

The Powerful Words Project: what we will do

Supporting accelerated progress in reading & writing for KS2 disadvantaged pupils in Yrs 3-6 by extending their receptive and expressive vocabulary

"The limits of my language are the limits of my world" Ludwig Wittgenstein

Project Ambition: We want to reduce word poverty for our disadvantaged pupils. This is part of a systematic approach to developing literacy in order to increase pupils' academic attainment; improve their life chances; and develop their cultural capital - all of which, up till now, have been the privilege of the word rich.

Priority 1: Improve KS2 teaching practice by equipping teachers with evidence-informed approaches and resources for developing vocabulary

Working with **22** primary schools from **8** school clusters in Cambridgeshire:

- Witchford
- Ely
- March
- Chatteris
- Wisbech
- Whittlesey
- Bottisham
- A1 schools (Yaxley)



114
KS2 teachers

Using cascade training, we will work directly with a school lead from each of our 22 primaries, supporting them to develop teaching practice of KS2 teachers at their school

Over a 5 term period, nationally recognised experts will provide 15 days of CPD to 22 school leads, supporting them to cascade research into classrooms, and embed evidence-informed approaches into teaching practice

15 days of Professional Development



Evidence informed approaches

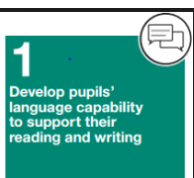
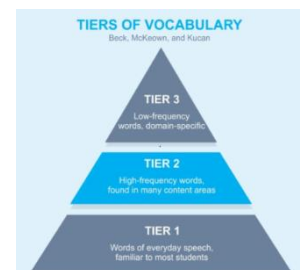


Our bespoke CPD programme, built around Recommendation 1 from EEF's 'Improving Literacy in KS2', will support the development of vocabulary through:

- Explicit teaching of new words
- Exposure to a rich language environment with opportunities to hear & confidently experiment with new words

Teachers will be trained in approaches and provided with resources that specifically target developing Tier 2 vocabulary (words that occur frequently in academic contexts)

Targeting Tier 2 vocabulary



Priority 2: Complement existing work surrounding language acquisition in EYFS and KS1, and sustain pupils' acquisition of vocabulary during KS2/3 transition

- 8 secondary schools, including feeders for all primaries involved in the project, to attend relevant CPD sessions
- Best practice to be shared between EYFS and KS1 teaching teams within each school



Priority 3: Spread best practice in developing pupil vocabulary by increasing expertise and system leadership within and beyond East Cambs & Fenland

- Investing in 5 term CPD programme to develop teacher expertise
- Ambassador schools identified to further develop partnerships, research & innovation with CPD providers
- Project learning to feed into the Opportunity Area and local literacy initiatives
- Post project CPD to be delivered via local school clusters



The Powerful Words Project: why we need it

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Foundations for thinking & communication



Through increasing vocabulary we deepen the foundations for thinking and communication – skills that lie at the heart of academic achievement

30 million word gap

By the age of 3, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are estimated to have heard 30 million fewer words than their advantaged peers

By the end of KS2, disadvantaged pupils are estimated to have **less than half of the 25,000 words** that their advantaged peers possess


12,000 words


25,000 words

We need to understand the meaning of a minimum of 90% of words in a passage in order to comprehend it, & then to begin to learn the other 10% of the words

90% of words need to be understood



The "Matthew Effect" of vocabulary acquisition



Those with an initial low level of vocabulary will fall further and further behind.

Attainment gaps re-emerge at KS2+ once pupils encounter more challenging, culturally rich vocab, especially in non-fiction contexts

Decoding



Comprehension

Attainment GAP

between KS2 disadv. pupils in our project & national average

-16%
Reading

-27%
Writing

Progress GAP

between KS2 disadv. pupils in our project & national average

-20%
Reading

-17%
Writing

Priority for our schools and region



Developing pupils' vocabulary is a priority for our schools on their Development Plans, as well as a priority on the Opportunity Area's Delivery Plan

Lack of ring fenced time



Our schools cite a lack of KS2 ring-fenced time currently allocated for explicit vocabulary instruction and reading Tier 2 rich texts aloud to pupils

Our schools cite a lack of KS2 class-based oracy activities specifically planned to develop Tier 2 vocabulary



Lack of vocabulary targeted oracy activities

64% of our primaries have an above average number of disadvantaged pupils



Disadvantage

Progress 8
Below or Well Below

Disadvantaged pupils go on to have below/well below Progress 8 scores at over half of our feeder secondary schools

Regional absence



There's an absence of regional CPD available to develop expertise surrounding vocabulary acquisition