

### **Improving educational opportunities and outcomes in literacy for looked after children through a multimodal approach**

#### **Closing the Gaps Project 2013-14**

The purpose of this report is to provide elected members with a brief overview and summary on the positive impact of a project which ran through the academic year 2013-14, centred on adopting a multimodal approach to learning. The outcomes contribute to the national agenda and Nottinghamshire LA's drive to close the gap for vulnerable groups. The intention was to support looked after children (LAC) to improve their engagement in literacy and encourage links between home and school through the use of multimodal texts including new technologies (specifically iPads). The premise was that the stimulating resources (e.g. multi-layered books) and latest technology would increase children's confidence in making individual choices as authors, allowing them to develop fundamental skills required today and remove some of the barriers to communication.

Project aims:

- ▶ To recognise, value and build upon children's wider literacy experiences
- ▶ To explore how technology can support children in engaging with and producing multimodal texts
- ▶ To motivate children in progressively becoming expert readers/ viewers and authors / 'writers' of multimodal texts
- ▶ To support home/ school partnerships and enhance learning

The group consisted of 18 schools including three secondary schools across Nottinghamshire. In total, 56 young people participated of which 32 were boys and 24 girls ranging from 4-14 years. 34 families, with at least one carer in each setting committed to supporting the young person with activities at home and liaising with all parties involved. A designated teacher was identified to support the child in school and this varied from the Head Teacher, to teaching member with responsibilities for looked after children or teaching assistant with this area of need as a primary role. Attainment levels in reading and writing were tracked throughout the year.

The project design drew on previous, smaller pilot projects and largely on the pleasing literacy outcomes obtained following the LA project in 2012-13. Academic data in the form of tracked reading and writing levels had shown that previously all children made progress in reading and writing, in addition, 35% made accelerated progress in reading and 35% made accelerated progress in writing (more than 2 sub-levels). Results reported in 2013-14 continued to reflect a positive impact. Whilst it is not possible to argue that this is due directly to the project and multimodal approach to learning, it may have contributed and did not hinder progress. In all cases there was also a reported increase in digital experience in the home and access to a range of quality texts.

**Summary of outcomes:**

- Evidence of progress in literacy attainment
- Increased engagement in literacy activities
- A strong sense of authorship and in authorial intent
- Children took pride in their work
- A knowledge of how texts work
- Enhanced ICT skills
- Improved confidence and a 'can do' belief
- An enthusiasm for books and book making
- Improved home school links
- Brought to light issues through interactions with texts and creation of stories