

'Children thrive on the routine of the lessons'

The British School Al Khubairat, Abu Dhabi, November 2023



We spoke to Jade Linton, Senior Associate - Literacy, at The British School Al Khubairat, a large five-form entry school in Abu Dhabi.



- School: **The British School Al Khubairat**
- Location: **Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**
- Pupils on roll: **2026**
- Age range: **3 - 18**
- English as an additional language: **7%**
- Special Educational Needs: **7%**

Why did you choose Sounds-Write?

We were looking for a programme that would align with current research in the Science of Reading, as well as support the varying needs of learning in our multicultural and diverse climate. Although we knew we had knowledgeable staff who carried out phonics daily in the Early Years and KS1, we felt that consistency was something we needed to develop. We also felt strongly that phonics teaching doesn't stop at the end of Year 2, and we wanted something to support this throughout the school.

When did you start implementing Sounds-Write and how did you do that?

After watching the free videos available on the website, I was immediately excited about the possibilities and the research-informed practices that Sounds-Write promote. My team and I met with the Sounds-Write trainer several times to discuss implementing Sounds-Write and how we would do this in a five-form entry school. Her knowledge and advice were invaluable at this point. I completed the course initially to get a better understanding of what the course and programme entailed. We started by training our Year 1 and Reception teachers at the beginning of the year and then trained Year 2 and 3 teachers at the end of the year. This is the first year that all year groups from Reception to Year 3 are teaching Sounds-Write. We plan to slowly build on this in KS2 by training year groups gradually. Our Inclusion department also received training and we are now looking to train our Secondary Inclusion department to ensure consistency of practice across our primary and secondary school. Staff like the predictability of the lessons and can see the high levels of engagement. As a team, we are working on fidelity to the script and the pace of our lessons, to ensure the children stay engaged as the year progresses.

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

The training was rigorous and gave our staff the adequate amount of background knowledge to understand why we were changing our current practice. Our trainer has been wonderful in checking in with us monthly and answering any questions or any misconceptions that we have. She has also been a wonderful support to me when leading Sounds-Write across the school.

'It just makes sense. We should have been doing this all along.'

Hannah Looker, Year 1 teacher

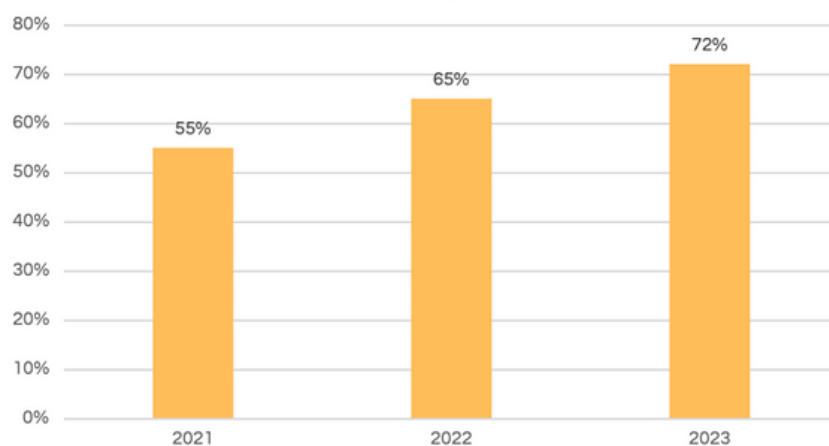
What has been the reaction from the children and parents to the adoption of the Sounds-Write programme?

We can see that the children thrive on the routine and predictability of the lessons, and we often find our Reception children playing 'teachers' and using letters to carry out their own lessons. Parents like the clear structure and many have completed the free course available. They often tell us that their children will correct them and will use the language we use in class: 'Say the sounds and read the word'.

What impact has Sounds-Write had on pupil progress?

As we started last year after October half-term in Year 1, we were expecting a dip in our end of year screener. However, we found that instead, there was a 7% increase in the pass rate compared to the previous year.

Phonics Screening Check Year 1



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

There are lots of phonics programmes out there to choose from, but Sounds-Write offers a clear, structured approach, underpinned by current research. It provides teachers with the training and support to enable them to deliver a high quality, rigorous phonics programme with confidence.

