

# What Works?

for education settings

## Case Study – Teaching Assistant

Interventions from the *What Works* database were introduced and accepted enthusiastically in all Foundation Stages across four schools. The schools chose to deliver the interventions to target groups of children, rather than universally across the setting. The initial challenges faced were prioritising and timetabling the sessions into an already busy week, the correct identification of the children to take part in the groups, the identification of an appropriate member of staff to deliver the group sessions and then supporting the staff member to assess the children and to deliver the groups. Teaching assistants who were already working closely with the children were selected so that strategies from the sessions could be reinforced in the wider Foundation Stage settings.



The groups have run consistently, over two years, in all four schools. However, there is one school in particular where the interventions have been particularly successful. Here, the Teaching Assistant has taken ownership and responsibility for the group from the beginning; liaising with teaching staff to ensure that it is timetabled into the week and that sessions are delivered consistently. She has been keen to develop her knowledge of Speech, Language, and Communication and has seen the experience of working with the Speech and Language therapist and running the groups as an opportunity for her continuing professional development. As such she has been extremely committed to the groups and has kept closely to the timetable; completing all groups successfully.

All schools have commented that the interventions from the *What Works* database have supported and developed the language skills of their English as an additional language (EAL) intake. Two schools in particular have a large intake of children with EAL and in order to run the groups successfully, in their Foundation Stage settings, it was necessary to include EAL children in the groups. It has been reported that this group of children have successfully accessed the groups and that taking part in the groups has had a positive impact on their use of English in the classroom.

In conclusion, the interventions on the *What Works* database have been most successful when they are prioritised and timetabled into the week by Teaching Staff and when the sessions are delivered by Teaching Assistants who know the children in the Foundation Setting well and who also work alongside the children on a daily basis. That same Teaching Assistant needs to understand how the intervention will support and develop speech, language and communication



skills, and most importantly they need to enjoy delivering the group to the children. On the occasions when groups have been less successful, some of the overriding factors have been staff who do not recognise the goals of the interventions or do not give priority to the groups and where they themselves do not enjoy delivering the sessions.

All four schools have reported that they will continue to deliver the interventions from the *What Works* database in their Foundation Stages, with two in particular looking to use the interventions more widely with their EAL intake of children.