



The Three Little Pigs and Talk for Writing

In May 2014, Pie was made aware via Twitter of a Talk for Writing video filmed at Highbank Primary and Nursery School in Nottinghamshire featuring a re-telling of the Three Little Pigs. We got in touch with Highbank and asked how for more info about how the school has been using Talk for Writing. Sophie Ishmael, a teacher at the school, kindly took the time to explain the work they've been doing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpbiTrmHCkM>

The video clip that was posted on Twitter recently was of Gracie Leigh a child in F1 (Nursery 2) telling the story of The Three Little Pigs to her peers. She was sat in the teacher's chair / the story telling chair and it is clear to see she is using key language, occasional actions to assist the flow of the story, and she has the other children completely hooked. This video footage came part way through the children exploring the story. They had experienced a few sessions of the adults telling the story with actions and had also had many opportunities to explore independently the many supporting props and books in the reading area to act out parts of the story.

Gracie Leigh started in F1 at the age of 3. On entry, she was a very quiet child; she had poor concentration and was very reluctant to talk. This continued for at least the first term and she was beginning to cause great concern as not only was her language limited, but she just seemed to not 'want' to talk. She continuously had her fingers on her mouth and dribbling was a problem. She seemed to like looking at books but was not heard 'reading' them or talking about them. On entry to F1, she was assessed as working securely within the 16 – 26 month stage of learning.

As the video footage reveals, huge progress has been made with this child in this area of learning, and she is currently assessed as working within the 30 – 50 month stage of learning, and the same for Literacy.

To explain our circumstances, we are a primary school situated on a large council estate on the outskirts of Nottingham, falling under Nottingham City Local Authority. We currently have 280 children on role, including the Nursery. Clifton estate has large elements of deprivation with relatively low levels of

employment and a higher than average crime rate. Unfortunately, in general there is a stubborn trend for many families of undervaluing education, resulting in very low aspirations. We currently have 28% of our pupils eligible for FSMs.

The Nursery at Highbank has 47 places per session for mostly part time attendance. Almost all groups enter Nursery at levels significantly below those expected for their age. The most common problems we have on entry revolve around speech and communication; PSED, and low levels of awareness of literacy and numeracy.

As a result of our Baseline data, we have prioritised Communication and Language and provision has been targeted to ensure accelerated progress for those children entering F1 below ARE.

In addition to this, the Foundation stage as a whole (F1 and F2) have enthusiastically embraced the Pie Corbett storytelling methods and techniques. I introduced the storytelling aspect in my F2 class a few years ago, as a result of being fortunate to attend a Pie Corbett conference. Within weeks I was seeing fantastic results and the impact on the children's speech and language was wonderful to witness. Ever since I have driven and ensured the storytelling aspect is embedded in the Foundation Stage.

We ensure that by the end of F1, each child is exposed to and can retell a bank of at least 4 stories, using key language, actions and props, and are beginning to create their own story maps. At the end of F2, the children will be able to retell a further 6 stories and will be able to create story maps, re-write the familiar stories and are beginning to create their own versions of these stories, but with a difference. The children all thoroughly enjoy the whole process (as do the adults!) and are always really excited to begin a new story experience.