

In Praise of Sound Reading System

by a school governor

I found SRS by accident some 10 years ago whilst teaching at a Special School in the North East. My class was made up with a mixture of Year 4 and 5 "failures". After immersing them in the **Sound Reading System** their reading ages rocketed up and as a bonus-or so it seemed at the time-they began to attempt and *succeed* at independent writing. Looking back now I realise that I had been able to use a system that was logical and worked-for the first time!

I have been a chair of Governors at a 1 form entry Primary School in Northumberland for many years. Historically we were perceived as the local 'poor relation' with approximately 48% free school meals. Many of our children enter Nursery well below expected levels with very poor language skills and vocabulary. For a number of years we accepted that our children were unlikely to succeed!

I am in the fortunate position as Chair to be able to exert some influence and finally convinced the then head that we needed to use a synthetic phonics program if ALL our children were to have any chance of learning to read.

Fast forward 4 years. KS2 SATS results indicated that 100% achieved Level 4 in Reading with 67% achieving Level 5. Writing achieved 94.4% Level 4.

Years 5 and 6 had not been taught to read via **Sound Reading** but the staff used Sound Reading as a spelling program which addressed some reading issues at the same time. **The Sound Reading System** is now firmly embedded up to Year 3 with the approach that we continue until a pupil reads at an appropriate level ie their chronological age.

Many of our children are disadvantaged when they enter school. Not only do they struggle with reading, they do not have a good understanding of language so they are faced with challenges which would have resulted in failure.

Teachers do not take kindly to being told there is a better way! However the proof of the pudding is we are now producing readers. It is not a quick fix or a magic wand but I know when properly delivered **Sound Reading** offers a fool-proof way of teaching children to read- and to spell. Brighter children learn faster and struggling children also enjoy success.

Diane Oliver, Cramlington, March 14.