

BIRMINGHAM

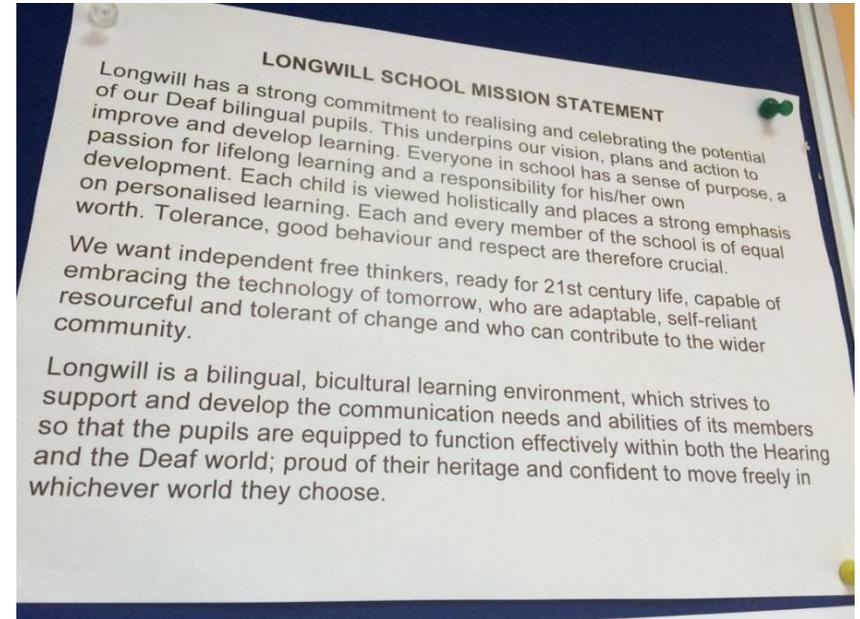
Education
Partnership

BEP FEATURED INSIGHT



DISTRICT: NORTHFIELD
PHASE OF SCHOOL: PRIMARY
TOPIC: TEACHING AND LEARNING

“Using Action Research
to promote reflective
practice within school
and raise the quality
of T&L.”

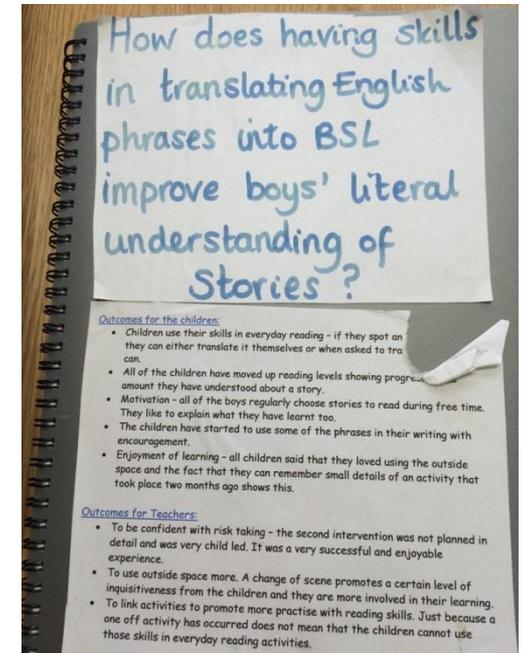


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Longwill is a research-led school and Head Teacher Alison Carter is its passionate exponent. The coaching culture and reflective practice in her schools enables teachers to build their own professional capacity, to stay fresh and improve outcomes for children. The school has forged close links with Leeds University which is one of only 5 universities in the country to offer a course for Teachers of the Deaf. This co-working forms the basis of the Head's systematized approach to the programme of action research which engages all teachers in a total of up to 10 projects every year.





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Using the “Plan, Do, Review” format, teachers address “thorny issues” in the classroom. A baseline assessment of “what I know now” is followed by formulating a hypothesis and the plan, do, review process to tweak practice.



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This bottom-up approach to school improvement takes place over the whole year, forming the basis of performance management objectives and culminating at the end of the school year in all teachers presenting the results of their research along with its impact and what they have learnt. The research findings are implemented across school and the school then benefits from having “champions” in place who have already tried and tested the research. Research processes are logged in “research journals” and findings are distilled onto posters (see attached photos) ready for the new school year.

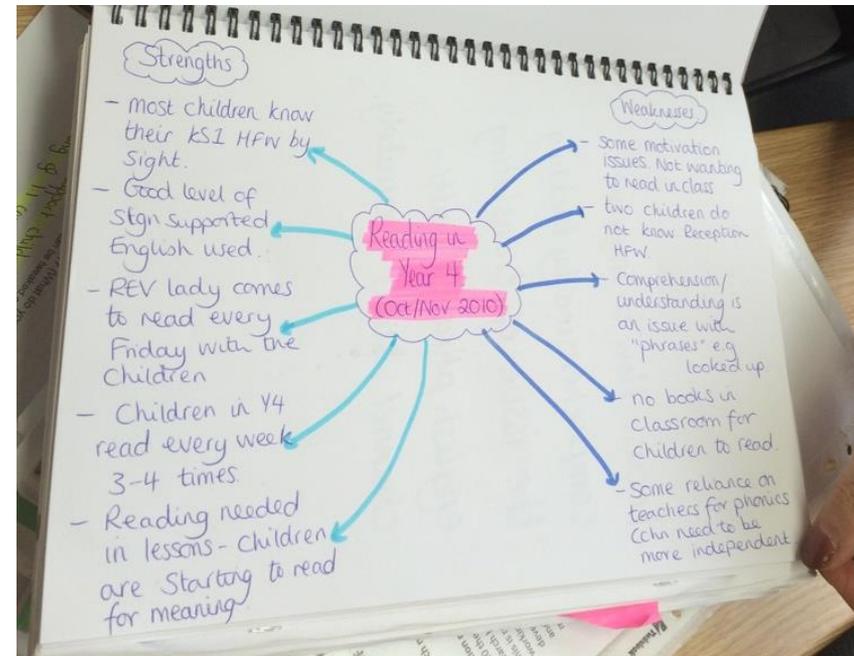
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WHY?

This practice has a number of important advantages for the culture of the whole school. The importance of undertaking action research is highlighted when recruiting all teachers, making clear the school's commitment to a risk-taking culture where everyone learns from their mistakes. It also helps with succession planning, with growing the leaders of tomorrow, distributing leadership and showcasing the work carried out in school on national and international platforms.



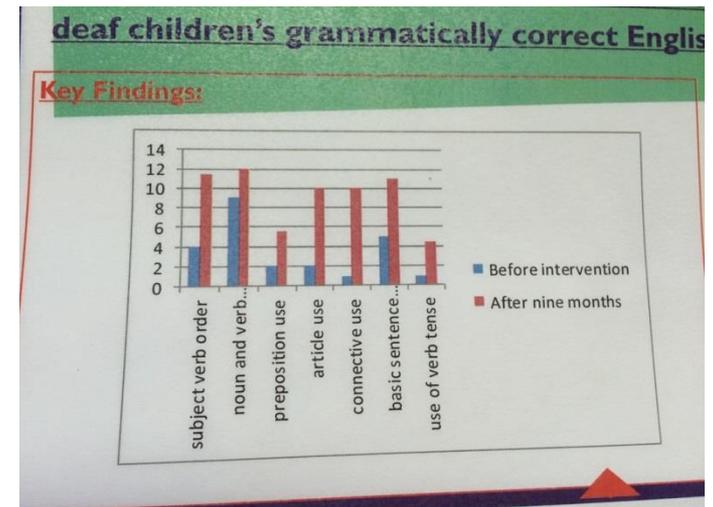
WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT?

Teachers practice what they preach.

Teachers are driving change and school improvement in a model that is very far from being “done to” and contributing to a culture of life-long learning.

Problems become opportunities. There is no “pass or fail”, but rather a journey of exploration, often out of a teacher’s comfort zone.

“Teachers of the Deaf are like detectives, collecting and assimilating information into their practice to impact on children.”





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WHAT LESSONS WERE LEARNT?

Allow time to be dedicated for staff to be supervised.

Get other Heads on board.



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WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS FOR YOU TO IMPLEMENT THIS IN YOUR SCHOOL?

The leadership needs to understand WHY action research is important and the school must already have a coaching culture.

Regular half-termly supervisions (it is possible to bid for money to supply cover to enable these to take place)

Place emphasis on the importance of the process in growing staff.

Understand the importance of resilience building for staff and of training teachers to be reflective.



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LIKED THIS INSIGHT...?

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Visits welcomed!