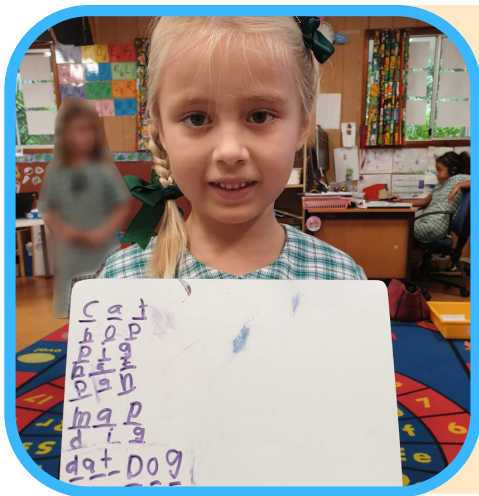


‘It’s a pedagogy for teachers to learn and apply’

Lord Howe Central School, Australia, February 2022



We spoke to Elisha Conway, Assistant Principal in Curriculum and Instruction at Lord Howe Central School. The school, the most remote in New South Wales, serves the tiny community of Lord Howe Island, located 600 km east of Australia.



- 🐞 School: **Lord Howe Central School**
- 🐞 Location: **Lord Howe Island, Australia**
- 🐞 Pupils on roll: **40**
- 🐞 Age range: **5 - 12**
- 🐞 English as additional language: **6**
- 🐞 Additional learning needs: **3**

Why did you choose Sounds-Write and how did you implement it?

I was trained in Sounds-Write at my previous school in Sydney and had implemented the program in my Kindergarten class. At the end of that year, I had noticed excellent results in students learning. When I arrived at my new posting at Lord Howe Central School, I identified a real need for a systematic synthetic phonics program to support students with reading and writing across the whole school cohort of 40 students. There was an alarmingly high number of students who weren't performing as well as their peers or at an average age level in reading and spelling. Since there were no additional needs identified for these students, it was obvious that the problem was lack of consistency in the teaching of reading and writing across the school. I started implementing the program straight away in the K-2 classroom but in order to make changes to the whole school culture and approach to teaching reading and spelling, I also organised training for all staff in the Sounds-Write program. This entailed having a trainer fly out to the island to train the teachers over a few days and also purchasing a whole school supply of decodable texts to be used to support Sounds-Write.

What impact has Sounds-Write had on pupil progress?

I have seen a remarkable growth in students learning to read and write. Because my class on Lord Howe was a K-2 class, I had the same students for successive years and saw the benefits of this program on their learning.



SoundsWritePhonics



@SWLiteracy

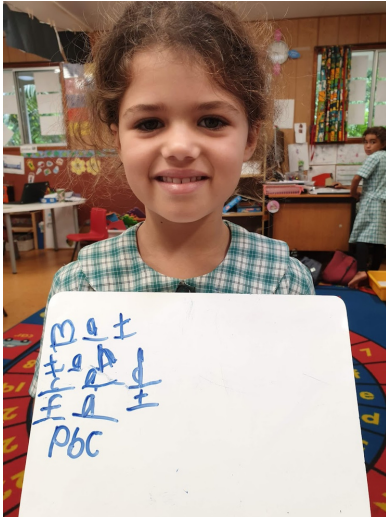


sounds_write



sounds-write.com





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

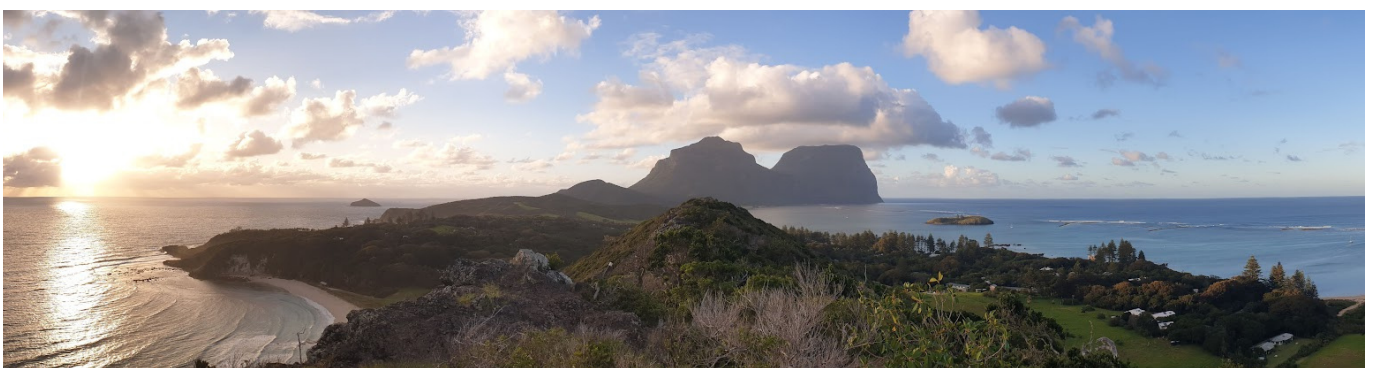
The children are highly engaged in the program and so enthusiastic! They see the benefits from the support received in this way of learning. I found that educating the parents in the program and how it differs to the way their children had been learning to read (whole language, predictable texts) was key in ensuring students understood and parents could support their children effectively.

How do staff/teachers feel about the programme?

The hardest part of implementing this program as a whole school pedagogy is getting buy-in from teachers. Changing their thoughts and getting them to see that the whole language approach is less effective and more damaging in the long run was hard because the use of predictable texts and benchmarking for assessment of reading progress using these texts is so ingrained in the culture of teaching within Australia. When helping teachers to make the change in their teaching of reading to follow the Sounds-Write approach, I have to explain that it may look like, in the early stages, students are taking longer to become proficient in reading, however over time, the students being taught using systematic programs such as Sounds-Write have been shown to have developed stronger reading skills, which also supports their writing and spelling. Furthermore, there are less students needing additional support.

What would you say to other schools about the SW programme?

All students are supported in their learning journey using this program and it's a pedagogy for teachers to learn and apply, not just a paid program requiring thousands of dollars spent buying their products to teach the program. If you are after an evidenced-based program which has been proven to develop strong literacy skills for ALL students, you should look to invest in the Sounds-Write program.



Lord Howe Island, located 600 km east of Australia

