

# Overcoming barriers to reading - Primary

**By James Howard**

This pupil was in Year 3 and their barrier to learning was reading. They had not passed the phonics screening check in Year 1 but had passed in Year 2. Their attainment was below age-related expectations but not significant enough for a specific SEND diagnosis.

So, although this pupil was making some progress, it was reading that continued to be the challenge. I used the graduated approach to identify the pupil's needs, generate strategies to support them and evaluate these strategies based on the pupil's progress. During the assessment phase I gathered as much information as possible. Through progress meetings, teachers had identified that the child had a 2.3 score for reading, which was significantly behind their age. As a result, further professional discussions about the pupil's specific barriers to reading were required.

We also met with parents to discuss further support before an in-depth gap analysis was carried out by the English lead to support the teacher with next steps in the pupil's learning. This analysis identified that whilst decoding was not an issue the pupil was not reading for meaning. Although they could confidently segment and blend, they were not making meaning from reading in sentences. During the plan phase, the teacher used the information obtained from assessments and parents to decide what actions to take place. It was identified that the pupil would need support and interventions to help them decode unfamiliar words using segmenting and blending.

They would also need support to develop their comprehension of what they were reading. To support the pupil to meet their decided outcomes, specific interventions were put in place such as:

- Reading to an adult every day with a specific focus on segmenting and blending unfamiliar words
- Receiving a reading intervention that focused on the pupil's ability to develop comprehension strategies such as re-reading sentences if they don't seem to make sense
- Teachers providing focused support in the lessons such as working with the pupil in a guided group at least once a week
- Lesson visits from an SLT member to engage the pupil in discussions and promote a love of reading and book choices
- Reading strategies were shared with his parents and it was asked that they read to them daily

During the review phase, we identified that the impact of this support on the pupil was positive. The pupil had become more confident at reading, the parents were more engaged in the child's learning and the gap between the child's ability and age-related reading expectations had narrowed. As cycle of the graduated approach continued, the pupil was tracked through assessment, their needs were met through carefully tailored intervention and teaching following on from the assessment, and there was ongoing monitoring from SLT through daily lesson visits, pupil voice and tracking. The regular review of their progress allowed us to shift the support to meet their changing needs.