

Transform new curriculum challenges into exciting teaching

School name:	 Timberscombe First School	School type:	 Primary (5-9 years)
Region:	 Somerset	Ofsted rating:	 Good (June 2013)
Area type:	 Rural	Pupil premium %:	 22.6%
Number of pupils:	 31	EAL %:	 0%

Why Wordsmith? Timberscombe First School could see that the grammar requirements of the new curriculum were going to be challenging. The school only goes up to Year 4 so it was important the children were on track when they went to middle school. **Alison Blackmore, Literacy subject leader and Year 3-4 teacher**, explains why they needed a resource to support the school in facing the new requirements, but also ensure the children remained both motivated and confident.

Key points to take away

- A suite of ideas and resources **provides a solid foundation** on which to build teaching plans.
- Wordsmith offers the opportunity to **customise units** to support schools' primary focus areas.
- Resources can be used as **stand-alone lessons** or **linked to specific topics**.
- **Engaging and stimulating stories** help foster enthusiastic and motivated children.

Background

We are a very small rural school with 31 pupils in two mixed-age classes: Reception to Year 2 and Years 3 and 4. We have recently become part of a federation with another small school and we have a joint governing body. In our last Ofsted inspection it was suggested that progress in writing, while still good, was not as strong as in reading and maths. Keeping this in mind we wanted to focus on writing and give the children lots of opportunities for extended writing.

How have you adapted Wordsmith to your school's needs?

Because I teach a mixed-age class, we have a two year rolling programme so I can choose appropriate units from both year groups. We then carefully incorporate the grammar lessons. It is useful to have a bank of fun grammar resources that can be used as stand-alone lessons or linked to a particular topic.

How have the children responded?

I have just finished teaching the *Ottoline* unit and the children really got into the book. Some children loved it so much that they bought the other books in the series to read at home. They like reading the eBooks on screen. Currently, they're enjoying mixing up different sports in the *Incredible Sports* unit. English has always been a popular subject, and we have great reading results. With Wordsmith, it's nice to see the children enjoying the same book all together, discussing it and really getting underneath the skin of it.

The outcome – a big thumbs up

We dipped into the resources in the summer term but have been following the programme in earnest since September. To begin with, we stuck quite closely to the plans, but now that we have taught one unit we are thinking about how we can adapt it so that there are more opportunities for extended writing, as that is our focus. One of the nice things about Wordsmith is that it provides ideas and resources but there is plenty of opportunity to adapt it to suit our own children. It is a great platform to teach from.

Find out more

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