

### 3 | TO RAISE ATTAINMENT AND IMPROVE PROGRESS OF PUPIL PREMIUM CHILDREN IN WRITING. CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN PP AND NON-PP PUPILS



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#### 3.1 | INTRODUCTION

This aim was data driven. Not only were we aiming to improve the children's levels but we were hoping to foster a new excitement and engagement in books and writing. We hoped to make more links with home and build children's writing confidence.

#### **Planning for the project**

A PACER model was used to help map out and plan the project.

#### **Positive**

*What outcome do you want? Desired state What's currently happening? Present state*

To raise attainment and improve progress of Pupil Premium children in writing.  
There is currently a clear gap between PP and non PP pupils particularly in terms of attainment.

#### **Achievement**

*How will you know when you've got it? What specifically will you see, hear and feel?*

- \*Children participating more in class discussions / talking partners.
- \*Children choosing to write (during free time, wet play etc)
- \*Children writing more independently and generating more ideas of their own.
- \*More pride in presentation and books.
- \*Children talking about class books outside of class.
- \*Children asking more questions about writing / book.
- \*Children enjoying stories and engaging with new characters and plots.
- \*Children's writing levels improve and their rate of progress is expected or above for the term of the project (and beyond).

#### **Context**

*Where do you want it? When do you want it? Who do you want it for?*

In the classroom during lesson / at playtime / at home / during writing club  
Focus = Year 2 children – everywhere, all the time, for everyone Even non PP children should benefit from PP children's engagement etc.

#### **Ecology**

*How does this fit in with what's important to you/your values? What might you also get that you do/ don't want?*

- Key Value – Everyone achieving their full learning potential.
- Breaking down barriers to learning -Working with parents – increased communication and collaboration
- CHOICE – children choosing activities and following interests and passions

**Resources**

What do you need to begin? What do you need to keep going? How will you get this?

- \*The target group of children selected from both Year 2 classes.
- \*Permissions from Head teacher and parents to include their children in the club/ action research.
- \*Gather current data for selected children so we can do a comparison.
- \*Interviews with children (questions planned)
- \*Meetings with parents
- \*After-school club planned and organised
- \*Trip to the theatre booked and planned
- \*Funding from school for theatre trip

**3.2 | THE PLAN: INITIAL DATA COLLECTION AND ACTIVITIES****The Plan**

- \*Permission from the Headteacher to complete the action research project in school.
- \*Interviews – with children and parents. To get a feel for how the children felt about writing / books / school. What they love to do at school and home and things they don't like so much etc.
- \*A weekly Writing Club – a special feel with lots of fun and aimed at engaging the children and making them want to talk / read and write. Lots of fun activities that were linked to our work in school to consolidate but in a subtle way so that the children didn't realise and there was still choice involved in our clubs.
- \*A theatre trip – the key stimulus and 'hook' of the club and project. These children are often the children who don't have the rich experiences to draw on when writing so experiencing something real and special was at the heart of this project.
- \*Links with home – encouraging parents to engage with school and learning and support their children. These links were also established to gain permissions from the parents for the children to attend the writing club.

**3.3 | ACTION/RESULTS****Interviews**

The interviews with the children were interesting, useful and revealing. The majority of children said they felt 'anxious' or 'nervous' when it was time to write and that they did not want to write without support or help.

All but one child said they did not read or write regularly at home and neither did their parents. Over half the children showed a strong interest in music, tv and film.

From these interviews it was clear the children lacked confidence in their abilities as writers and were de-motivated by writing at school. The idea for using a popular, funny and 'grown-up' feeling Roald Dahl text to study alongside a trip to the theatre was born!

We decided on informal group chats with parents rather than interviews, which we felt might be intimidating or difficult to actually arrange. We told the children, sent a text to the parents and even sent an informal letter to arrange a quick chat before pick up one day with tea and biscuits. Two parents showed up and one of those was 'poached' from the playground and oblivious there actually was a meeting. This highlighted to us the issue of communication and collaboration with this particular set of parents and was quite telling alone. We arranged another meeting and really publicised the theatre trip as a 'carrot'. This time we got all of the remaining parents attending except one. The parents confirmed the children's interests (popular tv shows and characters, film and music) and were excited about the prospect of the trip. We worked hard to avoid parents feeling they had been singled out because there was an issue or problem.

## The Writing Club

The writing club itself took place every Thursday after school and was designed to be different, special and fun. The children were all given their own book to decorate, and although we always discussed all writing together, their books were not marked.

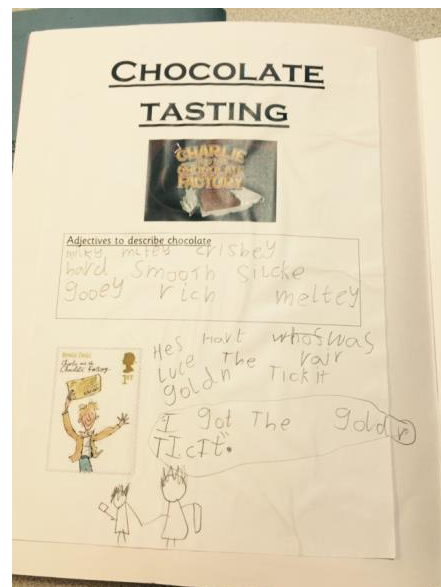
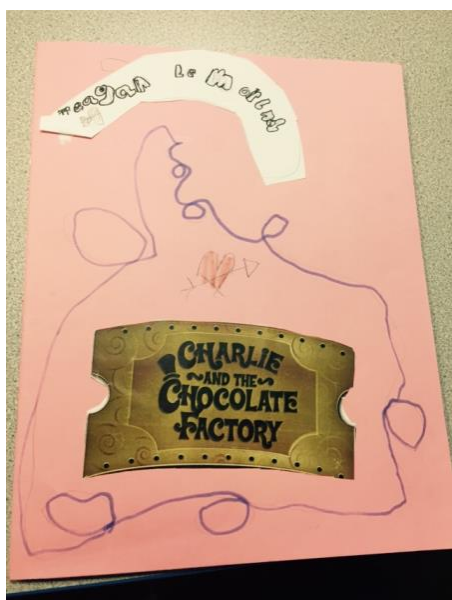


FIG.1 PUPILS' BOOKS

From the outset the children knew we were reading Charlie and The Chocolate Factory and that we had an exciting theatre trip planned. An exciting and accessible pop up version of the book was purchased to share with the group, which the children loved.



FIG.2 POP UP BOOK

The children were all issued with golden tickets to generate excitement!



FIG.3 GOLDEN TICKET

We had a few weeks before our trip to explore the book and a few weeks after. The children had a key role in choosing what they wanted to do and how. It was steered where possible to link with our class work and consolidate their learning but the children did not realise this was the case as it was done in a very different way.

Activities included chocolate tastings, diary entries, recounts, recipe writing (we made chocolate cakes) etc. Children were writing independently, composing their own ideas and sentences and choosing to do it without pressure. Gradually confidence and quality of work improved.

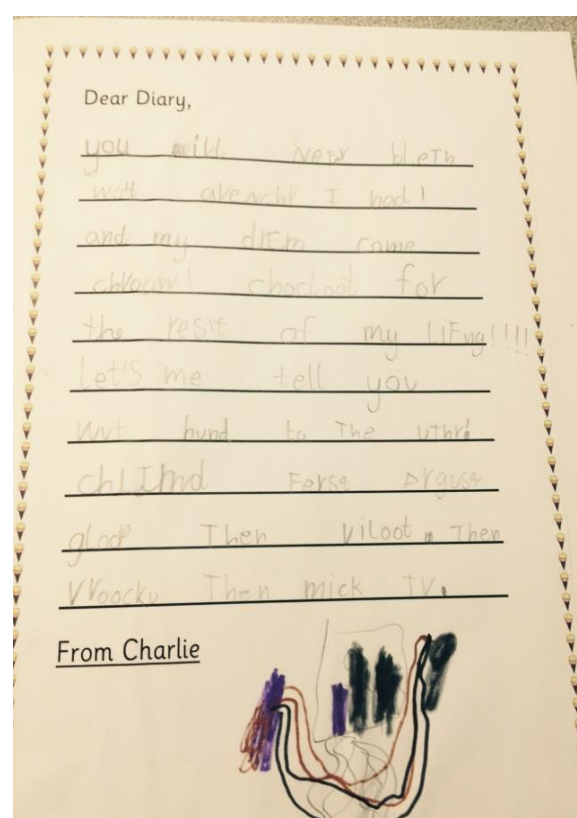
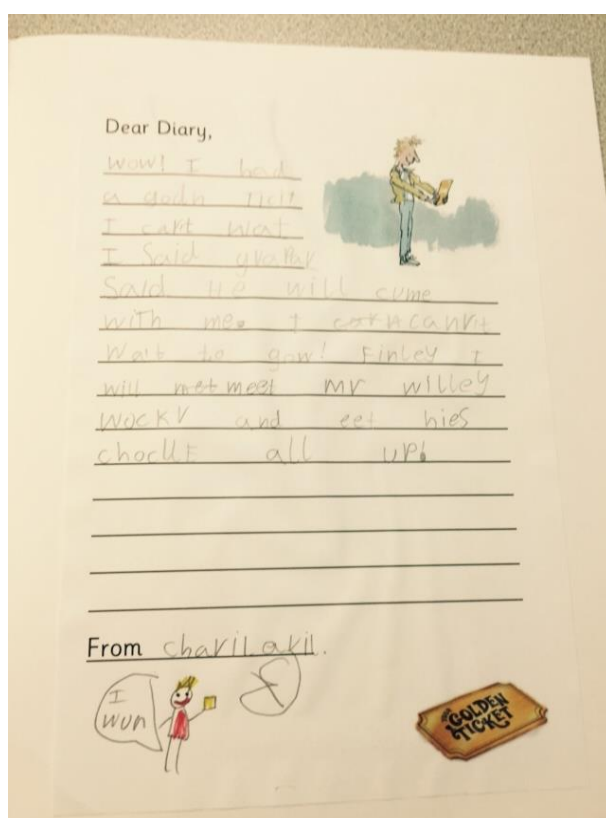


FIG.4 PUPILS' WRITING

Children's confidence and engagement appeared to really soar and it was clear how much they were enjoying being a part of this special club. We completed an activity in another lesson about things we are best at / proud of and nearly all the writing club children mentioned being a part of this special club. It was a badge of honour for them and something to be treasured.

Quotes from the children about the club included:



'I love writing club, it's a special club and we do fun things.' 'Writing club is the best thing in school.'  
'We do lots of fun stuff at writing club, and we do some writing.'

The Theatre Trip itself was a huge success and for most of the group their first experience of the West End and theatre. It was a special trip and a memorable experience.

Children said:

'The trip was really fun and I got to see the story on the stage – I was excited to go and do work on the show and story after.'

Soon, the quality and quantity of work in class was also improving with children generating more of their own ideas and writing more independently and enthusiastically.

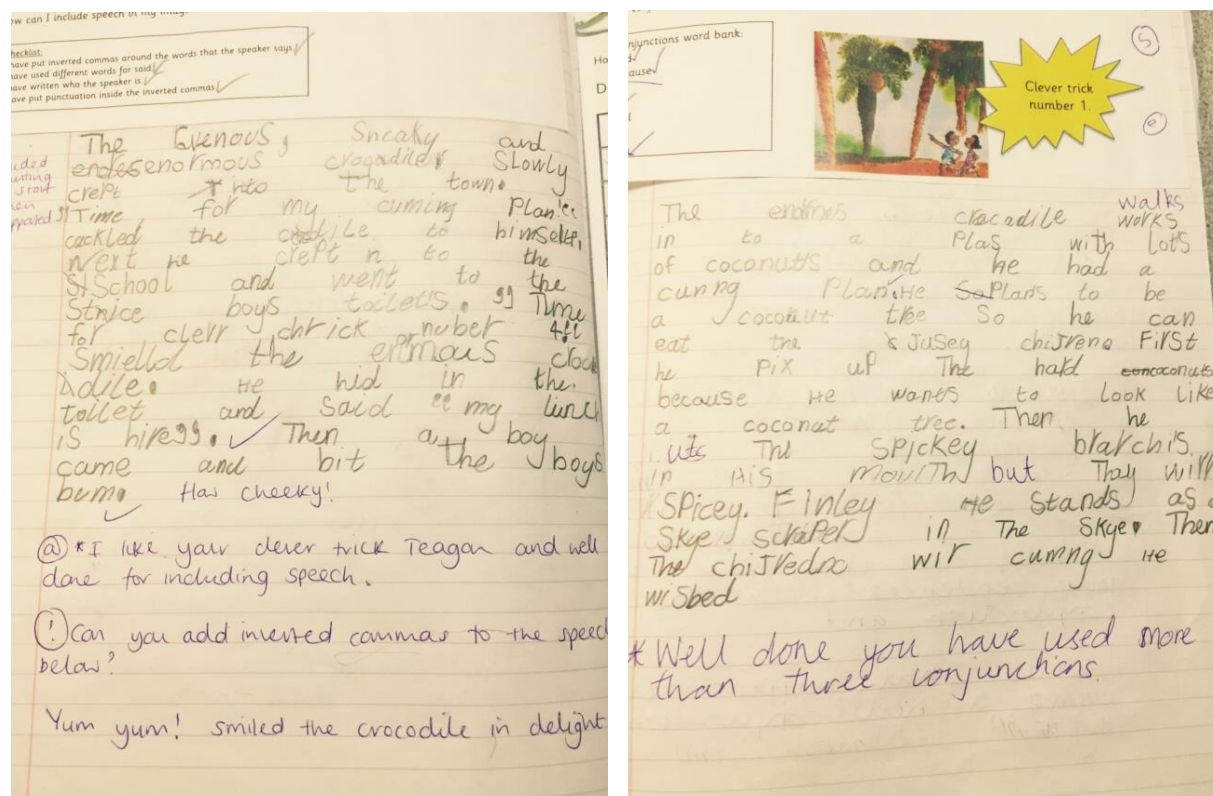


FIG.5 PUPILS' WRITING

### 3.4 | CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12 children selected for the project 4 boys and 8 girls

Data at the start of the project (from Year 1 end of year): Writing ATTAINMENT - 16% are above expected for APS (average point score) 33% at expected for APS (average point score) 50% below expected APS (average point score)

Data this year: Writing Attainment at end of Year 2 of the 80% at expected, 20% are above expected for APS 80% are at expected or better APS 20% are below expected APS

Progress this year

Of the 67% who have made expected or better progress, 47% have made above expected progress 67% have made expected or better progress 13% have made below expected progress (one with SEN). From this data we can see that attainment on the whole is not an issue for this group in writing and the gap between their attainment and their peers is closing rapidly. There has been a significant shift to show more of this group achieving at or above expected attainment following this project.

Progress has been accelerated amongst this group to close the gap between these pupils and their peers, though more still needs to happen for those children who have not made expected progress this year and this will be followed up in 2015-2016.

Writing Club was only for one term due to the member of staff running it taking maternity leave. Other interventions filled the gap for most of the children in this group and there were more additional writing opportunities presented to all the children in school to encourage children to write at home and take more ownership in their writing, for example graffiti artists working with children to include their poetry on the playground walls.

The children in this group were starting to get into the flow when the writing club finished for the term. We believe that with blossoming confidence which the club helped to foster we would have seen more and more from them and hopefully this would have had even greater impact on their progress and attainment.

This project was a short-term success but to reap the benefits even more, especially in terms of data and attainment, it needs to run for longer than one short term as the children were just getting into their stride.

In terms of the children's attitudes towards writing and their confidence it was hugely successful. Interviews conducted at the end of the project showed the difference in children's outlook and approach to writing shifting and becoming much more positive in 100% of cases. When asked how they felt when they were about to write they said 'excited' and 'full of ideas', a contrast to the feelings of nerves before the project.

Going forward it appears that projects like this can make a difference. We believe that implementing this kind of approach earlier in the year and continuing it for longer, in order to really work with the children and develop their confidence and enthusiasm for writing and wider aspects of literacy would result in even more positive outcomes for the children. We would also be able to gain a better understanding through closer tracking of their work and attainment how this approach impacts on pupil progress.