



Queensbridge Primary School

Queensbridge Primary School is an Ofsted-rated Outstanding school providing a high-quality teaching environment for pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. Based in Hackney, north London, it is also a Daily Supported Reading (DSR) Hub school. DSR is a whole class programme developed by Hackney Learning Trust that helps all children make accelerated progress in their reading. It is delivered initially to Year 1 pupils, then introduced into Reception, and for the lowest attaining children in Year 2 for maximum impact across a school.

The programme provides a coherent and systematic approach where children enjoy daily independent reading in small groups led by a trained adult. Adults use differentiated lesson guides to help move children on and make sound judgements about when to do so. Weekly feedback and development sessions support the process. At Queensbridge, alongside an effective and systematically delivered phonics programme, children have opportunities through DSR to discuss engaging stories at their learning level. The school's overarching literacy strategy is informed by 2002 OECD research which found that "reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's future success", and a whole school aim to "create a passionate reading community".

"When I joined the school in 2006 the children were not benefitting from an effective approach to reading," recalled Headteacher Sarah Bailey OBE. "Even when we progressed to Good with Outstanding features by Ofsted in 2008 reading was still a priority as it cuts across everything – but the interventions we had been using became more challenging as we grew from one to two and three-form entry. In particular, I felt that a love of books and reading for pleasure was missing, and we did not want to lose sight that reading is engaging, and that we want pupils to understand and make meaningful links. Our Reading Recovery lead Catherine Selwyn actually came up with the idea for DSR, with her colleague Ruth Brown, when she was at another Hackney school. The programme was then implemented at Queensbridge in 2010."

Queensbridge has subsequently developed a comprehensive approach to reading in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, as it strives for independent reading from Year 1 going into Year 2. "At the beginning we did a lot of DSR training, upskilling and generating buy-in as part of a full-on drive in the school," Sarah said. "This was upheld by senior management, and we led DSR with classroom teachers and teaching assistants. Questioning, touch-base meetings, tailored interventions, sharing what are we doing well and what are we struggling with, and providing advice in that capacity, and timetabling have all been important. Practically making sure children are on the right books, the right levels, and that books are labelled is also key. Getting parents on board has been critical. We have become a centre for people to see DSR in action, and the impact it has had on our data."



Queensbridge was graded Outstanding in 2011 and has gone on to become an exemplar DSR school across Hackney as well as a hub for research excellence through the Department for Education's Strategic Schools Improvement Fund (SSIF). Andrea Boland, the school's Reading and Phonics Co-ordinator, who with Sarah and Catherine has hosted numerous visitors to see the programme in action and supported other schools with implementation, said the value of DSR was in "generating a love of reading, and building independence from day one: helping children to want to read and make rapid progress".

She explained: "From very early on we want children to get the intrinsic reward of reading and this can be done through accessing over 70 books a year through DSR. PM books are at the centre of the programme and are excellent at engaging children and building cultural capital. For us, we do not want children to think reading is just about decoding and 100% accuracy in terms of getting words right. It is about understanding, thinking on the run, and engaging in the text as they read by enjoying the sense of a story. Meaning is at the heart of our culture in school. Alongside the rigorous teaching of phonics, DSR brings a hierarchy for vocabulary, language and engagement in reading."

Andrea added that the school's approach to reading for pleasure supported by DSR ensures that pupils begin to express their own opinions and responses whilst reading with increasing fluency and understanding. "Every child progresses, some more than others of course, but it has had a positive impact on reading in our school with the vast majority of children leaving Year 1 at expected," she said. "We have a high proportion of EAL/Pupil Premium and SEND children and DSR has proved very effective in meeting the needs of these children in terms of engaging them in stories, building language and understanding, plus developing their verbal skills. It is also highly effective in supporting more able children, as they are constantly being challenged with higher text levels, alongside the expectation that they understand the more complex ideas, language structures and vocabulary."

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Catherine, who is responsible for the ground level implementation of the programme, outlined the importance of staff professional development around DSR. "We begin the DSR cycle in summer term of reception," she revealed. "We train staff, assess each child's reading level, group them and provide the DSR reading resources to ensure the programme is delivered daily and with purpose. Children then enter Year 1, grouped and levelled with a strong foundation ready for the Year 1 reading curriculum. CPD is initially delivered across the entire school so that all adults have an understanding of the whole school approach to how children learn to read and the pedagogy that underpins it. In our DSR weekly team meetings we monitor the progress of children and deliver ongoing CPD responsive to the current needs of the cohort. Informal observations and coaching sessions are undertaken to inform these. The group discusses children who are highlighted as struggling, and we jointly consider how best to support them. Children are also moved between groups depending on their progress that week. Responsibility as a team is central. It is crucial that staff understand why we deliver lessons in the way we do so that they have ownership."

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. Book packs are available to buy through the Scholastic website.

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