

Reading for Success: A Catch Up Literacy Case Study in Robert Smillie Primary

Catch Up Literacy is a structured, commercially available one to one literacy intervention for pupils working in early, first and second levels who are having difficulty with reading. The intervention can be delivered by any trained adult and in many cases is carried out by support staff and coordinated by a member of the SMT. It was identified by the headteacher in Robert Smillie, as an approach which could impact positively on children who demonstrate they are not making effective progress in reading. Robert Smillie was selected in 2015 for involvement in the Scottish Attainment Challenge as more than 70% of the children lived in SIMD 1 and 2.

The training for Catch Up Literacy consisted of three half-days, provision of resources, online support and the option of accreditation. All the support assistants in Robert Smillie opted to pursue accreditation.

In the school, a standardised assessment was used to screen children and identify those who would benefit from this approach. Twenty-six pupils across the school were identified as a result of the screening and subsequently received Catch Up Literacy support. The support takes the form of two support sessions each week, with pupils working on a one-to-one basis with a trained support assistant. Catch Up Literacy supports children in developing their reading skills and also provides a diagnostic element to identify any barriers. These diagnostic findings and pupils' progress are shared with the class teacher every week to ensure the child also receives appropriate support in his/her classroom work. Each child participates in the programme until they have made the required progress to read at their chronological reading age or beyond.

Parents were informed that their child was participating in Reading for Success and asked to give written permission for their child to take part. Parents were invited in after the programme had been running for an appropriate length of time, allowing both child and support assistant to become comfortable with the process and each other, and the child felt ready to share their success. Parents could then take some of the support materials home with them and continue support there.

In Robert Smillie, the headteacher reported that the support assistants who had been trained were very excited by their experience of the training and by the approach itself. The support assistants gave a professional learning presentation to class teachers about Catch Up Literacy, which the headteacher described as being very well received by class teachers and which the support assistants felt very valued in delivering.

Catch Up Literacy was created by Diana Bentley, Dee Reid and Suzi Clipson-Boyles (Oxford Brookes University) in response to research (Thomas and Davies, 1997), which found that '18% of all 7/8 year olds have reading difficulties'.

Recent figures suggest that this research is still relevant today. In England (2013), 11% of 7/8 year olds were working below the expected level in reading, and 9% in mathematics. For 11 year olds (based on DfE expectations from 2014), 25% are below the expected level for reading, and 27% for mathematics.

Catch Up Literacy and Catch Up Numeracy are both featured in the EEF Report 'Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants- Guidance Report- March 2015'

A number of other schools in the Scottish Attainment Challenge in South Lanarkshire have also undertaken training in Catch Up Literacy with support staff. The impact of this intervention can be

shown across these schools through data demonstrating improvements in reading levels and children returning to classroom reading groups. This is a reading intervention which is most effective with children who have slipped behind in their reading development due to interrupted learning.