

Evaluation of every child a writer report 2: teaching and writing in ecaw classes

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This research report was commissioned before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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Table of Contents

| | | | |
|----------|------------|--|-----------|
| | | Executive Summary | 3 |
| 1 | | Introduction | 6 |
| | 1.1 | Methods | 6 |
| 2 | | Evidence from classroom observation | 8 |
| | 2.1 | Literacy lessons | 8 |
| | 2.2 | Structure of lessons | 8 |
| | 2.3 | Content of lessons | 8 |
| | 2.4 | Learning objectives | 9 |
| | 2.5 | Lesson introductions | 9 |
| | 2.6 | Resources | 10 |
| | 2.7 | Guided writing | 12 |
| | 2.8 | Teacher interaction | 12 |
| 3 | | Writing samples | 17 |
| | 3.1 | The methodology | 17 |
| | 3.2 | Sentence structure | 19 |
| | 3.3 | Sentence variety | 21 |
| | 3.4 | Word choice | 22 |
| | 3.5 | Connectives | 24 |
| | 3.6 | Cohesion | 25 |
| | 3.7 | Handwriting | 26 |
| | 3.8 | Teacher feedback | 27 |
| | 3.9 | How text choice influences writing opportunities | 27 |
| 4 | | One-to-one tuition | 28 |
| 5 | | Implications for writing pedagogy | 31 |
| | 5.1 | Classroom practice | 31 |
| | 5.2 | Writing samples | 31 |
| 6 | | References | 31 |
| 7 | | Glossary | 32 |

Executive summary

Introduction

In 2008, the University of Exeter and the National Foundation for Educational Research were commissioned by the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) now Department for Education (DfE), to conduct an evaluation of the *Every Child a Writer* initiative. The study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate impact and explore process and practice over the second year of the project. This report focuses on the findings from the classroom observation and writing samples collected in ten case study schools.

Aims

The research aimed to evaluate:

- The impact of involvement in *Every Child a Writer* (ECaW) on standards of writing in the schools: on teaching, of both class teachers and one-to-one tutors; on pupils' attitudes and perceptions; and on the whole school.
- The delivery of ECaW including investigating processes which supported/hindered the effectiveness of ECaW, and identify features of effective and ineffective practice.
- Perceptions of cost effectiveness.

Methodology

The evaluation involved a blend of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Central to the qualitative strand were ten case studies of both cohort 1 (five) and cohort 2 (five) schools. Each case study focused on one LA (Local Authority). Selection of case study schools provided as broad as possible a range of characteristics. These characteristics cover demographics such as geographical location as well as economic and social background; schools making exceptional progress as well as those experiencing difficulties; schools with the Leading Teacher based in the school and those where this is not the case. Data included interviews with LA staff, teachers, one-to-one tutors, parent focus group and pupils; classroom observation of literacy teaching; and analysis of writing samples from pupils in case study schools. The case studies were conducted in the spring and summer terms of 2010.

Key findings

Data from the case studies of 10 ECaW schools provide the following insights in relation to the 3 aims of ECaW:

Improving quality first teaching for the whole class, ensuring that Year 3 and Year 4 teachers make effective use of the Primary Strategy and the range of writing-related materials and interventions available.

- Medium term and lesson planning for case study lessons was mostly coherent and appropriately linked to schemes of work. This supports what class teachers report that the leading teachers had helped them with planning.
- The extent to which teachers adhered to the learning intentions of the lessons varied considerably. Some teachers' interaction with pupils in lessons foregrounded objectives other than those identified in the plans.
- In most lessons more time was spent in whole class session than in individual writing. In the best lessons, this time was well spent using variety of talk and short burst writing activity.
- The quality of guided writing varied. In the best lessons the guided session offered targeted instruction well matched to the needs of the pupils. Pupils were helped to write independently and were encouraged to make choices in composition and evaluate the impact of those choices.
- In some cases teacher subject knowledge was weak, evidenced by a tendency to treat linguistic features as essentially good or bad rather than considering how effective they are in the context of the writing.

Supporting Year 3 and 4 teachers in improving writing through the use of the Leading Teacher (LT) model. These are teachers who are recognised as excellent practitioners and who assist Supported Teachers develop their understanding of the teaching of writing, focusing on planning assessment and guided writing.

- There was a close link between classroom teaching and the writing produced by pupils. Pupils responded to the teachers' input and feedback, sometimes despite the planned intentions of the teacher (see point 4b below).
- Lesson activities were chosen with a view to scaffolding the writing produced by pupils. Teachers mostly used engaging topics, sometimes linked to work in other curriculum areas. The best lessons had an authentic purpose for the writing and this enabled pupils to write with expression.

Providing one-to-one tuition for those pupils that need it most.

- Pupils enjoyed one-to-one sessions but spoke about personal relationships rather than writing.
- Pupil targets were focused on individual need but were not always well understood by tutors.
- All parties agreed that the main benefit of one-to-one tuition was on individual pupil confidence.

Targeting areas that make the most difference in writing, in particular sentence construction and text cohesion.

- The best writing samples came from lessons where teachers focused on meaning and communicative effect. Such lessons were observed both from supported and leading teachers.
- Scaffolding was used extensively by teachers. In some cases scaffolding appeared too strong or 'supportive' and may have been limiting student learning and creating over-dependence.
- Lesson plans and the teacher feedback frequently focused on particular grammatical constructions such as connectives, verbs, adjectives, sentence starters etc. This was directly evident in the writing samples where pupils used these features in their texts but without necessarily using them effectively.
- Teacher feedback often lacked focus on meaning and communicative effect. Thus, often the communicative purpose of the writing was lost, or subordinated to, the emphasis on grammatical features, making the writing task more of an exercise in demonstrating usage than act of communication.

1 Introduction

In 2008, the University of Exeter and the National Foundation for Educational Research were commissioned by the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), now Department for Education to conduct an evaluation of the Every Child and Writer initiative. The study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate impact and explore process and practice over the second year of the programme. This stand-alone report is intended to review the teaching of writing observed in the ten case study schools that took part in the qualitative strand of the research.

For full details of the complete evaluation, please refer to the Research Brief and full Research Report available at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/Rsg/AllRsgPublications/Page1>

In order to address concerns with lack of progress in writing particularly at year 3 and 4, the National Strategies developed *Every Child a Writer* (ECaW), a programme of materials and support for writing at KS2. The main objective of the programme is to ensure faster progress in writing at the beginning of KS2 in the expectation that all pupils will secure level 3 by the end of year 4 and make two levels of progress across KS2. The programme is a three-tier model for all pupils which operates through:

- Improving quality first teaching for the whole class, ensuring that Year 3 and Year 4 teachers make effective use of the Primary Strategy and the range of writing-related materials and interventions available.
- Supporting Year 3 and 4 teachers in improving writing through the use of the Leading Teacher (LT) model. These are teachers who are recognised as excellent practitioners and who assist Supported Teachers develop their understanding of the teaching of writing, focusing on planning assessment and guided writing.
- Providing one-to-one tuition for those pupils that need it most.

ECaW is designed to target the areas that make the most difference to writing, in particular sentence construction and text cohesion.

1.1 Methods

Full details of the of the case study methodology can be found in Appendix 6 of Report 1.

The data drawn on for this report come from the classroom observation and collection of writing samples in the ten schools visited as part of the evaluation of ECaW. Five of these schools had been part of the first cohort of ECaW schools and were in their second year. Five were from cohort 2. Each case study focused on one Local Authority. Selection of case study schools sought to provide as broad as possible a range of characteristics. These characteristics covered demographics such as geographical location as well as economic and social background;

schools making exceptional progress as well as those experiencing difficulties; schools with the leading teacher based in the school; and those with supported teachers.

Data collected for each case consisted of:

- telephone interviews with local authority Primary Strategy Manager and Strategy Consultant responsible for ECaW;
- face to face interviews with headteacher, leading teacher or ECaW supported teacher (as relevant), and one-to-one tutor;
- focus group meeting with parents or carers
- observation of literacy lesson taught by ECaW supported teacher or leading teacher
- observation of part of one-to-one tuition sessions
- writing conversation with 4 pupils following the lesson observation
- paired interview with pupils who had received or were receiving one-to-one tuition
- linguistic analysis of samples of 10 pupils' writing

Four the purposes of this report which focuses on classroom teaching, the main data used are the observations, writing samples and interviews with pupils. Other data are referred to only when they are relevant to the lesson observed or the writing sample discussed.

Ten hour long literacy lessons were observed. Four of these were given by ECaW Leading Teachers and six were given by ECaW Supported Teachers. All but one were to year three and/or year four classes. One Leading Teacher was observed teaching her own year two/three class. All lessons were audio-taped and seven were also videoed. Thirty minutes of eight of the hour long one-to-one tuition sessions were observed. Five of these were videoed. In all of these the observer kept an observation schedule that had been developed particularly for the purposes of this evaluation. The schedule had four columns to note: the time; what the teacher was doing; what the pupils were doing; and any other comments, for example, resources used or evidence of teacher subject knowledge.

2 Evidence from classroom observation

It must be noted that the observation of ECaW classes provide only a snapshot of practice at one point in the year. The comments relate to particular lessons and do not provide any evidence of change in practice as a result of ECaW.

2.1 Literacy lessons

An overriding impression of the observed lessons has been the good behaviour of the pupils in both Leading and Supported Teacher classes. They have behaved well, been responsive to their teachers and engaged enthusiastically in the writing activities.

The integrated nature of the literacy curriculum has been evident as not all lessons focused only on writing itself. All lessons involved some writing but most also gave opportunities for pupils to talk in pairs or groups. One lesson included a reading activity. Additionally, the topics of 3 of the lessons were linked to work in other curriculum areas.

2.2 Structure of lessons

The structure of the 10 observed lessons was similar: starting with a whole class section, usually interspersed with paired talk or writing on individual white boards. This was followed by a section where pupils went to their tables and some writing was done (even when the focus was on talking or reading). All lessons ended with a further whole class session where the work was reviewed. The distribution of time between whole class and groups work varied but in all but one case the whole class sessions were considerably longer than the group work. The longest whole class opening section was 50 minutes and the shortest 15. The longest group work session was 35 minutes. The final section lasted between 5 and 10 minutes.

2.3 Content of lessons

In all cases the observed lesson formed part of a block of planning. The amount and length of writing depended on where the lesson fell in this block of work. Three lessons were based on narrative, two on non-fiction texts, two on poetry and three on play scripts. Four of the lessons involved the pupils working on a text either written by their teacher or as a joint composition from a previous lesson. This allowed the teacher to encourage pupils to evaluate the text and provided a platform to explore the impact of a text on the reader. Three of the lessons focused on persuasive writing. Here different text types, some linked to the class topic, were used successfully to provide a purpose for the use of persuasive language. In one lesson the pupils were preparing leaflets to advertise their Stone Age museum. In another pupils were working on a section of a play script based on the life of Lady Jane Grey.

2.4 Learning objectives

Each lesson had been planned with one or more than one clear objective linked to the aspect of literacy under consideration. Some of these were presented as learning objectives others as success criteria in child language. They included:

- Use vocabulary to engage the reader
- Produce a leaflet. Use persuasive writing
- Improve and continue traditional story build up. Success criteria: understand dilemmas and use conjunctions
- Locate information in non-fiction texts. Note use of language in non-fiction texts. Identify main points of a non-fiction passage.
- Use and reflect on ground rules for sustaining talk. Identify and summarise evidence from a text to support hypothesis.
- 'I can convey characters' feeling in a play script'.
- Personalise the class story using interesting story openings and exciting word choices (including characters' feelings)
- Use exaggeration to make product sound better, revise play script, work independently

In one case the objective was presented more as the material outcome of the lesson: 'Use adverbs in stage directions. Create a story through improvisation. Write a complex sentence.'

In some lessons the learning objectives, although clear in the planning, were less evident in the actual classroom interaction. This is an important point in relation to the success of ECaW. The Leading Teachers had talked about how they had worked with their Supported Teachers on planning and the Supported Teachers had reported that they had found the help with planning very useful. Although the data presented here does not show a direct relationship between the work of a specific Leading Teacher and their Supported Teacher, they give clear indication that a good plan with a clear objective will not necessarily lead to an effective lesson for that objective.

2.5 Lesson introductions

As indicated above the length of the whole class introduction varied from 50 minutes to just 15. However, the minute count gives a misleading picture of the nature of these introductions. Many of these opening whole class sessions were engaging, stimulating and varied. In the case of the play script based on Lady Jane Grey (Leading Teacher Cohort 2), in addition to focused work

on the use of persuasive writing, pupils dressed up in Tudor costume and role played the exchange between Lady Jane Grey and John Dudley. In other lessons paired talk was used extensively as were small white boards on which pupils could try out short pieces of writing.

2.6 Resources

One of the tasks of the Leading Teachers in ECaW is to support teachers in their knowledge and use of resources. There are no specific classroom resources produced exclusively for ECaW. Therefore the resources covered by the Leading Teachers were varied. These resources as used in the 10 case study schools were drawn from the following sources:

- Standards website, e.g. Talk for Writing
- Commercial resources, e.g. Pie Corbett
- LA produced resources

It was evident that not all the supported schools fully understood the resources on offer and their relationship to ECaW. Where resources were providing support for the teacher such as planning grids or APP (Assessing Pupils Progress), these were often not mentioned as a resource. Favoured by the Supported Teachers were resources that could be used directly with pupils such as writing frames. Moreover, Supported Teachers and headteachers of supported schools did not always realise that the resource used in their school were part of the resources covered by ECaW.

In a small but significant minority of schools there was a tendency to over rely on resources that were little more than a mnemonic. These resources seemed to provide little in the way of developing pupils' understanding of the purpose of the various features of writing. For example, in a supported class a system of using gestures to signal the punctuation mark to be used had been suggested by the leading teacher. The Supported Teacher had found this useful but this seemed only to draw attention to the mark without considering how and why it should be used. An example of how such strategies can detract from the process of composition can be seen below in the comparison of two extracts from the data.

In the extract below a Supported Teacher (cohort 1 school) in a Year four class has pupils writing a leaflet to advertise their stone age attraction: using persuasive language to convince a tourist to visit. In this lesson the teacher focuses on the meaning of the words they are using.

Teacher: And you're going to use your imaginations to come up with a really good persuasive leaflet, to convince tourists that might be coming to your area to come and visit your Stone Age museum. Okay? [Name]?

Okay. Think about what sort of language you might use.

Pupil: Well, if you give them information like where it is, um, what's inside of it -

Teacher: Yeah, where it is, what's inside of it. And you really want to – do what? [Name]?

Pupil: You could say, like, you'll feel like you're in the Stone Age time?

Teacher: Fantastic. You've got to use really good language to convince people, haven't you? That it's somewhere they want to go. [Name]?

Pupil: Well, um, make it sound really interesting. And so also, you could also put, like, other events on it which you could go to as well. And, like, really exciting events as well.

Teacher: Brilliant. So exciting language. And it needs to use really good – What kind of words are you going to need to use, do you think? [Name]?

Pupil: "Travel through time," um... Um... "Travel through time with," like, say the name of the museum.

It is further clear from talking to the pupils afterwards that they have understood what they were doing.

'Well this morning we were doing advertisement writing, we were supposed to sort of have sort of persuasive writing, we had to sort of persuade people to come to a museum that we were sort of making, a stone age sort of, it was sort of like a stone age village and it was like a museum and it was sort of, it was... I think I was sort of pleased, I think I, 'cause I think I might have used my words quite well and made good sentences I think..... I think I used quite good vocabulary cause I said 'Dine in style at the Cave Kids Café.' (Writing conversation, cohort 1)

In contrast, following a lesson on using connectives supported by the acronym FANBOYS, pupils (Supported Teacher, cohort 1) were not able to describe what they were trying to achieve in their composition.

P1 About, we were like, we had like two sentences and we had to put like FANBOYS in.

P2: The FANBOY are for, and...

P1: So, nor, yet, and I think...

P3: So, or, but....

P2: No, the, it, for...

P4: For, am, which...

P1: Nor, but, or, yet and so.

R: Oh alright so you were thinking of other words, and what were you using those words to do?

P4: To make up sentences.

P1: You can combine one sentence with another and make (...) one of them FANBOYS which makes it like join together, and if it doesn't work you have to try a different one.' (Writing conversation, cohort 1)

2.7 Guided writing

A key intention of ECaW is to improve teachers' use of guided writing. The important feature of guided writing, emphasised by Leading Teachers, is that guided group work enables the focused teaching of a particular aspect of writing to those pupils that need it. The intention is to help teachers to move away from the practice of teaching groups of pupils at the same writing level to attempt to raise that level for that group of pupils. Instead, Supported Teachers are encouraged to identify groups of pupils who share a particular need in their writing development. Thus the focus is on a particular skill rather than a more general aim to raise the attainment level. In this way groupings would vary according to their needs.

Guided writing was used in eight of the ten observed lessons. However, the potential impact varied according to how and why it was used. In some cases the teacher had selected a group to work with on the main objective of the lesson. Here s/he sat with the group and provided extra reinforcement of the earlier input as the pupils produced their own writing. In other cases, the objective was different from the main class objective. In line with the advice of the Leading Teachers, pupils had been selected according to a particular need and the teacher worked with these pupils on a separate objective. A difficulty with this strategy arose when the focused objective did not fit well with the whole class writing task. For example, in the lesson in which pupils were writing a poem, the guided work was on speech marks. The focus of the whole class introduction was on the use of imaginative language to create the picture of the rainforest and this did not seem to fit easily with the introduction of speaking animals to enable the study of speech marks with the guided writing group.

A potentially more successful strategy in such a case was to openly change the activity and work on a mini lesson with the guided group. In one case, while the remainder of the class was identifying key points in a non-fiction text, the ECaW Supported Teacher worked with a small group on joining sentences. She had written several short sentences about gerbils and pupils had to join two sentences together using a connective. They discussed how the different connectives gave different meanings to the new sentence. She then photographed the resulting sentences. Although the topic was still based in non-fiction text and related loosely to the earlier introduction, the activity and the objectives were quite different but coherent and purposeful.

2.8 Teacher interaction

As indicated above, although lessons had objectives in plans that related to a broad range of aspects of writing development, these were not always the aspects of writing emphasised by teachers in their interaction with pupils. A significant aspect of the teaching observed was the way in which some teachers appeared to foreground the secretarial (spelling and punctuation) aspects of writing at the expense of meaning. This was even the case when the lesson plans appeared to focus on something quite different.

In one lesson the Supported Teacher's (cohort 2) objectives were to get pupils to personalise a class story using interesting story openings and exciting word choices. However, the interaction between teacher and pupils and the feedback given by the teacher could have given pupils the impression that other features were more important.

Who can carry on that story with me, whilst I write?

Pupil: [inaudible]

Teacher: Out of the - ? Good girl. Okay, so, 'Out of the corner of his eye' [children murmuring along], and remember when we have a good sentence opener, what follows?

Pupil: Comma.

Teacher: Good girl. Comma. 'Out of the corner of his eye -'

Pupil: He saw -

Teacher: Who saw?

Pupils: Tom.

Teacher: What are we going to use for 'Tom'?

Pupil: Capital letter.

Teacher: Good girl. Tom. 'Out of the corner of his eye, Tom saw -'

Pupil: An arrow.

Teacher: Good girl. Come on folks, you need to be thinking. 'An arrow pointing -'

Pupils: To the treasure -

Teacher: Right, stop there. Oh, hang on a minute, somebody said something lovely I'll pick up on in a moment. 'Tom saw an arrow pointing to the -'

Pupils: [inaudible]

Teacher: Oh right, okay. 'The golden, comma, shiny treasure.' Right. Stop there for me. What am I going to put at the end?

Pupil: Full stop.

Teacher: Full stop. Please don't shout out, hands up. It's lovely to see so many hands up. There we go, there's our full stop. Right.

In the plenary of this lesson, pupils were asked to circle all the punctuation they had used with blue pens. When this had been completed they could read to each other their 'fanciest sentences.' Here the intended learning focus on interesting openings and exciting word choices seems subordinate to the use of punctuation. In this case the support of the Leading Teacher which might have been beneficial to this Supported Teacher had been rejected by both Headteacher and Supported Teacher as unnecessary.

In contrast, in another lesson, one of the Leading Teachers (cohort two) wanted pupils to write their own poems based on one read and discussed in the class earlier. She asked them to come up with three wishes for a good poem. Here, whilst acknowledging the importance of punctuation, she works hard to keep pupils focused on the learning objective.

Teacher: But let's have a quick think. Let's have a quick think of our three wishes. What are our three wishes for this poem? So let's do our three wishes. What – Before we start writing, what's going to be, make it a really fab poem. What do you think?

Pupil: Capitals

Teacher: Well I hope they're going to happen anyway, aren't they? Let's think about the poem, and what do we want in this poem. Yes, we need our capital letters. Yes, we need our full stops. But that's the same for every piece of writing, isn't it? Tracey, what do you reckon?

Pupil: Um, we need rhyming words.

Teacher: We need rhyming words. Okay, so, rhyming words. Okay. Yeah, anything else?

Pupil: Doing different [starting words?].

Teacher: Brilliant. That's what we want, Jack. So starting our sentences in different ways. Fantastic. The next wish to make it a really good poem. What's it going to be? What things did we like about the Barnyard Banter poem? Let's have a quick look. You said that it was funny. We liked the rhyming words.

Pupil: Funny words.

Teacher: Funny words? Okay, so do we want to make a funny poem?

Pupils: Yeah!

Finally in the plenary, pupils read out their poems and evaluated each other against the three wishes decided earlier. Here the focus has remained on the evaluation of the impact of the poem.

Another issue that is evident in the data is that of teacher subject knowledge. It is clear from both observation and comments from the parent and carer focus groups that the teaching of writing includes use of linguistic terminology and attempts to teach the use of particular word classes to pupils. Initial impressions are that this approach to grammar teaching is not well understood by teachers. There is a tendency to ask pupils to provide 'good adjectives' or 'interesting verbs' rather than considering how the use of these words may or may not be 'good' or 'interesting' in the writing that they are doing.

In one lesson in a Year 3 class the teacher (Supported Teacher, cohort two) has written a poem which he shared with the class. They were asked to improve it. The mid-term plans focus on using a range of vocabulary to engage the reader. This is translated into powerful words: words to engage become words that are powerful in their own right.

Teacher: ...using powerful words. Now yesterday, as part of our literacy lesson, we researched and wrote down a lot of powerful rainforest words. As part of our ICT yesterday, we created word lists using the most important powerful rainforest words. So what I'm looking for today, in today's lesson and today's writing, is children who can write down in their poems as many powerful words as possible. What I'm also looking for – this is how you get your 3 star – is children who can use alliteration. Sleeping sloth. Towering trees.

In this lesson, as described in the section on writing, the teacher held a sustained discussion about better words for grass than 'green', and offered 'emerald' as an improved substitute: there was no discussion of why 'emerald' might be more appropriate or what the connotations of 'emerald' were that supported the ideas in the text.

In contrast, in the extract below the Leading Teacher (cohort two) has pupils working on a play script linked to their history project about life in Tudor times. The learning outcome of the lesson was that pupils would be able to 'convey a character's feelings in a play script'. The lesson involved good use of spoken language through role play which was then translated into the speech in the play script. The focus was only a small part of the script in which someone has to persuade Lady Jane Grey to return to London. Throughout the focus was on the meaning of the words used. This Leading Teacher had described some lessons she had observed as being 'death by connective'. In this lesson, the use of connectives is mentioned but only in the context of its meaning within the writer's text. Pupils are improving a script written previously by their teacher. Note below in this extract the way the teacher focuses pupils' attention on the effectiveness of the language for its purpose. First the teacher works with pupils to decide that

lady Jane Grey is feeling scared and John Dudley must try hard to persuade her to come back to London.

Teacher: the way I've written it – don't you think that he could be a bit more persuasive?

Pupils: Yeah.

Pupil: Um, he could say something like...

Teacher: [Name]?

Pupil: 'Come on, Jane. You need to come to England if you want to be crowned Queen.'

Teacher: 'Come on.' 'Come on'. 'Come on, Jane. You need to come to England if you want to be crowned Queen.' Good. Good. Before that, is there anything else you can add? Just be a bit more polite, just to like break it to her a bit more gently? What could you add in front? [Name]?

Pupil: 'Jane, Jane. Come with me. You could be crowned Queen of England if you just – If you just come to London.'

Teacher: I like it.

Teacher: 'Come with me to London' -

Pupil: 'So you can be'... 'And you can' -

Teacher: So, I like the 'so' – That connective 'so'. So, 'come with me to London so – '

Pupil: 'You can be crowned Queen of United Kingdom or England.'

Teacher: And [name], what – add something to this. Make it a bit more persuasive, oh, she's really needed. What did you say when I was chatting with you?

Pupil: Um, we need you desperately.

Teacher: Lovely. We need you – We need you, or England needs you?

Pupils: Yeah, England.

Teacher: England needs you -

Pupil: Desperately.

Teacher: Okay, lovely. That's really nice. 'Jane, Jane. Come with me to London so that you can be crowned Queen. England needs you desperately.'

Following this pupils write their own versions in which the task and teacher input results in effective use of co-ordination. Simple co-ordination is used effectively to indicate Lady Jane's reluctance to become Queen. One writer expressed Jane's horror at her father's wish that she should become Queen thus - '*H-he can't h-have and I-I don't want t-to.*' Another used 'but' very

effectively to make a counter argument. At the end of the lesson the teacher asks pupils to read their work and they identify which language features produced the effect that they were looking for.

3 Writing samples

*Items marked with an asterisk are explained in the Glossary at the end of this document.

3.1 The Methodology

Samples of pupils' writing were collected from the lessons observed in each of the case study schools. Because the case study classes were all undertaking different pieces of writing, and were at different stages in the teaching of that writing, the sample is very varied. The sample includes writing as diverse as poetry, a persuasive information leaflet, modern re-tellings of a traditional story, and writing a play script. It is encouraging to see young writers having the opportunity to write in such a variety of forms, given previous critiques of the primary writing curriculum for over-emphasising narrative fiction and personal writing. The Supported Teachers in case study schools had mentioned an increase in the range of writing undertaken as one positive outcome from their work in ECaW. The writing was also differently scaffolded both across the sample and within classes, so for example, the sample from the class writing a play script includes script written wholly by the pupil and script where the pupil has completed prompted text. The diversity in the sample in terms of both type of text and nature of support means that any statistical comparisons would be invalid and any numbers used in the report below are indicative of patterns and trends, rather than statistically comparative data. In two cases, the writing produced in the lesson was not analysed; one sample because it was a series of questions to a character and the other because it was an exercise altering supplied text. As neither of these were continuous pieces of writing produced by the pupils, it did not seem valid to subject them to analysis. A summary of the writing tasks and learning focuses is provided below.

| Writing Task | Learning Focus |
|---|--|
| A Rainforest Poem | creating and shaping text: connectives, writing a conversation |
| An information leaflet for a theme park | To complete a leaflet using persuasive language |
| To write a build-up to a modern re-telling of a traditional story | To write a build up To use conjunctions |
| Re-telling the story of the Minotaur | unclear |
| Writing Questions to ask a character (not analysed) | To think of questions to ask a character |

| | |
|---|--|
| A playscript | To convey characters' feelings |
| Exercise altering 'and' conjunctions to time connectives (not analysed) | To use time connectives |
| A collaborative class story | To personalize the class story using interesting sentence openings and exciting word choices |
| A radio advertisement | To show imagination through language used to create emphasis, humour, atmosphere or suspense |
| A fitness poem | To follow pattern of shared poem when writing our own poem |

* This writing did not come from the observed lesson as this had a reading task.

Each writing sample was analysed using the coding framework (See Appendix 6 in Report 1), following viewing the video of the lesson in which the writing was collected and reading of the lesson plan and observation notes. This contextual information was important in informing the analysis as it highlighted, for example, whether a particular word or phrase was the pupil's own or had been given by the teacher, and made evident the nature of the teaching which preceded the writing. In some cases, nearly always in weaker pieces of writing, the lack of clarity of the handwriting made it impossible to analyse the whole text. Elsewhere, again usually with weaker pieces, it was not always possible to analyse every sentence because of breakdown in within-sentence cohesion or punctuation problems. A good example of this is the use of minor sentences* which in confidently written texts appeared to indicate sophistication and accomplishment in using such sentences for rhetorical effect, but in weaker writing, appeared to be the accidental consequence of not managing to successfully structure a complete sentence.

In general, the coding framework was very successful in capturing information about the writing at word and sentence level. The section on text cohesion was less useful as very few of the samples were long enough to include textual cohesive features. In particular, very few samples were paragraphed which meant that inevitably there were none of the connecting devices for linking paragraphs. This does not appear to be indicative of a problem with textual cohesion; rather that the sample is often work-in-progress which had not yet reached completion.

After each sample was analysed using the coding framework, a further layer of analysis was undertaken, looking for trends, patterns and emerging themes, using both the numerical data and the qualitative examples. These themes are elaborated upon below.

3.2 Sentence Structure

In general, the analysis suggests that the majority of writers are confidently using simple*, compound* and complex* sentences, in their writing, although this is influenced by the text type. The play script and the information leaflet samples, for example, contained a significantly higher number of simple sentences than other samples because this was appropriate to the text type. In the play script, many of the simple sentences, were straightforward dialogue, such as '*I'm too young*', whereas in the information leaflet, they were often persuasive imperatives, such as '*Dine in style at Kit's café*' or persuasive statements, '*There's fun for everyone*'.

Many writers could use the imperative* persuasively, both in the information leaflet and in other texts. There was no evidence in the sample of pupils using too many simple sentences where compound or complex sentences might have been advisable, other than in the collaborative class story which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

In line with research on writing development (Perera 1984), there was evidence of some writers, over-using 'and' and other co-ordinating conjunctions*. For example, one writer in the class who were re-telling the Minotaur story wrote '*So he fell on the floor and I felt the rope and got out of the maze and I got on the boat and sailed to the land*'. Some pupils also used 'so' excessively to chain ideas, as does this writer from the collaborative class story lesson:

But the alligator saw him so Tom shook nervously. So Tom followed a sammil (?) so he slept over the broken bridge.

Several pupils incorrectly used 'then' as a co-ordinating conjunction, as in the following example: '*I felt something huge then I knew it was the minotaur I felt*.' Examples like this are interesting because it is unclear whether the writer thinks 'then' is an appropriate substitute for 'and' as a within-sentence conjunction, whether it is an omission of an 'and' preceding 'then', or whether it is a punctuation problem in not recognising that grammatically this one sentence is, in fact, two separate sentences. The sample is not large enough to give further evidence on this but it may well be that this kind of 'mistake' represents developmental growth in attempting to link ideas within a sentence. There is little doubt that three narrative tasks were more likely to lead to over-use of co-ordination, and this is almost certainly a feature of the genre. It also reflects young writers focus on plot and action, and the co-ordinating conjunctions are initial ways of linking ideas which move the narrative forward. However, this was not a major problem across the sample and the majority of compound sentences analysed contained just one conjunction.

There was also evidence in the sample of pupils shaping effective compound sentences with multiple clauses, using asyndetic co-ordination (in which conjunctions are deliberately omitted, such as 'I came, I saw, I conquered'): '*Explore high mountains, talk to the cavemen and learn how to arch*.' In the playscript, simple co-ordination was used effectively to indicate Princess Jane's reluctance to become Queen. One writer expressed Jane's horror at her father's wish that she should become Queen thus - '*H-he can't h-have and I-I don't want t-to*.' Another used

'but' very effectively to make a counter argument to the previous speaker's argument – '*She might but we need a protestant queen not a catholic one.*'

There were plenty of pupils using complex sentences successfully. What is perhaps more relevant here is the nature of the subordination. The majority of complex sentences were structured in one of three ways:

- A 'zero that' relative clause*: e.g. See the rockets [that] they play with; I thought [that] I would die.
- An infinitive clause: e.g. There's plenty of people to be queen; Jack rushed home excitedly to tell his mum.
- A finite* subordinate clause using 'when': e.g. Jack banged the door open when he got home; When I got home my dad was gone.

In the whole sample, relative clauses were predominant as the source of complex sentences. The relative clauses were almost always simple constructions where the relative clause simply followed the main clause, as in the examples above. There were no examples of relative clauses embedded in main clauses, as in '*The man, who was late for dinner, hurried home.*' Other subordinating conjunctions other than 'when' were infrequent (just a handful of examples of 'until'; 'if'; 'as'; 'before' and 'because'). This emphasis on temporal connectivity (when) and sequential relative clauses may reflect speech patterns and is a developmental pattern which has also been found in weaker writing of students in key stage 3 and 4 (Myhill 2009). The rainforest poetry writing task generated several examples of participial clauses, although these were often part of (appropriate) minor sentences such as '*Incredibly fast jaguars, foraging for scrumptious food.*' The stage directions in the play script task (M) also gave rise to a complex sentence using a participial clause: '*JD turns around to the Wall, closing his eyes.*' The requirement in the play script task to explain to the princess, Lady Jane Grey, that her father, King Edward, was dead seemed to generate good examples of very well-managed complex sentences:

- *Unfortunately, he has passed away, but before he did, he signed a paper wishing for you to be the next queen.*
- *Sadly the old King has departed from our world but he wishes someone as clever and as beautiful as you to rule.*
- *Come with me to London where your beautiful head will bear the crown.*

3.3 Sentence Variety

The coding framework also looked at sentence variety, in terms of the use of non-subject* starting points for sentences, and the use of short sentences for effect. Whilst there were many examples of short sentences which were not yet used for deliberate crafting effects, there was also considerable evidence that many writers were developing effective understanding of using simple or short sentences for rhetorical effect. There were many examples of effective short sentences in both the rainforest poem and the information leaflet: in the poem these were descriptive and in the leaflet they were persuasive imperatives such as '*Come and see the crazy cars!*' The re-telling of the Minotaur story demonstrated that writers could also short sentences for effect in narrative with key narrative moments often being described in a short sentence, for example, '*I thought I would die.*' One pupil concluded her poem about the rainforest with a simple sentence which rounded off the ideas conveyed in the poem – '*Wow, what a wonderful night.*'

There were also many examples of effective verbless sentences or sentences without a finite* clause. The rainforest poem, as noted earlier, generated several examples of effective sentences without a finite clause, using instead present or past participles (e.g. '*foraging for food*'); and the information leaflet had many examples of summative persuasive statements such as '*Fun for all the family.*' The play script had a high number of verbless sentences which were a natural consequence of dialogue (e.g. *Oh please* and *No!*) but it also had examples of shortened sentences appropriate to the playscript format, such as *No time to tell you all that!* One writer of the information leaflet used listed clauses and asyndetic co-ordination as a patterning persuasive device (*See it, want it, get it!*). Variety in sentence length was most evident in the playscript and least evident in the narratives: the playscript offered a lot of variation between single or two word sentences and longer more elaborated sentences; for example, '*Come, Jane! Quickly! You absolutely have to come to London! All the protestants are depending on your decision.*'

In the fitness poem, the modelled poem used the pattern of a present participle clause, plus three verbs or sound words, which the class followed very closely: for example, '*Playing on the trampoline, boing, boing, boing.*' Obviously, this led to a very high number of sentences without a finite clause.

The use of non-subject starting points for a sentence was much more limited, but not wholly absent. There were several adverbs used to in the narratives (*suddenly; finally*) and in the play script (*sadly; unfortunately*), but very few adverb phrases. One of these occurred in the rainforest poem (*In the starry sky*) and another in the information leaflet (*For a great day out, come to rockety rock rock*). There was an occasional subordinate clause start, usually beginning with 'when' or 'as'. The remaining non-subject starts were dialogue-driven, such as *Hey guys!*, or *Please*, or they were using *So* or *But* as sentence openers.

The collaborative class story is an exception to the patterns noted above and worth consideration because the learning focus was on varying sentence openings. The pupils were given a list of possible openings phrases (Out of the corner of my eye; just then; within minutes; as quick as a flash) to use in their own narratives. All the pupils in the sample used at least two non-subject starts, and there were 28 examples of non-subject openings in this batch. Relative to the other samples, this is a very high number, and of these the majority were the adverb phrases supplied by the teacher. In general, pupils used these openers successfully though there was a sense with some pupils that they were not always used meaningfully in relation to the narrative plot, as the following examples illustrate:

Out of nowhere, a snake chased him.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw an arrow. Within minutes, a frog leapt out of a brown, scruffy tree.

One characteristic of this set of writing is that not only were there more non-subject sentence starts, but there were also far more simple sentences and almost no complex sentences. It seems that by focusing on one aspect of sentence structure, the start of the sentence, writers lost their awareness of clause connecting. This is a mixed blessing. In some pieces, this did lead to rather clipped narratives, dominated by simple sentences. On the other hand, it also led to the generation of simple sentences with elaborated noun phrases*, such as '*Out of the corner of his eye, Tom saw a broken bridge with an alligator under.*'

3.4 Word choice

A strong and repeated pattern in many of the samples was that writers were more ambitious in their use of adjectives for description than any other word class; there was some evidence of effective descriptive verbs but very limited evidence of selective choice of nouns. The use of adjectives was frequently over-done and not always supporting the ideas being conveyed (*twinkly starry sky; freezing cold night; bashing bulldozers; miserable poor children*). There was a sense that pupils were trying very hard to use adjectives and that more was always better:

I felt brave and worried because it was very dark as I went through the dark terrified maze.

Big fat hairy head

A stinky old maze

In the collaborative class story, one writer's extension to the story shows great efforts to include adjectives but which unfortunately result in a rather over-done style:

Within minutes, Tom arrived at an old, knackered, broken bridge. Underneath were billions of deadly, poisonous, big, king cobras.

It is difficult to know whether these examples represent pupils flexing their linguistic muscles and trying out what they can do: certainly these examples do seem like attempts to evoke clear pictures for the reader, and it is important to encourage this kind of ambition and experimentation. But the video data suggests that even when adjectives were not the learning focus, teachers tend to draw attention to adjective choice. In particular, there is a tendency to encourage unusual choices without discussion of appropriacy or effect, often implying that using adjectives is inherently good and using an unusual one even better. In one lesson (Supported Teacher, Cohort 1), the teacher held a sustained discussion about better words for grass than 'green', and offered 'emerald' as an improved substitute: there was no discussion of why 'emerald' might be more appropriate or what the connotations of 'emerald' were that supported the meaning of the text. Ironically, the teacher began this teaching episode by misquoting Coleridge, saying the writing poetry was about '*the right words in the right order*' (rather than the 'best words in the best order'): the message of the discussion of adjectives was that 'emerald' was the right choice as substitute for 'green', even if many writers might have suggested it was not the best choice!

There were, however, some good examples of effective expanded noun phrases, with effective adjectives, in the play script: *My dear cousin Edward; the whole of England* and the delicate poise of the use of 'beautiful' in '*Come with me to London where your beautiful head will bear the crown.*' One writer of the information leaflet also used adjectives well in creating a grotesque appeal for the food served in his cavemen museum café – '*Order flesh hamburger and blood drink and a deadly snake crumble for dessert*' and a similar persuasive effect was evident in the radio advert, with '*a lovely foamy hot chocolate*'.

Whilst the majority of verbs used in the writing were commonplace, everyday verbs typical of spoken discourse, there was very clear evidence of ambition and success in choosing verbs more appropriate to the task. The poetry task prompted a variety of verbs evocative of the rainforest and the sense of loss of precious animals: these were often present participles and included *stalking, foraging, sobbing, vanished* and *perching*. The information leaflet generated very few ambitious verbs, partly because of the use of simple imperatives such as *come, see* and *look*, but two pupils used *discover* and one pupil used *dine*, showing that even texts with a predominantly simple use of language can make use of effective verb choices. There were very few examples of effective verb choices in the narrative tasks but the playscript elicited well-chosen verbs relevant to the storyline (*presented, passed away, slaughter*) and the stage directions also elicited well-chosen verbs which supported the task of establishing characterization (*wrings, bursts, shrieking, annoyed*).

In the rainforest poetry writing samples, there were some writers who seemed to be focusing on word choice at the expense of meaning-making, thus creating writing which did not make sense. The extract below explains the destruction and sadness in the rainforest and then concludes that the rainforest is a happy place:

Bulldozers destroying and animals sprinting;

Kids crying all alown

That's why the rainforest is a happy place!

Another writer seems to be more preoccupied with getting the rhyme correct (although this was not suggested by the teacher) than with communicating a clear message:

In the starry night all the animals are the same height.

Tigers stalking there prey for the day.

This does seem to be very specific to the poetry task and may indicate the extra demands that poetry makes on pupils' writing skills. There were no similar examples in any of the other writing samples.

3.5 Connectives*

The section above, on sentence structure, has already addressed pupils' confidence in connecting clauses to form compound or complex sentences. Several of the observed lessons had the use of connectives as a learning focus which brought to light some issues worth commenting upon. Firstly, in the rainforest poetry lesson, although it was a learning focus, the teaching actually addressed word choice more than connectives, and the structure of the poem did not lend itself particularly to the use of connectives. In the poems themselves, there is no particular evidence of the use of connectives beyond the commonplace. In one of the retelling of a story lessons (Supported Teacher, Cohort 1), the focus was both on writing the build-up element of a story and on using conjunctions to create compound sentences, and the class were given the acronym FANBOYS (*for; and; nor; but; or; yet; so*) as a strategy for remembering the possible connectives that can create compound sentences. Using a worksheet which scaffolded fairly heavily the story content, one group's task was to create a story build-up with compound sentences. The consequence was a group of texts that were very similar in content, but which did not successfully manage the connectivity. The connectives led to very long sentences; in fact, for the three extracts quoted below, the single sentence represents the entire text produced, and the connections made are not always meaningful in the context of the narrative. In extract 1, the use of *for* and *so* are inappropriate to the narrative direction; in extract 2, *yet* is inappropriate; and in extract 3, *so* and *yet* are inappropriate:

Soon Jack reached his best part of the terrific town park in the whole world which was the Spectacular Spider Web for he was just about to start climbing when he spotted a sporty Subaru racing car on the other side of the spider web, so before Jack could speak the Subaru spoke.

Soon Jack reached his best part of the town park of the whole world the Spectacular Spider Web yet was just about to start climbing when he spotted a sporty Subaru racing car on the other side but before Jack could speak the sporty car spoke.

Soon Jack reached his best part of the town park in the whole world the Spectacular Spider Web so he was just about to start climbing when he spotted a sporty Subaru racing car on the other slide yet before Jack could speak the sporty car spoke.

It seems likely that these writers focused on the task of joining clauses with the list of conjunctions recommended through the FANBOYS acronym, but not on the process of meaning-creation. In one of the writing tasks not analysed because the pupils did not produce any of their own writing, the learning focus was connectives. The pupils were given an unpunctuated passage which was in effect one continuous sentence with clauses joined by 'and then'. They were asked to punctuate it and use time connectives, and again they seemed to focus more on the task of using connectives than on the task of improving the communicative impact of the text, as the sample below illustrates:

I saw the plane and then it flew over. Soon it seemed to disappear. Just then I thought that it had gone. It came back. After that I could hardly believe it. Next when I did not know if I was awake or ...

In the retelling of the Minotaur story, there were several pupils who over-used *Suddenly* in their narratives, almost as a narrative plot mover, but without the meaning necessarily being on the suddenness of the event; and *finally* was occasionally used when it was not evident what the finality was. Care must be taken in drawing conclusions from this: over-use of a language feature may be a natural part of writing development and would only be a problem if the pattern was sustained by an individual writer. However, the teaching of connectives should draw attention to the meaning relationships they convey, rather than exclusively focusing on their connecting function.

3.6 Cohesion

As noted at the outset, it was difficult to find features of textual cohesion because so many of the writing samples were short pieces and incomplete. Very few samples were paragraphed and many texts listed ideas through sentences, rather than shaping connected ideas. To an extent, some of this was a characteristic of the task: the fitness poem prompted listed non-finite clauses and the information leaflet had many listed noun phrases. When completed, it is likely that the information leaflet would have developed textual cohesion but the fitness poems seemed complete but had no overarching structure or communicative message. In contrast, the rainforest poems seemed to generate more opportunities for sentence and text shaping. These texts were more cohesive, some with very appropriate concluding lines. They used repetitive sentence structures for effect and many were strongly cohesive through thematic linking of ideas (such as words which conveyed loss when describing the decline of the rainforest). The poem below illustrates this, with its repeated single line 'where...' answered by three lines with similar syntactical structures, and a concluding final line.

I see a rainforest where...

*Towering trees are felled,
Where...
Amazing armadillos are never seen,
Where...
Ravenous people search for food but have no luck.
When I think of the rainforest I feel sad.*

Analysis of use of pronouns to sustain cohesion suggests that this group of writers are very confident with simple pronoun reference. There were no examples of coherence lapses caused by over-use of a pronoun, and almost all writers competently switched between a noun and its referent pronoun, particularly with names. A small number of writers did not use pronouns who might have done so to avoid repeating a noun. There were also good examples of writers using a variety of alternatives for nouns. In the playscript, (Leading Teacher, Cohort 2) for example, this writer created cohesion through effective substitution of 'Edward' with 'beloved King'.

*Lady Jane Grey: But what has happened to Edward?
(worried)*

John Dudley: Sadly our beloved King has passed away.

In the re-telling of the Minotaur story, one writer successfully substitutes the initial reference to the Minotaur with 'monster' in a later sentence, and 'beast' in a later sentence. This ability to move from a hyponym (Minotaur) to hypernyms (monster; beast) is a mark of increasing sophistication in textual cohesion. Not all writers were able to manage substitution and reference so comfortably, as the following writer's repetition of 'Minotaur' and 'string' exemplifies:

Suddenly I felt a sharp horn of the Minotaur. Finally I came face to face with the Minotaur... Then the Minotaur stamped on me so hard I thought I would die... I jumped on the Minotaur's head... Suddenly I couldn't find the string. I felt something. I knew it was the string. I picked up the string. So I followed the string all the way home.

In the playscript, one writer effectively created cohesion across the script through the use of negatives (no; never; not) which reinforced the message of Lady Jane Grey's reluctance to assume the crown.

3.7 Handwriting

In some cases, as noted earlier, poor handwriting made it difficult to analyse some samples. In common with research on this topic (Stainthorp and Rauf 2009), there was a strong correlation between poor handwriting and weaker pieces of writing, reinforcing the importance of early acquisition of handwriting fluency and legibility. But there is also a note of caution on this. In a couple of cases, poor handwriting masked some real strengths in the writing. One writer, in the Minotaur re-telling (D), had handwriting which made it difficult to read the text fluently, but

nevertheless the writer communicated the story well and contained a very effective short sentence for emphasis at an appropriate point in the story: *That strength was a surprise when it hit me.*

3.8 Teacher feedback

Teacher feedback was very affirmative and encouraging, but not always insightful. One teacher wrote '*Great subordination*' when a pupil used '*when*' and '*Great connectives*' for the use of '*so*': in both cases, these are connectives which are a) common in the oral repertoire and easily transferred to writing and b) in evidence in pupils' writing from the Early Years. Such comments also suggest that the grammatical feature itself has merit, rather than considering communicative effect. There were examples where the teacher feedback was constructively focused on development. One teacher made helpful suggestions to one writer who over-used '*suddenly*', offering the alternatives of '*within a second*'; '*A moment later*'; '*In a flash*'. Another teacher highlighted the choice of '*roam*' as an effective verb, and invited the writer to go back and look at two lines which repeated a word and consider an alternative. In general, however, the teacher feedback tended not to engage with the overall communicative message and effect of the writing, just the presence of certain features. More challenging comments, which link textual features with communicative purpose, might enable these writers to develop their writing more.

3.9 How text choice influences writing opportunities

The diversity of writing tasks in this sample illustrates powerfully how different texts tend to create different opportunities for learning about writing. Storytelling and narratives do seem to promote chaining and breathless narration, typified by use of '*and*', '*then*', '*but*' and '*so*', and also tend to have a large number of time connectives (Suddenly; After that; Finally). But they also offer perhaps the best opportunities for learning about pronouns for reference and synonyms* and hyponyms* for substitution. They also produced the most extended pieces of writing. The rainforest poem appeared to give particularly good opportunities for shaping and crafting at both sentence and text level, and for discussing text structure and cohesion. In contrast, the fitness poem did none of this because there was no communicative intent to the task other than imitating the model and so shaping and text structure were not evident. The information leaflet, and to an extent, the radio advertisement, had a strong sense of audience including appropriate direct address in the second person, and were good at offering opportunities to write persuasive short sentences (*Fantastic fun for families!*). Because of the characters and the contextual problem underpinning the playscript, it offered writers the chance to write in appropriately formal language ('*what has become of*'; '*I do not wish to*'), and to express complex ideas through subordination. Careful thinking both about the text type and the writing task can ensure that writers are given appropriate opportunities to learn about a range of ways of shaping and crafting text.

4 One-to-one tuition

Eight one-to-one ECaW sessions were observed. In one case the pupil was ill and the session was cancelled and in the other the school had not yet begun the one-to-one sessions. In each case the pupils worked hard and seemed to be happy to be involved. Evidence from the interviews with the pupils and parent focus groups indicates that these sessions are generally enjoyed and increase pupils' self confidence and their pride in their work.

The content of the lessons varied and was based on the targets provided by the school for that pupil. The individual tuition plan for each child lists the targets agreed by the class teacher and tutor. Although the guidance for ECaW indicated that the targets should relate to improving composition, not all tutors or schools adhered to this. The targets given to the pupils observed in one-to-one tuition sessions include:

- Write in full sentences that make good sense. Improve punctuation. Make writing more interesting by varying word choice. Spelling.
- Adventurous word choices to engage the reader. Write sentences in order planned. Consistent use of pronouns
- Adventurous word choices to engage the reader. Audience and purpose. Sentence construction
- Use conjunctions to join sentences. Use basic sequencing of ideas.
- Use of powerful language
- Adventurous vocabulary varying use. Use past and present tense consistently. Start sentences in different ways and think about effect on reader.
- Punctuation, letter formation, connectives, adventurous word choices
- Use paragraphs to group ideas. Use more powerful describing words. Include interesting ideas.

As with the classroom observations, the extent to which the lesson followed the lesson and/or the given targets varied from tutor to tutor. As in the Supported Teacher lessons there was a tendency for the tutor to focus on the need to use certain types of words more than on the impact of the words chosen in the context of the whole text. For example in a session with a pupil whose target was on 'demonstrate use of adventurous word choices and detail to engage the reader', the tutor input and feedback focused on: connectives, commas, capital letters, use of tenses, use of paragraphs, spelling, and exclamation marks. The observation notes do not record any reference to meaning or interest in the interaction. It was only at the end of the session that the pupil read out the whole story.

In another school, the tutor led an excellent session in which the focus was on the same target as the session described above. In this session the outcome was to be a poem from a picture. The tutor and pupil worked together to generate words that the pupil could use in her poem. The pupil suggested words and the tutor had brought along her own thesaurus and they selected words from this. When they had produced a list, the pupil was encouraged to look through the words and choose the ones that would work best in her poem.

In another school there was evidence of a tension between the demands of meeting the target provided by the school and the clear desire by the tutor to support the process of composition. Here the intention of the lesson was to work on story openings using powerful language. However, one of the pupil's targets was to improve their use of adverbs. In a shared writing session tutor and pupil produced an interesting and descriptive opening to a story set in Africa. The pupil seemed mainly clear about adjectives and made some sensible suggestions for adjectives that would describe an interesting setting. Her learning may however have been impeded by the tutor's repeated mention of adverbs. He was clearly unwilling to break off from the composition to explain what adverbs are (even if he were able to achieve this difficult task). He repeatedly asked questions about 'how' an action was occurring but the pupil responded with an adjective. The tutor sensibly opted to accept the word as appropriate in the text rather than demanding an adverb just so as to achieve the target. The pupil is describing how the child in her story has to cross the river:

Tutor: What's an adverb we could use here? Sss... If I just jumped out at you?

Pupil: scared – surprised – Jemima was surprised

Tutor: Suddenly. Jemima was suddenly surprised

Pupil: by all the fish.

Tutor: How can we describe how the fish moved?

Pupil: Wriggling – by all the wriggling fish.

As indicated by the interview and focus group meetings a key feature of the success of the one-to-one sessions was the increased confidence shown by pupils not only in writing but in their whole demeanour in the classroom. The extract below indicates how the one-to-one interaction can allow the pupils to develop a better understanding of the role of the writer in the production of written language. Tutor and pupil are together writing a poem based on a picture brought in by the tutor.

Tutor: Now is this going to be a poem or a story?

Pupil: [inaudible – a poem?]

Tutor: Okay.

Pupil: [inaudible]

Tutor: Never mind. This is only rough. You can write it out beautifully afterwards, don't worry. Um... alright. So if it's a poem, then how do you want your lines to be? Do you want to go on with the idea of the short lines, breaking it up?

Pupil: [Yeah].

Tutor: It's a bit more... If we look at the one you used last week... It is the wild weather one. She uses nice short lines, doesn't she?

Pupil: So would I be allowed to do it like this girl here?

Tutor: Yes, you can. It's not allowing, you're allowed to use your own ideas. And I'm glad you've got your own ideas. So, a girl alone. Right. Now then. Would it be best to have crashing waves in the background before no one to play with, or after? [Pause...]. Which works better? You want to build a picture up in the person's mind who is reading this, don't you?

Pupil: That one first.

Tutor: That one first, okay. There you go.

Although such an exchange does not seem to focus tightly on the skills of writing, it may be that the opportunity for a pupil who is not achieving in writing to receive personal praise for their work and to develop an understanding of the writer's control over the text is effective. This could particularly be the case where the positive interaction is interspersed with clear targeted teaching of particular skills in context.

5 Implications for writing pedagogy

5.1 Classroom practice

Support from Leading Teachers for planning has been useful but further opportunity to discuss lessons resulting from the planning would be helpful. In only some areas was there the practice of Supported Teachers observing Leading Teachers teaching in their own schools. Some Supported Teachers were enthusiastic about this possibility and this modelling of practice could be advantageous.

More work is needed on the organisation and planning of guided writing. It still does not seem to be fully understood by all teachers.

More development work is required on teachers' subject knowledge of writing to support understanding of the purpose and effect of linguistic features.

Further discussion and evaluation of resources should focus on the extent to which the resource supports a developing understanding of the purpose of writing as opposed to merely acting as a mnemonic.

The selection of targets for pupils receiving one-to-one tuition could be improved by more discussion among Supported Teachers, Leading Teachers, tutors, parents and pupils to ensure understanding of the focus of ECaW and the purpose of the target.

5.2 Writing samples

First of all, it is important to reiterate the caveat noted at the start of this commentary, that the sample is small and diverse, making generalisable comparisons and assertions invalid. However, the richness of the data which combines the writing samples with the lesson plan, the lesson observation notes, and the video of the lesson does mean this analysis is able to make good connections between the text produced and the teacher's input. There are three principal implications which arise from this analysis.

The use of scaffolding: there was frequent use of scaffolding pupils' writing as a teaching strategy in various ways: the use of the FANBOYS acronym; the use of pre-written text which needed to be altered; the use of the modelled poem; the use of partially written texts which needed completion; the teacher input which precedes the writing time and so on. Scaffolding is a valuable strategy in explicitly supporting learning about writing but scaffolding which is too strong or 'supportive' may be limiting student learning and creating over-dependence. The modelled poem produced texts which were highly imitative, for example, and teacher recommendations of word choices in pre-writing discussion all too often found their way directly into pupils' writing. In particular, the scaffolding can seem to be more focused on getting pupils to use a particular feature (time connectives; adjectives) rather than understanding the use of

that feature. Two priorities for the use of any scaffold are firstly, that the scaffolding should focus on what the teacher wants the pupils to learn about the writing and secondly, a consideration of how the teaching can move from the scaffolded support to independence.

The focus on grammatical features: it is evident in the lessons observed, the lesson plans and the teacher feedback that frequently learning focuses on particular grammatical constructions such as connectives, verbs, adjectives, sentence starters etc. This plays out directly in the writing samples where pupils use these features in their texts but without necessarily using them effectively. The danger is that young writers may learn that usage is good, that is, that using adjectives or connectives is intrinsically a good thing to do, without any corresponding understanding of how use of these features can shape meaning or effect in a text.

A lack of focus on meaning and communicative effect: this relates to both the points above. It was noticeable that oral and written feedback praised usage but rarely discussed impact or effect or appropriacy. 'What' questions were asked (e.g. what sentence starters have you used? Have you used any powerful verbs? etc) but not 'Why' questions, such as Why did you choose that starter for that sentence at that point in the story? or Why do you think that adjective works for this piece of writing? More connections and more discussion of the effectiveness of choices made might support the move from heavy scaffolding to independence. Similarly, very often the communicative purpose of the writing was lost, or subordinated to, the emphasis on grammatical features, making the writing task more of an exercise in demonstrating usage than act of communication. This is not to say there should be no explicit teaching of these things, rather that the explicit teaching should be contextually linked to the creation of meaning and effect in that piece of writing.

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7 Glossary

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| Sentence | Sentences are strings of words that usually express a proposition. They consist of at least one finite clause. <i>The child ate an apple.</i> |
| Minor sentence | A sentence without a finite verb – usually used for effect. <i>A really massive fire burning furiously.</i> |
| Simple sentence | A sentence consisting of just one clause. <i>The dog ate a bone.</i> |
| Compound sentence | A compound sentence contains coordinated main clauses: <i>Jenny brought the wine and Ben cooked the meal.</i> |
| Complex sentence | A complex sentence contains a main clause and at least one subordinate clause. For example, <i>Your dinner is cold because you were late.</i> The subordinate clause is <i>because you were late.</i> |
| Finite clause | A verb is finite if it shows tense. In the following example the finite verbs are highlighted: <i>She eats too much. He threw the ball.</i> Finite clause - A clause containing a finite verb. For example, <i>Henry has a large black cat.</i> If it does not carry tense it is non finite. Non finite clauses: <i>Skidding on the ice, he walked slowly home. She sat in the corner, ignored by them all.</i> Here, skidding and ignored are participles. |
| Relative clause | A relative clause gives more information about a noun or modifies it, as in the following example: <i>The man who bought our house has just won the lottery.</i> |
| Noun phrase | A group of words that represent the noun – <i>tree; the tree; the tall tree; the tall willow tree; the tall willow tree shaking in the wind.</i> |
| Imperative | A sentence type usually used to issue orders or directions. The verb is in its base form, e.g. <i>Move over!</i> |
| Conjunctions | A wordclass which includes coordinating words such as <i>and, but,</i> and <i>or,</i> and subordinating words such as <i>because, if,</i> and <i>when.</i> This usually describes connecting words within sentences. |
| Connectives | A conjunction is used to connect sentences: <i>I ran quickly. Nevertheless I was late.</i> |
| Non-subject starters | Most sentences start with the subject: <i>The dog barked. I ran across the field.</i> Non-subject starters include: <i>Suddenly the dog barked. Panting heavily, I ran across the field.</i> |
| Synonym | A word that means the same as another: small, little; faint, indistinct. |
| Hypernym | A specific term used to designate a member of a class. For instance, <i>oak</i> is a hyponym of <i>tree</i> , and <i>dog</i> is a hyponym of <i>animal</i> . |
| Hyponym | A word whose meaning includes the meanings of other words; the opposite of <u>hyponym</u> . The opposite of a hyponym is a <u>hypernym</u> |

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