

# 'I cannot rate Sounds-Write highly enough'

Angel Oak Academy, UK, October 2021



We talked about the impact that Sounds-Write has had on pupil attainment at Angel Oak Academy with Thomas Cornell, Senior Lead for Teacher Development at the STEP Academy Trust and former assistant head teacher at Angel Oak Academy, where he taught Year 6.



- School: **Angel Oak Academy**
- Location: **Peckham, London, UK**
- Pupils on roll: **412**
- Age range: **3 - 11**
- Free school meals: **47%**
- English as additional language: **45%**

Angel Oak Academy began implementing Sounds-Write in September 2015. The school is part of the STEP Academy Trust, a charitable trust with schools in areas of high social deprivation.

## What impact has Sounds-Write had on pupil progress?

The more slowly a child reads, the more likely their comprehension will suffer as a result. Comprehension ability depends on the speed at which someone can decode. If a child's reading speed falls below 200 words per minute, the strain on working memory makes it much harder to comprehend any given text. Sounds-Write's code-oriented approach overcomes much of the disparity between fluent and non-fluent readers by ensuring all pupils achieve automaticity. By removing the barrier of reading fluency, a far greater proportion of our Year 6 students now have the mental resources with which to consider meaning. Within our most recent cohort to sit a formal mock-SATs reading paper, 88% of pupils scored expected standard or greater depth. This cohort benefited from 5 years of Sounds-Write instruction.

## Reading progress score (end of KS2 - summer 2019)

Angel Oak Academy	4.2 'Well above average'
Local authority (Southwark)	1.0 'Above average'

## What has been the reaction from children and parents to the adoption of Sounds-Write?

Parents and children alike have welcomed the adoption of Sounds-Write. The three essential skills of segmenting, blending and phoneme manipulation necessary for reading and spelling are taught on a daily basis. This regular practice rapidly builds pupil confidence. All pupils develop a love of reading and a willingness to engage in learning across the curriculum.

Equipped with a clear understanding of how the English alphabet code works, parents feel empowered to support their children at home. From a young age, our pupils now write almost anything they want to write using plausible spellings for sounds.

### Phonics Screening - Year 1

2016 - 79%

2017 - 89%

2018 - 92%

2019 - 92%

2020 - 95%

(% of children achieving expected standard)

'Attainment in phonics is above average and rising. Pupils also make fast progress in developing wider reading skills.'  
(Ofsted report, 2017)

## How do you and other teachers in the school feel about Sounds-Write?

I cannot rate Sounds-Write highly enough. The training involved numerous opportunities for deliberate practice and an informative discussion around assessment. This enables Key Stage 2 teachers to accurately gauge where to start pupils in the programme. Within two weeks of starting the programme in class, I felt confident delivering the highly structured sessions. For such little planning input, I saw transformational improvements in my students within the first term alone.

'Teachers have a clear understanding of language, which they apply when teaching phonics. Consequently, progress in phonics is rapid, starting from the early years.'  
(Ofsted report, 2017)

