Boys & Writing
Raising Boys’ Achievement
Guidance
Compiled by Practitioners and the Lewisham Primary Strategy Team
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Planning, Units of Work, Case Studies & Reflections.
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In November 2004 a group of 18 Lewisham teachers from 16 schools came together to participate in a local action research project ‘It’s Cool to Write; Raising Boys’ Achievement Across the Curriculum’ to look at ways to improve the writing of underachieving boys, in particular African-Caribbean boys in their classes.

Why boys?
The project arose from concerns around the persistent underachievement of boys in Literacy both nationally and in Lewisham with a greater gap between boys and girls in writing. Over the last four years boys have trailed behind girls in English at around 10% and in Writing more alarmingly at around 17%.

In Lewisham, the percentages of pupils achieving level 4+ in the 2006 KS2 English tests were as follows:

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In Lewisham, the percentages of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in the 2006 KS2 English tests were as follows:

- English overall: Boys 72%, Girls 83%
- Reading: Boys 78%, Girls 85%
- Writing: Boys 58%, Girls 71%

Equally worrying is the continued underachievement in the reading and writing of African-Caribbean boys, 68% of whom attained a Level 4+ compared with 72% of all boys overall.

A new climate – time for change
The project was also timely in that the PNS Excellence and Enjoyment (DfES 2003) document stated that ‘high standards and a broad and rich curriculum go hand in hand.’ This document went on to say that the PNS would ‘support teachers and schools across the whole curriculum, building on the lessons of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies, but moving on to offer teachers more control and flexibility’. (ibid.27:3)

In addition, QCA had published their materials – Creativity: Find it, promote it. In a three year research project, QCA found that where teachers made changes to their planning and practice, predominately by embedding speaking and listening strategies, pupils were more motivated to learn and therefore increased their attainment in Literacy.

OFSTED, in their document, The Curriculum in Successful Primary Schools’ had also encouraged schools to be flexible with the curriculum and use their professional judgments to meet the needs of all pupils.

Encouraged by these central policy documents, the teachers in our project felt that it was high time to take back ownership of their Literacy planning, take some risks and experiment with their own practice.

Two other recent publications influenced our decision to begin our own project – the United Kingdom Literacy/Primary National Strategy’s research on Boys and Writing and The Centre of Literacy in Primary Education’s Boys on the Margin (clpe 2004). Both research publications emphasised extending the teaching sequence for writing to include a pre-writing phase of interactive activities – drama, role play, ICT and visual literacy as successful practices which engaged and motivated boys. We wanted to share this knowledge with teachers and inspire them to develop creative ways of working.

The Project Aims
One aim of the project was to provide a platform from which teachers could meet together and develop the confidence to take risks in their teaching as researchers. We wanted to provide teachers with the opportunity to explore a variety of interactive teaching approaches that would motivate the underachieving boys in their classes to engage with the processes of writing. By focusing closely on a group of three case study boys in their classes, teachers were able to closely monitor whether the changes they made to their planning and practice to bring literacy alive would result in an improvement in the quality of the boys’ written texts.
Project processes
During the project the teachers, who were working with classes from year 1 to year 6, met at the Professional Development Centre for six sessions over the Autumn and Spring terms. They also met together in pairs for four half days in each others’ schools to plan 2 units of work.

At the PDC teachers attended sessions from key speakers:
Myra Barrs presented evidence from the clpe research Boys on the Margin.
James Berry gave a poetry workshop, reading from his anthologies for children and adults.
Francoise Fokias gave a talk on using core texts from African-Caribbean cultures and the importance of cultural identity.
Moira Harboard and Dianne Spalding ran a practical IT session on e-mentoring
Jerome Monahan ran a practical session on visual literacy

Inspired by these sessions teachers then decided on a variety of different teaching approaches that they would try out as part of the teaching sequence in planning their units of work. This helped them to define the focus for their particular research question.

Teachers were also given particular core reading of other research texts to read at each session. They also kept a reflective journal in which they recorded significant moments in children’s progress and reflections on their changing practice.

Planning units of work
Teachers worked in pairs across schools to plan together two 2 units of work around narrative texts. As an initial starting point for thinking creatively and mapping the teaching sequence for each unit of work teachers used the UKLA/PNS 3 ellipse planning format. This format and some of the teachers’ plans are reproduced in this booklet for you to use and adapt as you wish.

The Case Study Boys
Each teacher identified 3 boys in their classes to focus on as case studies, one of whom in each class was an African-Caribbean boy. Teachers selected boys from their tracking information in their schools on pupil attainment; these were boys who were underachieving according to National Curriculum levels. Some of these pupils were attaining higher levels of progress in reading than in writing. Teachers were also asked to consider pupil engagement in Literacy sessions and to observe, for example, whether pupils were engaged in reading but not in writing activities.

Assessing Progress
In order to monitor the progress of the case study boys the teachers collected four pieces of data:
National Curriculum sublevels in Reading and Writing
Levels in Reading and Writing using the clpe scales
Pupil interviews on attitudes to Literacy
Samples of writing
The boys were assessed at the beginning and at the end of the project and samples of writing were collected before and after each unit of work was taught.

Celebrating Successes
At the end of the project, the teachers mounted an exhibition of their work and their children’s texts, and invited their Headteachers to attend a presentation of their research findings.

Reaching a wider audience
In 2006, a group of teacher-researchers from the project formed a small working party to put together this publication. It is intended for Headteachers, Literacy Subject Leaders and classteachers to use as guidance for developing creative teaching approaches that will motivate, inspire and engage boys. However, as with all good teaching, the teachers found that the kind of strategies they employed specifically for boys were also those which were beneficial to the girls.

Val Cork
Teaching & Learning Consultant
Taking risks and establishing control
At the beginning of the project the teachers were invited and encouraged to take risks in their teaching and this meant taking risks in their planning, both in the formats that they used and in the amount of time they spent exploring one text.

The majority of the teachers in the project were using the NLS medium term and weekly planning formats or adapted school formats. Some were still using the Lewisham plans and others were using commercially produced plans such as Hamilton Trust.

Teachers were asked to plan two 2/3 week block units of work, one for each term, around the narrative texts they had chosen. For some teachers it was a new experience to plan a unit of work entirely from scratch around a their own chosen text. In some cases the teachers found that the children were so engaged with the whole text and so motivated to produce work around it that they extended the unit of work across the half term. For some teachers, exploring a whole text in this amount of depth was a new experience.

Flexibility and fluidity
Initially teachers were shown the ‘United Kingdom Literacy Association/Primary National Strategy (UKLA/PNS) planning format from their Boys and Writing Project’ and were encouraged to use this as an initial thinking tool for planning each unit. In this booklet we have reproduced a slightly amended version of this planning format on the following page. Although teachers then transferred this in more detail to their individual school weekly planning formats, they found that using the UKLA/PNS format enabled them to see the whole teaching sequence for writing over an extended period of time. This allowed them to slow down the process of creating a text and revisit parts of the teaching sequence to meet the children’s needs.

Rather than sticking rigidly to the plan teachers felt they could shuttle back and forth across the sequence thereby adapting their teaching activities flexibly towards achieving the final quality writing outcome. For example, if pupils needed further experiences in order to capture ideas before writing in role as characters, another speaking and listening activity or drama technique could be planned to secure and anchor their thoughts.

Units of work
Some of the units of work planned and taught by the teachers in the Project are reproduced in the Appendices for you to use and adapt.

Units were planned around the following Core Quality Texts:
The Lion and the Mouse – Aesop’s Fables
Handa’s Hen – Eileen Browne
What has happened to Lulu? – Charles Causley
Short and Scary – Louise Cooper
James and the Giant Peach – Roald Dahl
The Little Prince – Antoine de Saint Exupery
Snow White – Grimms Fairy Tales
The Iron Man – Ted Hughes
The Fox Busters – Dick King-Smith
Just So Stories – Rudyard Kipling
Fingers on the Back of the Neck – Margaret Mahey
Chicken Run video – Nick Park
What is pink – Christina Rossetti
Holes – Louis Sachar
There’s a Boy in the Girl’s Bathroom – Louis Sachar
Where the Wild Things Are – Maurice Sendak
The Three Little Pigs – various versions
Greek Myths – Marcia Williams
The Legend of King Arthur
St. George and the Dragon
Planning the teaching sequence for a unit of work

Range:
Texts:
Objectives:

- Familiarisation with text type
- Capturing ideas
- Teacher demo
- Teacher scribing
- Supported writing
- Independent writing
- Quality writing outcome

Model from the UKLA/PNS Boys and Writing Project
Planning for a literacy unit of work

Range: Stories, novels about imaginary worlds
Text: James and the Giant Peach – Roald Dahl
Objectives: T1 - to understand how writers create imaginary worlds, particularly where this is original or unfamiliar, such as a science fiction setting and to show how the writer has evoked it through detail; T2 - to understand how settings influence events and incidents in stories and how they affect characters’ behaviour; T4 - to understand how the use of expressive and descriptive language can, e.g. create moods, arouse expectations, build tension, describe attitudes or emotions; T10 - to develop use of settings in own writing, making use of work on adjectives and figurative language to describe settings effectively; T13 - to write own examples of descriptive, expressive language based on those read. Link to work on adjectives and similes.

Quality outcome
Book making - word processed text and watercolour illustrations, laminated and bound.
Planning for a literacy unit of work

Range: Fiction – Scary Stories
Texts: ‘Short and Scary’, ‘Fingers on the Back of the Neck’
Objectives: To study a genre in depth and produce an extended piece of writing.

T1 - to compare and evaluate a novel or play in print and the film/TV version; T3 - to articulate personal responses to literature, identifying why and how a text affects the reader; T4 - to be familiar with the work of some established authors, to know what is special about their work, and to explain their preferences in terms of authors, styles and themes; T5 - to contribute constructively to shared discussion about literature, responding to and building on the views of others; T6 - to manipulate narrative perspective by: writing in the voice and style of a text; producing a modern retelling; writing a story with two different narrators; T7 - to plan quickly and effectively the plot, characters and structure of their own narrative writing.

Mind mapping - 'What do we know already about this text type?'

Discuss well known scary stories and films with children. 'What is it about this film/story that makes it scary?'

Children to collect key words/phrases that are used with this text type. These can be put into a 'Phrases for Free' book.

Use of drama to familiarise children with characters. Use TA in role e.g. as character in the haunted house. Children can interview Use sounds such as 'organ music', to create eerie atmosphere.

Children to use guided reading time to design scary book cover for their story.

Children to use writing partners to peer mark each others drafts. Use specific lesson objectives for marking focus.

Use quality introduction from a text used. Discuss what makes a good opening. Ask children to highlight answers to key questions - Who? What? Where? Why? Children can use this as a model for their own scary stories.

Use classroom/learning environment as a starting point. Ask yourself 'How can I create a space that reflects this genre of scary/suspense stories.'


Use visual and audio resources. i.e. DVD e.g. 'The Haunted House' (Eddie Murphy) and 'Fungus the Bogeyman' Raymond Briggs.

Children to create a story plan/mind map where they plan and create both written and visual ideas for their story.

Story setting descriptions - children to consider sights, sounds, tastes and feelings associated with settings. 'How cold was it in the old house?' 'What did the air taste of?'

Writing with partners to collaborating on ideas. Children can present these as a team/partnership.

Use of IWB to model the story writing process all the way through, starting with the introduction/interesting opening.

Planned discussion and open ended questioning to highlight and focus on key areas. Examples of this could be character description/complex sentences.

Children to analyse, discuss and record their feelings about their learning outcomes. 'What did they feel they achieved from this unit? What did they most/least enjoy?'

Give children the opportunity to publish their story in full or excerpt, using ICT. Class book can be created for display. Children can also perform short versions of their stories in drama form.

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Liz Wright — Case Study

David Year 4:

Initial Perceptions
At the beginning of the project David was a reluctant writer who chose to write very little. He showed no enjoyment in literacy lessons particularly those that involved writing and was reluctant to join in. He frequently needed coaxing to have a go at the activities and was of the opinion that he would fail before he had even tried. When I asked him ‘Do you like literacy?’ He stated emphatically that he did not. He especially did not like story writing ‘It's too hard’. At this point I decided that David was the perfect choice for my action research.

I decided that it was David’s attitude towards literacy lessons which was affecting his progress in reading and writing. He was underachieving according to National Curriculum expectations of a child his age. At the end of Year 3 David was working at sub-level 2b in both reading and writing. At some point he had become disengaged and I was keen to see if I could find activities and genres that would appeal to him and make him interested once more. I felt that if I could capture his interest he would begin to make progress.

I interviewed David in the initial stages of the ‘It’s cool to write project’ to find out more. As we chatted I realised that his difficulties with writing, in particular narrative writing, stemmed from him finding it hard to get ideas and plan his work effectively. He had convinced himself that he was a failure at writing and said ‘What’s the point?’ I asked him if there were any particularly kinds of writing that he preferred. After a considerable silence he said ‘I e-mail friends on the computer sometimes’ and then went on to talk about the games he enjoyed playing!

Towards the end of the interview I asked David if he could remember a piece of writing that he was proud of. Interestingly, he replied ‘A story that I wrote in Blue Class’ (Year One). This was memorable ‘because I did it by myself with no help’.

Reading Stories
I noticed early on in the year that David enjoyed reading in class especially when he had free choice or time to share books with friends. He particularly enjoyed non-fiction and comic texts. His favourite reading matter was the Captain Underpants series and books on football tactics. When asked about his reading experiences at home, David spoke about his favourite reading place, ‘My Mum and Dad’s bed’, and how both his father and mother shared stories with him regularly. His favourite text in this situation was ‘Cops and Robbers’ by Janet and Allan Ahlberg. David also enjoyed drawing and spent free time drawing and labelling detailed pictures of his favourite football team and tactical manoeuvres.

David evidently enjoyed listening to narrative and sharing stories with adults and friends. It was obvious that interest in the narrative genre was not the problem. So what was?

Relating Reading with Writing
As I got to know David better I began to realise that although he enjoyed reading or sharing stories he found it difficult to relate this activity to his writing. He hadn’t made the links between reading and writing. He saw them as two separate elements.

He also viewed writing as something that he must do independently to be successful, hence his comment about his story in Year One being memorable because he did it without help.

David found it almost impossible to control all the aspects of writing at the same time. If he concentrated on the content, his organisation and transcription suffered. I decided that David needed time to become familiar with a text and a structured approach using reading, speaking and listening, drama and teacher modelling before attempting writing.
Planning a Unit of Work
I decided to choose Roald Dahl’s James and the Giant Peach as the text for the first part of the project. It fitted in with our NLS genre – stories/novels about imagined worlds, sci-fi, fantasy adventures; and I knew that David, and others, had enjoyed other books by the same author. I felt that it was important to have a boy as the central character as it would be easier for David to empathise with the character of James.

I planned a unit of work, using the UKLA planning format that would allow David the time necessary to become immersed in the text. I devised a range of interactive and multi-sensory experiences, as part of a pre writing phase, to allow him to become a part of the story world and develop confidence with the text.

Rather than focus on writing an entire narrative in one go, the plan broke the text into small sections each having its own pre-writing phase. I hoped that this would make writing more manageable for David and enable him to focus on the different elements of writing at the same time.

When I told the class that we would be using James and the Giant Peach for our literacy for the next few weeks I was delighted with their response. Several had already read the text, some offered to bring the video in for us to watch and Daniel sat on the carpet and said ‘Cool’.

Becoming Motivated with Narrative Writing
After reading the part of the text where James makes the journey into the peach, I gave the class a range of fruits to explore. David chose a pineapple and relished having a whole session to touch, smell, look at and finally taste the fruit. At the end of the session he had produced a long list of adjectives and descriptive phrases, something that he would have found challenging beforehand. The hands on experience had stopped him from becoming anxious about whether he could do it. Instead he couldn’t wait to pick up a pen. The use of whiteboards seemed to help David too. He was more positive about writing if he had the facility to wipe away and try again. It allowed him to organise his ideas without having ‘mistakes’ permanently recorded.

Using this first hand experience he was confident to have a go at writing about his own journey into a giant pineapple. He was encouraged to share the work with a talk partner. He was eager to share his work with his peers and welcomed their suggestions for improvement. He was beginning to realise that writing does not have to be an independent activity to be successful.

Increasing Confidence through collaboration
As the project progressed I made the decision to continue the work on James and the Giant Peach for the whole 7 weeks. The children in the class were immersed in the story and motivated to write.

David worked confidently through each section of the text. He remained positive and motivated. He especially enjoyed the use of video clips.

Towards the end of the project David worked with a talk partner to scaffold the sections of his story together to produce the final piece of writing. As he had told me earlier in the project that he enjoyed drawing, I asked him to paint some watercolour scenes of sections of his writing to illustrate his story. He happily agreed, chatting about why he was painting particular ones.

Liz Wright—Case Study
Success and Progress
Making a book as the outcome at the end of the project was essential. The children needed to see everything they had learnt come together into an end product. The books were an exceptional mix of quality writing and careful artwork. They quickly became a cherished part of the class book corner.

David shared his completed book with the rest of KS2 in a sharing assembly. It was the first time that he had wanted to share his writing in Year 4 and, despite his shyness, the enjoyment and pride he had shone through.

David’s attainment reflected his new attitude to literacy. At the end of Year 4 his attainment in reading had progressed to National Curriculum level 3a, up 4 sub-levels as measured by the optional SATs. This slightly exceeded my teacher assessment which was level 3b in reading. In writing he had progressed 2 sub-levels to 3c. This was in line with my teacher assessment. Reflecting on his progress I felt that the study of one text in depth over several weeks, building in time to capture ideas and collaborative writing opportunities, had shifted David’s attitude and motivation in writing.

I asked David what he thought of literacy following the project. He responded ‘It’s better, we have fun now.’ He was thrilled when I told him that I was taking his draft work and completed book to be part of an exhibition at the Professional Development Centre. However after a few weeks he became impatient and kept asking me ‘When am I going to get my book back?”

Liz Wright—Case Study
Luigi Leccacorvi – Case Study

Ashley Year 6
Disengaged with reading and writing
In September 2004, Ashley began his learning experience in Year 6 with me. After a few weeks getting to know Ashley, I noticed during Literacy lessons that he appeared to be disengaged in any writing activity. He would choose to write nothing, or as little as possible and was even less prepared to choose a book that he thought he might enjoy reading. I used to ask Ashley, ‘Which books do you like reading?’; ‘What do you like writing about?’. The answer would normally be something along the lines of - ‘I don’t like literacy and I don’t like reading. Writing is hard to do and reading is boring’. I decided to choose Ashley as a focus for a case study in my action research as I was keen to find out what I could do to change his negative attitude towards Literacy.

Ashley’s attainment in reading and writing reflected this attitude; he was underachieving according to National curriculum sublevels with both reading and writing at 3c, at the end of Year 5. I felt that his interest and enthusiasm for reading and writing had almost disappeared. I believed that Ashley was disenchanted by lack of prior success in Literacy and also possibly by being asked to work with subject matter and genres in literacy lessons that were neither relevant or of any real interest to him.

When I interviewed Ashley about his attitudes towards writing for the ‘It’s Cool to Write’ project, he stated that he found it hard to concentrate on his writing when he knew that some of it didn’t make sense and that his handwriting was untidy. He also said that he felt embarrassed to publish his work as he didn’t want others to see it. He revealed - ‘I don’t actually think that I have ever written about anything that has really interested me!’.

Becoming motivated through engagement with personal interest
With this in mind, I asked Ashley to write a short profile on different footballers that played for Manchester United, who I knew were Ashley’s favourite team. He very gladly accepted the offer and did the majority of the writing that very night at home. The next day Ashley asked if he could read what he had written to other boys in his peer group, which he did, without feeling ashamed or embarrassed. Quite the opposite – he enjoyed sharing his work! I felt that he had found an audience for his writing and a real purpose – to inform his peers of his expertise in the Manchester United Football Team.

This observation prompted me to ask all children in the class to select their own focus for biography writing during the Autumn term. The children predominantly chose role models and icons pertinent to their own lives - pop-stars, footballers and celebrities. My decision to plan work around the children’s personal interests brought about a noticeable change in the boys’ motivation to read. The boys’ attitudes towards reading displayed a quite remarkable and positive shift towards real engagement with their chosen subject matter as many of the reluctant readers were now reading for a purpose to find out about their heroes for their own writing. As well as using the internet at school, many of the boys (and the girls) brought in texts from home – magazines, annuals, fanzines, newspapers from which to research their information.

The writing outcomes – the biographies were composed and produced using during the Literacy Hour and completed for publication during Literacy Club run which I ran after school. The children were having fun and the boys enjoyed working on something which captured their interests.

Moving on to a new genre; capturing imaginations
In January, I announced to the class that they were going to be starting a unit of work on scary/suspense stories. An air of excitement washed across the children, especially the boys who seemed genuinely enthralled about the subject. Immediately offers of DVDs from home and suggestions for story choices rained on me from the children, especially the boys. It was obvious that they were ‘into’ this genre of fiction. Ashley supplied his video copy of ‘The Haunted House’ which I later used as part of my teaching sequence to familiarise children with the genre.

In my planning, I decided to use art sessions to capture ideas for writing. The children drew and painted giant rats and tombstones that were used to create a learning environment that reflected the genre. The children were very enthusiastic and looked forward to coming in each day to see how the classroom looked. Ashley stated with a smile ‘It’s a bit like having Halloween twice a year!’.
I selected group reading texts such as ‘Fingers on the Back on the Neck’ by Margaret Mahy and ‘Short and Scary’ by Louise Cooper for my guided reading sessions. I noticed that as soon as I had introduced these books to the class they were not seen again on the bookshelf until the end of the summer term! A number of the boys, including Ashley, used to enjoy visiting lower year groups to read aloud in role as ‘scary storyteller’, using these texts as their source. Indeed Ashley observed about himself, ‘When I read my work to Year 1 it made me feel really good.’ I observed another clear shift in the boys’ reading patterns – they wanted to read for their own pleasure and to entertain without being asked to read.

**Increase in confidence and writing stamina**
During this unit of work, Ashley began to gain confidence in writing as he became more motivated to succeed. He was now writing about things that he was able to relate to. He was able to identify with the scary/suspense-led images associated with this genre through his own interest in the films that he had enjoyed. During the teaching sequence for this unit of work I modelled all aspects of the writing process clearly allowing the Ashley to see what he needed to do to achieve success. Ashley’s confidence in composing ideas was matched by his desire to improve other areas of his writing such as sentence structure and presentation. I felt that he was now in control of shaping his texts according to his needs. Whereas Ashley had previously been reluctant to share his work with others, he now wanted to show his writing to his parents and other staff members. During this unit of work, I noticed that Ashley’s stamina for writing during literacy sessions began to increase. He was able to write for more extended periods and sometimes even requested to continue his writing at home.

**Recognising success and progress**
Ashley was also proud that his work was being displayed at the ‘It’s Cool to Write’ exhibition day and was clear about which pieces of work he wanted to choose. He wanted to be recognised for his achievements and was thrilled that his writing was reaching a wider audience. I noticed how much this recognition from me contributed to Ashley’s perception of himself as a writer.

I had seen a distinct change in Ashley’s attitude towards writing and reading. I was now teaching a boy who wanted to be ‘high profile’, within the class in providing ideas and suggestions during literacy sessions. This change of attitude towards reading and his motivation to write resulted in Ashley’s attainment in Literacy increasing. His attainment in writing moved up 3 sub-levels to 4c and in reading by 4 sublevels to 4b by the end of Year 6. Ashley was absolutely thrilled to achieve a Level 4 in his English SATs.

**Building on children’s enthusiasms**
When I was asked to reflect on the impact of this project on my class, I realised that it was not just the case study boys who had benefited from the changes I had made to my practice. I had seen an increase in the enthusiasm and motivation for reading and writing which had spread throughout the class. I noticed that children who had previously struggled with Literacy found ways into writing through being given the opportunities to find out about what they were interested in. I then tried to build on this enthusiasm by introducing the children to other genres that I thought would be familiar to them first in the visual form. Using a flexible planning format and interactive approaches to teaching and learning, including drama, art and ICT I managed to extend children’s repertoire of known texts that they could use as models for their own writing. I believe that this scaffolded the boys’ learning and gave them confidence to take risks.

As the unit of work on scary/suspense stories was drawing to a close, I asked Ashley what he thought of literacy now. His reply was, ‘Literacy is still literacy…but this has been fun!’

Luigi Leccacorvi—Case Study
Data collected
During the project, teachers collected and used four different pieces of data on each of their case study boys with which to assess progress:

National Curriculum sublevels in Reading and Writing from school tracking data
Teacher assessment in Reading and Writing using the clpe scales
Boys’ self-perceptions as writers – a questionnaire/interview
Samples of writing

The boys perceptions were collected at the beginning and at the end of the project and samples of writing were assessed before and after each unit of work was taught.

Pupils’ self-perceptions as writers
At the beginning of the project less than half of the boys thought that they were good writers. Of those that enjoyed writing activities most boys said that they preferred to write stories and poems rather than non-fiction. Reasons given for not enjoying writing included:

‘it hurts my hands’
‘it takes a long time’
‘because I’m not good at it’
‘because my handwriting is bad’
‘it hurts my head’

When asked if there were any aspects of writing that boys enjoyed more than others, the responses included:

‘writing on the computer’
‘writing about favourite things’
‘writing/talking with others’
‘reading my writing aloud’
‘making books’
‘emailing on my computer’

Boys were also asked what kind of writing they did at home for pleasure. Genres mentioned included:

‘stories’
‘cartoons’
‘graffiti’
‘diary’
‘spelling practice’
‘neat handwriting’
‘songs’
‘lists’
This list of genres was not a surprise for most of the practitioners with the exception perhaps of stories as this was often the area of writing that the boys were seen to struggle with so it was interesting that some of the boys chose this genre to write at home.

**Tracking progress**

The two units of work that teachers planned over the course of the project were both narrative – some story writing and some poetry. Each piece of work was levelled by the teachers using the National Curriculum level descriptors. Using this measurement, all of the children in the project made between 1 and 5 sublevels progress in writing over the two terms. While a few boys had made exceptional progress, others made less progress according to this measure and some practitioners felt disappointed that the progress that they knew their boys had made did not seem to be reflected in their new level.

This lead led to a discussion about what exactly does constitute progress in writing. Teachers found the clpe writing scales to be useful in helping them to discuss their boys’ progress as writers. They reported a shift in their boys’ patterns of behaviour and described progress in terms of their boys:

- becoming more engaged in literacy activities
- being more willing to take risks with committing ideas to written form
- gaining confidence in having a go at paired and independent writing
- enjoying writing/drawing activities such as story maps
- having more ideas to write about
- using sentence structures close to those modelled in shared reading/writing
- writing longer texts
- wanting to share own texts with an audience

In almost all cases the pre-project NC levels the boys attained for reading were higher than their pre-project levels for writing. The practitioners felt that this was because writing was harder to teach and that the skills required in becoming a writer took pupils longer to master and gain control of.

**Responding to individual needs**

Each boy presented with different reasons for underachieving in writing such as difficulty with spelling and handwriting, confidence in expressing ideas, shaping a whole text, writing in particular genres or having negative attitudes towards reading. Where practitioners focused in closely not only on the boys’ writing samples but also on their behaviours during literacy sessions, they were able to support their boys and meet their individual needs.
What inspired you to become a teacher researcher and join this project?

I was inspired to join the project because I had noticed that increasing numbers of children in my class, especially boys, were becoming disengaged with writing. As Literacy Subject Leader, I also noticed this pattern across the school and was concerned about the underachievement of boys in particular. I was hoping that the project would provide me with effective ways of making writing accessible and achievable by all pupils in the school. I also hoped that it would help me to enthuse staff as I felt that many of us were bored with the current approach to the teaching of English.

Describe how you felt about teaching Literacy before the project.

I felt the same as the boys in my class! I was disengaged with the curriculum. I had fallen into the trap of planning how I was to cover objectives in the time frame given by the NLS. I felt that my creativity had been stifled and I was bored. Speaking to colleagues made me realise that I was not alone and that something needed to be done. If we felt like this then it was no surprise that the children in our classes were not getting enthused about writing.

What changes have you made to your planning as a result of the project?

The project gave me the freedom to take risks with my planning and teaching. I have moved away from the rigidity of the NLS framework and now try to cover objectives in an extended, interactive and multi sensory way. I begin my planning using the ellipse format, devised by the UKLA/PNS in their research on boys and writing, as it gives me a clear structure to follow where the outcome is always at the forefront of my mind. The children are given time to speak and listen, to become immersed in the genre, to have the genre modelled and to rehearse their own writing before they have to write independently. I have also started to think about visual literacy and am looking at ways to include video and photography in the quality outcomes of units of work.

My weekly planning format has stayed broadly the same. I find that I can easily transfer ideas from the ellipse onto a weekly planning grid. The individual needs of my pupils are still met through careful differentiation. Word and sentence level objectives are moved around to make links with the text objectives that I am teaching.

What do you believe the impact to have been on the case study pupils in terms of their motivation and achievement?

The main impact that I saw was their happiness when writing. They were given the time that they needed to feel secure in the genre and become familiar with a writer’s style. This, together with clear modelling of the skills and structures that they needed gave them the confidence to write in a similar style. The teaching sequence had a clear structure and cohesive links between objectives so that the boys always understood why they were doing something. They realised that writing does not have to be about sitting alone at a table with a blank piece of paper and having to produce something from nothing by the end of a session. Collaboration with each other was a key part of their success.

At the end of the project every child had produced their own story book complete with colour illustrations that they were desperate to share with peers, staff and their parents. Finally they saw themselves as writers.

Impact on actual attainment- sublevels of progress?

All children in the class benefited from the project not just the 3 case study boys. I saw that standards in writing improved as the attitude towards writing became more positive. During the six week unit planned as part of the project children made at least one National Curriculum sub-level of progress in writing.

Planning and teaching writing in this way has meant that the attainment in my class this year has been very good with 83% making at least 2 sub-levels progress. More importantly, most underachieving children who were targeted, including the boys in my research, have made the progress to enable them to be ‘on track’.
What do you consider to be the most effective classroom pedagogies or teaching strategies that you have tried out during the project?

Allowing the children to become immersed in the genre by spending time reading, re-reading, watching DVDs, speaking and listening and participating in drama activities before they started writing was essential.

Modelling the writing process to the children to show them each stage clearly and giving them success criteria to work to. Also relating each objective to previous learning to make the links explicit.

Finally giving them the chance to rehearse their writing through the use of talk partners.

What recommendations would you make to other teachers who are thinking about making changes to their literacy teaching or considering new ways of bringing literacy alive?

Begin by deciding your quality outcome – what is it that you want the children to achieve at the end of the unit of work?

Use the UKLA ellipse planning format to help to guide you to achieve that goal. Ensure that you spend enough time on familiarisation with your chosen genre or the children will not be able to write that way.

Think about the different learning styles of the children in your class. How are you going to help them? DVD, drama, role-play, mind maps? Can you give them sensory experiences? For example, I allowed my class to see, touch, smell and taste different fruits before they wrote about their journey into one of them. The vocabulary generated by this activity meant their writing was very descriptive.

Model the processes that you want children to undertake and give them opportunities to rehearse their writing orally before committing ideas to paper. My children really look forward to sharing their ideas with their talk partner.

Give them the chance to complete their writing. If necessary delay the next unit you have planned. It is vital for their self-esteem that they go through the process to the end and produce that quality writing outcome.

Celebrate their success!

What would you say are your core beliefs about the way that children learn to become more literate and the way that literacy should be presented to children in the 21st century?

I believe that teachers need to be inspired about what they are teaching or the children will not be keen and enthusiastic to learn. The literature that we offer our classes must be of a high quality and have characteristics that can hook their attention. If we are enthused when picking up a text and want to read on to find out more, we can pass that excitement onto children. Whole texts must be used - not extracts. We must ensure that we give children enough time to become familiar with a text or genre rather than rush through onto the next one and we must cater for different styles of learning.

In terms of outcomes we need to ensure that we take account of the changing world that we live in. This means having a variety of different outcomes in the 21st century. A unit of work may result in a video, a presentation using ICT or a tape of children reading their work as well as a book or piece of written text. Literacy in the 21st century has become more visual and children experience this on a daily basis. We must change our expectations of what literacy is to include these modes and present it to children as being valid literature.

Finally I believe that we need to celebrate the successes of all the children in our class. It is up to us to encourage the children to feel proud of themselves whether they have met a daily outcome or completed the final piece of work. If we can instil a sense of achievement in our pupils they will want to keep on learning. In the 21st century we have many modes of doing this and involving children in their own successes through assessment got learning.
What inspired you to become a teacher researcher and join this project?

I was immediately inspired to join the 'It's Cool to Write; Raising Boys’ Achievement project because I felt that I had a large number of boys in my new class who where not motivated by or interested in writing. I was hoping that the project with its focus on action research would give me the tools to change this.

As a teacher-researcher I made a number of changes to my teaching practice. The project gave me a perfect opportunity to reflect on the way that I had been teaching writing, and to make some changes and additions to my practice that would not just help to raise attainment, but also to enrich the learning experiences of the children that I was teaching.

Describe how you felt about teaching Literacy before the project.

Before the project began I felt that I was restricted in my teaching of Literacy by the amount of different objectives that I needed to cover each week/term. I probably allowed that feeling govern the quality and style of my lesson delivery, especially in relation to the children gleaning ideas and providing a secure model to allow the children to be successful. On reflection, I don’t think I built in enough time for the pre-writing activities before expecting children to be able to write. I now manage every literacy unit of work with total confidence in the amount of time I will spend on it. When the children have gained as much as they can from a unit and are secure in the main objectives then we move on.

What changes have you made to your planning as a result of the project?

My planning now is led by the individual needs of my children rather than simply lifted from a suggested framework. I always begin by looking at how I can make the unit of work relevant and meaningful to the children before deciding on the objectives that I want the children to achieve or revisit. I ensure that there is enough time to capture ideas through speaking and listening activities. Talk is important in exploring meanings in a text and building thoughts which later feed into children’s writing. I also demonstrate and model the kind of writing I want children to try out in Shared Writing. This can happen at any point in the teaching sequence but most often happens prior to the children beginning their final piece of extended writing. These elements of the teaching sequence are now an integral part of my planning.

My planning format has also changed considerably. I have moved away from the NLS model that didn’t really seem to suit the structure of my lessons to a grid that allows me to be flexible in the teaching sequence. It has a separate section for daily outcomes and most importantly, the types of stimuli that I will be using in each lesson. This format acts as a constant prompt to remind me to ensure that the children have the right resources and input from me in order to be successful.

What do you believe the impact to have been on the case study pupils in terms of their motivation and achievement?

Without doubt, the boys were given a gateway to success as far as improving their writing is concerned. They were motivated to write, I believe, because they were able to have a large element of choice about what they were writing about. They were being given a clear framework to present their ideas in a way that was not only designed to meet the lesson objectives but was also fun and enjoyable. This in turn, boosted the boys’ confidence. They were able to demonstrate this confidence by presenting their writing to peers and to other staff. The general ‘feel good factor’ that came from the sessions was definitely the most tangible impact.

Impact on actual attainment- sublevels of progress?

Standards of attainment in writing rose in the case study group and have risen in the classes that I have taught since the project, and this is the case for both boys and girls. In many cases, this was by 3 or more sub-levels for writing. I really do feel that the strategies for teaching writing that were offered to me during the project have enabled me to give my children a solid framework and knowledge of the writing process that children can adapt to any genre of writing.
What do you consider to be the most effective classroom pedagogies or teaching strategies that you have tried out during the project?

I feel that total familiarisation with the genre before the children begin to even think about writing was really important. I made this as visual, interactive and exciting as possible. This involved me reading aloud core books to the whole class and watching DVD excerpts, which was useful for the visual learners. I have also found drama very useful in motivating some children.

I also think that it is key to clearly model each stage of the writing process to the whole class, building a bank of key words and phrases as the writing is developed. Children can then work on their drafts and refine them together. This includes an element of self-assessment and peer assessment with children highlighting where they have met the success criteria or including the key words that have been previously discussed.

What recommendations would you make to other teachers who are thinking about making changes to their literacy teaching or considering new ways of bringing literacy alive?

Here are a number of different strategies that could help different stages of the writing process:

Mind-mapping what the children know already about a particular genre of writing or the theme in a story to draw on their prior experiences. For example, if the chosen text genre is scary stories, the children can think about what has scared them in the past. This allows them to begin to sink into the world in which you want the writing ideas to come from. I have also used mind maps to focus children on the characters or settings in stories. Allowing them to imagine the kinds of sights, sounds and smells there might be in a story world is very productive, especially for boys. I use as many visual cues as possible such as colourful images and pictures, including some from the IWB to stimulate adventurous vocabulary - words and phrases that I hope will appear in their writing.

Planning for speaking and listening, using drama techniques such as hot seating and conscience alley allows children quality time capture ideas for their writing.

Giving the children a range of methods to plan with is important as it is an acknowledgement that real writers plan in different ways. This freedom gives children another element of choice - for example some boys in particular prefer to plan in images or drawings.

Asking the children to contribute to the texts to be studied makes them feel included in the planning. For example, when looking at non-fiction writing, such as biographies or non-chronological reports, I now expect the children to provide ideas and themes to focus on from their own interests. This immediately hooks the children in and is much more meaningful and relevant than me imposing subject matter on them.

Giving the children opportunities to always finish their writing before moving onto a new unit. This sounds obvious but I used to feel pressure to move on to the next unit of work sometimes before children had completed their writing. Now I plan for extended writing and working together in pairs to improve. If I don’t have the respect for the children’s need to complete a story or a persuasive text to the best of their ability, how can I expect them to learn the craft of writing?
Lastly, always try to give the children a forum to publish and present their writing, in a way that interests them. This could be as part of a published class book of stories or in the form of a ICT-based presentation to the rest of the class. This allows the children to understand that the purpose of writing anything is to communicate with an audience and gives them an incentive to produce quality writing that they are proud of. It’s really worth celebrating the finished writing in this way, however time consuming it may be.

**What would you say are your core beliefs about the way that children learn to become more literate and the way that literacy should be presented to children in the 21st century?**

Firstly, literacy must be meaningful, relevant and instantly accessible to children in every aspect. Once they have a made connection, taken an interest and been successful with their own choices of reading and writing topics, they are more likely to warm to genres that they are unfamiliar with.

Secondly, children need to be presented with as many different options as possible to glean and refine ideas that they can then use in their writing. The learning style must be a choice that children make for themselves to ensure they feel in control of the process. For example, one child may prefer to list ideas while another chooses to represent thoughts graphically.

Children need also to be given the right level of support in Shared and Guided Writing. This can be done by adopting and adapting the writing frameworks that have been offered. This will allow them to meet specific success criteria. For example, when looking at the features of a good story opening develop a checklist of features for children to work from.

Lastly, there must be a purpose for the child’s writing. ‘Who will be reading it? Who can I show it to? Will I have time to finish it? Where will it go when I have finished it? These are different questions that need to be answered in order to attach value and a sense of pride to a child’s writing. I have seen that this is especially important for boys – they need to know why they are doing something.

And of course, it must be fun! If the children are presented with a task that sounds irresistible, then they are more likely to produce a piece of writing that will be irresistible to readers and is of quality.
General Conclusions

Teachers and schools
The practitioners in this research project were all at different starting points in their own professional development as teachers of literacy. Some had only been teaching for a few years whereas others were very experienced, and a few were Literacy Coordinators.

The teacher-researchers were also working in a variety of school contexts. A few were working in schools where it was the norm to use commercially produced plans for Literacy which did not cluster together the objectives for reading and writing and advised planning around a different text each week. Some practitioners were in schools where staff had begun to think about making changes in their whole approach to the Literacy Hour, such as being more flexible with timings and planning units of work around core books. Others were working in schools which included creativity somewhere in the curriculum by giving pupils the opportunity to work with various Arts groups funded by Creative Partnerships. Teachers in these schools had noticed the difference in the quality of pupils’ writing when it was inspired by working with drama, art and music as part of their Literacy Hour.

All the teachers in the project shared a common desire to explore new ways of working. They were hungry for change and eager to take risks in their practice. One teacher stated that the project had given her the ‘freedom to plan and teach without feeling constrained by documentation’.

Areas of research
Each teacher chose an area that they wanted to research. They chose to explore what the effect would be on their boys’ attitudes to and attainment in writing when they tried out different strategies and techniques. For example – using visual texts, drama activities, ICT, graphic organisers such as story boards and story maps, art work, group conferences, response partners, storytelling circles and collaborative writing.

Planning the whole unit of work around a core text
Using the UKLA/PNS planning format enabled the teachers to see the bigger picture of the whole unit of work spread out over the course of two or three weeks. This was important as it meant that teachers planned for studying one text in depth hence the pupils got to know the text really well and this motivated them as writers.

Reading aloud - bringing the text to life
The way that teachers brought the text to life was important in opening up the fictional world for pupils to enter into. All of the teachers planned in time to read aloud the text in sections throughout the unit. Children who have been read to have a bank of story structures from which to draw on when they create their own texts. They also know a lot about language. ‘The recognition that we learn the large scale structures of written language above all by learning to listen to its tunes and rhythms, and that these become part of our auditory memory, helps to explain why hearing texts read aloud is such an important experience for young language learners.’ (Barrs and Cork, 2001)

Choice of texts
The choice of text was crucial to the success of pupils’ engagement with pre-writing activities and their achievement in writing. Reflecting on his choice of text for one of his units of work, one teacher said, ‘Boys were coming up and wanting to borrow the book – I’ve never had that before.’

Where the text was selected carefully to match the interests of the class, the case study boys engaged readily in the compositional aspect of writing first, knowing that they would have time for editing and proof-reading their work at a later stage of the writing process. Commenting on her boys’ achievement, one teacher said that this way of working had ‘encouraged the boys to write more and not worry about the technical aspects of writing’.
Planning for writing in more than one genre

Teachers saw that they could sometimes use one core text as a stimulus for writing outcomes of different genres. For example, one class were reading ‘Holes’ by Louis Sachar. Over the course of three weeks, the children produced several different kinds of writing including a diary written in role as Stanley, a dialogue between the characters of Stanley and Zero when Zero admits to stealing the sneakers, a missing persons report on Zero and the next chapter in the story. A teacher for whom this way of planning was new commented, ‘Having spent a lot of time working around one text, I would repeat this – planning lots of genres around one text’.

Slowing down the teaching sequence

The planning format also enabled teachers to slow down the teaching sequence and extend the pre-writing phase to build in exciting activities and scaffolding strategies before pupils embarked on their final extended piece of writing. Reflecting on her boys’ progress in writing, one teacher said, ‘They’ve done so much preparation beforehand, the writing then comes easily’. This flexible approach to planning also enabled teachers to make changes to their planning along the way, taking into account pupils’ ideas and needs. For example if pupils need to go back and capture more ideas before writing or if a particular group of pupils need further modelling in shared writing there is time to do this within the unit.

During the course of the project, the practitioners noticed that building in time for thinking and talking and drawing and acting had a positive impact on the boys’ motivation and enthusiasm for writing which led to an increase in the quality of their writing. As one teacher remarked, ‘They [the boys] were more engaged [with the text] when they had the opportunities to act it out and talk about it’. Another teacher said, ‘Writing became the way to record what they [the boys] had talked about’.

What we learnt from our research

All of the case study boys improved their attainment in writing by between one and five sublevels and their attainment in reading by between one and three sublevels as measured by National Curriculum levels. Teacher assessment, using the scales for reading and writing, developed by Clpe in their Primary Language Record, also showed progress in writing of between none and three levels and progress in reading of between one and three levels. It could be argued that the case study boys would have made this progress anyway without the project interventions over the course of the two terms.

However, the teachers strongly felt that National Curriculum levels were rather limited in measuring progress in writing. What about progress as writers? The teachers thought that equal importance should be given to the increased enthusiasm for Literacy, engagement in literacy activities and positive attitudes and motivation for writing demonstrated by the boys.

As previous researchers have discovered, we also found that interactive approaches to the teaching of writing such as drama, role play, collaborative drawing, mapping and writing and using ICT all seem to benefit boys. Teachers also found that these approaches not only enhanced the quality of girls’ writing but also that of pupils who were already competent writers – they too were challenged to increase their achievements.

At the exhibition of pupils work at the end of the project, one Deputy Head teacher attending the celebration in support of her project teacher said, ‘The Raising Boys’ Achievement project had also benefited the rest of the class’. One headteacher, reflecting on the work on display at the exhibition said that there ‘seemed to be a real purpose in the writing – the children have known why they are writing’. Another said, ‘The quality of teaching that has gone on is amazing – it’s good to hear the teachers saying how much they’ve enjoyed the project’.

What was it that made the difference to these boys? Just as every school context and every teacher is different so are boys. It would be wrong to classify them together as a homogenous group. The boys in this study were all chosen because they were underachieving for a variety of reasons but they were all individuals with different interests and needs. In any action research project when teachers select case study pupils to focus on, they automatically strengthen their relationships with the pupils. By getting to know them better and understanding their needs it is almost certain that pupil performance will increase. In this way teachers can find out what interests their pupils and what will be the most helpful support in developing them as writers.
Despite individual differences it is possible to draw some general conclusions about teachers’ classroom practice:

**Successful practices**
A willingness to engage with boys’ interests and respond to their individual needs.
Changing the planning format to integrate speaking and listening, reading and writing activities.
Extending the teaching sequence to include time for oral and interactive pre-writing activities leading to a final piece of writing.
- Careful choice of texts, some with boys as the main characters
- Teacher reading aloud from the text during the Literacy Hour
- Use of film or video to compare and contrast with written text
- Using ICT for composing, communicating and presenting
- The use of response partners when composing and editing
- Collaborative writing groups/pairs
- Writing in role as a character
- Choice of how to present ideas e.g. story map, story board
- Time for extended writing within the unit of work

**Planning and the Revised Primary Framework 2006**
One of the central changes of the revised framework for Literacy is flexibility in planning units of work around quality core texts across a 2 – 4 week time span. The UKLA/PNS planning format reproduced in this guidance, also available electronically for use and adaptation on our website, is one which is being promoted by the Primary Strategy in the revised framework as a useful format for planning each unit of work.

This format focuses teachers’ thinking on the 3 phases of planning for writing: familiarisation with the text genre, a pre-writing phase of capturing ideas before the main writing outcome, and scaffolding pupils’ writing through modelling, demonstration and collaboration towards an independent extended quality piece of writing. HMI have endorsed this format as ‘a robust and rigorous model of best practice for teaching writing’ as it naturally slows down the teaching sequence building in time for embedding speaking and listening and ICT which are core aspects of learning in the revised Primary Framework.

Since this project began, we have continued to promote this planning format on our training in the borough as a thinking tool for teachers to use when planning each unit of work. Teachers have found it to be immensely helpful and we hope that the exemplars given in this guidance will be used and adapted by teachers when planning together.

**Final thoughts**
At the end of this short action research project the teachers felt like they were only just beginning to make changes. They wanted more time to embed their practices and wished that the project could have continued for another term. They were keen to continue trialling their new ways of working as they felt that they were being more creative in the way that they taught writing and had seen the increased confidence, motivation and achievement in their young writers. As one teacher summarised, ‘Children who said they weren’t good writers at the beginning now say they are good writers.’

When asked about the strategies their teacher had used in one unit of work one boy said, ‘Reading and watching the film helped me get more ideas.’ Whilst another enthused, ‘We had loads of ideas so our pencils went really fast and the ideas came out of my head!’
Appendices

- Stages in the process of writing
- The teaching sequence for a 2/4 week literacy unit of work (blank planning proforma)
- Pupil perceptions survey—blank questionnaire
1. Starting Writing
   • Establishing purpose
   • Getting ideas
   • Deciding on format

2. Composing
   • Working the ideas into a text

3. Revising
   • Finding out whether the text does its job and amending if necessary

4. Editing
   • Polishing the text to make it read well

5. Proof-reading
   • Checking for spelling and punctuation errors

6. Publishing
   • Letting the text reach its audience

7. Evaluating
   • Reflecting on the writing to learn from it

Stages in the Process of Writing
The Teaching Sequence for a 2/4 week Literacy unit of work

Familiarisation with text type

Capturing ideas

Teacher modelling and demonstration

Teacher scribing

Supported writing

Independent writing

Quality writing

Range:
Text(s):

Year group:
Pupil Writing Perceptions Survey

Name………………………………………………
School………………………………………………
Class………………………………………………

Do you enjoy writing? Why?/Why not?

Are there any particular aspects of writing that you don’t enjoy or find difficult? (getting ideas, planning, drafting, redrafting, talking about writing with a friend/teacher/parent, making a best copy, publishing your work for others to read, reading your writing aloud)

Are there any particular aspects of writing you enjoy more than others? (See above)

Is there a particular kind of writing you prefer to do more than others? (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, playscripts, captions, mind maps, make books, e-mail)

Where do you like to write best? (at home? at school?)

Do you ever write at home for pleasure? What kind of writing?

Do you ever draw at home? What kind of drawing?

When you play, do your games ever involve reading or writing or drawing?

Who or what helps you most with your writing? What do you do when you get ‘stuck’ with your writing?

Do you think that reading helps you with your writing?

Can you remember a piece of writing that you did that you were especially proud of? What made it good?

Are you a good writer? If no, what do you think you need to learn to become a better writer?

What advice would you give to someone in the year below to help them get better at writing?

Would you like to add any other comments about writing?
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<th>Physical</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Getting ideas</th>
<th>Talking/writing with others</th>
<th>Drafting</th>
<th>Publishing my work</th>
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<th>Non-fiction</th>
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<td>Is there a particular kind of writing you prefer to do more than others?</td>
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Sheet 1

Analysing Pupils’ Perceptions Survey on Writing School................................. Year group........
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where do you like to write best? (at home? at school?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you ever write at home for pleasure? What kind of writing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you ever draw at home? What kind of drawing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you play, do your games ever involve reading or writing or drawing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sheet 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who or what helps you most with your writing?</th>
<th>Other people</th>
<th>Talking/Listening/Thinking</th>
<th>Reading/Watching</th>
<th>Particular Resources</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask someone for help/advice</td>
<td>Reread/edit my work</td>
<td>Look at any available resources</td>
<td>Give up</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you do when you get ‘stuck’ with your writing?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<p>| Do you think that reading helps you with your writing? | |
|-------------------------------------------------------| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Praise at home</th>
<th>Praise at school</th>
<th>Personal satisfaction</th>
<th>Neat/carefully done</th>
<th>Time spent</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Improvements</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you a good writer? If no, what do you think you need to learn to become a better writer?</td>
<td>What advice would you give to someone in the same year below to help them get better at writing?</td>
<td>Can you remember a piece of writing you did that you were especially proud of? What made it good?</td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Analysing Pupils’ Perceptions Survey on Writing

**School........................................Year group.......**

**Sheet 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you like to add any other comments about writing?</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Brother</th>
<th>Sister</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does anyone else write at home?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Myra Barrs and Valerie Cork (2001)
The Reader in the Writer – the links between the study of literature and writing development at Key Stage 2
published by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education

Reading and Writing scales
published by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
http://www.clpe.co.uk/researchandprojects/research

OFSTED (2002)
The curriculum in successful primary schools
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk

Primary National Strategy (2003)
Excellence & Enjoyment

Raising Boys’ Achievement in Writing

QCA (2004)
Creativity: find it, promote it
http://www.qca.org.uk

Boys on the Margin – Promoting boys literacy learning at Key Stage 2
published by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education