

ST.SILAS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL OUR READING RECOVERY JOURNEY

St Silas' Church of England Primary School, Toxteth is a single form entry school close to Liverpool city centre, with high levels of free school meals, pupil mobility and pupils with English as an additional language, many of whom are refugees.

In 2003 Liverpool LEA offered Liverpool schools the opportunity to train a teacher in Reading Recovery, the training to be done in the neighbouring authority of Wirral where a team of Reading Recovery teachers had flourished since the early 1990s.

It was just a small advertisement in the training section of the Schools Weekly Bulletin but, fortunately, my Head Teacher saw it and offered me the chance to train. At the time I was the school SENCo and worked, as I still do, with pupils with additional learning needs. What an opportunity I thought! Although I wasn't sure about the fortnightly drives through the tunnel [that's the tunnel under the River Mersey].

I was enthusiastic. I knew of a Liverpool teacher who had gone to New Zealand in the 1980s and trained with Marie Clay, but I had no idea what an impact this opportunity would have on my professional development, on my struggling pupils and eventually, on the school as a whole.

My year of training brought enlightenment, but with this came a feeling of frustration. If only I had had the opportunity to train earlier in my career instead of waiting until I was over fifty. All those pupils I had tried to help but largely failed!

However the future was looking bright. Now I was a Reading Recovery teacher and when ECaR came along in 2005 my newly appointed Head jumped at the chance for funding to roll out Reading Recovery in St Silas.

No more driving through the Tunnel, Liverpool LEA appointed Gilda Possibile, as our very own Reading Recovery Teacher Leader and the good news started to spread.

In St Silas' School that year all our teaching assistants were trained in Better Reading Partnership. Beautiful new books were bought to kick start the programme. Guided Reading books were book banded, labelled and boxed for easy access. The PM 'Benchmark Kit' was introduced to assess reading levels and to pinpoint struggling readers.

St Silas School was part of the CLLD pilot in 2006, so the programme is now in place throughout Key Stage 1 with dramatic results. The majority of pupils are now leaving FS2 with a sound knowledge of all phonemes and many can both read and write cvc, ccvc and cvcc words confidently.

In 2006 -2007 I completed RRIPLLE literacy leadership training with Gilda. This showed me the possibilities of extending the impact of Reading Recovery in my school and gave me a knowledge base so that I could be confident in so doing. Senior management continued to be enthusiastic about Reading Recovery.

In 2007-2008, my colleague, Jenny Luscombe, was given the opportunity to train as a Reading Recovery teacher. This is how she feels about her Reading Recovery experience.

"It has dramatically transformed the way I teach Literacy in the classroom. I now have such a detailed perception of how reading and writing is learned and should be taught. I was just guessing in my teaching of reading and writing beforehand. It seems unbelievable to me that teachers go through PGCE and B Ed teacher training courses and come out the other side still not sure how to teach children to read. We should all have RR training. Becoming immersed in RR culture has been such an uplifting and positive experience. The satisfaction of seeing the children's rapid progress in RR is an unbeatable experience. I would actually go as far as saying that it has kept me in the profession. "

This term the recently appointed year 2 teaching assistant will attend Fischer Family Trust training in 'Wave 3 literacy' and we expect this to will become an established Wave 3 Intervention in school. My Head Teacher trained as Link Teacher, although not needed currently as we are fortunate to have two Reading Recovery Teachers on the staff!

In the summer of 2008, the Head Teacher arranged a very special Celebration of Reading in the school. Parents were invited along to join in celebrating their children's achievement. We took the opportunity to explain a little about Reading Recovery and what the lessons entail, stressing how hard the pupils had worked and how proud we were of them. We thanked the parents for their support. But the best part by far was when pupils who had started the RR Programme on level 1 and 2 stood tall at the front of the hall and read out loud with confidence and fluency from texts level 22 and 24!

We could have cried!

Each child who had followed a Reading Recovery Programme [year 1 and 2] or worked on Better Reading Partnership [year 2] chose a book from the Waterstone's Stall at the back of the hall as well as receiving a certificate and a handshake.

'Reading is good. I got better at sounds because I was sounding the letters out. Mrs Crew was helping me' Asha ,Y2

'Reading's good. My writing's good. My sounding out's good. I'm good.' Miashea, Y1

'I read with Mrs. Luscombe. I was doing sentences. She likes my reading finger. She gives me stickers.' Mohammed, Y1

'We got a sentence to take home every day. We had to stick it on and write it under. Mrs Heaney's nice and kind. She learns us how to read' Carvell, FS

WHERE WE ARE NOW

As from September 2008 we have two fully qualified Reading Recovery Teachers on the staff.

Jenny teaches Y1 class in the mornings and in the afternoons is a Reading Recovery teacher.

I am a Reading Recovery teacher in the mornings and also school SENCo with responsibility for managing intervention programmes, putting my RRIPLLE training into practice.

There are currently 7 children on RR Programme. We work closely together, which is great.

We have a designated, well equipped Reading Recovery Room, referred to fondly by the children as 'The Blue Room.'

In FS2

- Daily Shared Reading and Writing
- Regular Guided Reading – whole school training September 200
- Daily CLLD Phonics Programme
- Regular Guided Reading – whole school training September 2008
- Spring and Summer terms pupils work in small groups on Read Write AtoZ.

This is a programme devised by a RR Teacher working in Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham.

Based on RR it lays the foundations for reading success, making connections between reading and writing.

In each lesson pupils read a simple repetitive text, write a sentence, re-assemble a cut up sentence and learn to spell a new tricky word.

In Year 1

- Daily Shared Reading and Writing
- Regular Guided Reading – whole school training September 2008
- Daily CLLD Phonics Programme
- Y1 cohort is joined by 7 pupils from Y2, 3, 4 and 5 who have EAL needs, SEN needs or have only recently joined St Silas.
- Class Teacher is RR trained and CLLD Phonics trained.
- 6 pupils on RR Programme.
- Experienced TA, trained in BRP, manages Individual Reading including Reading Record Diaries completed by parents.

In Year 2

- Daily Shared Reading and Writing
- Regular Guided Reading – whole school training September 2008
- Daily CLLD Phonics Programme
- One pupil on RR Programme.
- Experienced Class Teacher trained in Fischer Family Trust and CLLD Phonics.
- TA enrolled on Fischer Family Trust training this term
- BRP used to boost reading for SATs

In KS2

- Daily Shared Reading and Writing
- Regular Guided Reading – whole school training September 2008
- PM Benchmarking Kit used
- All CTs able to use Running Records.
- BRP used to support reading

MY ROLE

- I am SENCo and RR Teacher.
- I am a member of the Senior Management Team
- I meet with Senior Managers to work on class action plans
- I meet with Class Teachers for Provision Mapping, Reviews of pupil progress and planning of interventions.
- I meet half termly with the Senior Management Team to work on Assessment Data.
- I am training three new support staff and one volunteer from the community in Better Reading Partnership
- I am supporting a newly qualified teacher with Guided Reading
- I am doing an audit of Guided Reading Texts and adding to them where gaps are identified.

We are planning another Reading Celebration for the summer term and hope to use the opportunity to persuade some parents and carers and maybe even school governors to train in BRP.

Diana Crew, January 2009