the game at home for five minutes each day. We included a sign off sheet to keep a track of this. The game was returned and swapped for the next one each Friday.

At the end of the half term we met the parents to discuss the project so far. We were able to discuss any barriers/difficulties and suggested ways to help.

Spring 2: As per Spring 1 with new games.

The impact it has had...

On children

Accelerated progress in reading over a term.
Developed confidence in reading.

On teaching

Focus groups reflecting the developing needs of those involved in the project.

What we have learnt

Parents want to be involved but sometimes aren't sure how best to help. Parents really enjoyed working with their child in class as opposed to attending a meeting after school. Daily activities boosted progress for those in the project. Early intervention has had an impact.

Our school: St George's Beneficial Primary

Our intervention: Reception Narrative

Our EYFS challenges

Communication and language is the biggest barrier to learning for many of our children. At the beginning of the year 30% of children were very new to English, 10% were working with SALT in school with 4% having a significant language delay.

What have we done?

As part of our baseline assessments all the children were benchmarked against the Early Communication and Language assessment tool. Children were then selected for participation in the program according to level of language and confidence with speaking within the classroom.

Out of the initial 24 children first identified as having a need, only four were not either PP, EAL or SEN. Children who were very new to English were deferred until later in the year when basic language skills had developed enough to benefit.

The children then took part in two or three half hour sessions a week, depending on need. The program is a small group approach to language development developed and advocated by SALT.

The sessions use practical resources and real life and familiar and traditional story scenarios to structure grammatical and vocabulary development. The sessions also reinforce Talk for Writing frameworks within the classroom.

The impact it has had...

On children

Progress has been made by all children as evidenced in record keeping of sessions, observations in Learning Journeys and data inputted into our data tracking system, Pupil Tracker. Some children made up to a year of progress in the first four months of the intervention. Those who needed confidence boosting no longer have the extra support and the children who had limited English at the beginning of the year are now benefitting. Those with a greater depth of need are still on-going.

On teaching

Pace of teaching has been positively impacted upon as children are better equipped to understand expectations and to contribute to class discussions. Children are more able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding across all aspects of the curriculum.

On the environment

Children's PSED has been positively impacted upon as their improved language skills have made them more adept at making relationships.

What we have learnt

The Reception Narrative program has had a positive impact upon the targeted children as well as the wider class environment. Once we have assessed the impact of the complete program at the end of the year, again using the Early Communication and Language assessment tool, we will look at how to maximise its impact when we run it again for our new cohort if their profile of needs indicate that they would benefit from it.

Our school: St John's Catholic Primary

Our intervention: Pupil Premium Personalised learning boxes

Our EYFS challenges

The percentage of disadvantaged children achieving a GLD across the EYFS was considerably lower than their non-disadvantaged peers. We have struggled to engage families of Pupil Premium children.

What have we done?

Personalised learning boxes: Each PP child made a learning box at the start of the school year. Initially interest led activities were placed in the boxes on a weekly basis, lots of princess and superhero activities were chosen! The children had dedicated time each week to complete the activities with the class teacher or LSA with a particular focus on developing the elements of the effective characteristics of learning. As we got to know the children activities to address individual gaps in learning, all still with an interest led theme, were put in the boxes, hand gym activities, number recognition activities etc. Parents were invited to come in and we shared the boxes and our hope that they would support their child at home with a weekly learning bag of similar activities that the children had done in their box.

Most parents engaged well with this and they have been really good at supporting their children to complete the activities. The parents have been extremely positive about the learning bags and have commented on the progress that their children have made, one 'WOW' slip came into school that said "Well done..., your handwriting has really improved and you are getting to be such a good writer, our practise at home has really helped you!"

The impact it has had...

On children

The children have become more confident, resilient and engaged in their learning. They have made great progress and any gaps in learning have been quickly addressed. The children have really enjoyed taking activities home and learning with their families in a fun and engaging way.

On teaching

Our teaching has become much more interest led rather than based on themes or topics. Our teaching has become more focussed on individual needs and closing the gaps before they get too wide.



What we have learnt

That the children have great ideas to support and move their learning on! That interest led learning is far more effective. That parents will engage and support their children with learning if it is fun and engaging.

Our school: St Paul's Catholic Primary

Our intervention: Phonics workshop with parents

Our EYFS challenges

Engaging Pupil Premium parents into supporting their children with reading and writing through phonics. Raising the amount of PP achieving GLD who usually miss out on the reading and writing ELGs.

What have we done?

During Spring 2 half term I have run a parents phonics workshop. The workshop ran weekly on a Wednesday and Thursday for approx. 30 minutes.

During these sessions parents were able to work alongside their children and complete activities that were taught in a daily phonics lesson. I gave a hands on input which mirrored a phonics lesson, for example the children had to write the digraph that I gave the sound for or the given tricky word.

Following this I set up one or two activities each week which either focused on reading or writing with the application of phonics. One example of this is where the children were given a phoneme frame and they had to correctly apply phase 3 phonics to write the word. Then writing it on a whiteboard in a sentence. Not only did this help promote the application of phonics but it also helped the children compose a sentence.

The sessions continued for five weeks and most parents attended all five. At the end a questionnaire was given out to evaluate the impact it had. The feedback was positive and all parents said they found them very beneficial.

The impact it has had...

On children

The children made significant progress through these sessions and as a result are now able to read and write a simple sentence with minimal support. Parents can now support their child better with their development using strategies given and practised within the sessions.

Children's knowledge of digraphs has improved and evidence of them applying it better within their reading and writing has been evident.

On teaching

It has allowed me to reassess my teaching of phonics and specific activities tailored to groups.

What we have learnt

Through this intervention we have learnt that parental understanding of how their children learn is crucial in supporting them. Although some parents are hard to reach, when we engage parents and work with them it has a great impact on their child's progress. Working in small group scenarios enables parents to ask questions confidently without feeling overwhelmed or embarrassed. Children benefit from their parents showing an interest in their education. When they value what their children learn it promotes a shared love of learning. Moving forward I would like to start the sessions earlier on in the year and cover a wider group of children to ensure gaps are identified earlier and are closed with targeted interventions alongside parents.

Our school: St Paul's Catholic Primary

Our intervention: Phonics workshop with parents

Parents comments on feedback questionnaires...

What was the most beneficial part of the workshops?

"Finding new ways and ideas to learn through fun games".

"Seeing how my child is doing and seeing what she needs help with".

"All of it was beneficial because it's a different way than how I was taught".

"It was great getting advice on techniques that are being used to teach".

"It was great to see exactly how my child learns. I can see a huge change in his reading and writing".

Any other comments...

"Miss Ainsley was extremely friendly and supportive. Me and my son both loved the sessions".

"It was really lovely to get to work with my child. I would like to attend more workshops".

"The workshops were good to squeeze a lot into them in 30minutes but not to feel rushed".



Early Years and Childcare

Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices, Floor 3, Core 6
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2AL

www.portsmouth.gov.uk/childcare
eyinclusion@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
www.facebook.com/portsmouthfis