

# Closing the gap project: raising the attainment of boys writing



## Background to the “Closing the gap” project

- Data from the DFE shows that the performance of writing is poorer compared to maths and reading in both KS1 and KS2.
- Clear evidence shows that boys are less successful than girls at writing, across all key stages (Ofsted—Moving literacy forward March 2012). This could be caused by a range of factors such as less attention span, lack of ability to sit still for prolonged periods of time, lack of connections between oral and written work, lack of interventions as well as behavioural and social factors (Daly, 2003; Estyn, 2008; DfES, 2007)
- Ofsted, 2005a; 2005b; Younger et al, 2005; Estyn, 2008; Daly, 2003; DfES, 2007 state that girls outperform boys by 10 %. 88 % of girls compared to 78 % of boys achieved the expected level of writing at the end of KS1.
- National Literacy Trust annual literacy survey (2017-stated that boys tend to enjoy writing less, write less often and think less positively about writing than girls. The report found that girls tend to write out of class significantly more frequently for pleasure than boys.
- The Literacy subject leader is exploring the curriculum provision for boys and the use of a more creative scheme of writing—Cornerstones.
- 83% of boys in this focus group achieved national standards of writing at the end of reception compared to girls who achieved 89% national average.

## Key project activities

Research informed several activities to improve the children’s written description and fluency:

- Quality first teaching and observation of experienced teachers.
- New cursive handwriting scheme
- Whole class strategies included more time and focus on the planning stage of writing. All children added more detail, key words and pictures to their story maps and writing plans.
- Children were encouraged to read through their work to check that it makes sense and make improvement independently.
- Children have the opportunity to read, record and listen back to sentences.
- High interest boy friendly topics were chosen throughout the schools ‘Cornerstones scheme’
- Cross-curricular writing was used on a number of occasions to encourage enjoyment and engagement of writing about a subject personal to them for example a Fact File about a superhero.
- A hook was included for literacy topics to engage and excite the children.
- Drama based planning and learning stories through actions (Talk 4 Writing) was involved and children were encouraged to share their ideas with the whole class which increased speaking and listening skills.
- During whole class writing sessions, the focus group were supported whenever possible. Children were encouraged to verbally discuss their ideas with a partner use dictionaries, thesaurus and talk partners to add description to their writing.

- Peer assessment encouraged children to read each other’s work, children were then

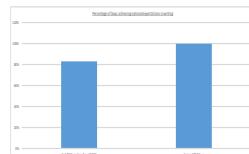
## Relevant research and reading

- *Moving English forward: action to raise standards in English -March 2012, No. 110118 Moving English forward: action to raise standards in English -March 2012, No. 110118 EEF (2016 ) Improving Literacy in Key Stage One. Available at: [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Campaigns/Literacy/KS1\\_Literacy\\_Guidance.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Campaigns/Literacy/KS1_Literacy_Guidance.pdf)*

## Impact of “Closing the gap” project

- Teacher assessments shows that a higher percentage of the focus group were assessed as working at nationally level compared to end of reception data (100% compared with 83%). This was a 17% increase in boys working at expected level for writing compared to the end of reception.

Increased confidence, enjoyment, greater description  
in writing/



- While we do not yet have end of