

A Case Study of Vittoria Primary School

Vittoria is a one form entry Primary school in an area of Islington with some of the highest deprivation in the country. The school has 70 percent of children with English as an additional language and 65 percent of children eligible for free school meals. Many of our families have great social and economic need.

Through recognition of significant improvements made over the last few years, we have been involved in working with a number of other schools in various partnerships. Namely:

- We are a lead school in a joint London Challenge and National Strategies Improving Schools Programme to develop leadership and governance.
- The school is hosting borough moderation sessions for assessment of progress in year one.
- We have held borough host days for Newly Qualified Teachers.
- The school is a leading practice school for the borough.
- Vittoria has strong relationships with other schools to share good practice and influence professional development.

Reading Recovery is an important and vital element of these partnerships. Our Reading Recovery teacher is a Leading Intervention teacher and as a result has shared practice with a network of other Reading Recovery teachers; performed demonstration lessons and has delivered an example lesson on a national training DVD. Our Head teacher was herself a Reading Recovery teacher and therefore, when the initiative of re-launching the programme began, she was committed to see it implemented in the school with the view to the skills and pedagogy of the programme branching out into the wider school environment. One of the questions we always ask before taking on any programme is 'what is in it for the children involved and what's in it for the whole school - will there be an ongoing effect on developing progress beyond the immediate project?' The answer to these questions for Vittoria was 'yes!'

Reading is a focus for our School Development Plan this year and raising the quality and enjoyment of reading is a target for all staff. We have the same expectation of Reading Recovery, in that the teaching of reading is always embedded within the text and any new learning always goes back to the text. Because of this, we are finding that there is a deep link between comprehension and the enjoyment of reading. This view has been confirmed in child interviews carried out by the Head Teacher and a rise in attainment at the end of KS1.

Vittoria has previously had a strong focus of raising standards in speaking and listening skills for children from all backgrounds, including those who enter our school with poor oral literacy. As a result, we have been a committed participant in the CLLD programme and have recently joined the national pilot scheme for Every Child a Talker (ECaT). Talking Partners is an important intervention within

our school, and our Teaching Assistants are regularly used as models of good practice across the borough. The programme has been modified by the Nursery Nurse and Reading Recovery teacher so that it can be used in Reception as well as being delivered throughout KS1 and KS2.

The school places a high priority on Quality First Teaching and targeting early intervention. This is managed through a rigorous moderating process that is seen as good practice for other schools. We hold termly assessment weeks where running records are used to accurately assess reading attainment at the end of the reception year and in KS1. The children's gains in achievement are continuously tracked through Pupil Profile meetings, at which each child's attainment is scrutinised. It is from discussion at these meetings that we have identified the extent to which individual children have gained confidence in reading. This confidence has also been evident in their maths work and has impacted positively on behaviour - which in turn impacts on the whole class.

From the pupil profile meetings, the schedule for Continuing Professional Development is updated and discussions are held about what needs to change in current classroom practices, led by the Reading Recovery teacher (who is also the school's Inclusion Manager) and the Head Teacher. This information is then fed into Individual Education Plans. These plans describe teaching strategies to be used in order to ensure that children's needs are met - these being jointly designed by the Inclusion Manager and class teacher. Some fundamental practices from Reading Recovery such as 'cut up sentences' or high frequency word 'snap' are shared in the classroom, and parents are often given 'literacy packs' to work on with their children at home. This initiative has enabled us to make good working relationships with some 'hard to reach' parents and has strengthened our message of the importance of offering support at home. The Inclusion Manager also holds termly meetings with Teaching Assistants which focus on determining the appropriate provision that is best suited to a child's individualised learning needs.

The Reading Recovery teacher/Inclusion Manager is an important member of the senior management team. She undertakes termly observations of classroom lessons and intervention programmes and provides constructive feedback, following the principles used in Reading Recovery. This has had an impact on individually trained teachers who now have a deeper understanding of learning and how to teach for independence, competence and confidence. Our classroom settings are rich literacy environments as a consequence. For example, there is a whole school expectation that book areas should be thematically organised, covering topics specifically designed to engage readers. Our literacy environments have regularly been praised including by visiting Head Teachers from Paris, the Netherlands and Hertfordshire.

Our Reading Recovery teacher has also influenced the quality of guided reading and the homework activities of all children in KS1. All reading books have been audited and levelled according to the programme. All staff within the school also regularly observe Reading Recovery lessons. We have found that, the more staff are trained in using and analysing Running Records, the better able we are to use carefully chosen texts so that children are operating at the edge of their learning. This understanding is spread through the school. Teachers and Teaching Assistants have a better understanding of using cue sources and strategies so that next learning steps can be clearly identified.

To ensure continuous development of practice, all staff have been trained in Letters and Sounds. This has been secured through whole school In Service Training (INSET) delivered by two Reading Recovery Teachers. There is a further INSET planned for reading in the coming terms. The school has shown initiative in implementing synthetic phonics. In KS1, children are grouped according to their current phase of phonic development, with systematic teaching delivered by teachers and teaching assistants. Children are regularly assessed and tracked and move groups according to their progress through the phases. We have also used Letters and Sounds to introduce a further phonics based intervention in years 3 and 4 (with a few children from years 5 and 6 who need further development). Again this is 'streamed' in terms of the phonic phases, and the expectation in terms of teaching is to 'watch what the child knows and what they need to do'. Meanwhile, Reading Recovery provides a model of effective assessment for learning, and we aim to continue to develop this with all our staff.

Elements from these strategies described above have been used in our leadership and partnership work with other schools.