

# Planning and language resources help deliver new curriculum and raise standards



School name:	Shirley Manor Primary Academy	School type:	Academy Primary (2-11 years)
Region:	West Yorkshire	Ofsted rating:	Good (December 2011)
Area type:	City	Pupil premium %:	52.2%
Number of pupils:	182	EAL %:	7%

**Why Wordsmith?** The school's search for new language resources was prompted by the new curriculum. The teachers were very confident with the old curriculum, as they'd built up quite a bank of resources over time, but there was a lot of work to do to get to the same point with the new one. There was a slight feeling of panic around it! **Jackie Naughton, Year 3 teacher**, explains how Wordsmith was a good starting point for the school as it provides all of the planning with the objectives mapped out.

## Key points to take away

- A bank of varied resources **inspires and supports teachers** and **engages children**.
- The professional development course helps teachers use the **building blocks to facilitate long-term planning**.
- A **high expectation level** in Wordsmith encourages children to achieve more.
- Wordsmith **supports cognitive development** with children recalling and using what they have learnt.

## Background

Shirley Manor is a smaller than average-sized school at the centre of a housing estate. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is well above average, and the proportion of children with SEN is well above average and very high in some cohorts. Many of our children have emotional and social needs. The children are mainly White British.

## Why did you choose Wordsmith?

We started looking for a new resource to help with the new curriculum and went to a presentation about the changes to the English and Maths curriculum. We saw an online demonstration of Wordsmith there. I was immediately impressed with the authors and the fact that the links are in the planning. I had just started back

teaching in KS2 and during the first year it took me hours upon hours to find things; the bank of resources was very appealing. On the back of this we requested more information and our Pearson consultant came in and did a demo to all the staff before they made the decision.

So far my favourite book to teach has been Roger McGough's poetry. My children loved the *Fight of the Year* poem, and had lots of fun with the Word Tennis activity. And my colleague in Year 5 has been raving about the unit that they've done recently – it really engaged the children.

“Previously, I'd have to look every night for resources but I don't do that anymore.”



## How have you implemented Wordsmith?

We're using Wordsmith across the whole school now. Year 6 are just dipping into it, but that will probably change next year when they'll be following the new curriculum as well. Sometimes we swap some of the units around if they fit better with our topics, but generally we don't have to change much. I do adapt the lesson plans, for example, I might stretch a lesson over two lessons if the children get really into it and we don't have time to do all the activities.

We had the professional development course, and we took the option of having it over 2 twilights. We'd been using Wordsmith for a while by that time, but we still got a lot out of it, particularly how to use the Pearson Primary English Ladder and the grammar assessments. We wish we had had it earlier because I spent a lot of time putting things into a long-term plan when actually it was already all there.

“Children are ‘magpie-ing’ challenging vocabulary and phrases from the texts.”

## What advice would you give to other schools thinking about using Wordsmith?

I would just tell schools how it *does* raise the children's writing. Just get Wordsmith! Everything you need is there – you do use it because it's pretty much been done for you. It has just made it all a lot easier. Previously, I'd have to look every night for resources but I don't do that anymore and it has saved such a lot of time.



## The outcome – achieving higher standards in reading and writing

I've found that the expectations are high in Wordsmith and it pushes my children to achieve more. I have quite a quiet class, but all the drama activities like *Role Play* and *Conscience Alley* really challenge them to think deeply and then speak about their ideas – it's really raised their confidence. Other teachers in school have given similar feedback.

I find that taking the time to do all of these pre-writing activities has a clear impact on their writing as well. Children are ‘magpie-ing’ challenging vocabulary and phrases from the texts and their role-plays and then remembering and using them in their writing. We recently finished the *Dragon Slayer* unit and I was really impressed with the descriptive language children used in their descriptions of beasts – words like ‘terrorising’, and similes like ‘a shield as hard as diamond.’

It has helped their non-fiction writing as well. I made a corridor display from the writing that came out of the “Where would you like to live?” topic, and everyone has commented on the sophisticated language the children have used in their persuasive writing, such as linking phrases like ‘in addition...’.

The children love being able to access the eBooks from home. They are re-reading last term's books, especially *Storm* and the Roger McGough poems, because they enjoyed them so much.

## Find out more

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