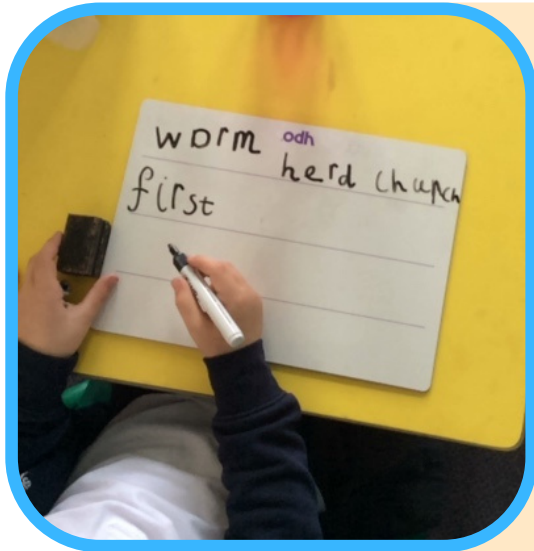




# 'Reading has greatly improved'

Sidmouth C of E (VA) Primary School, UK, January 2022

We spoke with Caroline Curtis, Year 5/6 teacher and English lead at Sidmouth Church of England Primary School, where Sounds-Write has been introduced progressively, starting with Early Years in 2020 and Year 1 in 2021.



- School: **Sidmouth C of E Primary School**
- Location: **Sidmouth, Devon, UK**
- Pupils on roll: **500**
- Age range: **2 - 11**
- Free school meals: **18%**
- English as additional language: **5.4%**
- SEN pupils: **21%**

## Why did you choose Sounds-Write?

After reviewing all the phonics programmes on offer, we were struck by the impact that Sounds-Write clearly offered through the explicit teaching of skills and how this in turn leads to high levels of pupil confidence. It is rooted in pedagogical and linguistic research which is soundly based on the principles of how children learn most effectively. We also liked how lessons can be delivered as a whole class, in small groups or individual sessions.

## How did you find the training and support provided by Sounds-Write?

The training offered by Sounds-Write is high-quality and rigorous, so that all staff use and apply consistent methods in the teaching of phonics in a progressive and structured way as the complexity of the code develops. Our Sounds-Write trainer was highly knowledgeable and invaluable in providing additional support, including helping us to purchase phonically decodable reading books. The websites and Facebook groups also offer a high level of support and a community of professionals who share common goals.

'I cannot believe how far my child has come since you have taught Sounds-Write. They are so confident and read everything!'  
(Parent)

## **What has been the reaction from children and parents to the adoption of the programme?**

Parents are constantly telling us that their children are practising, playing phonics at home without prompting and are keen to pick up a pen and write. In school, we see children are taking on roles in continuous provision to teach phonics and role-play the teacher and learners.

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

The opportunity to write was very limited in our previous phonics programme, but the daily focus on writing has had a huge impact on children's progress and on how they see themselves as successful writers and have the confidence to write. The change to print font has also made it much easier for children to read their own writing, as has the fact that they are required to do this daily in Sounds-Write. We are really proud of the achievements of our Year 1 cohort, who are in their second year of Sounds-Write. These 56 children, including 18 who have SEND, had 3 months of their reception teaching disrupted by the COVID lockdown and in spite of that, the vast majority are securing expected skills on the current unit of teaching (82% for code knowledge, 91% for blending and 88% for segmenting).

## **How do staff feel about the programme?**

Once the script is learnt, the scheme is easy to follow and plan for and the children don't have a sensory overloaded phonics session - they know what to expect (to the point where some children can even say the script before I do!). Reading has greatly improved too since changing phonics scheme and the children are keen to read, which is so important at this young age. Year One children are more confident at segmenting the sounds they write because they are told to 'say the sound as they write' and this is now becoming automatic when writing anything in any lesson. This is a big confidence booster for the less able writers.

'The children's skills are so much better than in previous cohorts.'  
(Teacher)

## **What would you say to other schools about the Sounds-Write programme?**

The Sounds-Write programme provides you with the skills and confidence needed to effectively teach children to read and spell from EYFS through to KS2. You will have a deep and solid understanding of how children learn to read and spell from simple code through to more complex polysyllabic words and how to support children with error corrections. The impact speaks for itself!