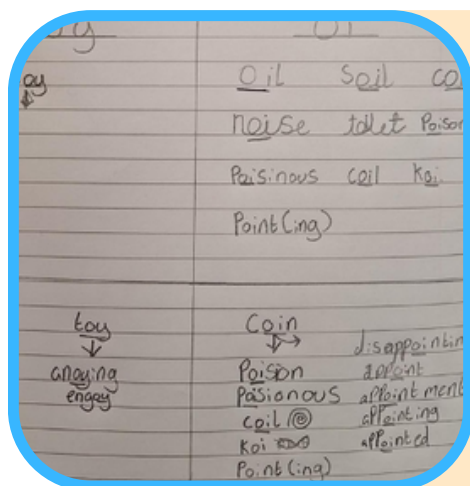


'It makes more sense to teach words grouped by sounds'

Courthouse Junior School, Maidenhead, UK, November 2023



We spoke to Kelly Buxton, Assistant Headteacher at Courthouse Junior, a school in the market town of Maidenhead in Berkshire.



- School: **Courthouse Junior School**
- Location: **Maidenhead, United Kingdom**
- Pupils on roll: **391**
- Age range: **7-11**
- Free school meals: **10%**
- Special Educational Needs: **7.4%**
- English as an additional language: **21%**

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

Spelling was quite poor across Key Stage 2. Children would receive a list of spelling words and be tested at the end of the week, but correct spellings were not being transferred to their writing beyond the tests. Sounds-Write made sense: group the words that children needed to be taught as specified in the National Curriculum by sound, as opposed to by following spelling rules.

We were already using Sounds-Write in our before-school phonics group, so in Summer 2020 we trained a further four staff (Year 6 & reading lead, Year 4 teacher, Year 5 teacher and the Headteacher), and each term we trained more staff members (both teachers and teaching assistants). We made sure one key person was trained in each year to lead instruction from Autumn 2021. We started with word building until everyone was confident and then introduced further lessons.

The training was first class; we all agreed that it was detailed and informative. The ongoing support - being able to ask any questions - has really helped with our implementation of Sounds-Write. Once staff were trained and felt confident, they found Sounds-Write to be a positive contribution to the reading and writing curriculum. Many reported that 'it makes more sense to teach words grouped by sounds.'

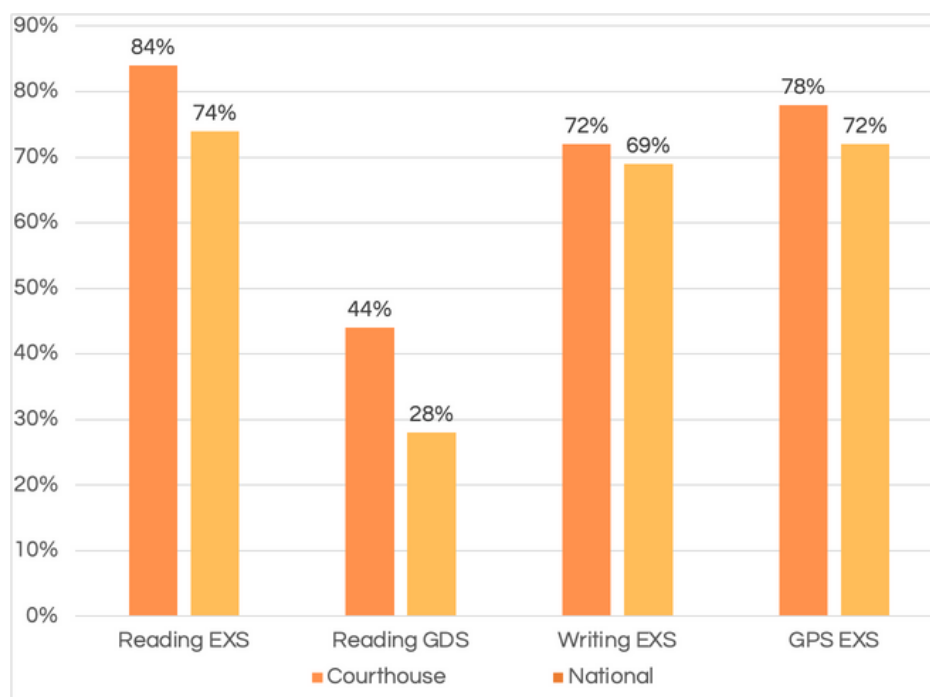
'It is the best CPD that you can offer your staff. Reading is a fundamental life skill and Sounds-Write enables children to succeed in reading and writing.'

What impact has Sounds-Write had on pupil progress?

30-50% of our Year 3 cohort require ongoing phonics intervention in our before-school phonics group. In 2021, Covid catch-up funds allowed a teacher out of class to conduct daily reading interventions in Year 3.

Since implementing Sounds-Write, the scores (in words per minute) for children who attend phonics interventions have increased substantially. Generally, we have seen fewer and fewer children needing the intervention as they move up the school, and many from this group don't require it by Years 5/6. Performance data for KS2 is strong.

KS2 Performance Data 2022



EXS - working at the expected standard / GDS - working at a greater depth
GPS - Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling

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

Parents have been very supportive of the implementation of Sounds-Write. Each autumn, we invite parents of Year 3 children in to learn how to support their child in their reading and writing journey using Sounds-Write. We also send them the link to the free course for parents and carers.

Children feel more confident and have the skills needed to read and write.
They say that they 'can now spell!'

