



CASE STUDY: Accelerating progress with the SAS Learning programme at Silver End Primary School

Silver End Primary School is a 311 pupil community primary in rural Essex, between Braintree and Witham. The school has been using the SAS Learning programme since autumn 2015 to raise the attainment of Year 6 children in writing.

Silver End first became aware of the SAS Learning approach through their local school cluster group. Head of school Victoria Gooding received information about a session where the approach was being discussed and she was immediately interested in its potential for improving writing at the school.



“Chris Williams from SAS Learning was running a demonstration lesson with Year 7s at a local secondary school so Victoria asked if I would go along and take a look,” says Kelly Brown, assistant headteacher and Year 5 and Year 6 teacher at Silver End.

“I was really interested because I wanted an approach that would help us raise attainment and encourage inspiring writing. I was also looking at new ways of using technology in teaching. We’re all being encouraged to use technology like iPads but for me they can sometimes come across as just a gimmick unless they are used as a key tool to support more effective teaching.”



SAS Learning is an audio visual writing programme. It contains writing activities guaranteed to make an immediate impact on progress and standards and improve outcomes for disengaged learners and underachieving pupils. The programme is based on the philosophy that spoken language underpins a child's development in reading and writing.



Kelly liked what she saw at the demonstration lesson and spoke to Chris, who suggested using the programme in a small trial group. "We had already identified a need for an intervention with Year 6 in writing," says Kelly. "We involved 14 children in two groups of seven and delivered the programme in a weekly 45 minute session with each group, starting just after the October half term."

Each group completed weekly writing activities over a period of five weeks, culminating in a final piece of writing that was finished to a high standard, every half term. In one set of activities the children were tasked with creating a set of clear instructions, using descriptive and technical vocabulary, to help people solve a challenging puzzle in the game *Pettson's Inventions*.

The process was kicked off with the children playing the game on their iPads and being asked to focus on a particular level of the game. After discussing their gaming experience with a partner and making rough notes the children then created an audio visual plan, capturing screen shots, notes and audio recordings of their ideas. This rich resource was then used by the children to help them write a first draft of their instructions. These were then submitted to fellow pupils and Kelly for feedback, which was used to create a final draft.



The activity had an impressive and immediate effect on the children's writing. For example one boy's sketchy and disjointed writing was transformed at the end of the process into a thorough, detailed piece of work bursting with descriptive writing that conveyed quite complex processes in a precise and engaging way.



SAS Learning: KEY STAGE 2

Creative Spoken Language and Writing Projects



“We have seen huge improvements since starting the groups in October,” says Kelly. “The children's language has improved significantly in areas such as description, structure and the conveying or expanding of ideas. I think the programme helped because it provides children with so many opportunities to talk about the activity and receive valuable, instant feedback which helps them to edit and improve what they are doing all the time.”

“A big impact has been that the children don't just want to complete their writing as quickly as possible,” Kelly adds. “This can be a problem especially with boys who think they can just write a few short sentences and that is the end product. We're now seeing really good quality, in-depth pieces of work.”

“The technology is just playing a supporting role really but it is useful because it gets the interest of the children from the start. It draws them in immediately and underpins their learning. It's about relating to things they know about.”

She adds: “One of the Year 6 children in the trial group, a boy whose parents are Polish started in October working at Year 5 level but he is now exactly where he should be. Another Year 6 child (eligible for pupil premium funding), with SEN, also went from a Year 5 level at the start of the year to their expected level today.”





“The SAS Learning approach is definitely a contributing factor. It’s a really valuable way of helping children quickly catch up. Seeing it in action in that initial meeting organised by my cluster group led me to see how I could use it in my own teaching. I could clearly see the whole process and how it could work for my children.”

Kelly is now championing plans to roll out the SAS Learning programme across the school. Chris Williams recently ran a twilight session at the school for all teachers and the plan is to eventually incorporate the approach into every teacher’s toolkit.

Silver End is one of 24 primaries and three secondary schools that have been trialing the programme in the Braintree area of Essex, with Year 6 and Year 7 children. Nationally, over 200 schools are now using the SAS Learning approach.

SAS Learning is an essential investment for every school that is seeking to improve performance and accelerate pupil progress.

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