

'The training and support has been fantastic'

Three Bridges Primary School, UK, February 2022



Dr Jeremy Hannay, Headteacher, talks about the impact that Sounds-Write has had at Three Bridges Primary School, where a very large percentage of children have English as an additional language.



- 🐡 School: **Three Bridges Primary School**
- 🐡 Location: **Southall, London, UK**
- 🐡 Pupils on roll: **432**
- 🐡 Age range: **4 - 11**
- 🐡 Free school meals: **33%**
- 🐡 English as additional language: **78%**
- 🐡 Special Educational Needs: **20%**

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

We had a separate phonics programme, a spelling programme that was based on rote learning and a writing programme. Phonics teaching was inconsistent across Early Years and Key Stage 1 because children were learning sounds in isolation rather than making that connection between reading, spelling and writing. We tried a range of phonics programmes and found that they weren't providing the rigour needed to close the gap. Then we began working with St George's Primary in Wandsworth and witnessed 4-year olds building words, reading words and writing them with confidence. Our minds were blown! As a research-based school, we learned more about Sounds-Write and it just made sense that the children should be following a systematic approach to phonics which focuses on decoding, writing and spelling and provides opportunities for the children to develop confidence and stamina.

Phonics Screening Check (Year 1)

	Three Bridges	National
2019	88%	82%
2018	85%	83%
2017	91%	81%



End of Key Stage 2 - Reading

	Three Bridges	National
2019	82%	73%
2018	81%	75%
2017	65%	72%

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

The training sessions are expertly delivered and have a great balance of research, theory and practical tips for the classroom. The idea of teaching with a script was very different to our other programmes, so we ensured that teachers felt supported and that mistakes were learning points. There were frequent discussions and sharing of experiences as well as stellar support from Sounds-Write, who visited once a year after the initial training in 2016 to ensure that we were fine-tuning teaching and learning, and that teachers had adequate opportunities to develop their practice in a low-stakes environment. The training and support provided by Sounds-Write has been fantastic. Even five years into our journey, we still have yearly visits and have developed a great relationship with the Sounds-Write team. Teachers are encouraged to email with questions or concerns about their practice or even specific children.

What impact has Sounds-Write had on pupil progress?

Our baseline data showed that 33% of children entering Reception were working below the expected standard and 47% well below in reading and similar in writing. We very quickly saw a transformation in the early years, not only in terms of results but in our children's enjoyment and confidence in reading. Children in nursery are able to read and write simple words and, by the end, sentences, and the skills to decode, read and write are well embedded by the time they reach Year 1. This has allowed teachers to focus on teaching code knowledge and spelling patterns further up the school. Teaching from a script has resulted in high levels of consistency, something which we know younger children thrive on. Since introducing Sounds-Write we realised that we didn't need a spelling programme any more, as children were transferring their phonics skills to help them improve their spelling. In terms of data, 82% of pupils in Key Stage 2 reached the expected standard in 2019. This is in contrast to 65% in 2017! Huge progress!

'Phonics is taught effectively, including in the nursery, where children already can read and spell simple words.'

(Ofsted, 2019)

What would you say to other schools considering Sounds-Write?

I would tell other schools to come and see it for themselves. Data is one part of the puzzle but it only shows a fraction of the picture. Come and see nursery children writing cvc words independently or children in Reception confidently reading and writing what they are learning with absolute clarity. Watch a child with limited English or with significant special educational needs saying the sound and reading words. The proof really is in the pudding.