

We use a range of widget symbols to support children in lots of different areas of learning. For example, we use them for early readers to help remind them about the reading strategies that would be helpful all the way up to years five and six. When we use them to support children in editing their work as visual prompts and reminders to them about how they can make their work better.

In terms of a whole school of approach to reading, we wanted to make our reading environments really consistent for the children and also for the teachers. I wanted teachers to think really carefully about what books to put in their reading environment. And a way to do that was to group books into quality texts and represent that with a symbol. So we've improved it with teachers. For children going through the school, I wanted the book corners to be easy to use, so when they go to a book corner, they can go to a box and see that box has stories about animals, that box has stories about inspiring children and going through the school, all of those things will be the same. So we're promoting a love of reading and we're supporting that by enabling children to make informed book choices. Because of the use of symbol in terms of their talk and how they communicate their love of reading, we developed a bookmark that has symbols on it. On one side we have strategies which help children stop, think and understand what they're reading and symbols support each point in that process. And on the other side we have symbols which encourage them to think about their love of reading.

Tell me something surprising, tell me something you likes, tell me something that puzzled you. And a symbol, again, just makes it really easy for adults who are supporting children to open up a conversation and for children to know what we are looking for.

We find that the use of symbols, consistent use of symbols throughout the school is a really supportive strategy for those children and it means that they are more relaxed and comfortable accessing learning. When it's very language and literacy heavy, this is a helpful thing for them.

So generally, in my day to day practice, I've embedded the use of widget symbols for many reasons. Really. They predominantly, I think, in year two, have helped the children build their vocabulary. Children are increasingly, I find, entering school with a vocabulary deficit and the use of widget symbols really helps to bowden and indeed deepen their understanding of the vocabulary that they're using and we're encouraging them to use. The sequence of lessons that today's lesson was about was part of is a descriptive writing unit. The children are looking at traditional tales, their own villains to be in their innovated versions of a traditional tale. So we've been looking at Little Red Riding Hood, we are looking specifically at the villains and they are going to describe in their writing. The widget symbols have been used to teach specific vocabulary at the outset. So adjectives, because we're producing a piece of descriptive writing. The children have then generated their own words to describe the villains that they know from traditional tales. I have taken some of those words that the children generated and made widget symbols from those words. So the words that they may be using may be a mixture of ones that I've specifically chosen and taught them and ones that they've generated themselves to give them some ownership over the words that they're using.

I'm also using the widget symbols in a day to day way, but specifically in today's lesson to teach different sentence structures and grammatical features that can add to descriptive writing. So, for example, the use of a list sentence or an expanded noun phrase on the wall. We have a working wall which changes regularly depending on what kind of writing we're doing. The writing today is obviously the descriptive writing. So I've got exams of the different sentence structures on the wall with a widget symbol to show what that feature is called.