

Understanding... By teaching others



Understanding...
by teaching others

We learn...

10% of what we read

20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

50% of what we hear and see

70% of what we discuss with others

80% of what we experience personally

95% of what we teach to someone else
(William Glasser)

This is the ethos behind the Success For All literacy scheme which has been taken up by three primary schools in Leeds.

Ebor Gardens, Bankside and Hillcrest have done away with the literacy hour to put their pupils through a learning programme with a difference.

The children work in pairs and small groups to ensure every single member of the class understands what is going on.

All the strands of the National Literacy Strategy are included: shared reading, spelling, grammar, reading and writing, story discussion, creative writing. The scheme runs every day from 9-10.30am, divided into smaller sections.

In "Think Pair-Share", the children think about something and share it with their partner. The teacher will ask the pupil what their partner was thinking about, so everybody in the class has to know what they are going to say.

Ebor Gardens SFA co-ordinator Denise Maruszczak explained: "This also works in small groups as well. It makes everybody in the team accountable. It teaches the children to articulate what they know."

That's where William Glasser's theory comes in. "If you can teach something to someone else you retain more." said Mrs Maruszczak.

Positive personal development

The SFA programme, which is American, works from reception to year 6. It emphasises language development readiness to read and positive personal development. Where possible, phonetics is used.

Children are grouped across age ranges according to their ability. It means there is no reason why there should not be "Success for All". With everybody at the same level, the amount of time for direct learning increases.

"In SFA you don't need to differentiate within the group," said Mrs Maruszczak. "All the children know what you are saying. The children are re-grouped every eight weeks. But they never go down, they stay where they are or go up. Research shows that streaming

means children become confident in their group. They are not having to keep up with their peers. They can do the work, which means a lot to them."

The emphasis from Reception is on the development of language skills, meaning and context. Children become fluent as they read and re-read to others.

The structure develops as the children's ability increases, taking in the identification of characters, settings, problem solutions in narratives, story summarisation and comprehension.

From year 2 onwards, whatever level the child is at, the pupils are expected to read for 20 minutes a night at home.

Head teacher Dave Shipley said: "We wanted to do something at the school to raise standards. For an inner city school we already have good standards, but even with good teachers and the work that goes into the school and the children, we can only achieve so much. SFA takes us on the next plane."

It has been supported to the tune of £10,000 by Leeds Community Learning Zone, which is led by education charity Learning Partnerships. The school has ploughed in a further £25,000, covering teacher training and resources such as the puppets which are used for the younger children to make lessons more fun.

Parents also play an important part in SFA. The Family Support Group works with parents to ensure they understand the necessity to get their children to school and on time.

The team promotes parental involvement and bridges the gap between home and school.

Children with English as their second language also benefit from SFA. Mrs Maruszczak explained: "The programme helps the children to express themselves in English. It forces them to have conversations in English."

Team work and communication

Pupils who support others in their reading get a confidence boost as well. And the scheme, which is running as a three-year pilot at Ebor Gardens, exudes those all important transferable key skills - team work and communication.

The results speak for themselves SFA children perform approximately three months ahead of comparable year groups by the end of Year One, and more than 12 months by Year Five.

Mr Shipley added: "We hope with Success for All the children will achieve standards we wouldn't have thought possible. We want this to be one of the best - if not the best - inner city school in Leeds for standards."

September 2001