

School of Teacher Education

THE HOPE CHALLENGE PROGRAMME

Primary

CASE STUDY: WRITING

Our Lady and St Swithins Catholic Primary School, Liverpool

St Andrews Primary School, Warrington

Lead: Veronica Poulter

AIMS:

The writing project aims to increase writing attainment for children across the two key stages, and to provide trainees with enhanced experience of teaching writing in two very different schools. Nine trainees in their third year of the BA (QTS) programme were selected to support eight children in year six and eight children in year 2 in OLSS, and four children in year 4 and four children in year 1 in St Andrews. The children in OLSS were currently working below expected levels in writing, and the children in St Andrews were able writers that the school wished to challenge, believing them not to be achieving at their full potential.

IMPACT/OUTCOMES:

Although it is difficult to show impact in the relatively short time scale, by the end of the eight weeks the children, supported by the trainees, did produce work that showed a more sophisticated use of language than at the start. The trainees themselves felt that their work with the children had had a significant impact on their achievement. Here are some of their comments:

‘There is significant improvement within their writing style, as their sentences now include things like punctuation. Their confidence has increased dramatically, and they understand that if they struggle to say their sentence out loud first to ensure it makes sense. I feel my teaching has improved, and I have gained strategies on how to teach and improve writing.’

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'The children's attitude towards books and writing has improved. They are able to recognise mistakes ... in their own work. They have improved significantly in their use of descriptive words, and they were able to produce well written letters.'

'The children have grown in confidence when it comes to their writing and sharing their writing. They have improved in their writing by using more interesting adjectives, similes and metaphors for instance.'

The students also reflected positively on the impact the project had had on their own practice:

'Completing the Challenge has enabled me to see the children's progress in their writing over 8 weeks, focussing on discussing their ideas before completing their written task. It has also increased my confidence when teaching writing. I feel I will be able to make my lessons more adventurous.'

DISSEMINATION (INCLUDING RESEARCH):

The writing project was shared with members of the Primary Steering Committee at Liverpool Hope University.

SUSTAINABILITY/ NEXT STEPS:

For this project, the brief was to improve the children's writing because the schools wanted them to move from one level to the next. In future projects, we would like to make the interventions even more nuanced, so that we and the trainees are focusing on more specific areas of writing.