



## **Matching interventions to need at Wheatlands Primary School**

### **Local authority**

Redcar and Cleveland

### **Context**

Wheatlands is a two-form entry primary school. There are 415 pupils on roll, plus 75 in the nursery. The school serves an area of mainly private housing; the majority of parents are skilled and semi-skilled workers. 2.7% of the children are eligible for free school meals. Despite relatively low levels of social deprivation, teacher assessment suggests that many children require support with oral language skills. 8 children have Statements of SEN and 29 children are on *School Action Plus*. 0.5% of the children are from minority ethnic groups.

### **Intervention to support children with literacy difficulties**

The school provides a range of 'layered' language and literacy interventions, precisely tailored to children's needs. The key to the introduction of these interventions is a thorough analysis of children's progress conducted by the school's SENCO and Reading Recovery teacher. Children's results in the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 tests are analysed, together with outcomes of QCA optional tests at Y3, Y4 and Y5, the Suffolk Reading Test and the SWST spelling test. The analysis highlights children who would benefit from some kind of language and literacy intervention. Final decisions are made in conjunction with the class teachers at termly phase meetings, where concerns are expressed, and solutions proposed.

The school employs a full-time Reading Recovery-trained teacher who coordinates all the language and literacy interventions available in the school. She works directly with individuals and groups, and also supports the work of teaching assistants. She trained as a Reading Recovery teacher four years ago and is presently completing a Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Studies: Responses to Dyslexia.

The school's language and literacy provision map is impressive.

Year group	Language and literacy provision
Nursery	Fischer Family Trust 'Firm Foundations'. This programme is aimed at parents and carers. It provides them with packs of ideas and resources to help them support their children's early language and literacy skills.
Year R	The school is about to introduce the 'Talking Partners' programme for children who need additional support with speaking and listening.
Year 1	The Reading Recovery teacher screens the lowest-achieving children to identify appropriate intervention for them. Last year the eight children with the most severe difficulties received Reading Recovery and three children with less severe difficulties received the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) Wave 3 one-to-one intervention delivered by a Teaching Assistant (TA). This year two or more children will receive Reading Recovery when a place becomes available, and three the FFT Wave 3 Intervention.
Year 2	In Year 2 the Reading Recovery teacher is working one-to-one with seven children. A trained TA is working with three children on the 'Better Reading Partnership' intervention, seeing each child three times a week for 20 minutes to apply Reading Recovery-based teaching strategies to their reading.
Year 3	In Year 3 a trained TA works with the class teacher, who also took part in the training, to deliver the new Primary National Strategy Year 3 intervention to a group of six children. Five children are supported through the 'Better Reading Partnership'. The Reading Recovery teacher works twice weekly on a multi-sensory programme with a group of children whose reading difficulties have been overcome as a result of the school's effective literacy provision, but who still show characteristic dyslexic difficulties with spelling, organisational and memory skills.
Year 4	This year three children have taken part in 'Better Reading Partnership'. The Reading Recovery teacher provides the same provision for the Y4 children as the Y3 children.
Year 5	The school is trialling 'Hi Five' a joint Redcar and Cleveland/Fischer Family Trust Wave 3 intervention which aims to develop independent reading and writing strategies linked to specific text types. Three children work on 'Hi Five' in a group with a trained TA. The Reading Recovery teacher works with a group of Y5/6 children with dyslexic difficulties, again focusing on spelling, organisational and study skills.
Year 6	The provision in Y6 is the same as in Y5 with a trained TA working on 'Hi Five'. One child has benefited from the 'Better Reading Partnership'.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

In addition to her direct teaching, the dyslexia and Reading Recovery-trained teacher takes a number of roles:

- Assessing children in Y1-2, using the Reading Recovery Observation Survey and the PM Benchmark Kit to identify their precise intervention needs
- Screening children throughout school using a battery of tests to identify their needs and devising and delivering programmes to support these children
- Working with parents
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of all the literacy interventions by using the PM Benchmark Kit to determine reading levels before and after each intervention
- Observing and supporting the work of TAs, including meeting with them weekly to discuss the children they are working with and provide advice based on completing a running record of the child's reading.

The Reading Recovery teacher says "Supporting other 'layered' interventions like the FFT Wave 3 gave me the opportunity to develop my own professionalism through the mentoring role. It enabled me to share knowledge and experience that helped both children and staff. Monitoring children as they progress through school and watching them access the curriculum as independent learners and growing in self-confidence is the most satisfying experience any teacher can wish to have."

The TAs working on the literacy interventions are highly skilled. All year groups except Year 6 have a TA who is trained and experienced in the relevant interventions.

TAs feel well supported and work with class teachers to make sure that intervention programmes are linked to work in class. One TA reports:

"I work in a class where the children are identified for Reading Recovery or for FFT Wave 3. Daily contact with the class teacher and RR teacher makes it easy to ask for advice. I can also watch the progress of the children and ensure they use in class what they have learned in the FFT sessions. The Reading Recovery teacher has given valuable support to me in moving the children appropriately so that they continue as confident readers and writers even when challenged to move forward. The training I received has helped me in my work generally with the class. We now use the FFT assessments with other children with SEN at the start and end of the year to monitor progress."

The local authority plays a key role in supporting the quality of language and literacy intervention in the school. It provides training to TAs and teachers, and gathers data on all its recommended interventions (Talking Partners, Reading Recovery, FFT Wave 3, Better Reading Partnership) for evaluation purposes. Through the Reading Recovery Teacher Leader it provides continuing twice-termly professional development for the Reading Recovery teacher.

## **The outcomes**

The school has seen an impact of its Firm Foundations programme on the speaking and listening skills of the first cohort to go through the programme (Year 1).

Children taking part in the layered Y1 and 2 reading interventions are consistently returned to average levels for their age, often from a very low baseline. It is too soon

to be able to track long term outcomes for the interventions introduced more recently, such as the FFT Wave 3 intervention, but progress has been tracked right through to Year 5 for the original cohort of eight children who received Reading Recovery. Having achieved average reading levels for their age at the end of their Reading Recovery programmes, they were still performing at age-related levels at the start of Year 5, with an average reading age of 9y 2m on the Suffolk Reading Test (range 7y 11m to 10y 3m).

The school has seen an impact on standards overall. In 1999 80% of children achieved Level 2+ at the end of Key Stage 1. In 2005 93% achieved this level. Only one child has been assessed at Level W at the end of Key Stage 1 since the intervention programmes were introduced, even though cohorts have included children with very significant special educational needs.

The lowest attaining children have grown visibly in self-confidence in this school, and in their ability to access the curriculum.

There has been a steady reduction of numbers of children on the SEN register. Children with complex SEN have benefited from the Reading Recovery programme, with its focus in developing independent learning. A Statemented child with visual and hearing impairment and medical needs, now in Y3, had Reading Recovery in Y1 and is reading well. Reading has become an area of success and – even more important – a source of pleasure for him.

The parent of a child with a Statement says “It was as if Reading Recovery was made for him. We were told he would have severe learning difficulties and it makes the hair on the back of my neck stand on end and it brings a tear to my eye every time I hear him read.”