

Impactful interventions:

Beanstalk at Eastry Church of England Primary School,
Kate Rumsby Recruitment Executive – Kent and Medway Beanstalk

Personal Reflections and Case Studies

THE EARLIER WE CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT, THE BIGGER THE IMPACT

33% increase

in Key Stage 1 children classed as 'at or' above' the recommended reading level.

26% increase

in Lower Key Stage 2 children classed as 'at or' above' the recommended reading level

22% increase

in Upper Key Stage 2 children classed as 'at or' above' the recommended reading level

Diminishing the difference between vulnerable learners and their peers and working to make sure all young people have the essential skills they need to lead successful lives is a key priority for Beanstalk – a national literacy charity which recruits, vets, trains and supports volunteer reading helpers in primary schools.

More than 150 Primary schools across Kent now provide additional literacy support through Beanstalk's volunteer reading helper model. Last year more than 1,000 children in Kent who had fallen behind with their reading received high-quality, consistent one-to-one support from reading helpers trained and supported by Beanstalk.

In its most recent impact report, Beanstalk found that the intervention of trained reading helpers in schools accelerated reading progress across KS1 and KS2 and crucially improved confidence and attitudes towards reading.

Tim Halling, Headteacher at Eastry Church of England Primary School in Sandwich, has worked with Beanstalk

since 2009. Four trained reading helpers have supported over 75 children in total at the school.

"For us, unfortunately, the key literacy challenge we face is a lack of parental input at home, particularly in speaking and reading. If children are not being heard read at home it means that they are missing out on basic literacy skills and we see a need to fill this learning gap to stop pupils falling behind their peers."

We work with Beanstalk and its trained reading helpers because they provide a much needed, regular and focused intervention to improve reading attainment and enjoyment of reading. Because the sessions are child-led, the child is empowered to choose which books they want to read and what games they want to play, which reinforces and develops a range of key skills including speaking, listening, reading and storytelling in a non-pressured environment.

We have seen a real impact on reading progress across year groups in the school. Class teachers report a rise in self-esteem and increased enjoyment of reading. The one-to-one time the pupils have with a

trained adult means they receive support which is completely centered on the pupil and their specific interests, which keeps each session fun and engaging.

Proving value for money continues to be a priority, particularly in the current financial climate. We have used our pupil premium to fund Beanstalk trained reading helpers which helps us provide this important intervention. We believe that the service is good value for money, as we are provided with trained and enthusiastic adults with their own resources, and it means our class teachers can focus on teaching in the classroom. Without the trained reading helpers we would need to use volunteer parents which would involve time for us to recruit and train them, as well as providing resources for the sessions."

SEN Governor - Jane Willis

"As a governor with special responsibility for SEN I am delighted to see the positive impact Beanstalk is having to prevent children from falling behind in their reading. This is so important, and proving to be good value for money. The enthusiasm of both volunteers and children involved in Beanstalk is clearly evident in our school."

What the pupils say...

"Please, this is my reading time."

Yr2 pupil

(When the HT came to talk to the reading helper)

"When I go back to class, I can read harder words."

Yr2 pupil

"It helps me write stories."

Yr2 pupil

"The volunteer helps me say words properly."

Yr4 pupil

"When I was in Year 1, I dreamt that I would play games with you. When I was in Year 2 it came true! "

Yr2 pupil