

Raising Standards in Boys' Writing

Background: After analysing GL data from Year 5, it was clear that (reflecting the picture nationally) there was a clear deficit between standards in boys' writing compared to that of their female counterparts. With a particularly boy-heavy cohort in Year 6 (2018-19) this would inevitably have an impact on KS2 SATs results. There was also the certainty of writing moderation in June 2019.

The first steps...

- Key staff (Head of Dept, Head of Learning Year 5 and Head of Learning Year 6) to attend Boys' Writing course to establish links with other professionals and seek advice.
- Identification of target pupils, using GL data, within Year 5 and 6 (focus on boys) to provide writing and reading intervention sessions.
- Liaison with English staff to discuss and review success of current schemes.

- Books selected with strong male protagonists and adventurous themes. Year 5 team worked closely with foundation subject leaders to create clear cross-curricular links e.g. 'Kensuke's Kingdom' – Science (Materials), Geography (a study of Japan)
- Development of Book Week – visiting author known for writing books with football/sport/war themes. Target boys selected to join him for a specialist writing workshop.
- Talk for writing activities embedded within schemes – giving practical opportunities before writing takes place.

Moving forwards...

"When we learnt about the Vikings, writing about them was easy. I knew loads about them."

"I don't have any good ideas."

What did the children think?

Reviewing the schemes from the previous year was essential to ensuring that the topics chosen were interesting. Year 6 children were selected to take part in a survey that focused on schemes that they had completed in Year 5. Year 5 children were selected to take part in a survey that identified their interests and writing tasks they had previously enjoyed.

"Some of the books we use are boring. I like funny stories or adventures."

"English is a girls' subject. They're better at it."

Reviewing impact...

What happens next?

- Moderation of English writing tasks with Head of Department and external moderation to take place – June/July 2019 – to measure impact and progress of target pupils.
- Another pupil survey (at the end of the final cross-curricular scheme of work) to establish what was successful (June/July 2019)
- Review of future schemes and topics – medium term planning with Heads of Department across foundation subjects.

- Schemes of work re-written and developed.
- Opportunities for children to 'choose' writing tasks.
 - Opportunities for Drama.
- Development of teaching ambitious vocabulary through weekly activities with form groups.
- Opportunities for staff to meet regularly to team teach and discuss successes.