



Alexandra Primary School

Alexandra Primary School, a thriving two-form entry primary school in Wood Green, London, is a Daily Supported Reading (DSR) Hub school in Haringey. DSR is a classroom programme developed by Hackney Learning Trust that helps children primarily in Key Stage 1 (but also striving readers in Key Stage 2) make accelerated progress by working with trained adults in small groups matched to their independent reading levels. It is a fundamental part of the school's commitment to "encourage pupils to develop the confidence to read a variety of good quality texts, appreciating our rich and varied literary heritage."

Under DSR, which is implemented in addition to a school's synthetic phonics programme, children read in small groups led by a trained adult. Adults use a lesson guide to structure the session, and to support independent engagement with, and independent enjoyment of, a range of story books. They receive ongoing weekly professional development training across the year – and also regular coaching support while working with their reading groups each day. This approach ensures that children in Year 1 and Year 2 develop reading fluency by reading authentic, natural language stories every day.

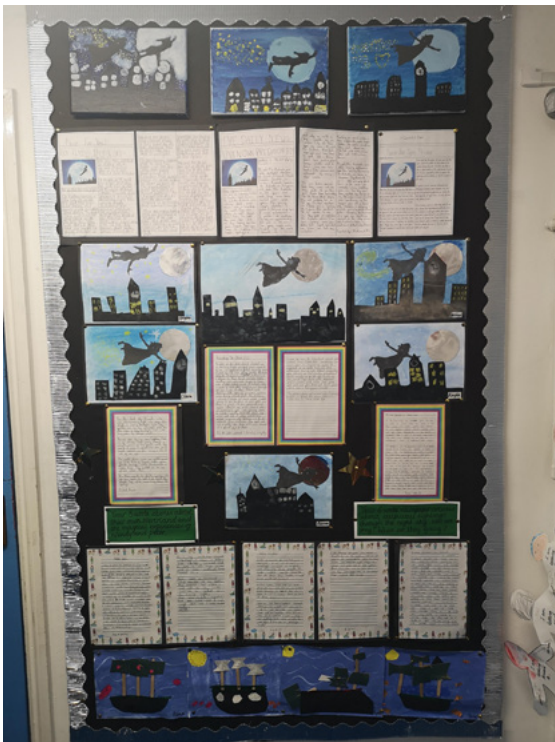


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DSR started in autumn 2016 with Heather Johnston and latterly, Simran Spencer, both members of the senior leadership team. "As a school we wanted to move away from the carousel approach of guided reading, which is not always consistent, and with DSR we work in small groups at an instructional level with a progressive range of texts," Simran explained. "It is about getting the children reading and sharing stories – we do that in Year 1 and 2, and by the time they leave Key Stage 1 they will have read an amazing range of texts spanning 50–60 books. All our adult staff are involved in the programme, it would not work without them, and support staff are empowered and given responsibility to do more and move the children on in their reading. Whether it is a teacher or teaching assistant delivering DSR there should be no difference in approach. Modelling, practising and coaching are in place for all staff."

Under DSR, children progress to using higher level texts weekly as appropriate to their independent reading levels. Through these texts, children learn to respond to, and engage with new ideas and information. "Cultural capital has such a high profile and it is fantastic that children can access such a rich range of texts," Simran said. "The small focus group model – with the teaching controlled by the text – allows support staff to confidently lead sessions. It also provides an opportunity for targeted support, with EAL children for example, but all children enjoy being exposed to and speaking about the text whilst reading with increasing fluency and understanding. Many schools only use phonics, but we have developed a really strong offer for the school and the impact is clear to see."

Headteacher Manjit Dulay was part of the Hackney Learning Trust group that developed Destination Reader, a follow-on programme from DSR for Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6). This involves daily sessions incorporating whole class modelling, prior to the children applying these skills through partner work and independent reading. Each lesson blends a range of learning behaviours and reading strategies which, brought together, allow children to explore and understand texts independently, at a deeper level. The school also uses Read Write Inc. Phonics developed by Ruth Miskin as part of a comprehensive whole school reading strategy.



Pupils' progress in reading and writing throughout the school has been highlighted by Ofsted, with the most recent Key Stage 1 indicators showing that pupils working at or above the expected standard is above the national average. "Each year we monitor staff turnover, movement in school between key stages, and retrain colleagues for the programme to ensure

that modelling and coaching is revisited and everyone is up to date and skilled as DSR develops," Simran said. "We look at resourcing, the newest texts, and investing in these and training around them. As a DSR Hub school we also participate in a range of forums, have the opportunity to develop practice alongside Hackney Learning Trust, and pre-Covid we would have other schools visiting for open mornings on DSR and Destination Reader."

DSR, which has helped Hackney become ranked in the top five local authorities in England for percentage of pupils reaching expected standards in reading, has also been implemented in schools across the UK (London, East Sussex and Suffolk) and in Denmark. DSR book packs are available to buy through the Scholastic website.

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