

EARLY LITERACY SKILLS

AT SHALFLEET AND YARMOUTH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS



Bold beginnings:

The Reception curriculum in a sample of good and outstanding primary schools

Key Findings of successful schools:

The headteachers recognised that a successful Reception Year was fundamental to their school's success. They were clear that children's achievements up to the age of five can determine their life chances. They did not accept the view that some will 'catch up later'.

They therefore designed their Reception curriculum to give children the necessary foundations for the rest of their schooling. These schools were clear that Reception children need more than a repeat of their pre-school experiences in Nursery or earlier.

Reading was at the heart of the curriculum. Children read out loud frequently from carefully selected books that closely matched their phonic knowledge. Story time was a valued part of the daily routine. Staff recognised it as essential in developing children's language, vocabulary and comprehension.

- In the schools visited in which outcomes by the age of five were above the national average, and in which this trend continued across the school, leaders and staff focused resolutely on doing certain elements of the Reception curriculum exceptionally well:
- making language a priority, embedding spoken language, vocabulary development and listening comprehension into all aspects of their work
- teaching reading in a systematic and structured way, building up children's phonic knowledge and skills explicitly
- providing regular story times where children could be taught to understand what they had heard
- teaching writing composition by building on children's spoken language and their comprehension of stories
- teaching spelling and handwriting directly
- deepening children's understanding of core mathematical concepts rather than moving them on too quickly to formal calculations and written algorithms
- securing children's personal, social and emotional readiness to learn, including resilience, perseverance, concentration, the ability to listen, to take turns and to cooperate.

All primary schools should:

- make sure that the teaching of reading, including systematic synthetic phonics, is the core purpose of the Reception Year
- attach greater importance to the teaching of numbers in building children's fluency in counting, recognising small numbers of items, comparing numbers and solving problems
- ensure that when children are learning to write, resources are suitable for their stage of development and that they are taught correct pencil grip and how to sit correctly at a table
- devote sufficient time each day to the direct teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, including frequent opportunities for children to practise and consolidate their skills
- use the EYFSP as a guide to end-of-Reception expectations rather than to define what should be taught.

Put simply, by the end of Reception, the ability to read, write and use numbers is fundamental. They are the building blocks for all other learning. Without firm foundations in these areas, a child's life chances can be severely restricted. The basics need to be taught – and learned – well, from the start.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

In every school, leaders and staff were clear about the purpose of play and understood its place in the curriculum. They were even clearer about its implementation. They knew when play was the right choice in terms of what they wanted children to learn and when other approaches might be more effective. Even within play, teachers made decisions about how structured or unstructured, dependent or independent each opportunity would be.

All the schools visited used role play effectively to increase children's opportunities to talk. Many had more than one role play area, one creating a familiar everyday context, such as a home corner or shop, and another extending children's imagination, such as a space ship or jungle. Inspectors observed children playing together to create imaginary situations, often based on the book

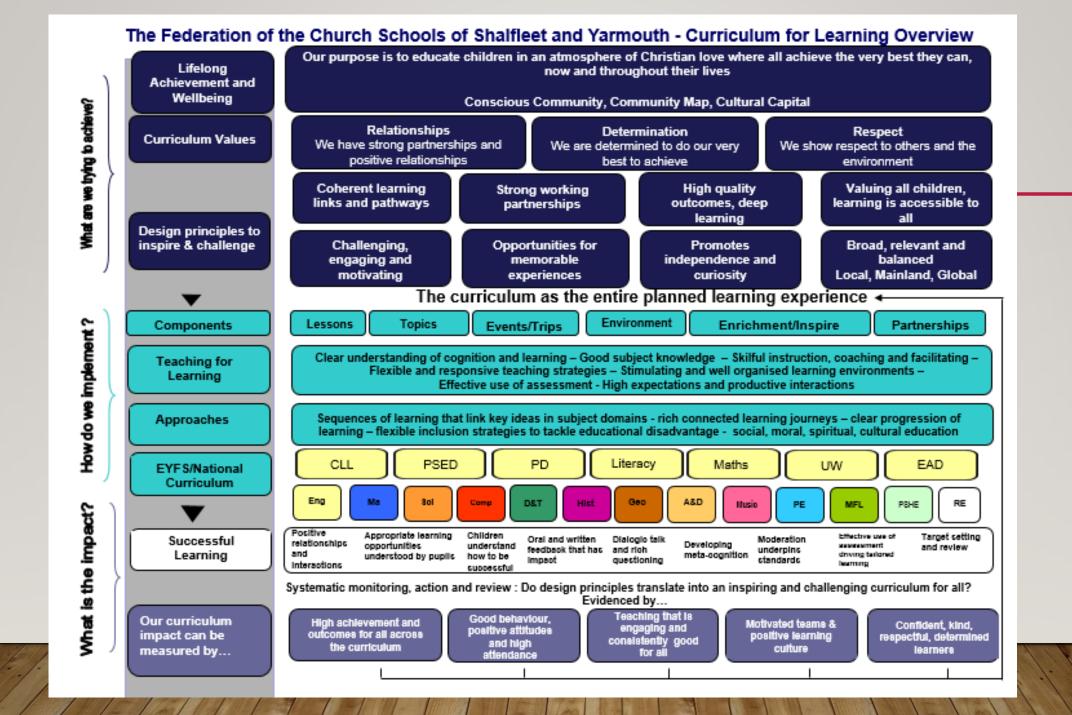
Teachers sometimes directed children's play until they became confident to play without adult intervention. For example, at the end of the Reception Year, children were playing confidently with traditional board games, playing snakes and ladders, doing jigsaws, building models with blocks (Lego), matching dominoes and creating complex wooden railway tracks. This was because, at the start of the year, teachers had spent time teaching children how to play, use equipment carefully and take turns. Losing games as well as winning was considered necessary learning.

OUR INTENT

The reception year is a fundamental stage in a child's life and one in which we aim to welcome and settle our children and their families into our school community. We aim to provide children with the opportunities to develop a love of learning through positive relationships, memorable experiences and by giving them an active role in their learning by tailoring learning to the children's interests. But, we also know the importance of the reception year to equip children with the fundamental skills as they prepare for the National Curriculum in Year 1.

We aim to equip children with a strong foundation of Early Literacy Skills on which their learning can continue to build as they move through their school years. We understand how early communication and Language and Literacy skills weave throughout the whole of the Early Years Curriculum and are the pathway for children's success to access learning and new knowledge.

Through a range of play based and adult led approaches, we work to ensure children secure a strong foundation of reading, writing and communication skills. We work to support our families too, to enhance their understanding of the key role they play in their child's learning journey.



THE NEW EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM

 there is a new focus on early language and extending vocabulary, with more examples on how to embed and develop vocabulary skills across all 7 areas, because this improves child development in a broad curriculum

www.gov.uk

Communication and Language:

Listening, Attention and Understanding

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Hold conversations when engaged in back and forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Speaking

- Participate in small group, class and one to one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, make use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past and present and future tense and making use of conjunctions with modelling from their teacher.

Literacy

Comprehension

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate, where appropriate, key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems during role play.

Word Reading

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound blending.
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Preparing to write:

Physical Development Gross Motor Skills

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely.
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing.
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Physical Development Fine Motor Skills

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery.
- · Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

LINKS TO READING TO FURTHER UNDERSTAND THE NEW CURRICULUM:

- * Prime and Specific Areas
- * 7 Features of Effective Practice
- *Characteristics of Effective Learning

MAKING LINKS TO THE ONWARD JOURNEY TO THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

• Onward links to the National Curriculum portfolios.docx

School Literacy Statement:

We know that Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. A literate individual is granted greater life opportunities and the foundation for lifelong learning and employment, which strongly contributes to the development of all aspects of social and academic life. In 2018, Ofsted said that it was hard to overstate the importance of early literacy, as reading is the gateway to almost every other subject and to children discovering their own unique interests and talents. build a robust vocabulary and 'unlock the door' to their curriculum.

School Literacy Policy:

School Literacy Policy

WHAT PRIORITIES DID WE OUTLINE TO DEVELOP OUR TEACHING OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE / LITERACY IN EYFS?

In light of the new curriculum and various training sessions and wider reading, we identified the following areas to develop to enhance our teaching:

- Wider reading opportunities teaching reading in a variety of approaches including weekly guided reading, book boxes linked to interests around the zones of the classroom and weekly visits to the school library.
- Standardising the teaching of phonics updating our Phonics Programme, adopting Little Wandle:
- More work to engage parents in the value of communication including Dojo videos and our daily Time to Talk board.
- The value of talk alongside play increasing opportunities to play alongside and with children, taking time to model the serve and return nature of communication, develop language, sentence structure/tense and introduce new vocabulary. Furthering children's opportunity and confidence to communicate their ideas, thoughts and opinions.
- Gross Motor time each week opportunities and exercises on large playground / hall to further develop balance, coordination.
- Greater range of activities to allow children to see the importance and value of good literacy / communication skills in the world beyond school- e.g. in our Local Community.

MID TERM AUDIT – FURTHER PRIORITIES

- A further audit of our reading books to teach the mechanics of reading, linking to recommended schemes from Little Wandle. Purchasing such books via school Literacy Budget.
- Following EYFS network meetings, we adopted the programme 'The Poetry Basket' to enhance children's language skills, vocabulary development and exposure to poetry as a genre.
- Revisiting books was identified as a vital tool for allowing children to really familiarise themselves with stories so that they could recreate and use ideas from these stories in their own play.

BUILDING PARENTAL AWARENESS — PARENT PARTNERSHIP

We use dojo videos, class story, time to talk boards, handouts and conversations with
parents to raise their awareness of the role of working with us to developing Early
Literacy Skills. We aim to support parents in helping to develop their child's speaking,
listening, reading and writing skills. We work with parents to explain how early literacy
skills build the foundation blocks for success in accessing the curriculum throughout a
child's education.

We have had a lot of fun on 'Children in Need Day' in Rainbow Class. The children have been making their own Pudsey Bears and cutting the outline of bears. In Funky Fingers they had the challenge of creating a spotty table using buttons and pegs and using sewing cards on bear shapes too. Over the week our focus has been creating our own 'Dinosaur' Isle'. We have been reading the story 'Dinosaur Island'. I will let the children tell you all about it. Mrs Cox was on a course for two days and the children all retold the whole story to her so she didn't miss anything. The children have created the most amazing 'Dinosaur Isle' outside. Some children have started creatures leaflets for it to help be a guide for any visitors. We have also visited the website and found information and some lovely colouring sheets. We have discovered some dinosaurs who lived on the Isle of Wight. The

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S SPOKEN LANGUAGE AND LISTENING

High quality adult interactions.

Adult interactions and the role of questioning by an adult is key to unlocking the full potential of child led learning. Staff are supported to deepen their understanding of the value of using open questioning with children to extend a child's thinking but also the value of being the observer — listening and taking note from a distance. We have expanded opportunities in the timetable to maximise time for adults playing with and alongside children to develop their spoken language and listening skills. We value fruit and lunch time as times of the day to sit together and talk — sharing experiences and listening to those around us. These times also provide excellent links to be made to developing children's understanding of oral and physical health.

Modelled language.

The positive use of rich language is embedded within our early years classrooms. Adults model language continuously to children, repeating back ideas in full sentences, introducing children to new words, consolidating the meaning of existing language.

• Time to listen to stories, books, poems, rhymes.

Story time is a key part of each day, with several opportunities for the children to join together as a class to listen to a story, rhyme, poem or extract of a book by an adult. We also join together with Little Stars each Wednesday to visit the school library, taking time to share books informally together as well as joining for a whole group story time and discussion.

Later this year we hope to introduce story time via class dojo/google drive whereby children can listen to bedtime stories at home. Members of the school community, including governors, caretakers, teachers and volunteers are asked to read a story to ensure children hear stories from a range of role models. Story CD's are also available within class to allow children to access quiet listening time during child led learning.

DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S SPOKEN LANGUAGE AND LISTENING CONTINUED

Following instructions.

Daily routines in class allow children to enhance their listening skills and to process / respond to information of increasing complexity. Instructions are also given in play based scenarios e.g. repeating patterns with music and beats

Opportunities to discuss own ideas.

Weekly Show and Tell sessions are incredibly valuable for allowing children to practice their speaking in a familiar group, whilst allowing them to listen to others and ask questions. Children develop the confidence to share their ideas and are encouraged and supported to speak in sentences to explain their thoughts. Rich play based opportunities in the Early Years setting also provide children with opportunities to share ideas together and explain their thoughts.

WOW word celebrations.

Developing children's vocabulary is a vital part of literacy development during the early years. Children need to feel able to explore new words, understand their meaning, their context and have confidence to try to use them in their own speech. Our WOW words allow us to celebrate and share new words for children. These words are displayed around the classroom e.g. on our literacy working wall or in our Book Detectives board.

FURTHER READING AND RESEARCH LINKS

- Oxford Language Report 2020
- National College Training Resources\Bringing-Words-to-Life-Booklet.pdf
- Milestones poster What's Typical Talk at Primary.pdf
- Snow Model Oral Competency

What is phonological awareness?



What is phonological awareness?

It is an awareness of the sound structure of language.

- Can you hear the difference between birdsong and a dog barking?
- Can you hear that a spoken sentence is made up of a series of individual words?
- Can you hear that a spoken word is made from a sequence of individual sounds?

It is the awareness of the units of sounds – which may be words, syllable, rhyme, phonemes

- Can you hear syllables, e.g. el/e/phant, ap/ple, trai/ner?
- Can you hear rhyme, e.g. snow and toe?
- Can you hear phonemes, e.g. /ch/ur/ch/, /s/w/i/m/?

5 Levels of Phonological Awareness More complex activities Phonemic **Awareness** Less complex Onsets and activities Blending sounds Syllables (phonemes) into words Blending and Seamenting words Sentence seamenting into sounds Segmentation Rhyming and Deleting & manipulating sounds in spoken words Alliteration

Why is phonemic awareness so important?



'Phoneme awareness performance is a strong predictor of long term reading and spelling success, and it can predict literacy performance more accurately than variables such as intelligence, vocabulary, knowledge, and socioeconomic status.'

DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S READING

- Regular reading I:I giving children time to practice their reading strategies. Updating the book bag texts we have in school to follow recommendations from Little Wandle.
- Helping children to discover that love of reading taking trips to the Local Library to explore local facilities.
- Engaging and supporting families supporting parents in gaining membership to the Local Library.
- Systematic phonics programme to support children in the mechanical development of reading segmenting and blending sounds to read words and recognizing sight words.
- Using planned guided reading activities to support the wider reading skills.
- Choosing high quality texts that link with children's interests and themes in class.
- Book boxes around the environment to encourage children to delve into books and further their knowledge / apply reading skills.
- Using a wide approach to reading e.g. having games alongside books to challenge children to apply their reading skills. Using singing and rhymes to retell stories and learn new words/sounds.
- Teaching children the value of reading. Why do we learn our phonics? What is the purpose of reading?

RESEARCH EXTRACTS

Box 1. What is Reading?

The goal of reading is to understand what has been read, and thus the goal of reading development must be to develop a system that allows children to construct meaning from print. Our review takes a broad perspective on reading development, reflecting the fact that reading is complex. To set the scene, consider the challenges posed by this simple, two-sentence text:

Denise was stuck in a jam. She was worried what her boss would say.

What needs to happen for us to understand this text? First and foremost, we need to identify the **individual words**. This in itself is hugely challenging, requiring us to distinguish a word such as *jam* from all the numerous similar-looking words it could be, such as *jar* or *ham*. We must have a means of identifying words that may be unfamiliar, such as *Denise*, and of analyzing words which appear in a complex form, such as *worried*. Words are the building blocks of comprehension, but it's not just a matter of identifying words. Their **meanings** need to be activated, appropriate for the **context**. This means understanding *jam* with respect to traffic, not the fruit preserve. **Causal connections** need to be made within and across sentences to understand that *she* and *her* in the second sentence refer to *Denise* in the first sentence.

Despite its brevity, this text demands a good deal of **background knowledge**: that Denise was probably on her way to work but was running late because of heavy traffic. We can further infer, perhaps prompted by our knowledge of Denise, her routines or her attitudes. Perhaps she is in a car or on a bus; we might wish to ponder her relationship with her boss. Perhaps she has been late several times recently and is thus especially worried about their reaction; maybe she is en route for a meeting that, if missed, will have important consequences. We might know her boss, and make **inferences** based on his or her reputation, prompting us to think about the extent or nature of Denise's worry. We have no idea, but these are just some of the potential elaborations and inferences that are licensed by the text.

Other factors also add complexity. Making connections within a text and integrating information with background knowledge places demands on **working memory**. Dealing with an ambiguous word such as jam might engage **executive** skills if the contextually inappropriate meaning is activated and then needs to be ignored.

This brief analysis makes clear that reading is complex. Even a straightforward, two-sentence text has the potential to require a range of mental operations, ranging from word recognition through to an appreciation of theory of mind. The challenge facing the beginner reader is thus substantial.

Background knowledge facts, concepts, etc. breadh, precision, links, etc. Language structures syrtaic semantics, etc. Language comprehension Verbal reasoning informer, metapher, etc. Literacy knowledge print concepts, perves, etc. Word recognition Sight recognition of family words sichspetic process. pelling-sound correspondences Phonological awareness substition, chonement, etc.

FIGURE 1: THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

Source: Scarborough (2001) Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice.

Early readers need...



- To develop strategies that help
 - phonics / word recognition
 - language meaning / structure
- To feel like a reader
 - fluency / automaticity
- To feel success
 - build on the known
- To read little and often





THE POETRY BASKET

Learning poetry helps children to develop their ear for language. The Poetry Basket offers you thirty-six poems that are suitable for 3 to 6 year olds and that can be learned by heart over the course of a year.

Imagine the potential...

The Benefits:

- · Learning poems together is an enjoyable way of experiencing the play of language.
- Reciting poetry creates a close bond between the adult and the child.
- Saying poems out loud emphasises the sounds and rhythms of language or the syllables contained in each word, a vital part of learning to read.
- When reciting a poem with actions, children discover and use new words in an almost effortless way. It is as if the rhythm and the structure of the verse give context to these unfamiliar phrases.
- Poetry develops the skill of prediction, where the rhyming structure of the poems allows children to guess what word might come next.
- As children recite poetry, the neurons in their brain light up. By repeating and learning new poems regularly, they strengthen their ability for memorising in this way.
- The more poems children hear and recite, the more capable they become of recognising and memorising patterns, a vital part of early maths.

And finally, the most important benefit that I have come across...

Learning poetry together is FUN.



The more children can play among the waves, the rhythms, the rhymes and the music inherent in spoken language, the more they are developing memory.

Steven Fry - Fry's English Delights Radio 4



We think of sound as a continuous stream of noise. Rhythm helps us work our where the words are and then within that where the syllables are, and within that where the intra syllabic units are.

DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S WRITING

 Funky Fingers and Physical Development. Learning to write from the core of our body to our hands.

We recognise that writing is a complex skill with many important skills needing to work together, including bilateral co-ordination skills, crossing the midline and the development of gross, fine and visual motor skills. Through the year, children's skills are built upon, with an emphasis on building body strength/control/coordination in gross motor development, progressing to finer motor skill development. Funky Fingers offers children fun activities within the daily environment (free choice and adult led) to support the development of key strength and coordination in preparation for the physical demands of writing.

It is also important to remember that children are still figuring out which hand is dominate between the ages of 2 and 4 and may not fully develop until age 6. Many are also not ready for handwriting until age 6 or 7. This will have an affect on how they hold the pencil, as the dynamic tripod grasp is not developmentally appropriate until age 4-6.

WRITING CONTINUED...

Phonics

During phonics, children are offered focused opportunities to apply their developing skills, using sound buttons to sound out individual words, progressing to whole sentences. Tricky words are embedded into the teaching of phonics, with opportunities given to children to read, write and apply the new words they acquire.

• Handwriting

Handwriting goes through a journey during the Reception year, progressing from opportunities offered through play to short, regular, discrete handwriting sessions. In play a range of resources will be embedded within the environment with links to the children's interests e.g. copying letters/words with paints, chalks, a range of pens (including invisible spy pens, highlighters) and word wands/props. When we progress to more formal handwriting lessons, more emphasis is then needed on supporting posture, seating position. The Read, Write inc. rhymes are used throughout the year to embed correct letter formation. As a Federation we support our children to form letters correctly, progressing to exploring the lead out line during their time in Reception.

Opportunities to write

We work from the children's interests in the Reception year, meaning children engage in purposeful opportunities to write where there motivation and interest to write has meaning. Writing will progress through the year, progressing from mark making that serves meaning to the child, labels and captions, sentences and then to longer pieces. Resources are placed around the environment to ensure children can easily and independently access the tools they need to support their writing.

Modelled writing

Opportunities for adults to model transferring the children's spoken ideas into writing are a fundamental part of children realizing the value and role of written text. This may be a whole class opportunity to write a letter back to a story character or member of the community but each time the hook we use will be in response to the children's themes and interests. Links are made to other year groups too, with opportunities taken e.g. for older year groups to interact with Reception children and write stories based on their interests.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION - ASSESSMENT

Class teachers use assessment to track the achievements of all pupils at key milestones throughout the year across all areas of the Early Year Curriculum. This is particularly important for monitoring Early Literacy Skills because we understand that this is a thread that runs throughout the whole curriculum. We begin initially with the baseline assessment and information provided through our robust transition from pre schools. This data will influence starting points and next steps for pupils and the level of support needed.

With the new curriculum, whilst the progress of all pupils is essential, early identification of those children who are in danger of falling behind is identified as critical. Early identification allows practioners to quickly identify the needs of children and implement measures and interventions to close gaps in learning. Assessment findings link to the class provision map, identifying those steps being taken to support children in danger of falling behind.

Phonic assessments take place at the end of each phase, alongside more informal daily teacher observations, allowing teachers to ensure the provision meets the needs of all children in the class. This allows us to offer additional support and challenge where needed.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING

Impact of the implementation of the teaching of Early Literacy Skills is measured in a variety of ways.

These include:

- Talking to children and families about their experiences
- Time spent in the learning environments, playing with and observing children.
- Assessment data
- Looking at samples of children's work

AUDIT / ACTION PLAN YARMOUTH SCHOOL



AUDIT / ACTION PLAN SHALFLEET SCHOOL



AUDIT / ACTION PLAN LITTLE STARS AND LITTLE EXPLORERS



2022/2023 One Page Subject Action Plan

FDP Link -

Subject – EYFS literacy

Subject Lead – Emma Haisell

ACTION	WHY?	HOW? Success Criteria	WHO?	COST/RESOURCES?	OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED?	EVALULATION What has been the impact?	NEXT STEPS
To ensure both Reception Classes have increased range of Scholastic Book Bag Readers reading books for children to cover all Reception phonic phases.	To provide children with reading books that allow them to practise their current phonic sounds – rather than books not linked to phonics scheme. (NB – additional schemes are used alongside the Bookbag Readers).	Stock audit will have been undertaken against Little Wandle list of books. Gaps identified.	EH VP (Finance) DI (Literacy Lead for Federation)	Various cost depending on how many sets of books the classes are missing from the complete range.			
To sign EYFS team up to Learning Development training courses Kym Scott for literacy (reading and writing).	To ensure all staff are up to date with current research and needs of children. To ensure all staff are able to adapt provision to meet the literacy needs of all children in the setting. To ensure consistency across The Federation.	Apply for training request to Finance and head teacher. Sign up to training and ensure all team members are able to view training. Where possible training to be watched collaboratively but always followed up with professional dialogue as to how	EH VP (Finance) DI (Literacy Lead for Federation)	£30 per module (2 training sessions, each with 3 modules).			

	To ensure we have the highest expectations, training and knowledge to offer	this looks in our own settings. Regular meetings of EYFS staff to showcase what has				
	our children the very best start in their literacy journey.	worked well and to share good practise.				
To visit both pre- schools to allow time to explore approach to reading and writing development, provision and resources.	To ensure consistent approach across the Federation – to share new Little Wandle, approach to phonics in Reception and to discuss how setting are promoting vocabulary development for children. To support nurseries in needs	- Plan a time to allow a visit to each preschool site Meet with both nursery managers to discuss their maths approach and needs going forward.	EH	Time to cover EH in class to allow visits to pre-school settings.		

SUBJECT LEADER REPORT