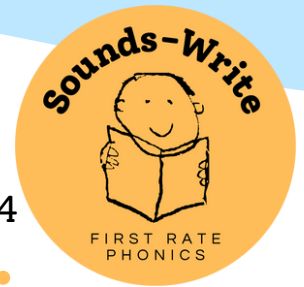


‘Choosing Sounds-Write is wider than choosing a phonics programme’

Cockton Hill Junior School, Bishop Auckland, UK, January 2024



Rachel Lambert, Deputy Head Teacher and SEND Coordinator at Cockton Hill Junior School in County Durham, explained how the school chose and implemented Sounds-Write and the impact it has had on children’s literacy skills.



- 📌 School: **Cockton Hill Junior School**
- 📌 Location: **Bishop Auckland, County Durham, UK**
- 📌 Pupils on roll: **205**
- 📌 Age range: **7-11**
- 📌 Free school meals: **56%**
- 📌 Special Educational Needs: **31%**
- 📌 English as an additional language: **6%**

Why did you choose Sounds-Write?

Sounds-Write was initially recommended by a colleague whose results had improved after adopting it. We completed research and then observed Sounds-Write in other schools, and from this, we knew this was the programme we wanted to use to support our children to make accelerated progress in reading. As a Junior School, it can be a challenge implementing new programmes, but our partner Infants' School had also recently implemented Sounds-Write, so we were confident it would support continuity and consistency for our children.

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

All teachers and teaching assistants were trained from July 2022, in a staggered way to ensure we could begin teaching in each year group from September 2022. By early 2023 everybody was trained in the delivery of the lessons and also to support 1:1 reading, which meant that our implementation of the programme was rapid. It has evolved since, as initially we had to plug gaps due to children not having been taught in the Sounds-Write way.

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

Very comprehensive and enjoyable, particularly understanding the rationale behind the scheme and how children learn to read and write. Despite the intensive time commitment, staff recognised the impact of the Sounds-Write training and the important role it had in their professional development as well as on pupil learning. Staff reported that it was the most significant and important CPD they had had in their teaching career.



What has been the reaction from children and parents, and the impact that Sounds-Write has had on pupil progress?

Children love their daily Sounds-Write lessons. They thrive on the structure of the lessons and repetitive element of the programme. Parents have discussed the significant progress children have made in their reading as a result of using Sounds-Write.

Reading data has improved across the school, and that is important because our percentage of children on free school meals and children with SEND is well above the national average. Pupils' phonic knowledge has been strengthened and, as a result, they are making significant progress with reading. Reading ages have improved, and pupils are able to apply their reading skills to the wider curriculum with greater success. They can engage with the wider reading curriculum, which is enriched with author visits, and can then talk with interest and enthusiasm about the books they are reading.

How do staff and teachers feel about the programme?

Teachers and teaching assistants enjoy delivering the programme and they recognise the impact it is having on children's learning. They like the structure the lessons provide and find the error corrections extremely beneficial when completing individual reading. The structure of lessons ensures everyone is consistent in their approach and, as staff become familiar with the script, they have confidence in teaching reading in this way.

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

We would advise other schools to seriously consider this approach. Choosing Sounds-Write is wider than choosing a phonics programme. It provides teachers with the tools and skills they need to teach reading successfully, investing in their professional development. Once staff are trained, the costs of the programme are minimal, as the resources are simple yet effective.

'The implementation of Sounds Write is supporting children to access the curriculum with greater success, as their reading skills are improving.'

