

Achieve new grammar targets and higher standards



School name:	Lillington Primary School	School type:	Community Primary (3-11 years)
Region:	Warwickshire	Ofsted rating:	Good (October 2012)
Area type:	Town	Pupil premium %:	45.3%
Number of pupils:	238	EAL %:	15%

Why Wordsmith? Lillington Primary is one form entry, moving to two forms, in quite a disadvantaged area. On average, the children come in at a low starting point and some have poor English. The main challenge for the school was addressing the grammar expectations in the new curriculum. **David Giles, Year 6 teacher and Literacy Co-ordinator**, explains how the school rose to the challenge and introduced Wordsmith to support and inspire both children and teachers alike.

Key points to take away

- The trial group were **writing at a higher standard** than other cohorts.
- Links to other parts of the curriculum offers a **seamless teaching approach**.
- Less experienced teachers are **supported with logical routes and frameworks to create lessons**.
- Wordsmith's flexibility means **teachers can confidently adapt lessons** to suit their needs.

Background

The new curriculum meant reassessing our approach to how we taught grammar within the school. Some of our children at the school do not use standard English in their everyday speech, so explaining the grammatical functions of English can be difficult. This is further compounded by the fact many children are still getting to grips with it in speaking, and then getting down in writing what they want to say. We wanted a resource which was easy to use for teachers and easy to understand for the children.

“Attainment was the highest we have ever seen.”

Integrating and embedding grammar

We knew we wanted something where grammar was embedded within the teaching and could be taught alongside the units of work and not as a separate skill. The way Wordsmith works supports this; it's all part of the same unit and provides an integrated approach to teaching grammar. Children don't see grammar as separate, so it helps them to apply the skills taught in their writing.

How Wordsmith is used at Lillington

It was important to us to choose a resource that was grounded in great texts. In my experience, when teaching is more ad hoc and uses a lot of excerpts, children don't get as involved as they do when everything centres on a great book, and it shows in their writing.

For example, just before the children did a short composition I taught the grammar blast about fronted adverbials as part of the *Eye of the Wolf* unit. Children really got it and were far more confident in their approach than before. They could see how it would work in their text structure, and all children, across the ability range, were able to use fronted adverbials to improve the complexity and variety of their sentences. We had used *Literacy Evolve* before so I knew the texts, but I found the writing that came from this year's cohort was of a higher quality, showing that the grammar lessons had had an impact.

It also makes it easier to connect literacy to the rest of the curriculum. We have tried to plan the rest of our curriculum around the topics in Wordsmith so in Year 6 when we are teaching *Eye of the Wolf*, this connects to our topic about endangered animals. The non-fiction units are also really good for linking to other curriculum areas, for example there are lots of connections that can be made to science.

“I have never seen writing of such a high standard.”

(Year 4 teacher)

Detailed and editable teaching plans for successful progression

The lesson plans are absolutely invaluable to us. Wordsmith gives us enough to have a starting-point, but also the flexibility to change things around. I taught the *Eye of the Wolf* unit before as part of the *Literacy Evolve* programme, so I'm confident adapting it. If my class gets really interested in something, we can spend more time on it, or move around the grammar lessons.

The real benefit for us is that the planning is strong enough to support less capable teachers but flexible enough to be adaptable too. There is a strong skeleton in the Recommended Route; one NQT in our school found this really helpful because the sequence was clear. And what we're finding is that as teachers get more experienced with Wordsmith, they feel more confident in being able to adapt it.



What other teachers say

This year, the *Was Tutankhamen Killed?* unit has also been a big hit. Children loved the interactive element of the eBook and the Year 3 teacher has seen really strong engagement with the lessons and some impressive writing. It's a bit early to tell, but it seems that we're not seeing as much of a dip in Year 3 as we have seen in previous years; the children are building on what they knew in Year 2 and moving on quickly.

What we are also seeing is that the interactivity and fun of the resources, particularly the grammar resources, has really enthused the teachers. It has ignited a new passion for teaching English.



The outcome – higher writing standards and attainment

It's still early days for us, but we trialled Wordsmith last year with Years 3 and 4 and the Year 4 teacher said he had never seen writing of such a high standard. There was a clear difference between that year group and other cohorts; the children took the different skills and text types in their stride and their attainment was the highest we have ever seen.

Find out more

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