

What Works?

for education settings

Case Study – Deputy Head

The *What Works* database has been beneficial for the infant school because despite having a focus on communication, they were missing an intervention programme. Generally each year, a very high percentage of children start at the school with below average levels of Communication Language and Literacy. They have been using interventions from the *What Works* database in their school since 2012.



During each cohort's three years at the school, approximately 40-50% of teaching staff have used an intervention on the *What Works* database. The progress that all the children have made has been good - the impact on their confidence, conversational abilities like eye-contact and waiting to speak have improved. When the school first started using the interventions, a very small percentage of children in Reception were at the national expectation for Communication, Language and Literacy. At the end of 2015, the majority of Year 2 achieved national expectations and above.

The biggest impact for the school has been seen on the number of children achieving age appropriate in writing at the end of Year 2. Most years this has been an increase of between 20-30% (from being in the 60% margin to the 80 or 90% margin). The school believes this is because they have tackled their speaking and listening during Reception year and Year 1, which means the children have the vocabulary and sentence structure skills verbally which they can then use and apply in their writing.

Staff have been utilising many of the strategies as a matter of course in their day to day teaching. When the school were visited by OFSTED, comments were made regarding the improvement in sentence construction in Reception since children started in September. It was also noted that this good foundation was being firmly embedded to support the children's communication and their writing skills by the time they reached Year 1 and Year 2.

By the end of the school's second year of using interventions from *What Works*, they had become key to the school's focus on improving communication skills for all of our children. The school's top tip to others using interventions from the database would be to allow children to be the experts; they choose which activities to take back into the classroom and they really enjoy it and it builds their confidence.

