



Introducing the **EARLY LITERACY SUPPORT Programme**

Q What is the ELS Programme?

Early Literacy Support is an intervention programme for children who need additional support. It includes a training programme, a screening package, and 60 extra literacy sessions to be run by a teaching assistant.

Good first teaching will meet the needs of most children, but provision must be made for those who may experience difficulty with early literacy learning. Early identification and support is the most effective approach to preventing long-term difficulties.

Q Who is it for?

ELS is designed to support groups of up to six Y1 children who have been identified as needing additional support.

Q Who will run it?

The additional sessions are run by a teaching assistant, with regular opportunities to review the children's progress in discussion with the teacher.

Q When will it take place?

The Y1 teacher and teaching assistant work in partnership to teach and support the class as a whole, and to identify the intervention group. At the end of the Autumn term, the children are screened and the intervention group is identified. The additional sessions are run during the Spring term, for 12 weeks. These sessions are in addition to, not instead of, the daily Literacy Hour.

Q How will it be resourced?

Each school will receive a full set of lesson notes and supporting materials.

This year, schools have been allocated £350 via the Standards Fund to spend on resources – this can be used to purchase the 'ELS trolley' and books needed for the sessions.

Funds have been provided to pay for supply cover for teachers and teaching assistants attending the training days, and for preparation and follow-up work in school.

Q What happens at the end of the programme?

The aim of the intervention is to generate accelerated learning back to the appropriate *NLS Framework for teaching* objectives. Most children will be able to work at the level of the rest of their class and no further support will be needed. Others may need one-to-one support or other specialised provision to address their particular needs.

Overview of ELS training

Day 1: Quality First Teaching – for teaching assistants, Y1 and YR teachers.

Day 2: Screening – for teaching assistants and Y1 teachers.

Day 3: Intervention Lessons – for teaching assistants and Y1 teachers.

Each training day has pre-course and post-course tasks for participants to complete. These form an important part of the preparation and follow-up for the day itself.

Training Day 1

QUALITY FIRST TEACHING

Before the first training day:

- **ACTIVITY 1:**

Observation and discussion

Teaching assistants need to observe one Guided Reading and one Shared Writing session in a Y1 class and to make notes about what the teacher does, and what the children do. After the sessions, the teacher and teaching assistant discuss what has been observed.

- **ACTIVITY 2:**

Discussing information and roles

Teachers and teaching assistants need to work together for half a day. They should:

- read information provided about the ELS programme;
- look together at the *NLS Framework for teaching* and talk through medium- and short-term planning for literacy;
- work through the *Progression in Phonics* CD-ROM and discuss how the activities are used in class;
- discuss *Progression in Phonics* activities which the teaching assistant could try out with small groups of children;
- discuss ways that the teaching assistant can support during Shared Writing sessions.

Objectives of Training Day 1

- To outline the features of the Early Literacy Support programme.
- To extend understanding of how children learn to read and write.
- To examine how an increased understanding of this process can improve teaching of literacy.
- To discuss the role of the teaching assistant in strengthening the quality of teaching and learning in Y1 classrooms.

Key principles

The ELS programme is based on the principle that early intervention is the key to ensuring long-term literacy success and the prevention of failure. This intervention must operate in the context of quality first teaching in Y1 classes and be based on a partnership between the teacher and the teaching assistant.

The structure of ELS

YEAR 1 TERM 1

The whole class receives quality first teaching, supported by the teaching assistant. Children are screened and a group is identified for the intervention sessions.

YEAR 1 TERM 2

Quality first teaching continues. The ELS group receive 60 additional literacy sessions run by the teaching assistant outside the Literacy Hour.

YEAR 1 TERM 3

Quality first teaching continues. Ongoing monitoring and assessment is used to identify children needing further support.

After the first training day:

The post-course activities are designed to help the Y1 teacher and teaching assistant develop their partnership and practice in relation to the information, activities and discussion from the first training day.

- **ACTIVITY 1:**

Planning a Shared Writing session

Teacher and teaching assistant work together to plan a Shared Writing session, identifying a specific role for the teaching assistant. They discuss the session after they have run it and prepare to feed back on the next training day.

- **ACTIVITY 2:**

Planning a Guided Reading session

Teacher and teaching assistant work together to plan two Guided Reading sessions which they will carry out with groups of children.

- **ACTIVITY 3:**

Observation of Guided Reading sessions

The teacher carries out the first Guided Reading session, with the teaching assistant observing one child and making notes. The teaching assistant runs the second session, making notes about how it went in order to feed back on the next training day.

Training Day **2**

SCREENING

Objectives of Training Day 2

- To review the activities completed after the first training day and draw conclusions about effective Shared Writing and Guided Reading.
- To outline the principles, content and administration of the screening.
- To ensure that teachers and teaching assistants are fully prepared to carry out the screening and make appropriate decisions about who to include in the group.
- To prepare teaching assistants to observe individual children within the class.

Summary of the screening process

- At the end of the Autumn term the 'at risk' group needs to be identified. The Screening Pack is designed to support this process, and complements the ongoing assessments made by teachers as they work with their classes.
- It is not necessary to screen every child in the class, just those who are not making expected progress.
- The Screening Pack contains Speaking and Listening, Writing, Reading, and Word level screens. It suggests the context for the different screens and provides checklists to be completed for each child.
- The teacher and teaching assistant carry out different parts of each screen within the Literacy Hour structure.
 - Speaking and Listening: the teacher leads a Shared Reading session, focusing questions on specific children while the teaching assistant observes their responses.
 - Word level: the teacher plays specified *Progression in Phonics* games with the class, while the children being screened sit beside the teaching assistant, who records their responses. The teaching assistant works with individuals during the independent session to check their knowledge of high frequency words. Children's ability to continue a rhyming string is checked during the plenary session.
 - Reading: the teacher leads a Guided Reading session with each group being screened, using a book from their current book band, and completes a checklist for each child.



- Writing: the teacher leads a Guided Writing session with each group being screened. The group are asked to compose a sentence and then to write it. The teacher completes a checklist for each child.
- After screening, decisions will have to be made about the children to be included in the group, which should consist of no more than six children. Every eligible child should be considered and priority given to those most at risk, while also considering other factors such as attendance, behaviour and other support available to individual children. It is recommended that SENCOs are involved in these discussions.

After the second training day:

Teachers and teaching assistants will have drawn up an action plan during the training day, and this now needs to be implemented.

- **Prepare for the screening.** Teaching assistants practise observing groups of children during whole-class sessions. Discussions are held about which children to prioritise for screening. Teachers familiarise themselves with the *Progression in Phonics* games 'Bingo' and 'Fans', and resources are prepared.
- **Run the screening.**
- **Identify the group.** The group is identified in consultation with the school's ELS implementation team.
- **Inform parents.**

Training
Day



Training Day **3**

INTERVENTION LESSONS

Objectives of Training Day 3

- To introduce the materials for the intervention lessons and familiarise teaching assistants with the content and teaching strategies.
- To identify features of effective intervention support.
- To support teachers and teaching assistants in preparing to run the sessions in the Spring term.

Key principles

- Children in the 'at risk' group receive extra support during the Spring term. They have an additional 20-minute session each day, outside the Literacy Hour, run by the teaching assistant. There are 60 sessions in total.
- The aim is for the children in the group to be supported in accelerated learning back to the appropriate *NLS Framework for teaching* objectives.
- The sessions build on success to secure, practise and apply key literacy objectives.
- Opportunities are provided for children to talk about their learning and reflect on their progress.
- The active involvement of the class teacher and parents or carers is important to help children secure and extend their learning.

Structure of the lessons

Each week:

- teacher's notes explain what is being covered and help teachers make links with whole-class teaching;
- sessions move from demonstration and modelling of reading and writing by the teaching assistant to application by the children.

Every day:

(the sessions are divided into five parts)

- *Oral Opener*: reviewing yesterday's learning and introducing today's;
- *Phonics Five*: games based on *Progression in Phonics*;
- *Text Ten*: reading or writing activities based on the text focus for the week;
- *Fast Finisher*: quick activity usually preparing children for the 'Take Away';
- *Take Away*: reviewing today's learning and giving children an independent activity to do in class or at home.

The sessions are designed to be lively and fun, helping children build on their successes from day to day. 'Pip' the puppet appears every day to demonstrate skills, often getting things wrong and asking the children to help.



Overview of the lessons

- The first four weeks are based on Reception objectives, the second four weeks on Year 1 Term 1, and the third on Year 1 Term 2.
- Each week is focused around a particular text type, with something for the children to take home at the end of the week.
- The children do either Guided Reading or Guided Writing with the teaching assistant at the end of every week.
- 'Progress checklists' can be used by the teacher and teaching assistant to monitor children during the programme.
- Some children may need one-to-one support or other provision through the SEN procedures at the end of the programme.

Preparing for the sessions

In advance:

- Allocate a regular time each day, outside the Literacy Hour.
- Find a dedicated space in the school for the teaching assistant to use as a base.
- Order the 'ELS trolley' and any big books needed for the sessions. Choose a puppet.
- Run the 'Getting to know you' sessions with the group.

Each week:

- Read through the lesson scripts for each day and remember the teaching points.
- Look at the list of things to prepare for each session. Time will be needed for preparation.
- Send the 'Activity Sheet' home for parents.
- Arrange regular liaison between the teaching assistant and the teacher.

This pamphlet supports the ELS training days. Access www.standards.dfee.gov.uk/literacy for full lesson scripts and resources. See also ELS pamphlets 2, 3 and 4.