

TYKES
TEACHING
ALLIANCE



LEARNERS FIRST

WRITING PROJECT MID-POINT SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 2022

APPENDIX 2

Together, Barnsley schools become *part of something more.*

Writing Project

Mid-Point Review – Summary

February 2022
(Barnsley Report)



Learners First
Schools Partnership

Connecting People, Promoting Excellence

Introduction

The impact on children's learning and wellbeing following global events over the last 18 months is well documented. Following the transition from remote education back to the classroom, many school leaders told us that writing had emerged as a key priority for a lot of children. This was echoed in Ofsted's briefing report (Oct 2020) which noted that school leaders had spoken about the *"need to work on pupils' writing, including their 'stamina' when writing at length"* to recover some of the opportunities children had missed to *"practise their writing style and posture"* during the first national lockdown".

As part of a long established partnership, Learners First has been honoured to have the opportunity to work with the extremely skilled, experienced and knowledgeable leaders at Humberstone Academy, winners of the UK's Literacy School Of The Year, to introduce two school-led writing programmes to support these endeavours. The programmes aim to further support schools to address both gaps in pupils' writing and the disadvantage attainment gap to help ensure children have the best opportunities to reach their full potential. The programmes are based around a 'Writing Project' approach and are very much designed with the needs of class teachers in mind. Projects blend an evidenced based approach to writing with relevant subject specific pedagogy, delivered through creative and well designed teaching sequences. There is a high focus on classroom application and participants will walk through effective teaching sequences and units of work which can be adapted for their own contexts. Participants undertake an action research project with a target group of pupils, aimed at demonstrating impact and providing a strong evidence of impact for self evaluation.

Barnsley Schools Alliance requested a number of places on the writing programme (both the Y2/3 programme and the Y5/6 programme) for Barnsley primary schools, which Learners First accommodated. The cohorts are mixed in terms of geographical representation with schools from across all South Yorkshire and Derbyshire Local Authorities represented. This report serves to provide a summary of engagement, feedback and early signs of impact at a midpoint within the programme delivery to the Barnsley Schools Alliance. (Where possible, Barnsley-specific data has been extracted but some of evaluations are representative of the full cohort, thus include the views and feedback from school leaders in the other LA areas).



Our Guiding Principles

All our professional development and networking opportunities (including the writing programmes) are designed and delivered in accordance with our guiding principles. At Learners First, we:

- **Endeavour to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reasons. Always.**
There is no one 'right way' but we will advocate sensible approaches and act with integrity, humility, honesty and openness.
- **Constructively challenge prevailing orthodoxies.**
Questioning the status quo through innovation and a genuine desire to make a significant and sustainable difference.
- **Both respect and have a healthy disregard for authority.**
We will ask questions and look for innovative solutions whilst upholding our professional duties and respecting the regulatory frameworks which we, and the partners we serve, operate within.
- **Are an inclusive partnership which operates without fear or favour and believes that quality should always prevail.**
The Nolan principles of public service guide our way of working and ensure we operate with honesty, integrity and generosity of spirit.
- **Look to address existing imbalances and examples of privilege bias wherever possible in the system.**
We place a huge ethical and moral emphasis on supporting those facing disproportionate disadvantage as a result of social mobility and contextual challenges.

“Connecting People, Promoting Excellence”

Learners First strives to build networks and partnerships of people who are committed and passionate about improving the educational outcomes and life chances of all children and young people.

Attendance & Engagement

- **20** participants from **14** different Barnsley schools joined the **Y2/3 programme**
- **22** participants from **18** different Barnsley schools joined the **Y5/6 programme**
- In total, participants from **22 different Barnsley schools** are engaging with the writing programmes.

The attendance overview provided is based on school engagement/representation at the sessions delivered thus far (as at 7th Feb 2022), rather than individual participant engagement. This represents the charging model (price per school rather than price per participant), reflects the nature of the programme delivery (some sessions are open to additional staff such as subject leaders) and the nuances of each school's staffing and curriculum models (i.e. split classes, more than one teacher per year group, part-time staff etc). There has been one withdrawal from the Y2/3 programme (Hoylandswaine Primary School).

- The **average attendance** on the **Y2/3** programme of Barnsley schools is **89%**.
- The **average attendance** on the **Y5/6** programme of Barnsley schools is **91%**.

School Name	Local Authority	Programme	% Attendance (School Engagement)
Athersley North Primary	Barnsley	Y2/3	100%
Athersley North Primary	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
Barugh Green Primary	Barnsley	Y5/6	86%
Barugh Green Primary	Barnsley	Y2/3	86%
Birdwell Primary School	Barnsley	Y2/3	86%
Brierley CE Primary School	Barnsley	Y2/3	71%
Brierley CE Primary School	Barnsley	Y5/6	86%
Carlton Primary Academy	Barnsley	Y2/3	100%
Carlton Primary Academy	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
Churchfield Primary	Barnsley	Y2/3	71%
Churchfield Primary	Barnsley	Y5/6	86%
Greenfield Primary School	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
High View PLC	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
Holy Rood Catholic Primary School	Barnsley	Y2/3	100%
Hoylandswaine Primary School*	Barnsley	Y2/3	29%
Hoylandswaine Primary School	Barnsley	Y5/6	86%
Joseph Locke Primary School	Barnsley	Y2/3	100%
Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre	Barnsley	Y2/3	100%
Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
Ladywood Primary School	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
Laithes Primary School	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
Mapplewell Primary School	Barnsley	Y5/6	67%
Milefield Primary	Barnsley	Y5/6	86%
Sandhill Primary School	Barnsley	Y5/6	50%
Springvale Primary School	Barnsley	Y2/3	100%
Springvale primary School	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
Summerfields Primary Academy	Barnsley	Y5/6	83%
Ward Green Primary	Barnsley	Y2/3	100%
Ward Green Primary	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
Wilthorpe Primary School	Barnsley	Y2/3	100%
Wilthorpe Primary School	Barnsley	Y5/6	100%
Wombell Park Street Primary	Barnsley	Y2/3	100%

Analytics & Data

Programme(s) Followed by Survey Respondents

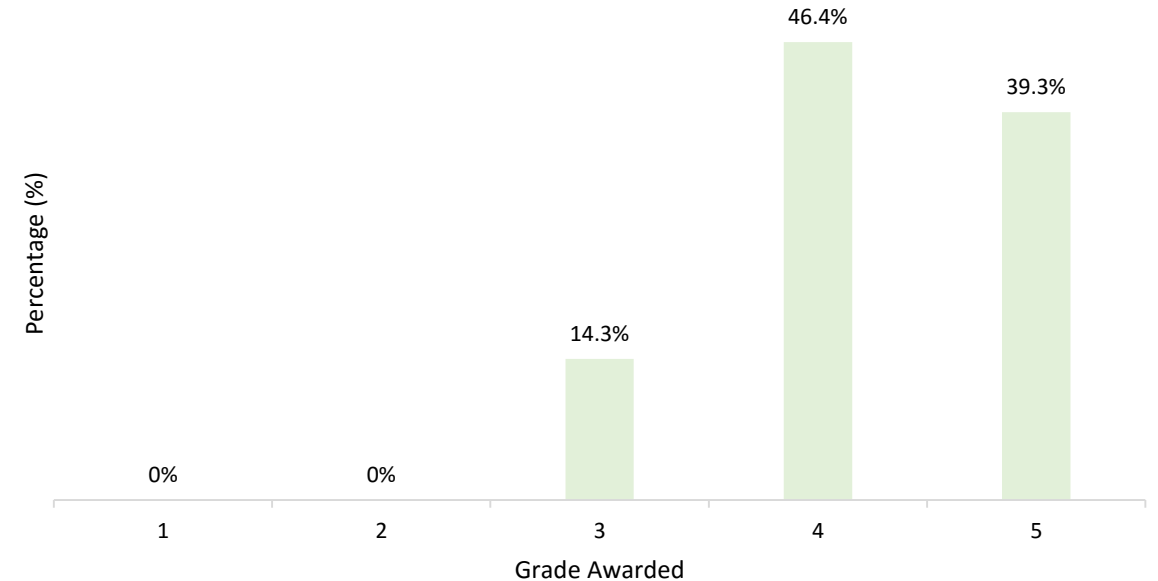


Notes

Not all participants completed the survey and it was optional for respondents to leave their name/contact details. However, from the analysis of those who did, 61% represent Barnsley schools.

Where feedback from other evaluations is reference in this report (such as the feedback forms sent out after each session and responses following the recent subject leader session in Feb 2022) this has been made clear.

1. Overall, to what extent has the programme met your expectations thus far?

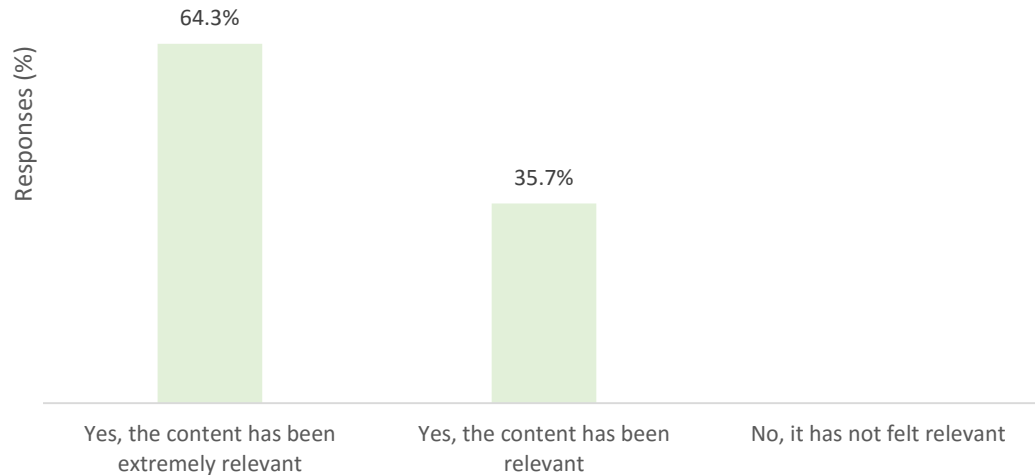


Notes

Participants were asked to grade the extent to which the programme was meeting expectations on a sliding scale with 'Grade 1' being that the programme had 'fallen well below my expectations' and 'Grade 5' indicating that the programme had 'exceeded my expectations'. All respondents stated that the programme had met their expectations with the vast majority (86% indicating a grade of 4 or 5).

- **100%** of survey respondents stated the content of the programmes felt **relevant**, with 64% citing the content as '**extremely relevant**'.
- All additional comments provided were positive endorsements (included below).

2. Has the content of the programme felt relevant to you?



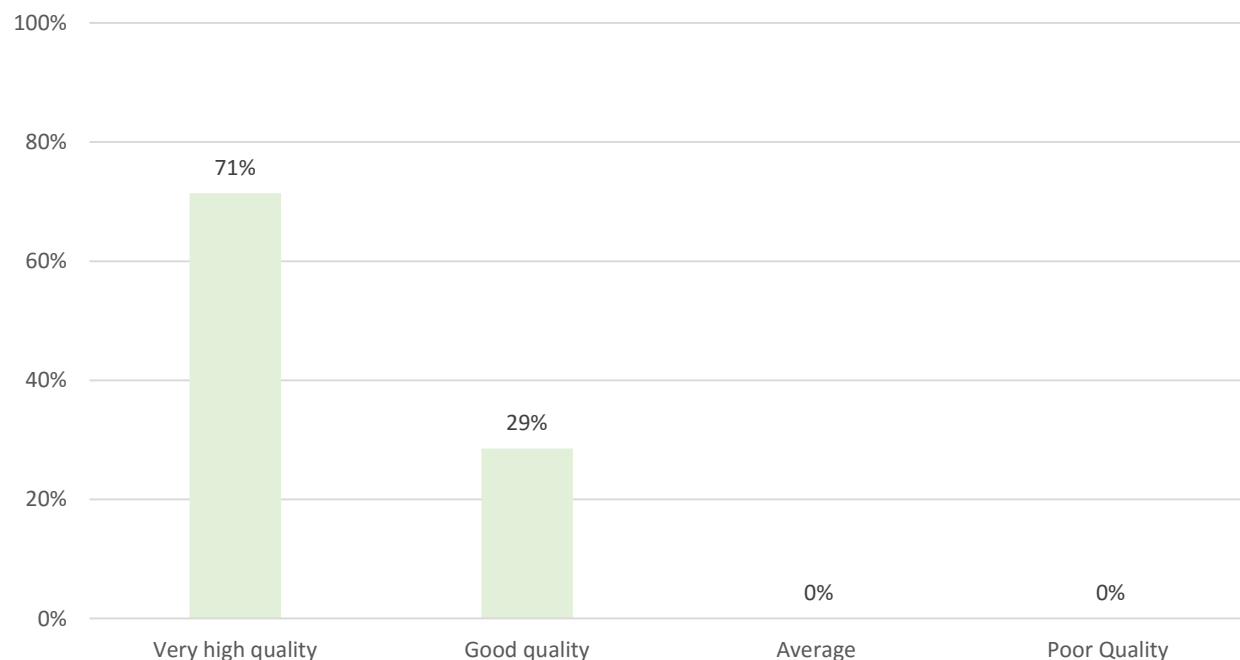
Additional Comments Provided in Response to this Question

- "I am already seeing a positive impact in my children's writing. Some elements, such as the Frayer Model, have been introduced across school, so teachers explicitly teach vocabulary as part of our writing sequence." (Writing Lead and Y6 Teacher, Y5/6 Programme)
- "It's such valuable CPD and has really made us consider our practice. The facilitators are brilliant." (Deputy Head/English Lead, Y5/6 Programme)
- "I have adapted this to suit my Year 4 class...I especially enjoyed the research aspects" (Class teachers, Y5/6 Programme)
- "Great texts used and the ideas given on how to 'dig deeper' into the text to improve speaking skills and writing has been really useful". (Phase lead, Y2/3 Programme)
- "I have a low ability class and the emphasis on oral rehearsal has had a huge impact on overall English sessions." (Year 2 teacher, Y2/3 Programme)
- "I've really appreciated examples of planning and resources to adapt. I've also found all of the practical ideas useful and have been able to try many of them out in the hope that eventually they will become everyday practice that the children are familiar with." (Year 6 teacher, Y5/6 Programme)

Analytics & Data

- **100%** of survey respondents stated the **delivery/facilitation** has been at least **‘good quality’** with over 70% citing it as being **‘very high quality’**

3. Quality of the Facilitation/Delivery of Sessions

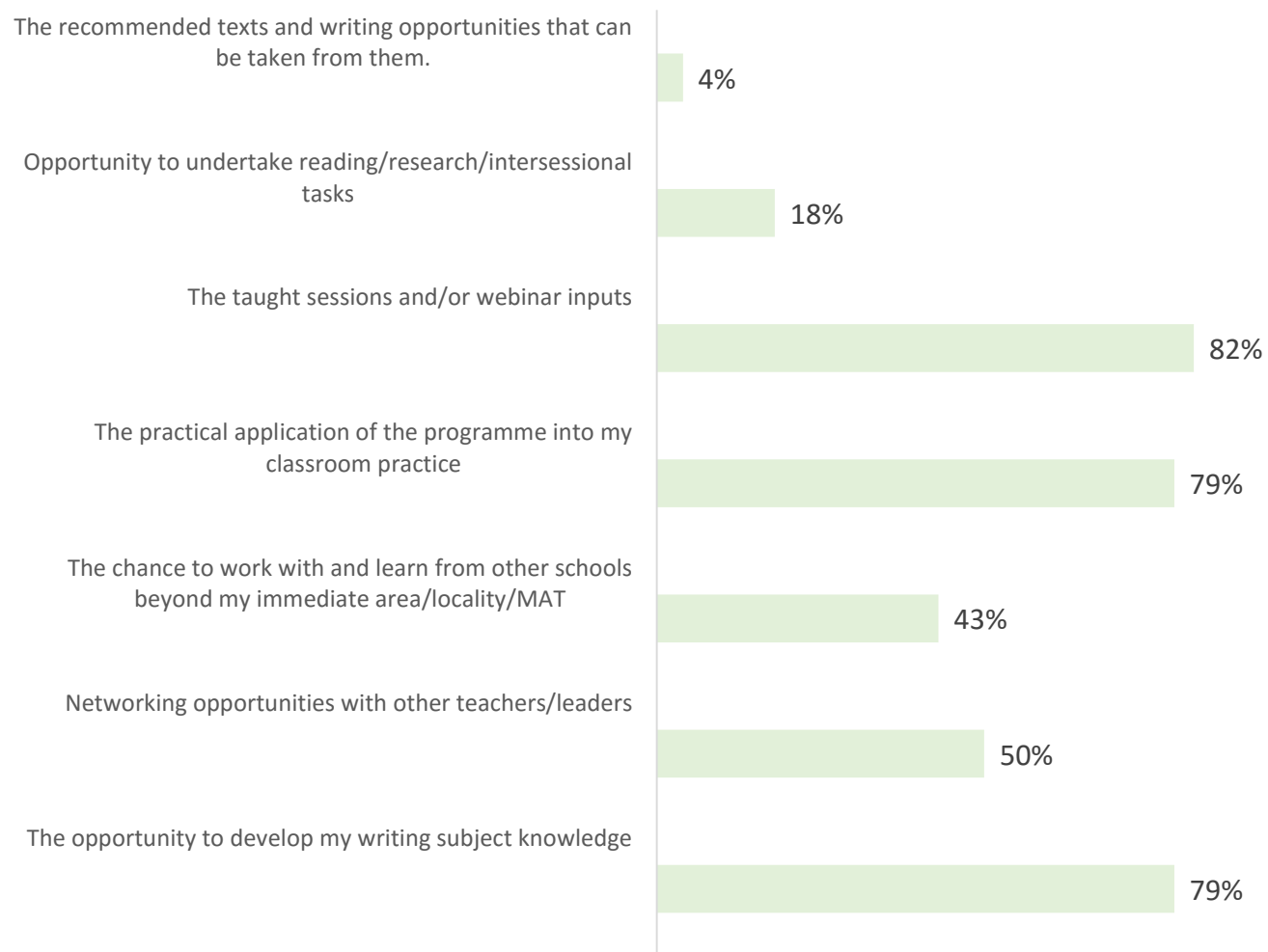


Additional Comments Provided in Response to this Question

- “The two leaders are very personable and professional” (Upper KS2 teacher, Y5/6 Programme)
- “The teaching sequence workshops have been very useful...” (Class teacher, Y5/6 Programme)
- “It has been really useful to see the lesson sequence in action in the in person sessions.” (Y6 Teacher and Writing Lead, Y5/6 Programme)
- “Such useful information and great high quality texts” (Teacher, Y2/3 Programme)
- Communication is always clear and professional. Presentations and accompanying resources are of good quality (Phase leader, Y2/3 Programme)

Analytics & Data

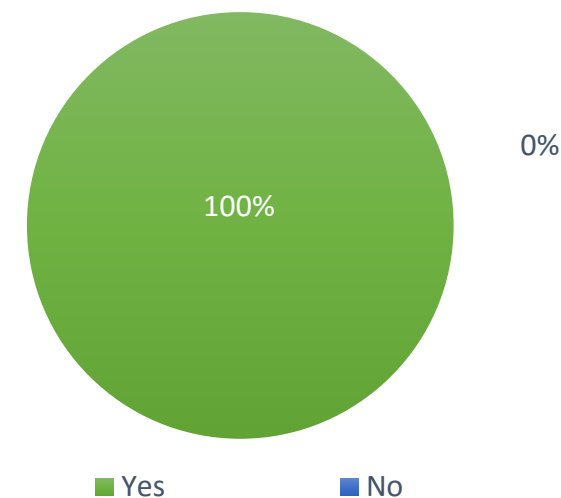
Q4. What have you enjoyed the most about the programme?



(Respondents asked to select as many as applied from a tick box list, hence the % figures)

100% of survey respondents stated that they already feel **more confident in the teaching of writing** as a result of their engagement with the programme

Q5. Overall, do you feel more confident in the teaching of writing as a result of your engagement with the programme?



Q6. Have there been any unexpected benefits of your engagement with the programme?

- The children's engagement with the Fantastic Beasts sequence was AMAZING!
- Seeing how much the children look forward to the writing lessons and tell me so.
- Introduced to more quality texts
- Writing has not been considered a key focus for our school. In fact quite the opposite, for the last three years, until September 2021, it was seen as below all the subjects we teach in school. This academic year, finally, it is having the attention it deserves. I'm hoping that on going staff meetings and an INSET day into rolling out the course to the other year groups will see a marked improvement in the levels of writing we have already noted in Y3 and Y6. Most importantly for me is that there are improvements in the levels of engagement with writing. Most pupils in school do not enjoy English lessons at the moment.
- The specific activities for lessons have been really useful to develop my practice.
- Time to discuss ideas and liaise with colleagues from my own and other schools.
- My new found love of planning literacy!
- I have been surprised about how much it has made me reflect on our current practice and how much I have changed as a result of these reflections.

Q7. Are there any aspects of the programme that you have not enjoyed or found less useful?

- No, it has been very engaging. (A further 5 individuals cited 'No', 'nothing' or N/A)
- Focused on vocabulary majority of time in planning rather than other SPaG elements
- Our cohort of children are working so far behind the year group expectations this year that the things I have learnt have to be very modified to be used with them. I think I may wait until I have a higher attaining year group before I can use the texts and writing ideas suggested.
- I wish more could be face to face but I understand why it can't be (Covid-19 restrictions).
- The timings between the sessions have been too short for me to implement it at some points. Having more time between would have enabled me to think more carefully about texts (when I needed to use alternatives) and also to implement the strategies more than once.
- It has sometimes been difficult to apply the exact learning sequence to practice in its entirety.
- Being show how to plan a narrative unit as we had already done this as a school.
- I would have liked more input about how to sequence units across the school.

Analytics & Data

Q7. Have you been able to undertake the gap tasks and/or apply any learning from the programme thus far in your own classroom practice? Please provide a brief summary if so.

- *I have completely taught the Fantastic Beasts sequence, which was successful for my 'cuspy' children. I have rolled out the explicit teaching of vocabulary.*
- *Yes elements of it, but because our books are chosen for us already I can't follow a full sequence. However, this could be changing over the next year.*
- *Yes. I have implemented some areas of the teaching processes within the units I was currently teaching with a particular focus on the oracy element. I used the Skellig programme of lessons - tweaked to suit my class - and have found that children are really thinking carefully about their audience and vocabulary choices to impact the reader. Our writing process in school isn't too far away from the one suggested so it has been brilliant to make tweaks as necessary to what we currently do.*
- *I completed the Fantastic Beast planning and adapted Skellig as Year 6 read this book, and used a book we were using for Literacy.*
- *Yes although due to our 2 week half term we struggled to fit the first one in before the next session and only did part of the unit.*
- *Yes, I have done the gap task, then a review of the gap task as well as done a complete run through of the Fantastic Beasts and an amended version of the Skellig unit (I used a video and book instead). We have also done some of the feedback methods.*
- *strategies for dev vocab*
- *Yes we have taken part in all reading which has helped to put into context learning and approaches - we have begun embedding some approaches to planning, modelling and overall delivery of writing across school as a result of the CPD and practical ideas provided.*
- *Yes - I have been using the teaching sequence and adapting it for my classroom.*
- *Yes, lots of practical ideas have been shared during training sessions which I have applied in the classroom.*
- *I have completed the gap analysis tasks and trying to apply the teaching sequence to planning.*
- *Yes - in particular using visual literacy to enhance writing which has worked really well.*
- *I missed the first couple of sessions - one due to being on maternity leave and another due to illness but I have managed to complete other gap tasks and implement some adapted ideas into my classroom practice. We were doing a topic on Europe and we did a fact file about France using the same teaching sequence format as the Under the sea lessons. I also used some of the ideas from the sessions I missed on the Heroes and Villains sequence and incorporated them in to writing character descriptions about Jack Skellington & Oogie Boogie from The Nightmare before Christmas book . I didn't get chance to do the teaching sequence before Christmas but will be doing it from next week.*
- *I have taught the Harry Potter sequence.*

(...continued overleaf)

Analytics & Data



(Q7 ...continued from previous)

- *Yes and no. I have found that disruptions to children's learning along the way such as absences and identifying many gaps in learning has made it hard to keep a consistent group in my gap task. I also changed my focus group along the way.*
- *Yes, though sometimes time is an issue.*
- *I did the first one fully but we were writing stories at the time I needed to do the non-fiction text. I've planned to cover this in the spring term.*
- *Yes. As I chose children from the bottom 20%, the gap tasks have supported assessments and pupil progress discussions.*
- *Yes - I followed the Skellig planning and the children in my class really enjoyed and engaged with the writing. My target children who are lower Y4 emerging writers really improved their vocabulary and used the rich scaffolded examples in their own writing. I was able to also link the descriptive writing of the shed by taking children to an abandoned house near school, which further enhanced the writing and experience for the children.*
- *Yes - I have implemented all of the teaching sequences (adapted for the needs of my class) and the independent writes have been a much higher quality and taught vocabulary has really come through.*
- *We have followed each teaching sequence after sessions delivered. As a school, we are now moving towards this approach rather than our previous T4W approach.*
- *Yes: the teaching sequences. We adapted parts of the Fantastic Beasts teaching sequence to fit with what we already had planned and are currently working through the Skellig teaching sequence for this term. We've also tried to include as many of the vocabulary practices: zone of relevance, Frayer model, say it again but better which is supporting the children with their own authorial intent and vocabulary knowledge.*
- *Yes, the reading tasks have impacted my practice. I have used all the teaching sequences in my class.*
- *I have been able to use elements from the teaching sequences such as the zone of relevance, layered planning, boxed up success criteria*
- *Yes, the activities such as the diagrams have been really easy to integrate into lessons.*

Q8. What (if any) support do you require to further embed/apply your learning back in your own school/classroom?

- None - all very good and informative (a further 6 respondents gave a 'N/A' and 'none' response)
- The support you have been giving so far has been working well.
- More support of teaching other skills needed to meet success criteria, for example, the letter to LRRH, I would need to teach exaggeration and cause and effect conjunctions to my class for them to successfully write a letter.
- It would be helpful to know how to really support the lower attaining children in their writing when teaching the suggested sequences.
- the chance to see more examples of planning/sequences of learning
- It would be good to be able to submit our own sequences at a later stage and get feedback on these on how they could be improved.
- While the class wide practice ideas have certainly benefited from the course but I'm yet to see this as an impact on the children selected for the diagnostic task.
- I feel I just need to keep practising with the sequence.
- the focus on vocabulary, the build up towards children's independent writes.
- Help sequencing units across the school to create a long term overview.

Analytics & Data

Q9. Do you feel there are any early signs of impact on pupils and/or the quality of teaching and learning as a result of your engagement with the programme thus far? (Quantitative and/or qualitative)

- Engagement of children, but not full impact- I think I need to be able to follow the sequences more in depth
- yes, better quality teaching and learning as well as seeing improvements in quality of the work being produced.
- Yes - I think the children are more engaged with their writing and are producing higher quality pieces as a result. I think I feel more confident with teaching of writing to ensure children produce quality. We have also put our curriculum map on the format you provided which has helped ensure that we are progressive with our grammar choices across the year as well as year on year.
- The children have enjoyed creating their own mythical beasts.
- Children have been more engaged as a result of the high quality texts used. Children are now verbally constructing simple sentences and able to independently write their ideas. Vocabulary has improved. Children are more motivated to write as they are given a clear purpose and understand the written outcome.
- Pupil use of language, especially the phrases they are using, are more advanced. They are enjoying writing lessons more and contributions in class have improved greatly. My teaching has improved as I am use a greater variety of styles instead of sticking with a few that have worked well. I'm also more inclined to go looking for better ideas.
- Children are wanting to write.
- Yes. I can see the progress in the children's writing. Their enthusiasm for writing has increased. They are using new vocabulary more frequently and more accurately.
- Yes absolutely! Children are enjoying the texts and this helps with their engagement
- After the first teaching sequence, my focus children's writing had improved. I will be interested to see if this is also the case after implementing the next couple of texts (or by the end of the course).
- There has been a significant rise in the engagement of the children, especially reluctant/weaker writers. They have also been more proactive and have more confidence to write independently. It has clearly developed the language of the children and given the more able children more freedom to be creative. The partner teachers in Year 3 have also enjoyed the teaching sequences and the strategies. Our Year 2 teachers have also taken the planning onboard for the Spring Term.
- The children have all shown some improvement in writing particularly in vocabulary and sentence structure. They are making their sentences more complex using some subordination and better conjunctions.
- The children are engaging more with vocabulary and many are applying this to their writing which is great however some of those writers are still forgetting the basics of capital letters, finger spaces and full stops so this requires more work.
- I am seeing children referring back to their 'notes' (zone of relevance, existing texts analysis) more than they were before to help them to trigger ideas. They are also using a wider range of vocabulary in their writing. Using a story as a hook for learning has been effective, the children have been more engaged with their writing as a result as they seem to be invested in the characters and the plot of the story
- Yes - cohesion is beginning to show improvement.
- Further consideration into vocabulary choices
- Half of my chosen children for the impact project are now on track for expected.

(...continued overleaf)

Analytics & Data

(Q9 ...continued from previous)

- Pupils can verbally communicate their ideas and have grown in confidence. They are much more engaged and am beginning to see impact on their writing.
- With it being my first year in teaching, I've found it hard to make comparisons to what my teaching was like prior to learning on the course in a qualitative sense and the writing has been hard to judge in a quantitative way.
- The small steps, scaffolding and sequencing of lessons has given the children a lot of confidence and has made the learning meaningful.
- Yes, the demonstration of vocabulary and sentence structure has improved.
- Children enjoyed the Fantastic Beasts planning and all writing was varied and of high quality

Other General Comments from Participants...

- Communication has been very good and the facilities, where the course is held are great.
- Thank you for all the time and effort putting the course together!
- I just wanted to say thank you for everything so far; it has been an inspiring experience and both myself and my Y3 colleague have learned a great detail.
- I know covid has impacted the course, with one moving online, and personally for me at school we missed the whole first unit but the face to face session on Skellig and Fantastic beast have been excellent and I hope we can resume in the new year. Megan's modelling of writing and scaffolding input / ideas I have found very useful.
- No suggestions, the course is very good.
- More face-to-face meetings, circumstances have made it impossible this time, but much more effective when face to face.

Q10. Given your experiences of the programme, how likely would you be to recommend the Learners First writing Programme to Colleagues?

