

Bristol Boys' Achievement Project Case Study from May Park Primary School

Context

May Park Primary School joined the Bristol Boys Achievement Project in June 2017. At the beginning of the project we teamed up with Filton Avenue Primary School. It was here that the journey began and we came up with our focus for the project which was 'do children's fine motor skills have an impact on writing outcomes at the end of Reception?' Together we created a baseline assessment (see appendix) for all Reception children to complete on entry. This was made up of ten activities which directly linked with the early years' objectives for physical development and writing. Shortly into the project Glenfrome Primary School became involved and it was here that May Park and Glenfrome worked in close partnership on ideas to develop the project further so as to maximise the progress each child could make. This was done by school visits and observations of each other's settings as well as regular meetings to discuss new ideas.

Rationale

The main reason for choosing the focus on fine motor development linked with writing was that, year on year, I was noticing a trend with fine motor skills being below gross motor skills. As such, it was apparent that all round physical development was coming in at below age related levels. This was particularly noticeable in the higher ability group where physical and writing development did not match their learning and levels in all other areas of the curriculum. I also have a passion for Early Writing and understanding how children acquire the skills to support their writing development.

Baseline data 2017

From the Baseline assessment that the Reception team completed the results showed the following information:

- 70% girls achieved 9 or 10 in overall compared with only 30% of boys achieving 9 or 10 overall.
- Areas of weaknesses across the year group - fastening buttons/zip on a coat and cutting around a curve shape

(see appendix for full table of results)

Method

Using the results of the assessment, I worked with the Reception team to adapt the current timetable to include fine motor activities in order to support physical development skills. I went to regular termly meetings with local schools to discuss the progress of the children and come up with further next steps, which included the changes to topics in class in order to promote further engagement with boys and their writing skills. The changes to the topics were done by consultation with the children themselves in an attempt to understand fully their interests and motivations for learning. We developed the topics by leaving them more open ended. This allowed teachers the flexibility and opportunities to develop the children's skills through a more bespoke curriculum which was meeting all children's individual preferences, whilst still meeting the Early Years outcomes.

Within the 2017-2018 cohort at May Park there was a high level of SEND children - particularly boys. With this in mind I worked closely with the Reception teaching team, and highly experienced 1:1 LSAs, to set up an intervention base which tailored activities to meet individual needs. Regular reviews through activities and assessments allowed the team to track progress in line with the boys project. It was quickly identified that the intervention base could be successfully used to provide interventions for the higher achieving boys whose fine motor skills were not in line with the rest of their learning. These children were selected and received twice weekly intervention developing their wrist muscles and confidence in writing through engaging activities which connected with the classroom learning.

Findings

Impact of the project on eight children:

- ▶ The eight children above were all children whose parents agreed for their children to take part in the project. Out of these, 88% have met age related expectations for physical development and 75% have met age related expectations for writing at the end of the year compared to only 25%(PD)/13%(W) entering Reception at age related expectations.
- ▶ The table below shows the progress that the children made in both physical development and writing from September to July.

Child	Physical Development		Writing	
	Baseline	Summer	Baseline	Summer
(IN) Child 1 (Autumn)	30-50W	GLD	30-50W	GLD
(SB) Child 2 (Pakistani)	40-60B	GLD	30-50S	GLD
(ON) Child 3	40-60B	GLD	40-60B	GLD
(MA) Child 4 (EAL)	30-50B	GLD	30-50S	GLD
(TO) Child 5 (PP) (Black Caribbean)	30-50W	GLD	30-50S	GLD
(LR) Child 6 (Black Caribbean) (Summer)	30-50W	40-60S	30-50W	40-60W
(MU) Child 7 (FSM) (PP) (Pakistani)	30-50W	GLD	30-50S	GLD
(KB) Child 8 (FSM) (PP) (Spring)	30-50W	GLD	30-50S	40-60S

The above information shows the impact that the development of the project had on a small number of pupils within the year group. Below shows the wider impact that the boys' achievement project has had on the whole year group. This is as a result of the baseline assessment, changes to the timetable so that fine motor activities were included into daily practice, and the staffs' increased awareness of how to support writing development through the development of children's fine motor skills.

Impact that the project has had on all the year group

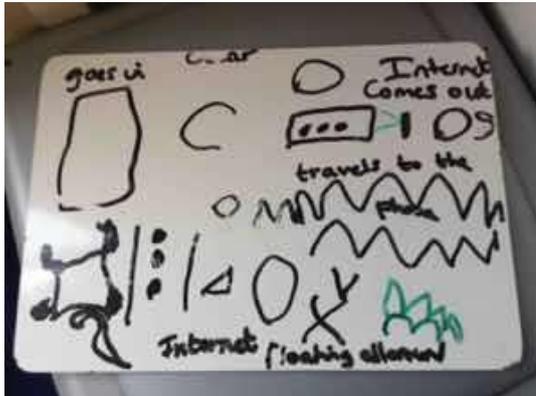
Boys' achievement

- Moving and Handling 2017 - 56%. Increased to 73% in 2018 (+17%).
- Writing 2017 - 39%. Increased to 52% in 2018 (+13%).

	Baseline	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Moving and Handling	10 16.9%	20 33.9%	32 54.2%	43 72.9%
Writing	8 13.6%	18 30.5%	18 30.5%	31 52.5%

Evidence

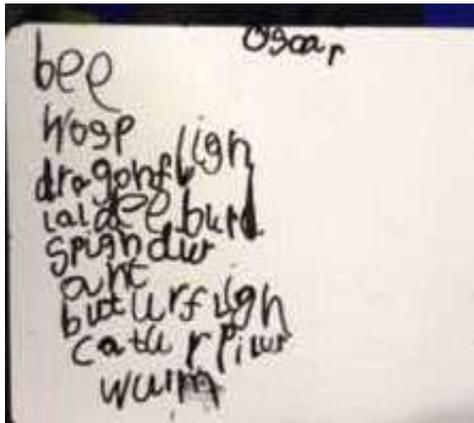
Observations and example work showing the children's writing:



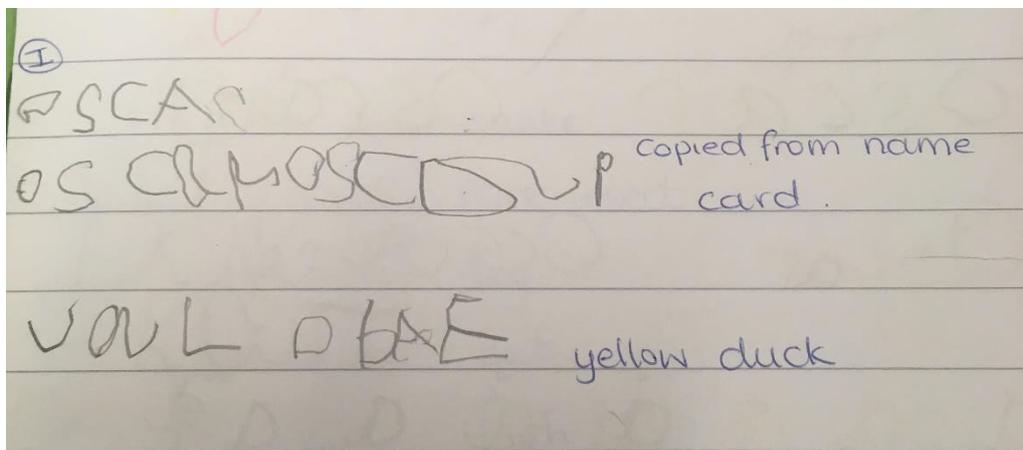
- ▶ During early morning carpet time work children are asked to draw and write about what they did on the weekend. O draws a detailed drawing of what he has found out. He explains his drawings, step by step. He says "I have been researching about how the Internet works".



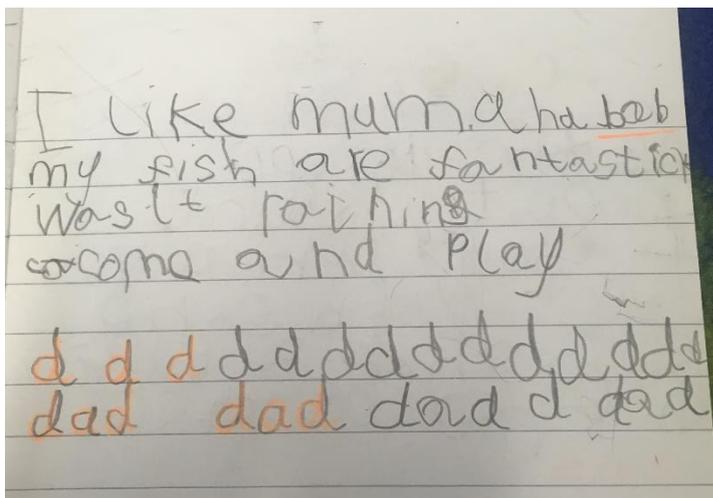
- ▶ After looking at L's Lightning McQueen cards the group decide to design a car together. They talk about the type of wheels. I states how the car is actually alive with lava. They discuss the colours they need for it to be a rainbow car. Y states how they need to find pink and offers a black pen to his friend. A finds some silver and colourful bits to stick on the car. I draws some oil and Y adds an engine.



► Writing a list of the mini beasts that he knows.



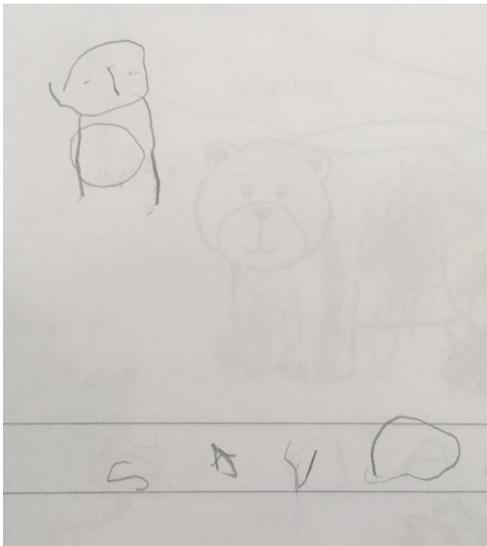
First piece of writing work (September).



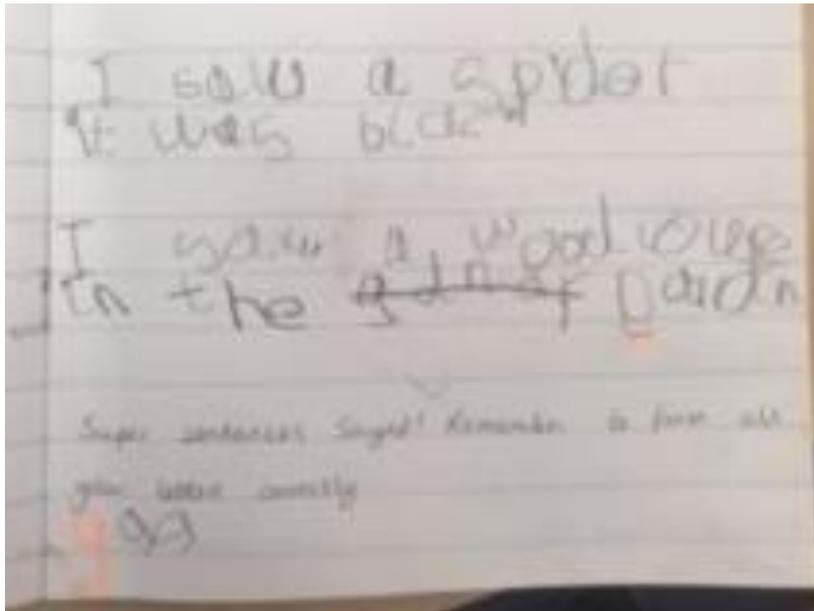
(Spring 2018 after intervention work on fine motor skills).

The bee can suckle.
The bee can bounce.
The bee can bounce and
soar.
The bee can hover and
float.
The bee can soar
and float.

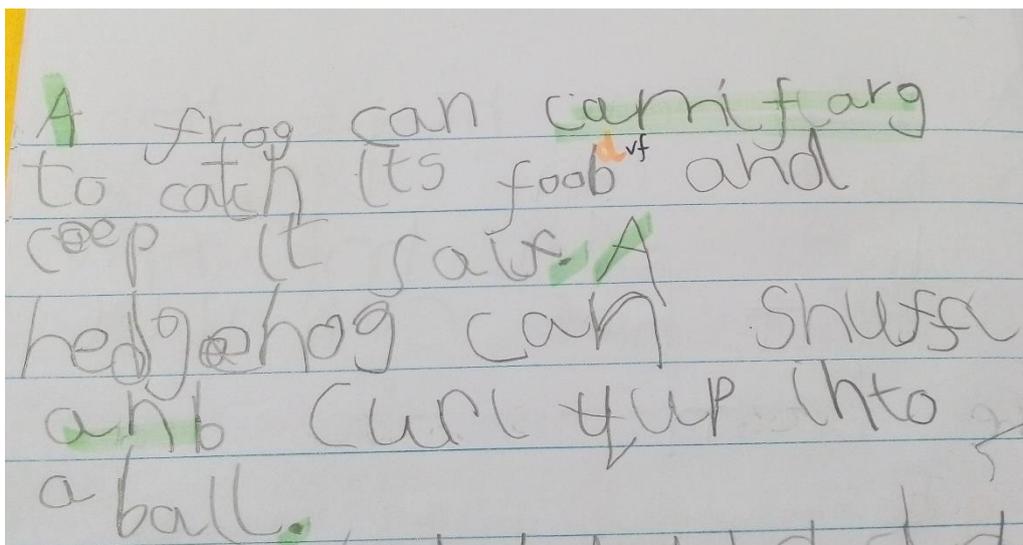
(June writing).



First piece of writing work (September).



(Spring 2018 after intervention work on fine motor skills).



(June writing).

The quote below is from a child who was a reluctant writer for most of the Reception year. In May he said to his teacher: "I want to keep writing Miss, I want to write all the way to the bottom of the page". This love for learning continued and he worked so hard in his writing every day that he successfully achieved the writing ELG at the end of the academic year.

Moving forward at May Park

Whilst the project had a positive impact and results improved slightly, there is still a long way to go until the children achieve results which are more in line with Bristol and National averages. With this in mind, the Reception team at May Park are keen to continue with the baseline assessment in September and will look at creating a new bespoke intervention timetable to support the new cohort of children. They have also agreed that they will revisit the assessment activities in December for the children who did not achieve them at the September baseline to compare how the fine motor activities are having an impact on the children's skills.

I am now working with the Nursery team to include daily activities such a finger gym and dough disco within their timetable. This is aimed at starting the process of fine motor development at the beginning of their May Park journey.

Parent workshops will also be developed for Nursery and Reception parents which focus on accessible activities aimed at developing physical skills and early writing such as playdough, mark making (indoor and outdoor) and cooking. Booklets will be produced for parents in different languages with activities that the parents can undertake with their child at home. One of the main aims for these workshops is to raise the awareness of using a variety of tools safely and effectively to develop children's skills, and also to give parents an insight into how physical development skills can impact positively on writing in future years.