1stClass@Writing

Helping pupils to write confidently and independently

1stClass@Writing enables Teaching Assistants to make a real difference for pupils who have difficulties with transcription and composition

1stClass@Writing is a new, highly motivating and effective intervention for pupils mainly in Years 3 to 5 who have fallen behind at writing. A trained teaching assistant helps them to make faster progress so that they can catch up with their peers.

1stClass@Writing is an Every Child Counts intervention, developed by Edge Hill University. Expert training enables teaching assistants to deliver it effectively and to strengthen their support for writing across the school.

There are two versions:
1stClass@Writing: The Pirate Writing Crew – for pupils who need support to access Year 3 national curriculum expectations
1stClass@Writing: Dragon Hunters – for pupils who need support to access Year 4 national curriculum expectations

How it works

A teaching assistant delivers 48 stimulating and motivating half-hour lessons to a group of up to 4 pupils, 4 times a week, in addition to their daily class lessons. The pupils develop key skills of spelling, handwriting, grammar, and punctuation in order to complete daily writing tasks bound up with the thematic adventure stories. They develop their composition and editing skills through a balance of supported ‘one-liners’ and sustained, independent writing.

It all comes ‘ready-made’ with detailed plans and comprehensive resources. The TA is supported by a senior teacher in the school who acts as a Link Teacher.

How effective is it?

1stClass@Writing was trialled with 40 pupils in 10 schools in 2015. The schools reported an almost immediate impact:

- pupils became highly motivated and engaged
- they became more thoughtful about their writing skills
- their classroom writing improved dramatically.

I was amazed at the children’s progress both academically and emotionally. They became confident, happy learners who found writing less of a challenge and more of a joy!
Sinead O’Brien, Inclusion Leader, St Theresa’s RCPS, Barnet

It developed the key components of writing in a fun, engaging way. All the children were keen to contribute and all made good progress.
Claire Daly, Deputy Headteacher, The Raglan Schools, Enfield

Training and support

"Many head teachers took an interest in the training and reported that it was the best they had ever seen."
Independent Evaluation of ECC, DfE 2011

Training is delivered by an ECC Trainer accredited by the University. Separate courses for The Pirate Writing Crew and for Dragon Hunters include:

- 3 days of training for teaching assistants over 2-3 months:
  - how 1stClass@Writing works
  - delivering it to pupils who struggle with writing
  - understanding the writing process
  - giving feedback and helping pupils to be independent writers
  - liaison with the pupils’ class teachers
- the school’s Link Teacher attends for 2 half days
- detailed handbook guidance and teaching resources

Schools also receive a one-year ECC support package including:

- online guidance and downloadable resources
- access to the ECC online data system, providing analyses of children’s progress to help schools to evaluate and demonstrate the impact of 1stClass@Writing
- telephone and e-mail support
- an optional visit to the school by the Trainer to support the delivery, management and evaluation of 1stClass@Writing
- opportunities for Every Child Counts accreditation

How to get it

Training is available from local ECC Providers. It can also be commissioned from Edge Hill University by:

- an individual school for its own staff or on behalf of a group of schools with whom it will share the cost
- a local authority, teaching school alliance, traded service or other organisation that wishes to provide 1CW support to schools

Contact us to find out more or to be put in touch with your local ECC Provider.

https://everychildcounts.edgehill.ac.uk
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Every Child Counts helps schools to help pupils who find mathematics and literacy difficult. It is run by Edge Hill University on a not for profit basis.