

Lower ability and SEN support

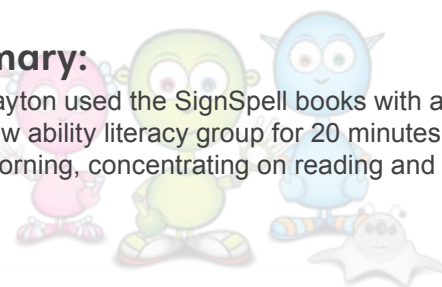
Miss Clayton and Mrs Simpson both used SignSpell with their lower ability classes, but in very different ways. SignSpell has been created to be flexible and encourage inclusivity within a class with a wide range of abilities, resulting in varied benefits to complement different learning environments.

Lakes Primary School, Redcar and Cleveland

Teacher name	<i>Miss Heather Clayton</i>
Year	<i>Year 1</i>
Average class size	<i>10</i>
Ability	<i>Low ability literacy group</i>

Summary:

Miss Clayton used the SignSpell books with a small, low ability literacy group for 20 minutes every morning, concentrating on reading and spelling.



Which areas of development did SignSpell support?

To help the year 1 children who struggle with literacy skills, Miss Clayton would usually take the children for a short period of time for extra help a couple of days a week, whilst the rest of the class are in morning assembly.

‘SignSpell is a good spelling technique for very low ability year 1 children. I would carry this on because they use actions for high frequency and key words already and it complements nicely.’

Concentrating on just the books, Miss Clayton used the stories to develop the children’s reading and spelling skills. She used the teaching notes as a guide but adapted them to suit the shorter, slow paced sessions, which she felt would benefit the children the most.

‘Some children respond really well to visualisation and this group of children learn better if they can link the word to a visual action. However they have never used official BSL actions before, the signs are usually much simpler and link directly to the word. I think it is good that these signs are official sign language and can be used for more than just spelling.’

Miss Clayton also used SignSpell to link in with her current class topic:

‘The SignSpell resources arrived at a very convenient time for us as our class topic at the moment is all about space and the solar system! The children love the idea of aliens and life on other planets so they enjoyed the books and it linked in well with my current lesson plan. It just shows how adaptable SignSpell is, I can see a lot of areas it could benefit.’

Teacher’s opinion:

When used with very low ability KS1 children, Miss Clayton described SignSpell as a ‘very good spelling technique’ which worked well as a kinaesthetic learning technique.

‘Their previous knowledge helped the children pick up the signs quickly and they weren’t fazed by it because they are used to this teaching method.’

For Teachers, From Teachers

‘I have seen the benefits of using SignSpell first hand and can see the value the resources could bring to older children. I am in discussion with a colleague regarding setting up a lunch time club where year 5 and 6 can access the materials on their own and with their friends.’

Miss Clayton