

Case study: Barlow Hall School

A case study of a school's journey from 45-100% achievement in its Key Stage 2 results in reading.

Through its whole school Reading Recovery programme, Barlow Hall School in Manchester has accelerated the literacy skills of the lowest 5% of its diverse population. It also provides a whole school focus for continuous staff CPD so that they can develop their knowledge about how to teach reading and, in doing so, improve their Quality First Teaching. Raising standards across the school has been achieved through making links with the principles of Reading Recovery and quality first teaching of Guided Reading; embedded through on-going support of the Reading Recovery Teacher as the in-house expert and the Literacy Team.

The school is larger than most primary schools. Around a third of pupils are from White British backgrounds and nearly two thirds have English as their home language. Other languages spoken at home by pupils include Arabic, Urdu and Somali, with a further eight home languages, including some Eastern and Western European languages also represented. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual transition points is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported through School Action, School Action Plus, or with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is also well above average.

The local authority provides seven additional places at the school for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders or who have specific speech and language difficulties (known in school as the resourced provision). The school meets the Government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club every day during term time (OFSTED Report: December 2012).

Features of the whole school intervention programme in Barlow Hall school

The headteacher **prioritises the development of reading skills** and OFSTED found that the *'...support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the resourced provision, and for pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is led and managed extremely well by the deputy headteacher. Inclusion team members have a wide range of specialist skills and they work well together. They also provide training for all staff to ensure everyone's skills are up to date'*.

The school adopts a **graduated approach** which works well as a mechanism for meeting all children's needs and provides a structure for early identification. Barlow Hall's experience has involved a **particular focus on improving teaching and learning in Guided Reading lessons to impact all children through quality first teaching.**

Having a **specialist literacy teacher** in school who works **as a consultant** to other teachers has **triggered a professional debate**, across all staff, about the development of reading skills and teaching and learning. The specialist literacy teacher provides **on-going in-house support** and assists teachers to expand their range of teaching approaches.

Barlow Hall has developed a **school culture of observation**. Staff are encouraged to **observe lessons with a literacy focus** including Reading Recovery lessons and Guided Reading. This allows them to **take a closer look at how children learn to read**. When teachers are observed they are confident that something will happen to further promote their practice and skills, either through **bespoke follow-up support, peer coaching or both**.

Key to developing staff confidence is the **reflective learning opportunities** in school after observation, **gathering examples of good practice from the evidence trails** which are shared with staff, having a specialist literacy teacher to provide the challenge and support and working across phases allows teachers to share expertise and develop a common approach throughout the school.

Embedding quality first teaching is an on-going challenge when considering the diverse cohort of children, mobility and new staff. **A school structure has been established** to monitor and support the teaching and learning of reading in order to **embed consistency across the school and maintain progress**. Over time, expertise has expanded across the school to include many class teachers that now play a key role in supporting new staff and other schools.

To find out more information contact Barlow Hall [here](#) or call 0161 881 2158.