

Teaching to turn reluctant readers into bookworms



School name:	Bishop Henderson Primary School	School type:	Voluntary Controlled Primary (3-11 years)
Region:	Somerset	Ofsted rating:	Satisfactory (Jan 2010)
Area type:	Town	Pupil premium %:	25%
Number of pupils:	160	EAL %:	2.5%

Why Phonics Bug? A trio of reluctant readers at Bishop Henderson school needed help to improve their reading confidence, raise their enthusiasm and progress with their reading and spelling skills. **Sandy Shepard, Year 1/2 class teacher, Advanced Skills teacher and Literacy Subject Leader**, knew that Phonics Bug would be the perfect tool to help engage the boys and make progress in their attainment.

Key points to take away

- Phonics Bug decodable readers **can engage even the most reluctant children**.
- Resource flexibility allows teachers to select appropriate activities and **focus on priority areas**.
- **Full access from home** gives children and parents additional teaching support.
- **Suitable for individual and group sessions**.

Background – a trio of reluctant readers

In Year 2, we had a group of boys who started the year with reading and writing skills that were well below the expected level for their age. David lacked confidence and knew that other children of his age were much better readers. John had refused to read at home and had been very reluctant to read and write in school. Simon sometimes read at home but had made very slow progress and lacked enthusiasm for reading and writing. All three boys had very poor spelling skills and were not able to read independently.

How Phonics Bug was used

We decided to use Phonics Bug as an intervention in addition to the regular whole-class sessions and daily individual reading and writing intervention groups. Phonics Bug decodable readers were used to get David, John and Simon engaged. They were able to access their books online at home and, for the first time, their parents reported that they were keen to read.

In school, Phonics Bug was used for individual and group sessions. The structure and flexibility of the resources enabled the teacher to select activities at the appropriate level and focus on the areas that were a priority for each of the children. All of the children looked forward to the sessions and loved the videos that introduce each phoneme and make them memorable. The feedback from the character when they succeeded, or needed encouragement to have another go, supported them and made the sessions lively and fun. They found they were regularly experiencing success in small steps and this motivated them to work hard even when they met challenges.

“ One boy, a virtual non-reader at the start of the year, was working within NC Level 2A by the end of the year. ”

Tailoring learning to each child

Phonics Bug was particularly successful in allowing the teacher to assess and meet the children's individual needs. When using the programme it was immediately apparent where the children had strengths to build on and weaknesses that had to be addressed.

David, for example, knew individual letter sounds but was slowly sounding each individual letter to try and read words. He responded quickly to being able to move the letters together on the whiteboard to blend the sounds.



The outcome – turning boys into book worms!

By the end of Year 2, Phonics Bug had helped all three boys make significant progress and all were well-placed to catch up with their peers. The children all achieved Level 2B in reading; David, who was virtually a non-reader at the beginning of the year, and working within 2A achieved 2B in writing. John and Simon both achieved 2B in reading and now read with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Although still slightly below the expected level in writing (2C), both made huge progress and were well placed to catch up with their peers very quickly. The children, their parents and their teacher were delighted with their progress!

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It was very helpful for him to hear and see the word being blended before blending and reading words independently. John had particular difficulty with spelling, so boxes for phonemes focussed him on how many sounds there were in the word and supported him in segmenting.