

# 9 Selby Community Primary School, North Yorkshire, England

Emma Darwin<sup>1</sup>

---

## 1. Context

Selby Community Primary School is an average-sized primary school with a two-form entry<sup>2</sup> situated a short distance from the centre of Selby in North Yorkshire. Selby is amongst the ten percent most deprived areas in England. It is located within the Selby North Ward, with 30% of children living in poverty, which is higher than the national average. Selby District has the second highest health inequality in North Yorkshire<sup>3</sup>.

At present, Selby Community Primary has 335 children on roll from Nursery to Year 6 (ages two to eleven). The school has a large majority of students from a White British background and 23% have English as an Additional Language\* (EAL), mainly from Eastern European countries. Across the whole school, 36% are currently accessing free school meals\*, which is well above the national average. Although the proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average overall, the proportion that have an Education and Health Care Plan\* (EHCP) is above average. The number of students who join or leave the school part-way through their primary education is high. The school has Healthy Schools status<sup>4</sup>, the Basic Skills Quality Mark<sup>5</sup>,

---

1. Selby Community Primary School , Selby, England; darwine@selby.ac.uk

2. An explanation for terms followed by an asterisk can be found in the glossary: <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2022.55.1367>

3. North Yorkshire County Council 2019 Strategic Needs Assessment: <https://hub.datanorthyorkshire.org/dataset/ef082317-37ed-428f-b849-740c4587fe06/resource/9b8b6efe-7808-4b37-a29d-7312f498395c/download/selby-2019.pdf>

4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-schools-rating-scheme>

5. <https://www.tribalgroupp.com/education-services/quality-mark>

**How to cite:** Darwin, E. (2022). Selby Community Primary School, North Yorkshire, England. In A. Beaven, A. Comas-Quinn & N. Hinton (Eds), *Systematic synthetic phonics: case studies from Sounds-Write practitioners* (pp. 87-95). Research-publishing.net. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2022.55.1363>

the Dyslexia Quality Mark<sup>6</sup>, and has received the UNICEF Rights Respecting School<sup>7</sup> award along with being a Talk 4 Writing<sup>8</sup> training school. In 2016, Selby Community Primary became a designated National Support School<sup>9</sup> in recognition of our strong record in successfully providing school-to-school support to others that have needed our help.

## 2. Implementation

The school embarked on their Sounds-Write journey in the summer of 2016, when senior leaders and the Early Years Foundation team trained to implement the programme in the new academic year that September. Prior to the implementation of Sounds-Write, the school had consistently reached and often exceeded the national average for the Phonics Screening Check since its implementation in 2007. However, senior leaders had noted that the weakest readers remained weak by the end of Key Stage 2\*, and often made little meaningful progress in phonics or spelling. They had seen the impact of Sounds-Write as a whole school initiative when they visited Saint George's Church of England Primary School (Battersea, London) and wanted to implement the same whole school teaching in Selby, starting with the new cohort beginning in Reception. The school were lucky to have face-to-face training with one of the founders of the Sounds-Write programme, and all of the team were eager to get started once trained.

From the initial implementation in 2016, the school has now trained seventeen teaching staff via various face-to-face courses and seven teaching staff via the online route. Over the past five years, Sounds-Write has been implemented and delivered across the whole school from Nursery through to Year 6. As part of

---

6. <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/educators/creating-a-dyslexia-friendly-school/dyslexia-friendly-school-awards>

7. <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/>

8. <https://www.talk4writing.com>

9. National Support Schools (NSS) are designated by the UK's Department for Education to support schools in challenging circumstances through the use of their skills, expertise and experience.

the Quality First Teaching<sup>10</sup> at Tier\* 1, the school delivers whole class Sounds-Write sessions for 30 minutes each day from Reception to Year 2. Within these year groups, if a child needs further support at Tier 2, interventions take place in supported small groups, whilst Tier 3 interventions are delivered one-to-one and contain increased targeted support. From Year 3 onwards, Sounds-Write sessions are delivered three times a week focusing on spelling, morphology, and etymology. Intervention groups continue to be provided where needed at Tier 2 and 3 throughout Key Stage 2.

### 3. Evaluation

This data set was first taken in the summer of 2018, when our current Year 4 students were in Year 1. These children were the first in the school to have been taught phonics via the Sounds-Write programme consistently from their Reception year (2016-2017). The sessions had been delivered daily as a whole class with additional small intervention groups for those requiring extra practice at Tier 2 and 3 throughout the week. On a recommendation from Sounds-Write, the school decided to use Young's *Parallel Spelling Tests*\* to monitor the spelling progression throughout the school.

The first data set below (Table 1) shows the children's chronological age compared to their spelling age generated from their raw scores in Young's *Parallel Spelling Tests*. The last column identifies the children who were accessing Tier 2 and 3 intervention and those children who had EAL, as well as those who were new to the school, and so had not received Sounds-Write in their Reception year.

The data set shows that 100% of the children matched or exceeded their chronological age for spelling by the end of Year 1, with 76% of the class achieving a spelling age twelve months greater than their chronological age. Furthermore, 38% of the children achieved a score 36 months greater than their

---

10. <https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SEND/IES%20landing%20page/Quality%20First%20Teaching%20Guidance.pdf>

chronological age, and five children out of 42 achieved a score of 42 months or more above their age.

Breaking this data set down further, we looked closely at the attainment of the EAL children. Amazingly, 100% of the EAL cohort, with the exception of Child U, achieved a spelling score nine months greater than their current age and 55% of the group achieved a score of eighteen months greater than their current age. Child U joined the school in the summer term, having moved from a country outside of Europe. The country in which he had lived did not start formal schooling until the age of seven, so his first experience of a school was with us. At that point he had not been taught Sounds-Write previously so did not have the code knowledge, conceptual knowledge, or skills required to attempt the spelling test.

Table 1. Year 1 Young’s *Parallel Spelling Tests* results July 2018

Child	Chronological Age (Years and months)	Spelling Age (Years)	Difference in months	Additional information
A	6.2	7.7	+17	
B	6.6	7.4	+10	SEND - SpLD <sup>11</sup> /Tier 3
C	6.10	7	+3	EAL SEND - SpLD/ Tier 3
D	6.7	7.3	+8	
E	5.10	8.1	+26	EAL New to school
F	6.0	11.1	+61	EAL
G	6.6	9.8	+38	EAL
H	6.2	7.5	+15	
I	6.4	7.7	+15	EAL
J	6.9	7.8	+11	
K	6.2	6.9	+7	SEND - SpLD/ Tier 3

---

11. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities & Specific Learning Difficulties: <https://www.dyslexia.uk.net/specific-learning-difficulties/>

L	6.1	8.2	+25	
M	6.5	7.8	+15	
N	6.4	9.3	+35	
O	6.6	9.0	+30	EAL New to school
P	6.7	9.3	+32	
Q	6.4	7.8	+16	
R	6.4	10.2	+46	EAL
S	6.4	8.6	+26	
T	6.0	8.4	+28	EAL
U	-	-		EAL SEND - SpLD/ Tier 3 New to school
V	6.8	10.6	+43	EAL
W	6.7	8.4	+21	
X	6.3	10	+45	
Y	6.2	7.3	+13	
Z	6.8	8.5	+21	
AA	6.2	7.8	+18	EAL
BB	6.0	8	+24	
CC	6.1	8	+23	
DD	5.10	7.3	+17	EAL
EE	6.9	6.9	0	SEND - SpLD/ Tier 3
FF	6.1	8.8	+31	EAL
GG	6.3	6.9	+3	SEND - SpLD/ Tier 3
HH	6.8	7.8	+12	EAL
II	6.9	8.6	+21	EAL
JJ	6.0	6.5	+5	
KK	6.7	8.2	+19	
LL	6.4	10.2	+46	
MM	6.6	8.5	+23	EAL
NN	6.6	9.8	+38	EAL
OO	6.7	7	+5	SEND - SpLD/ Tier 3
PP	6.3	6.9	+6	
QQ	6.0	7.4	+16	

This cohort transitioned into Year 2 and continued to receive daily Sounds-Write whole class sessions, with additional interventions continuing for those children who needed extra support. They completed their Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) towards the end of this year and the school's judgements were moderated by the Local Education Authority<sup>12</sup>. Incredibly, 47% of this cohort reached the higher standard for reading and writing.

In Year 3, the children received three whole class Sounds-Write sessions focusing on spelling. Unfortunately, halfway through the year, like for many others across the world, their education was suddenly disrupted due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. The children were only into their second term when school closed and teaching moved to online homeschooling. Due to the high level of deprivation in our area, online learning was very difficult for many of our families as they did not have the technology and skills to support online learning at home. Laptops were donated to every family within the school but the impact of the pandemic was manifesting itself in many different ways for our families.

Along with other subjects within the Year 3 curriculum, regular Sounds-Write sessions were provided through the online platform for the children to access. These took the form of slide presentations and spelling tests. Unfortunately, the pandemic forced another school closure for this group of children part-way through their Year 4 schooling, with online learning re-commencing over the winter months.

The data set below in [Table 2](#) shows the chronological ages and the spelling ages of the same children at the end of Year 4, taken in July 2021 after a full term of being back in school. By this point, Children F, M, and BB had left the school, moving into another area. Although the children had experienced two very disruptive years, Young's *Parallel Spelling Tests* results showed that 78% of the children matched or exceeded their chronological age for spelling by the end of Year 4, with 60% of the class achieving a spelling age twelve months greater than their current age. Looking closer at the attainment of the same EAL children

---

12. Local education authorities (LEAs) in England and Wales were responsible for education within their jurisdictions, but have been progressively phased out and their responsibilities moved to local authorities.

we tracked in Year 1, amazingly 94% of this group of children achieved their chronological age or more, with 81% achieving a score twelve months greater than their chronological age. Unfortunately, the children who had been receiving additional quality intervention in school due to their additional needs were not able to access this during the online learning. The pandemic was manifesting many different issues within our families, not just the barrier of not being able to access a computer. The level of support that these children needed could not be provided during these difficult times and unfortunately this impacted on the progress made by B, D, U, Y, EE, GG, JJ, OO, and PP. Since September 2021, we have had a higher level teaching assistant take these children, and others, for small group Sounds-Write interventions every afternoon. At time of writing, staff and student absences due to Covid are still high and unpredictable, so it is not always possible for these groups to go ahead.

Table 2. Year 4 Young's *Parallel Spelling Tests* July 2021

Child	Chronological Age (Years)	Spelling Age (Years)	Difference (months)	Additional information
A	9.2	9.6	+4	
B	9.6	7.7	-25	SEND - SpLD - Tier 3/2
C	9.10	10.5	+7	EAL
D	9.7	9.4	-3	Tier 2 Intervention 2020/2021
E	8.10	10.7	+21	EAL
F	-	-	-	-
G	9.6	12	+30	EAL
H	9.2	9.6	+4	
I	9.4	11.4	+24	EAL
J	9.9	11	+15	
K	9.2	10	+10	
L	9.1	11.4	+27	
M	-	-	-	
N	9.4	11.7	+27	
O	9.6	12.7	+37	EAL
P	9.7	12.3	+32	
Q	9.4	11.7	+27	
R	9.4	12.3	+35	EAL

S	9.4	12.3	+35	
T	9	11	+24	EAL
U	9.3	7	-27	SEND - SpLD - Tier 3/2 EAL
V	9.8	10.6	+10	EAL
W	9.7	11.2	+19	
X	9.3	13.2	+47	
Y	9.2	7.5	-21	SEND - SpLD - Tier 3/2
Z	9.8	10.7	+11	
AA	9.2	11.7	+29	EAL
BB	-	-	-	-
CC	9.1	11.4	+27	
DD	8.10	13.7	+57	EAL
EE	9.9	7.5	-28	SEND - SpLD - Tier 3/2
FF	9.1	13.2	+49	EAL
GG	9.3	7.5	-22	SEND - SpLD - Tier 3/2
HH	9.8	11	+17	EAL
II	9.9	13.7	+46	EAL
JJ	9.5	7.5	-24	SEND - SpLD - Tier 3/2
KK	9.7	12	+29	
LL	9.4	12.3	+35	
MM	9.6	13.2	+44	EAL
NN	9.6	13.7	+49	EAL
OO	9.6	7	-30	SEND - SpLD - Tier 3/2
PP	9.3	8.6	-9	Tier 2 Intervention 2020/2021
QQ	9.0	9.2	+2	

## 4. Recommendations

The consistency of the delivery of the Sounds-Write scripts has been key to the success for our children. Ensuring that all teaching staff within a year group were trained helped them to peer support and refine their practice in its

implementation. Peer monitoring has helped the staff gain confidence to teach the Sounds-Write scripts with fidelity. Teaching the same content to the whole class ensures no child is left behind with their learning, and intervention groups should be put in place for those that need extra practice. Sounds-Write advocates teaching the whole class together, using booster sessions where needed, and this is what we did, rather than grouping and teaching different content to different ability groups. We now have an advanced teaching assistant who delivers these booster sessions to ensure consistency of support throughout the school.

Because of the high proportion of EAL children in the class, we used visual images as part of our Sounds-Write teaching in Reception in order to support their understanding of the words that they were being asked to build/read. In addition to the main class teaching, some of the EAL children had vocabulary development sessions to pre-teach vocabulary needed for the sessions. Being a Talk 4 Writing school has helped enormously with vocabulary building for our EAL learners, and both these programmes work seamlessly together.



Published by Research-publishing.net, a not-for-profit association  
Contact: [info@research-publishing.net](mailto:info@research-publishing.net)

© 2022 by Editors (collective work)  
© 2022 by Authors (individual work)

**Systematic synthetic phonics: case studies from Sounds-Write practitioners**  
**Edited by Ana Beaven, Anna Comas-Quinn, and Naomi Hinton**

**Publication date:** 2022/05/09

**Rights:** the whole volume is published under the Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives International (CC BY-NC-ND) licence; **individual articles may have a different licence.** Under the CC BY-NC-ND licence, the volume is freely available online (<https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2022.55.9782383720010>) for anybody to read, download, copy, and redistribute provided that the author(s), editorial team, and publisher are properly cited. Commercial use and derivative works are, however, not permitted.

**Disclaimer:** Research-publishing.net does not take any responsibility for the content of the pages written by the authors of this book. The authors have recognised that the work described was not published before, or that it was not under consideration for publication elsewhere. While the information in this book is believed to be true and accurate on the date of its going to press, neither the editorial team nor the publisher can accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions. The publisher makes no warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein. While Research-publishing.net is committed to publishing works of integrity, the words are the authors' alone.

**Trademark notice:** product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

**Copyrighted material:** every effort has been made by the editorial team to trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyrighted material in this book. In the event of errors or omissions, please notify the publisher of any corrections that will need to be incorporated in future editions of this book.

Typeset by Research-publishing.net  
Cover layout by © 2022 Laura Walker

ISBN13: 978-2-38372-001-0 (Ebook, PDF, colour)  
ISBN13: 978-2-38372-002-7 (Ebook, EPUB, colour)  
ISBN13: 978-2-38372-000-3 (Paperback - Print on demand, black and white)  
Print on demand technology is a high-quality, innovative and ecological printing method; with which the book is never 'out of stock' or 'out of print'.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.  
A cataloguing record for this book is available from the British Library.

**Legal deposit, France:** Bibliothèque Nationale de France - Dépôt légal: mai 2022.

---