

Because of where we're located, there's a very high percentage of children with English as an additional language, around about 70%. And so that means that we have children who are very new to English, children who are learning and some who are fluent bilingual speakers. The aim of our curriculum is that we make sure that all children are informed, articulate and empowered. One of the ways that we achieve that aim is to make sure that the children are included in every lesson. And to do that we do not group children according to their attainment levels, excepting for early readers. This means that in all the lessons, children of different levels of skill and attainment are all working together. And so the lessons need to be as supportive and as accessible as possible. And we use widget symbols, one of the ways that we achieve that.

So as English lead, one of the things that I really wanted to focus on was that we had a big push on reading for pleasure. And when we walked around the classrooms, there was no consistency. So as part of a whole school approach, I've used Widget to look at every book corner or learning environment and really pull out groups of books and texts that we want children to be enjoying and basically make the journey through the school so that a child can walk into any classroom and find a book that's really, really important. It's a way of making our emphasis on reading for pleasure really visible as we walk around the school and children know it's really important. Another thing I've done in terms of English, we've had a big focus on improving writing. So for writing I really wanted to be clear about children understanding the audience and purpose that they're writing for. And again, it's about not overloading children. So we've got three very simple purposes for writing to entertain, to persuade, to inform. And we use widgets on all of our interactive whiteboards so that children know why they are writing. Then we kind of dig deeper into the reader.

What do we want the reader to feel, to imagine? And we crystallize that. We simplify it into a symbol and the children will tell us what that is by looking at good models. So it kind of really integrates with our practice. So if I'm doing a letter in role for Bearwolf, we know we are writing to entertain and we know we are writing to terrify our reader. And we pull that through to our use of success criteria and what success looks like. So again, I think as a teacher and as a subject lead, it's helped me support teachers in kind of really pinpointing what makes good writing and identifying a symbol that will support that and how you communicate that really clearly to the children so that they can take ownership of their writing.