

Improving KS2 writing by developing independent writing skills

Overview

York's Key Stage 2 outcomes in writing required improvement.

This project aimed to improve progress in writing at KS2 by developing children and teachers as writers, embedding strategies and implementing an evidence based approach that had previously had impact on pupil outcomes.

In turn, this enabled the development of capacity locally to improve writing outcomes in all York schools through dissemination of the strategic approach by a cohort of upskilled teachers.

The intended outcomes were to improve KS2 results in writing and increase student self-efficacy and engagement in writing.

This project was seen as a first stage in the development of sustainable, system led capacity to improve rates of progress in literacy across EYFS and all key stages, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.

Good practice to share with others interested in running school improvement projects to ensure projects deliver the intended outcome.

- Limiting the number of schools initially involved to 14 ensured that the key messages and focus of training were not diluted.
- Each school benefitted from 1:1 support from a school based trainer as well as from individual support from the Lead Practitioner.
- The development of peer support groups had a significant impact on the confidence of teachers throughout the project.
- Being responsive to training needs enhanced the effectiveness of the project through addition of CPD on issues which teachers confronted during the project (e.g. specific support for SEN learners and use of digital technology to aid progress).

What the project may do differently in the future

- Where schools are engaging in two or more projects with some overlap, it is important to recognise this so that potentially conflicting messages are not received in vulnerable schools.
- Identify more opportunities for senior leaders to be involved.
- Put more thought into how the system can secure sustainability so that progress is maintained beyond the funding period.
- Be clearer about how many staff per school will be supported by supply funding to attend training sessions.

Sustainability measures taken by the project to ensure improvements are sustained beyond the funding period.

- Showcase events to demonstrate the lasting impact on progress on whole cohorts, groups and individuals involved in the project.
- Visits by the Project Leader and Lead Practitioner to support schools to upscale the work to whole school level.
- Additional CPD events for teachers and school leaders on how to adapt the project to suit their setting or particular needs of the school or key stage.
- Presentations to School Improvement Leads across Yorkshire and the Humber on the lessons learned from the project and how the approach could benefit them going forward.
- Development of a shared resource bank on IRIS to enable schools to access resources to support the development of practice.