

Let's Talk Reading: Year 1 Impact Summary 2016/17

Introduction:

The LTR project launched with initial partners during July and September 2016, with further schools joining through to January/February 2017. Each school had to draw up a formal Initiatives Plan, have it signed off by SCC's 'Raising the Bar' (RtB) team and the LTR Project Board, and then implement these initiatives. So, actual LTR interventions started in some schools from October 2016 and others not until March 2017; many schools did not receive their LTR/RtB funding until the end of March 2017.

Non-school activities started in November 2016, but were harder to launch, as LTR had to research which organisations were operating in 'early years' and adult literacy support, and had to analyse what additional support and interventions might be useful before concrete progress could be made. A substantial amount of basic contact work had to be done with many relatively small providers. So, in this case, tangible progress could not start until Spring 2017.

It must be noted that LTR's funding could only ever be a relatively small addition to a school's normal expenditure on Reading and English. However, schools have very limited discretionary spend, so the LTR money, focus and exposure of best practice interventions has made a positive difference to each school.

Schools would have made positive progress without LTR, and must take the credit, but the quotes below confirm that the project's support has been very influential (more than expected) in achieving some excellent gains, even in these short timescales.

Also to be noted, the KS2 SATs have been changing, with the 2016 tests recognised to be much more difficult than previous SATs and with higher 'expected' levels from government; however, these results are the best formal gauge available. The SATs figures for 2017 below are 'interim' figures at this stage; final figures will not be published for some months.

The schools working with LTR in 2016/17 had a total of ~ 5,090 pupils/students.

Changes to adult literacy take a long time, typically 12 to 24 months depending on the individual, once there is an admission of low literacy and help is sought.

Quotations from Partners

There have been supportive quotes from most partnering organisations, including:

- "The LTR project will, in the long term, be transformational for our pupils": Jeremy Pentreath, Headteacher, The Oaks Primary School.
- "Fresh Start interventions have been incredible in securing progress for a number of our struggling children and wouldn't have been possible without the funding from LTR. This year we have completely transformed the way we teach reading and a big part and support of that has been Let's Talk Reading": Hollie Carey, Literacy Lead, The Oaks.
- "I didn't used to like reading. I swear I am always reading now! My teacher recommends good books to me and there are some really good ones in our book area." Year 6 boy, The Oaks.

- Helen Emmerson, English Coordinator Cliff Lane Primary School, after LTR Steering Group meeting: “I came away feeling really inspired and we've implemented a few of the things I heard from other schools. You're doing a wonderful thing for reading in the area!”
- “I love these books with mum at bedtime. We read some of the words together but mostly mum reads and I get to listen to the stories.” Y2 pupil at Whitton Primary School following introduction of bedtime reading trolley funded by LTR.
- LTR funded books to extend FRED through the school increased parental engagement from 14 to 67 families: Hillside Primary School.
- “English is now the highest performing core subject across all year groups. The excellent progress in each year group has been underpinned by LTR contribution”: Emma Ingate, Literacy Lead, Ipswich Academy.
- “People enjoyed getting involved. We all clapped and sung along with the actors. It was easier to visualise scenes after we saw the performance. It really helped me – I still remember some of the quotes.” Year 10 male student, Ipswich Academy, following LTR funded Shakespeare workshop.
- “My favourite part is working and sharing with my child and when Miss reads a story.” Piper’s Vale Primary School parent, relating to LTR funded Reception workshops with parents.
- Ashlee Jacobs, Head of SEN, Raedwald Trust: “Through initiatives supported by LTR, in addition to targeted intervention and quality first teaching, we have seen a narrowing of the gap between our disadvantaged pupils and their peers...”
- “The Let's Talk Reading project has been an excellent opportunity for libraries to collaborate and work in partnership with like-minded organisations to tackle a key issue in Ipswich. The project has given the libraries involved the support to think and act wider around literacy, to help local communities more effectively and it has fundamentally changed the organisation's approach to literacy support. Suffolk Libraries is keen for this work to continue and grow”: Krystal Vittles, Suffolk Libraries’ Innovation and Development Manager.

Measured School results:

These are limited in scope as primary schools only have interim results at this point. Some schools have only been working with the project since March/April 2017. This section will be made comprehensive over the next 4 months.

- 19 “non-readers” in Years 7 & 8 at Ipswich Academy (IA) have become readers in 3 terms.
- At IA, there has been a 12% reduction in the number of students in Years 7 & 8 with a reading age which is 2 or more years behind their chronological age (approximately 40 students).
- KS2 SATs results in English up by 13% to 64% at Cliff Lane (interim figures).
- KS2 SATs in English up 25% to 74% at The Oaks (interim figures)
- Chantry Academy recorded its best ever combined English + Maths result at 56%, up a massive 17% from the 2016 figure of 37%.
 - Within this figure, 66% of students gained an equivalent of a ‘C’ grade in English.
 - Disadvantaged students made better progress than non-disadvantaged students by an average fifth of a grade, which is significant.
- Ipswich Academy recorded a very significant 12% improvement in its combined English and Maths GCSE results; up to 51% from 39%. These are the best results in the school’s history and the first occasion that results have been over the government’s ‘floor target’.

- Cliff Lane recorded a 37% improvement in the number of the Year 5 cohort pupils reaching the nationally expected level in Reading during the 2016/17 academic year.
- At Piper's Vale, the Year 6 cohort had a 28% improvement in the number of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in Reading during the 2016/17 academic year, and a massive 70% improvement in the Reception class.
- KS2 SATs Reading Test results:
 - National average 'expected' figures: 66% (2016) to 71% (2017); 5% rise
 - The Oaks: 49% to 74%: 25% rise
 - Cliff Lane: 53% to 64%: 11% rise
 - Whitton: 43% to 51%: 8% rise
 - Piper's Vale: 34% to 62%: 28% rise
 - St. Helens: 66% to 71%: 5% rise
 - Hillside: 53% to 57%: 4% rise
- KS1 Reading Test results:
 - National expected level in 2016 was 77%
 - Whitton: 60% to 74%: 14% rise
 - St Helen's: 66% to 73%: 7% rise
 - Piper's Vale: 54% to 61%: 7% rise
 - Cliff Lane: 77% to 79%: 2% rise; above national expected level.
 - Hillside: 48% to 63%: 15% rise
- Chantry Academy is focussing on developing a whole-school active involvement in reading, with its DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) sessions during each day. It has recorded a 15% increase in usage of the library by boys in 2017. Such a culture change is difficult to measure quickly.

Other Results

Political:

- IBC leader and Area Committees sensitised to the Issue.
- Concept of focusing on 'disadvantaged' pyramids articulated to IBC and SCC/ Raising the Bar team.
- MP (Ben Gummer) sensitised to the Issue.

Coordination and Engagement:

- 13 schools signed up to the project (including 3 PRUs and the Hospital school unit). A further 5 schools were contacted.
- 4 Children's Centres engaged.
- All early years settings in target areas were contacted. 10 early years settings visited to date. One presentation given to staff and parents, 6 further sessions booked for the autumn. Early years settings have agreed to be the channel for distribution of book-bags to 2-year-olds funded by the 'Golden Ticket'.
- 200 'Teach a Friend to Read' (TaFTR) books distributed free to all settings and libraries.
- HomeStart engaged: training given to 10 volunteers and talked to 10 parents at toddler group (free book given to each child).
- 'Realise Futures' and 'Got to Read' engaged to deal with adult literacy challenge. Sign-posting leaflets to these organisations has been included in all bookbags and distributed to collaborating organisations and settings.
- 80 to 100 midwives, health visitors and family support practitioners have been presented with information about adult and children's communication and reading issues, to help identify adults with low levels of literacy and encourage parents to learn to read confidently/effectively and read with their children.
- 30 IBC Housing Officers appraised of the challenge; many of their clients will struggle with reading. TaFTR books and sign-posting to adult literacy support being provided.

- National Literacy Trust support negotiated, with 'account manager' contact point and bulk discount membership.
- Inspire Suffolk involved.
- Feedback questionnaires developed for TAFTR and book-bags, to be distributed from September 2017 via all settings.

Books, Resources and educational Events:

- Wolsey Theatre literacy workshops at the Lindbergh Centre and Ipswich Academy
- 350 books supplied (free) to all Year 7s and 8s at Ipswich Academy
- "Reading Pledge" developed to be signed and adopted by participating schools
- Puppets and Read/Write Inc packs worth ~£500 recycled from storage.
- 200 'Teach a Friend to Read' books bought and distributed (free) into the communities.
- 500 recommended 'early years' books bought and being given away (free) to all families with 'golden ticket' 2-year-olds in the focus pyramids.
- 1000 book-bags designed and purchased for above.
- 2000 Leaflets (simplified) signposting 'Realise Futures' and 'Got to Read' printed to guide people to adult literacy support locally.
- 1000 sheets of nursery rhymes plus guidance pamphlets on 'Reading with Your Toddler' and recommendations for books available in the local library obtained and distributed in the book bags.

Conclusions

- It remains very early to see tangible, measurable progress, even in all participating schools.
- Measurable progress will be available for all schools and with community work, early years and adult literacy support, by the end of Year2, in July/August 2018.
- Signs of the aspirational culture change in the community and in schools are already evident: some early tiny green shoots:
 - The adult literacy support manual (Teach a Friend to Read) has been quietly disappearing from library shelves and is being given away by early years settings and schools.
 - Early years settings are requesting LTR volunteers to come and talk to parents who struggle with reading.
 - The reading message is getting out to many people providing support services, particularly in early years, including midwives, health visitors, children's centres, family support practitioners etc, and reading is now a key topic of conversation.
 - LTR Steering Group meetings are setting the tone of focusing on every child reading by the time they leave primary school, and sharing best practice to encourage all schools to get there quickly and sustainably.
 - Results for reading in all the participating schools are improving, some considerably.
 - Parental engagement in their children's reading and wider education is increasing.
- Collaboration with the large number of participating organisations is beginning to work well; the challenge for 2017/18 is to make this sustainable collaboration.

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