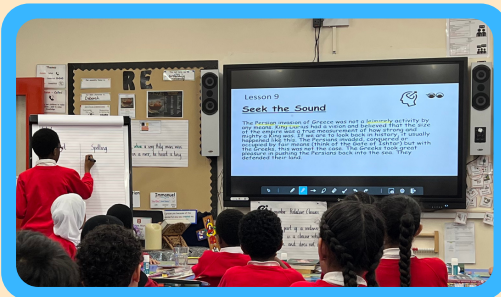


'Economy of language with error corrections has proved very popular'

St Matthew's C of E Primary School, UK, April 2023



We talked to Hydeh Fayaz, Assistant Headteacher, about the implementation of Sounds-Write at St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, a Sounds-Write Training School in Birmingham.



- 📍 School: **St Matthew's C of E Primary School**
- 📍 Location: **Birmingham, UK**
- 📍 Pupils on roll: **203**
- 📍 Age range: **4-11**
- 📍 Free school meals: **59%**
- 📍 English as additional language: **74%**

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

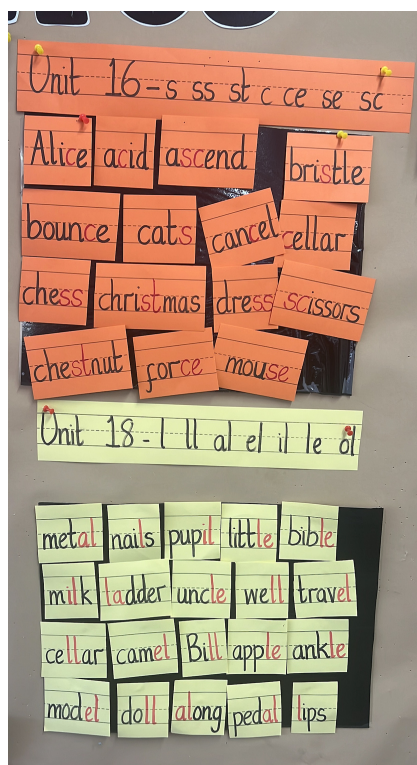
Whilst our phonics data was strong, lots of our children struggled with blending adjacent consonants. We know that this particular skill has an impact on how fluently children can read and spell. Sounds-Write was the perfect remedy. We began the training in Summer 2021 - training every Key Stage 1 teacher and teaching assistant so that we could get up and running in the Autumn term. The training was outstanding - designed in a way that promotes learning and understanding through practice and self-reflection. It also consistently contained mechanisms from the Education Endowment Foundation's 'Effective Professional Development Guidance Report' - which was a win-win for us as we knew this meant Sounds-Write was far more likely to have an impact on our staff's behaviours when it came to the teaching of phonics. We are now rolling out the spelling programme in Key Stage 2 and feel assured that our children have a deeper understanding of etymology and morphology compared to what we were doing before.

'I've noticed such an improvement in confidence. Children try to read a syllable at a time, can articulate the concepts when writing in different areas of the curriculum and, through this confidence, they are able to have a go with our ambitious reading curriculum.' (Simone Pringle, Y1 Teacher)

How have children responded to the adoption of Sounds-Write?

They absolutely love the Sounds-Write lessons and, now they are accustomed to the structure, their focus and working memory is on the content of the session. They take full ownership of the lesson and encourage their friends to join in with their 'pointy fingers'. It's such a wonderful sight to see a child at the flipchart scanning the room to ensure their friends are all ready to read.

Children are motivated because the difficult concepts of learning how to read are addressed and explicitly taught from the beginning. They feel successful and able to tackle the reading of any phoneme because they understand that sounds can be represented by different spellings, etc. We know that if our children feel successful and challenged appropriately, then they are going to flourish. The scaffolds in Sounds-Write ensure that all children have this experience when it comes to learning how to read.



Classroom display

What has been the impact of adopting Sounds-Write?

We began to see immediate impact on pupils; notably, an increase in confidence to try and read, as well as an interest in learning how to read. We had a particular success story in upper KS2 with a child who could not decode and is now working through Unit 10 of the Extended Code. He is now learning to read.

Some of our youngest EAL learners struggle with phonemic awareness of their first language as well as English. Sounds-Write has been perfect to tease out the skill that they may be struggling with, and has provided teachers with the understanding of how to create small, achievable, yet still challenging, steps to succeed in learning the sounds of the English language.

Would you recommend Sounds-Write?

Sounds-Write helps practitioners and leaders to do two things: understand why it is cognitively demanding for children to learn to read, and ensure children process the information in a meaningful way and remember it better.

Teaching with fidelity and having a greater understanding of this complex and crucial skill is absolutely achievable because of the fantastic training, expert trainers and knowledgeable staff. I can't recommend it enough.

