

Does Talk for Writing work? By Pie Corbett

Graphs containing the data referred to in this article can be found below on Pages 3-6. All of the data sourced is publicly available via the Department for Education's website.

Quite reasonably, teachers often ask about whether Talk for Writing works. Since 2016 when the new SATs came into place, we have been analysing the data from our 16 training centres and comparing our standards with the national picture. We know that the centres are faithful to the approach and so we can see the impact of Talk for Writing and Talk for Reading by comparison with the rest of the country.

Our schools are almost all in challenging areas. We do have one small village school and one large town school where pupil premium and free school meals are low. However, the other 14 schools serve deprived areas where the challenges are great. St Matthews in Birmingham, for instance, has 88% pupil premium. The data shows that on average our schools have 32% pupil premium which is above the national average of 23%. The percentage of children for whom English is an additional language is 42% whereas nationally it stands at just over 21%. Interestingly, the percentage of pupils with special needs is only slightly above the national average (16% compared to a national figure of 14.6%). We believe that this is because where schools have a well-developed, systematic, coherent and cumulative curriculum, the number of children who struggle is reduced.

So, what is the impact? The graphs show that Talk for Writing schools, despite serving more challenging areas, attain at a significantly higher standard than the national average. The data demonstrates that since 2016, there has been an improving picture and the impact is not just in writing. Our schools use the teaching approaches in all subjects. Children are taught the language structures they need to think and express themselves as mathematicians, scientists and historians. Our schools use the core direct teaching strategies around well-defined, cumulative curriculum, informed by formative assessment.

If we look at 2019 data:

Talk for Writing Centres 2019	National 2019
Combined 76%	Combined 65%
GPaS 88%	GPaS 78%
Writing 88%	Writing 78%
Reading 82%	Reading 73%
Maths 90%	Maths 79%

Our next targets for the coming years will be to strengthen reading and writing at greater depth, to focusing on those not yet attaining the expected standard and to strengthen the percentage of children attaining the expected standard across the board. At the same time, we are strengthening our work in other subjects.

You can see on the graphs below, the comparable data from 2016 as well as the three-year average. If schools have been using Talk for Writing over a number of years and have not seen an impact on progress and their standards, then do work with our trainers, visit our centres, read the various books and use the DVDs. Our experience is that to raise standards takes time and commitment. It cannot be done through one day of training and this is why we are increasingly working with schools over time on two-year projects. Hopefully, we can now bury the query, 'Does it work?' and get on with working together!

The core teaching practices and principles that are transferable across subjects are:

- **Keep it simple and clear**
- **Use a strong, core model**
 - Read and explore models, attentively
 - Teacher as model reader, writer, mathematician, etc
 - Demonstrate how to do things – 'I do, we do, you do'
 - Teach language needed orally as well as through reading
 - Think aloud to explain
 - Use shared and guided work
 - Provide other models
 - Show examples and talk it through
 - Use effective examples of children's work and they talk it through
- **Small steps, bit by bit, for new and hard material**
 - The daily drip, drip rather than once a week
 - Don't swamp children with too much
- **Pitch it high and expect everyone to succeed**
 - Differentiate through scaffolding
 - Lots of scaffolded practice where needed
 - Guide less confident children
 - Gradual release of responsibility
 - Aim for high rate of success
- **Provide feedback in lessons, after lessons**
 - Feedback leads to action by children
 - Feedback leads to re-teaching in a new way
- **Capture learning points with examples on learning walls/ in journals**
 - Use quizzes and reviews to embed learning

KS2 Data Report for National Talk for Writing Training Centres

The following slides contain the aggregated results from 16 Talk for Writing Training schools across England.

Context of the 16 schools in 2019

- Number on roll: approximately 7000 children (Year 6 = 750 in 2018 & 880 in 2019)
- An average of 32% of children are Pupil Premium (Nationally 23%)*
- An average of 42% have English as an Additional Language (Nationally just over 21%)**
- An average of 16% children with SEND (Nationally 14.6%)*

*www.gov.uk

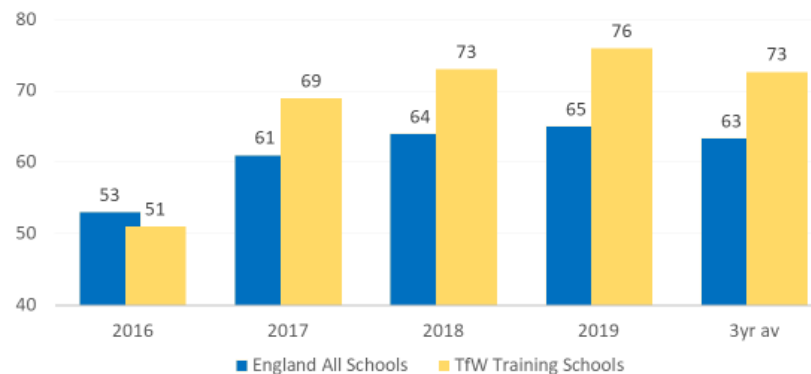
**ealresources.bell-foundation

2019 KS2 Combined Attainment

Increase of 25% points 2016-19 (England Schools +12%points)

Double the national rate of improvement. Just over 3/4 of Year 6 children achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2019

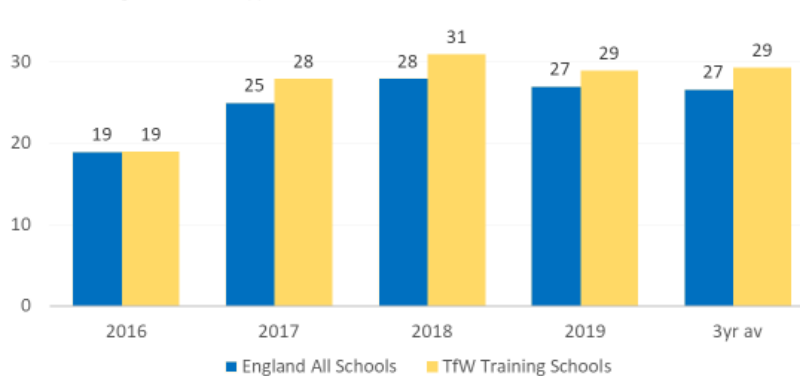
Talk for Writing cohort approx. 880)



2019 KS2 Great Depth Reading

Increase of 10% points 2016-19 (England Schools +8%points)

Talk for Writing Year 6 cohort approx. 880

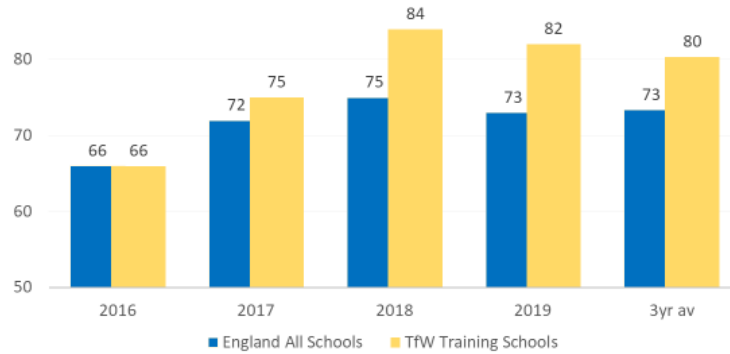


2019 KS2 Reading Attainment

Increase of 16% points 2016-19 (England Schools +7% points)

Talk for Reading has been a focus for professional development across all of the Talk for Writing Training Centres since 2016

Talk for Writing Year 6 cohort approx. 880

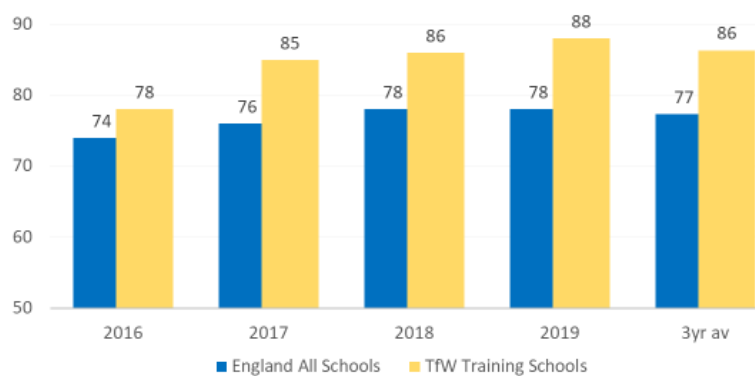


2019 KS2 Writing Attainment

Increase of 10% points 2016-19 (England Schools +3% points)

Over double the national rate of improvement since 2016 despite the training schools already being strong with the teaching of writing prior to 2016

Talk for Writing Year 6 cohort approx. 880

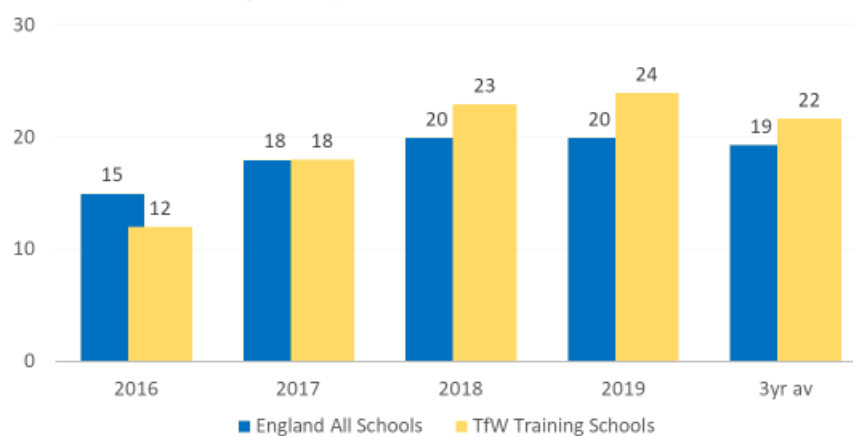


2019 KS2 Great Depth Writing

Increase of 12% points 2016-19 (England Schools +5% points)

Double the proportion of children reaching greater depth in writing since 2016.

Talk for Writing cohort approx. 880

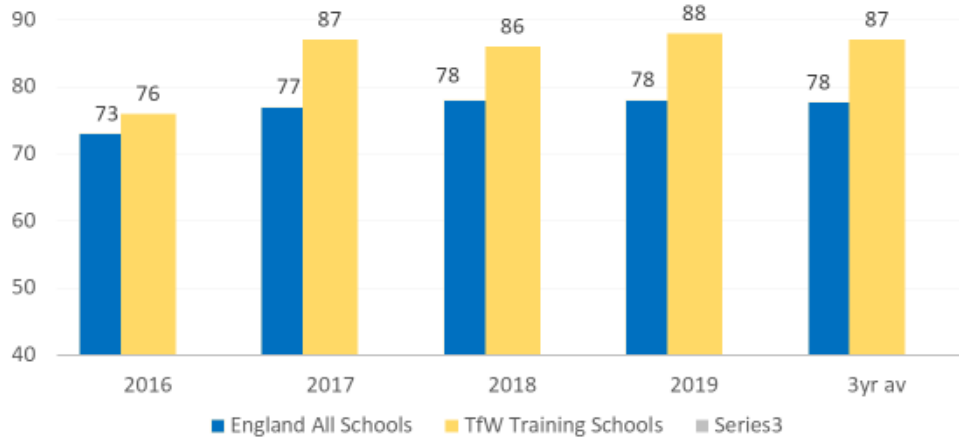


2019KS2 GPaS Attainment

Increase of 12% points 2016-19 (England Schools +5% points)

Talk for Writing schools teach grammar in the context of the writing

Talk for Writing Year 6 cohort approx. 880



2019 KS2 Mathematics Attainment

Increase of 15% points 2016-19 (England Schools +6%pts)

Over double the national rate of improvement since 2016 despite reading and writing being the main driver for development

(Maths Talk for Writing Year 6 cohort approx 880)

