



# Oxfordshire Gaining Momentum

## Impact Evaluation Report

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*Words for life*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation of Oxfordshire Gaining Momentum (OGM) used both quantitative and qualitative elements. Three surveys were conducted at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the programme. The final evaluation compared results from the first and last survey in six schools that took part in both. In addition, attainment data provided by the schools were analysed. The evaluation also used case studies, consultant reports and half-termly progress trackers to create robust analyses of the impact of the programme.

Overall the evaluation found that OGM has resulted in positive teacher outcomes, positive whole school outcomes and emerging positive student outcomes.

The evaluation found that at the end of the programme teachers have:

### **Improved attitudes and increased awareness**

- More teachers agree that it is their responsibility to teach literacy, they have generally positive attitudes towards teaching literacy and fewer see a lack of time and a lack of understanding of the importance of literacy as barriers to teaching literacy in their school.
- Interviewees attributed the positive attitudinal change directly to their school's participation in OGM and the extensive amount of work done in the school as a result. They have also noticed an improvement of awareness: more non-English teachers are aware that literacy is a part of their teaching job while some English teachers have become more aware of how literacy is perceived and understood by their non-English teaching colleagues.

### **Improved knowledge and strategy use**

- More teachers are familiar with evidence-based approaches and more have particular strategies or approaches to teaching literacy that they feel work well.
- The qualitative data show that teachers and literacy leaders give positive feedback about the continuous professional development (CPD) sessions and the strategies that they gained from the sessions. In addition, consultants noticed during their visits that teachers were using their newly acquired knowledge about literacy approaches in class.

### **Increased confidence**

- Teachers' general confidence in teaching literacy has increased over the course of the programme as has their confidence in developing the literacy skills of specific groups of pupils, for example those receiving free school meals (FSM) and Able, Gifted and Talented (AG&T) pupils.

### **Positive classroom practices across all subjects**

- Teachers' perception of developing their pupils' literacy skills has improved over the course of the programme.
- The consultant reports from spring 2016 school visits unanimously evidence improvements in teachers' classroom practices, marking and literacy efforts.

Participants also describe the numerous strategies inspired by the OGM CPD and resources that they have started to use in class. The data shows that English teachers who took part in the programme have also benefited.

The whole school positive outcomes were:

### **Teachers feel better supported with literacy teaching in their school**

- More teachers feel that they get helpful literacy CPD support and all the support they need from colleagues to help support children's literacy skills.
- The qualitative data show that Inset days and co-coaching efforts, some of which are directly linked to participation in the OGM programme, have also provided support for teachers.

### **Strong strategic vision for literacy**

- The qualitative data show that schools' literacy efforts are now more focused, targeted and much better coordinated among teachers. In some schools, a "literacy leading team" has taken charge of disseminating best practice throughout departments and providing skills training, as well as encouragement and support to their colleagues.
- The qualitative data also show evidence of effective literacy strategies being rolled out across the school and that the senior management's involvement in the project resulted in the most positive experiences. Evidence of planning beyond the scope of the programme was also found. There is also evidence of a truly reflective process within schools to bring about effective change and a positive impact on students.

### **Greater awareness of school provision for literacy**

- More teachers say that literacy is included in their school improvement plan and in their department or faculty action plan as a top priority. More teachers are also aware of particular efforts towards literacy in their school, such as a literacy marking policy.
- The qualitative data also show that teachers have noticed the numerous efforts to promote literacy made by their school since joining OGM and can name various initiatives that they are implementing. Those efforts are particularly focused on reading and writing for pleasure, rather than speaking and listening.

Pupils' attainment, attitudes and behaviour also improved:

### **Pupils read more frequently outside class**

### **Pupils' attitudes towards reading have become more positive**

### **Pupils' attitudes towards writing have improved**

### **Pupils also have more positive attitudes towards communication skills**

Attainment data were only available from less than half of the schools and are therefore not sufficient to draw conclusions. However, the available data show no difference in

pupils' attainment. Nevertheless, teachers and consultants have noticed progress in pupils' attainment in all areas of literacy. The lack of progress was attributed to need for more time to evidence impact on attainment.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Programme description

The Oxfordshire Gaining Momentum (OGM) programme is a new programme run by the National Literacy Trust, funded by Oxfordshire County Council, to improve attitudes towards literacy and overall academic attainment in Oxfordshire. To do so, the programme aims to equip practitioners with pertinent skills and confidence in teaching reading, writing and oracy, to help practitioners see themselves as teachers of literacy and to help literacy leaders take a strategic and consistent approach to developing whole school literacy.

The programme provided continuing professional development (CPD) sessions to both teachers and literacy coordinators, external consultancy, online support, joint professional development (JPD) and facilitated networking. In each of the participating schools, three subject leaders and one literacy coordinator were given the opportunity to attend the training sessions. Those were provided by literacy experts recruited by the National Literacy Trust. A peer coaching model was intended to ensure dissemination of the approaches ensuring that language and literacy underpin each school's improvement plan.

In addition, the programme provided various opportunities for student engagement with literacy. A writing competition called Ox Tales was organised in 2015, where students were encouraged to write about Oxfordshire. Booklists were created and distributed to participating schools. Literacy festivals were organised at the end of the programme (in May and June 2016) where students travelled with their teachers to a local university to work with authors, writers and spoken word artists. Students were immersed in a range of writing and oracy workshops, and were encouraged to enjoy writing and playing with language for a variety of purposes and audiences. All participating schools provided extremely positive feedback while one school spoke of the transformative effect on their students.

The programme ran for two years (2014/16), with 10 schools participating in the first year (one dropped out in the second year) and an additional seven in year two. Schools who joined in the academic year 2014/15 are referred to as Phase I schools, while those who joined in 2015/16 are called Phase II schools throughout the report.

In total, 17 CPD sessions were provided for over 35 teachers and 17 literacy leaders. In addition, 68 consultant visits took place in school, including 17 baseline literacy reviews and 17 final school reviews. The programme team also conducted 50 visits to schools to support project delivery.

### Evaluation methodology

The evaluation of OGM used a mixed-method approach with both quantitative and qualitative elements.

Pupil and teacher surveys were used to collect quantitative data throughout the programme. The first surveys were conducted in February 2015 for Phase I schools. The second survey was conducted in November/December 2015 for both Phase I and Phase II schools and the final survey in May 2016 again for both Phase I and Phase II schools.

The analysis of survey data included pupils and teachers only from those schools that took part in the first and the last survey; therefore, only Phase I schools were included in the quantitative analyses. This allowed the analysis to focus on the changes between the

beginning and the end of the programme. 1569 pupils and 321 teachers took part in the first survey and 920 pupils and 150 teachers in the last survey from six schools.

In addition, six case study visits were conducted in OGM schools: three in Phase I schools and three in Phase II schools. The selection of interviewees was left up to the schools, on the basis that the case study should feature practitioners from various backgrounds, whether or not they were involved in OGM. In every school, OGM subject leads and the literacy coordinator were interviewed, and a group discussion was conducted with Year 7 and Year 8 pupils. In addition, some schools were able to organise interviews with senior management, school librarians, intervention practitioners and other teachers, depending on availability. The case studies were reported on individually as the visits took place, and they are used in this report to inform the overall evaluation. However, names of people and schools have been removed in this report.

Attainment was measured by the schools; no external tests of reading or writing were conducted as part of the programme's evaluation. The schools shared their data in various formats, which were all converted into Average Point Score (APS) for the purpose of between-school comparison. Attainment data were collected for all pupils in Years 7 and 8, with details for pupils on free school meals, boys and girls.

Finally, for the purpose of the evaluation, the consultant reports that were submitted regularly throughout the duration of the programme as consultant visits were taking place were also analysed, to seek additional evidence of impact on teachers, literacy leaders and pupils. The consultant reports include the final reviews conducted in May and June 2016. The half-termly trackers completed by the schools (with a format provided by the National Literacy Trust) were also analysed. Again, this included data for both Phase I and Phase II schools.

### Description of the quantitative samples

The teacher pre and post-samples do not significantly differ in terms of gender, age group or length of teaching experience<sup>1</sup>. Most participants in both samples were female (pre 73.6%; post 73.0%). Most of the participants are aged between 26 and 45 (pre 30.3%; post 38.7%) and most have between three and 10 years' experience (pre 34.9%; post 38.8%). In both samples most participants were teachers (pre 47.6%; post 54.2%), followed by Heads of department, faculty or subject leaders (pre 20.5%; post 28.5%). English was the most common subject specialism (pre 25.7%; post 22.1%), followed by Science (pre 19.0%; post 14.5%)<sup>2</sup>.

The pre and post-survey samples of pupils do not differ significantly in terms of gender and free school meal uptake<sup>3</sup>. Both samples include slightly more boys than girls (pre: boys 51.9%; girls 48.1%; post: boys 51.5%; girls 48.5%). The percentage of free school meal (FSM) pupils is below the national average in both samples (pre 5.8%; post 5.6% vs. 15.2% nationally<sup>4</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Gender:  $p = .893$ ; age:  $p = .185$ ; experience:  $p = .216$

<sup>2</sup> Please note that it was not possible to compare the percentages of the main subject specialism and main roles in the samples as the first survey allowed participants to choose more than one option, while the last survey only allowed for one.

<sup>3</sup> Gender:  $p = .832$ ; FSM:  $p = .858$

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/433680/SFR16\\_2015\\_Main\\_Text.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/433680/SFR16_2015_Main_Text.pdf)

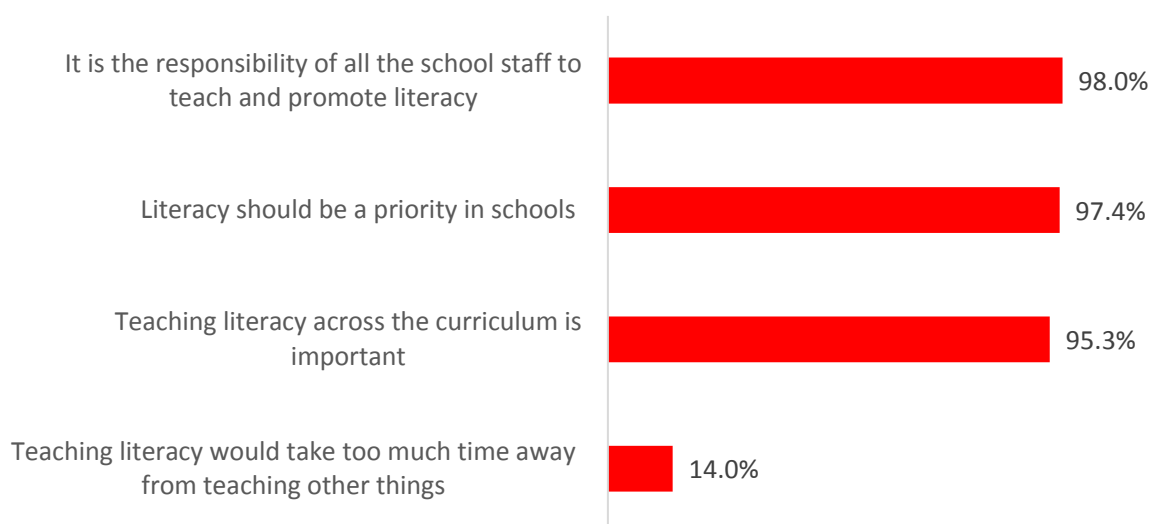
## POSITIVE TEACHER OUTCOMES

### More positive attitudes to teaching literacy and increased awareness of the importance of literacy

The results of the surveys show that more teachers feel responsible for teaching literacy<sup>5</sup> after the programme. At the end of OGM activities all the teachers (100%) agree that it is their responsibility to teach literacy compared with 94.7% of teachers at the beginning of the project. A closer look at the data shows that 93.4% of those whose main subject specialism is not English agreed that it is their job to teach literacy at the beginning of the programme while all of them (100%) agreed with this at the end of the programme.

The post-survey also included some questions about the teachers' attitudes towards teaching literacy. Generally, teachers have positive attitudes towards teaching literacy at the end of the programme. Figure 1 looks at teachers' agreement to individual attitudinal statements in percentages and shows that, for example, nearly all of them agree that it is the responsibility of all the school staff to teach and promote literacy (98.0%) and that literacy should be a priority in schools (97.4%).

**Figure 1: Teachers' attitudes towards literacy teaching at the end of OGM**



At the end of the programme fewer teachers see a lack of knowledge of how to support literacy (52.3% vs. 41.3%) and a lack of understanding of the importance of literacy (27.4% vs. 18.7%) as barriers to improving pupils' literacy in their school<sup>6</sup>.

In keeping with survey findings, in interviews most teachers and literacy leaders recognise that there has been a change in attitudes to literacy, either for themselves or for their colleagues. A music teacher from a Phase II school describes how she has changed her mindset about how to support her students' literacy in her subject, and how she has adapted her practice accordingly:

<sup>5</sup>  $\chi^2(2, N=434)=8.123, p=.017$ ; Cramer's  $V=.137$

<sup>6</sup> Lack of knowledge:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=4.953, p=.026$ ; Phi=.103; lack of understanding:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=4.214, p=.040$ ; Phi=.095

*"When I'd see an extended piece of text in a work, I'd always cut it out or I wouldn't include it, because I thought, they're not going to be able to do this. But now I'm including that. So I think there's been a shift in attitudes, in expectations, for me. And for my other colleague in the department. I suppose, not trying to dumb down your language also when you speak. I will use the extended vocabulary now rather than explain in a 'child speak' kind of way. So we're building vocabulary back into Key Stage 3 now." (Music subject lead, Phase II school, May 2016)*

For the qualitative research participants, this attitudinal change towards the positive when it comes to teaching literacy is not a coincidence and can directly be attributed to the school's participation in OGM and the extensive amount of work that literacy leaders and subject leaders have done in their school as a result. For example, a Phase II assistant Headteacher describes how taking part in OGM gave her clout to promote change in her school:

*"I think when you're trying to establish a higher status of something in a school... Don't get me wrong, I think everyone values literacy, but it's whether or not it's been at the very top of everyone's agenda. (...) I think it always helps to have an external input, especially in the first two years of a project. I think it's easier if you have an additional body on side when you're trying to reinforce the impact, and showing that it's not about loads of extra work but just embedding good practice." (Assistant Headteacher, Phase II school, May 2016)*

However, most interviewees do recognise that the change in attitudes has not been completely effective at this stage across the entire school. Again, this Phase II school subject leader describes how she still wishes to see change among her colleagues in their attitudes to literacy teaching:

*"Literacy has really negative connotations. Grammar... and add-on to a lesson... rather than being part in the learning process, just something you add at the end of the lesson. 'We don't use literacy in our subjects'. (...) I think people need to realise that literacy... it's thinking and speaking, and reading an image, and organising your ideas. Being literate means so much more than being able to read and then write." (Music subject lead, Phase II school, May 2016)*

Nonetheless, where attitudes still need more time to shift, interviewees have definitely noticed an improvement in awareness. That is to say, more teachers, notably non-English teachers, are aware that literacy is a part of their teaching job, that it can fit into their regular practice and that it is indeed their responsibility.

*"I definitely think for staff it's become much higher on their agenda. Awareness is one [of the things where OGM has made a lasting impact]. I think... it's the awareness that literacy is so integral." (Assistant Headteacher, Phase II school, May 2016)*

Another interesting finding in terms of awareness is that some English teachers have become more aware of how literacy is perceived and understood by their non-English teaching colleagues, particularly colleagues who teach subjects not traditionally associated with literacy, such as Maths, Sciences and Arts. This is notably due to the fact that the OGM CPD sessions involved non-English teachers primarily and a few English teachers and subject leaders who were therefore given the opportunity to discuss with non-English colleagues from their school and other schools.

*"[The CPD sessions] have been great, actually. I think as an English specialist myself, it's been very interesting for me to go into these training sessions with non-English specialists and actually see from their perspective what their issues with literacy are*

*in their subject areas. So taking a whole school approach, that gave me some real insight into what other departments... what sort of direction they might need, or how they might be able to use that approach in their own subject, so that's been really helpful. (...) Because it just dawned on me, we take our literacy for granted I think in the English department."* (Head of KS3 English, Phase II school, April 2016)

### Case study examples

From the individual school case studies conducted as part of the evaluation, we have selected two examples from a Phase I school to demonstrate how the OGM CPD sessions and the work of the OGM consultant have had a direct impact on the awareness, attitudes and skills of two non-English teachers, and subsequently their practices. These examples show how raising awareness of literacy in non-English subjects was the first step to enabling further change.

The Head of Science was involved in OGM in its first year. She attended CPD sessions which she found interesting and useful. More importantly, she worked directly with the OGM consultant who dedicated time to reviewing how she approaches literacy in her classes, and in the Science department overall.

*"I had never thought of teaching literacy before, even though I knew the pupils struggled with literacy and I could see it. But working with [OGM consultant] gave me a push, and it gave me ideas and techniques to use."*

Perhaps the most interesting point made by the Head of the Science department is that within a year she has started to notice improvement in her pupils, both in literacy and in actual subject knowledge and attainment. She says that she can directly link her efforts in teaching literacy with progress among the children, and further, link their literacy progress with subject-specific progress.

The business teacher attended his first OGM CPD session in December 2015. One of the aspects covered in the session was the difference between two-tier and three-tier words, how to support students in identifying them and how to encourage them to use more three-tier words in their writing.

This was immediately taken on board by the Business and ICT teacher who proceeded to develop resources for his Year 11 students, whom he describes as a very difficult group with serious limitations with literacy. The resources fit onto one A3 page and combine text and images. They include key words and their definition to help understand the course as well as the main points of the lesson.

*"It made me realise that having good literacy skills is not the same as having literacy teaching skills. I had to become aware of how I write... how I think, or how I express an idea... in order to communicate that to the students. Deconstructing sort of, the thought process in order to teach it."*

He admits to having found it hard, but interesting and fairly successful. He seems to be gaining in confidence, notably because he has received positive feedback from pupils about the resources he provides (which he designed himself) and about the explicit teaching of literacy, which students find make work easier for them (based on data collected from students by the OGM consultant).

## Improved knowledge and confidence in teaching literacy, and improved literacy practices

The evaluation has revealed that following participation in OGM, teachers feel more knowledgeable and more confident teaching literacy, which results in improved classroom practices around literacy.

### Teachers have more knowledge about literacy teaching strategies

The surveys show that teachers' knowledge about literacy teaching has increased during the two years of activities. For example, more teachers are familiar with evidence-based approaches at the end of the programme<sup>7</sup>: 50.7% of teachers at the end of the programme say that they are very or quite familiar with evidence-based approaches compared with just 28.0% of teachers at the beginning of the programme, an increase of 81.1%.

In addition to familiarity with evidence-based approaches, teachers' knowledge about strategies has increased during OGM activities. At the end of the programme, more teachers have particular strategies or approaches to teaching literacy that they feel work well (51.7% vs. 34.0%)<sup>8</sup>. This might suggest that teachers have gained more knowledge during the activities and this has enabled them to develop effective strategies for teaching literacy.

This was reflected in interviews with teachers and literacy leaders who give positive feedback about the CPD and the strategies for improving students' literacy that they gained from the sessions. One Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) teacher shared an example of the insight she gained:

*"So one of the things I found interesting [at the reading CPD], was... it's probably quite obvious, it's that reading doesn't have to be a text, it can be a picture as well. So I've recently done surrealism with my Year 8 and we were looking at Dali's work. And trying to read the images and trying to get lots of ideas from this has been a really good way to start them talking about the artwork."* (Head of KS3 MFL, Phase I school, February 2016)

Likewise, consultants noticed during their visits when teachers were using their newly acquired knowledge about literacy approaches in class:

*"There was evidence that some of the strategies promoted by the literacy team were being used effectively by some teachers. For example, we saw evidence of the STAR writing approaches being used in Science, RE, History and Languages."* (Phase I school, consultant report, April 2016)

### Teachers are more confident teaching literacy

Teachers' confidence in teaching literacy has increased over the course of the programme (see **Figure 2**)<sup>9 10</sup>. For example, after the two-year programme, they are more confident that

<sup>7</sup> beginning: Mdn= 3, end: Mdn= 2; Mann-Whitney U(415)= 14310.000, z= -5.032, p< .001, r= -.247

<sup>8</sup>  $\chi^2$  (2, N= 387)= 14.876, p= .001; Cramer's V= .196

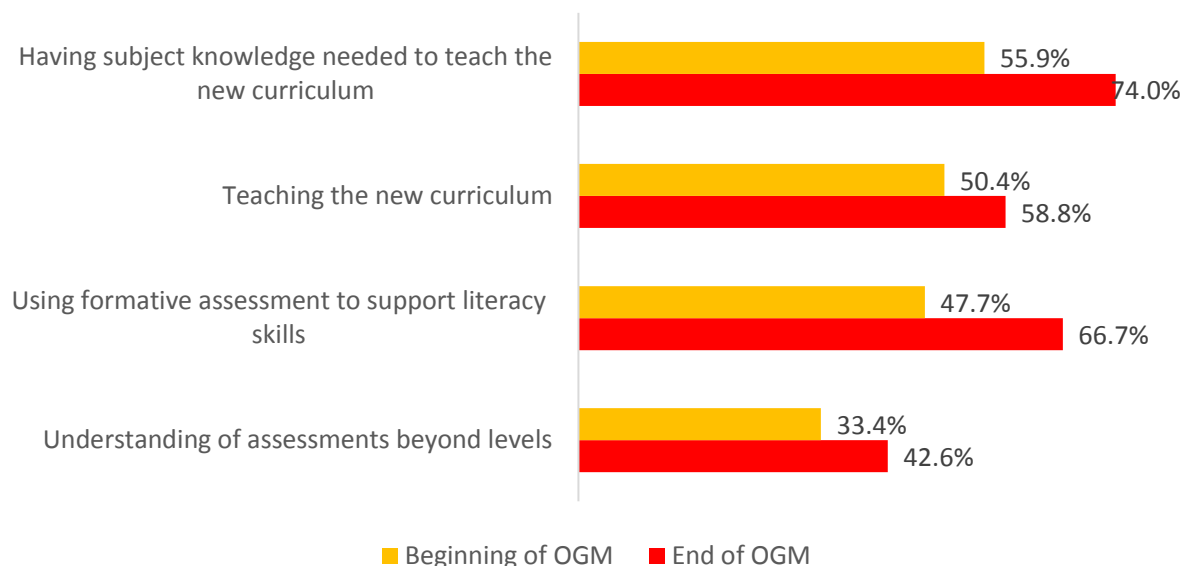
<sup>9</sup> Beginning: M= 3.01, SD= 1.307; end: M= 2.50, SD= .910; t(415)= 4.265, p< .001, Cohen's d= .712

<sup>10</sup> A principal component analysis with direct oblimin rotation showed that the 4 attitudinal items loaded on 1 factor. Therefore, all 4 items were combined in a scale (Cronbach alpha .890): How confident are you: teaching the new curriculum; that you have the



they have the subject knowledge needed to teach the new curriculum (74.0% vs. 55.9%) and in using formative assessment to support literacy skills (66.7% vs. 47.7%).

**Figure 2: Percentage of teachers who are confident or very confident teaching literacy at the beginning and end of OGM**

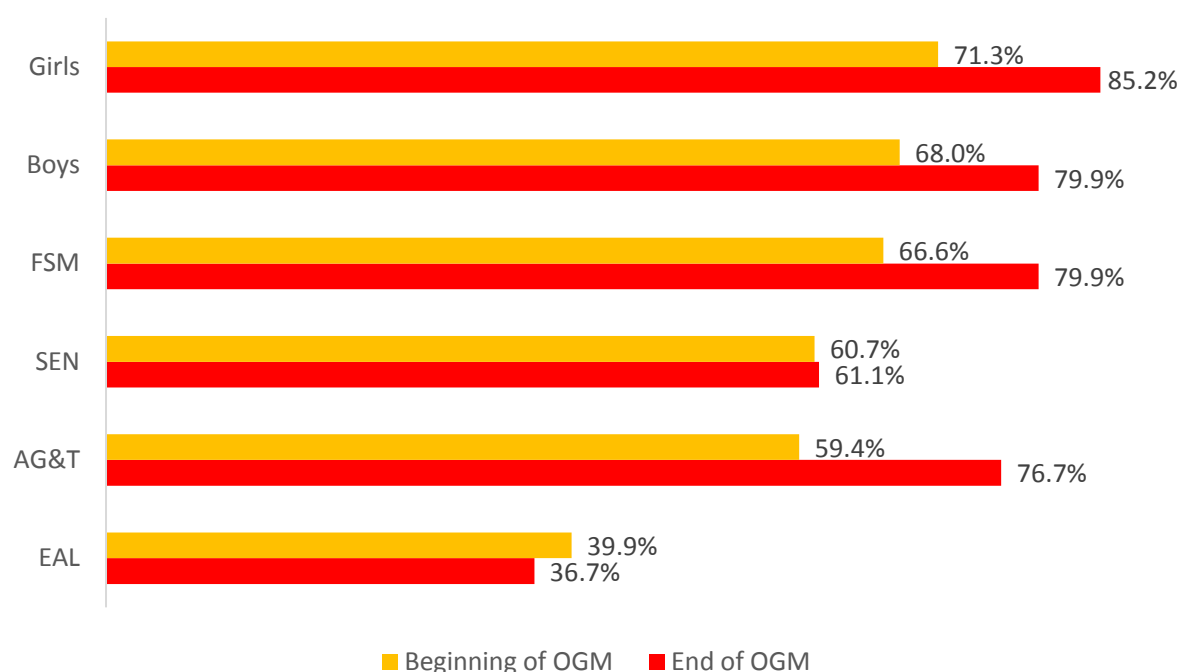


In addition to being more confident in teaching literacy generally, teachers are also more confident in developing the literacy skills of specific groups of pupils at the end of the programme<sup>11</sup>. For example, after two years of OGM activities, they feel more confident developing the literacy skills of able, gifted and talented pupils (AG&T; 76.7% vs. 59.4%) and those eligible for free school meals (FSM 79.9% vs. 66.6%; see **Figure 3**).

subject knowledge you need to teach the new curriculum; in your understanding of assessments beyond levels, and using formative assessment to support literacy skills.

<sup>11</sup> Girls: beginning: Mdn= 2, end: Mdn= 2; Mann-Whitney U(417)= 16732.500, z= -3.109, p= .002, r= -.152; boys: beginning: Mdn= 2, end: Mdn= 2; Mann-Whitney U(418)= 17445.000, z= -2.458, p= .014, r= -.120; AG&T: beginning: Mdn= 2, end: Mdn= 2; Mann-Whitney U(419)= 16168.000, z= -3.068, p< .001, r= -.150; FSM: beginning: Mdn= 2, end: Mdn= 2; Mann-Whitney U(418)= 17272.500, z= -2.617, p= .009, r= -.128

**Figure 3: Percentage of teachers who are confident or very confident in developing literacy skills of specific groups of pupils at the beginning and end of OGM**



### Evidence of positive classroom practices across all subjects

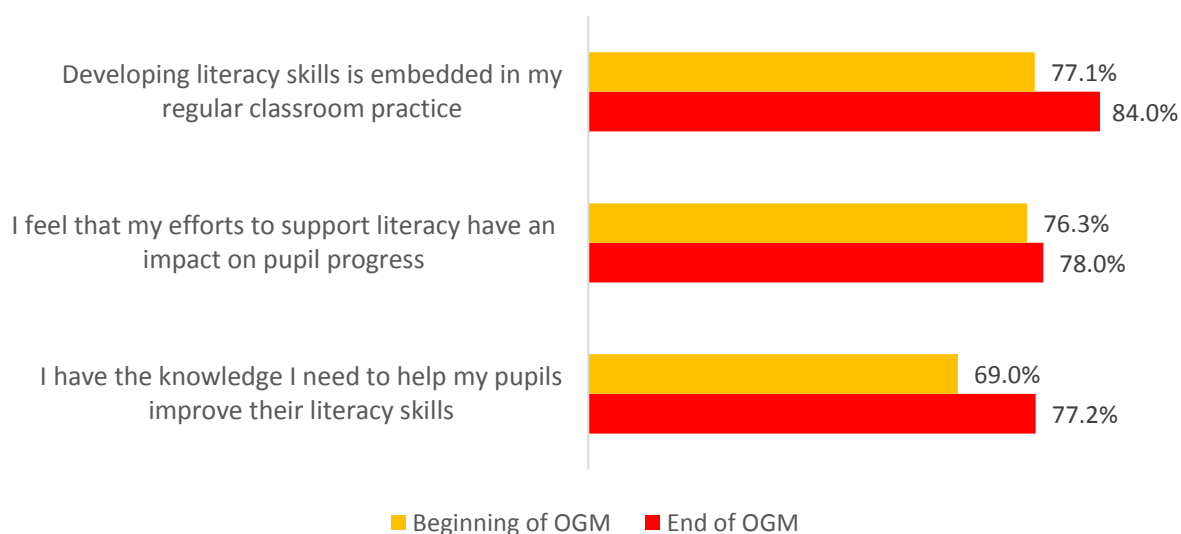
Teachers' perceptions of developing their pupils' literacy skills have improved over the course of the programme<sup>12 13</sup>. For example, more teachers at the end of OGM strongly agree or agree that developing literacy skills is embedded in their regular classroom practice (84.0% vs. 77.1%; see **Figure 4**).

<sup>12</sup> Beginning: M= 2.13, SD= .749; end: M= 1.98, SD= .676; t(424)= 1.954, p= .051, Cohen's d= .201

<sup>13</sup> A principal component analysis with direct oblimin rotation showed that the 3 attitudinal items loaded on 1 factor. Therefore, all 3 items were combined in a scale (Cronbach alpha .752): developing literacy is embedded in my regular classroom practice; I feel that my efforts to support literacy have an impact on pupil progress, and I have the knowledge I need to help my pupils improve their literacy skills.



**Figure 4: Teachers' perceptions of developing their pupils' literacy skills over time**



The reports from OGM consultants following their regular assessment visits corroborate the teachers' perceptions as measured by the surveys. The school visits in spring 2016 unanimously reported improvements in teachers' classroom practices, marking and literacy efforts. We only include a few examples in the report as there have been at least four consultant reports per school per year.

*"Plenty of evidence of teachers using a range of standard literacy strategies in lessons, especially consistency in promoting key words and phrases, support for structuring writing and collaborative discussion to rehearse ideas and concepts." (Phase II school, consultant report, March 2016)*

*"Pupils talked about the ways that some teachers helped them to improve their writing by sharing examples of 'What a good one looks like', giving them sentence starters, writing frames, helping them structure PEE paragraphs and giving clear instructions. They felt this happened often in History and in Science and they found it very helpful. They also commented that they had good support for note taking in Geography and History where they are encouraged to use graphic organisers and mind maps etc." (Phase I school, consultant report, April 2016)*

*"In the majority of classrooms there were excellent learning displays to support vocabulary development and to exemplify model answers." (Phase I school, consultant report, April 2016)*

*"An English lesson for Year 7 was observed in the library which involved the use of a differentiated spelling programme which is also used across Key Stage 3. Graded spellings were tested for different abilities through the use of colour coded books." (Phase II school, consultant report, May 2016)*

*"Each new piece of work within each topic was introduced with a list of keywords ('armistice', 'treaty', 'blockage' for example); and the tasks ranged from taking brief notes in simple or compound sentences, to more sustained and developed written responses, offering more nuanced answers in a slightly more sophisticated written style." (Phase II school, consultant report, April 2016)*

*"- Support for students in structuring longer answers at KS4 in PE and developing the use of subject specific vocabulary in ICT and Computing."*

- Embedding use of terminology in Health and Social Care and developing written work to include explanations of how data are used in Science.
- In History, using more specialist vocabulary and key terms (with particular attention paid at the drafting stage).
- In Business and Economics, using active reading strategies to provide students with material to use in their writing; redrafting and reflecting to ensure that written work is improved; supporting students with structuring their work.
- Sociology: active reading to extract information to support written work; structuring work.
- Science: being able to build explanations; using conjunctions; colour coding to highlight different components of an analytical sequence.
- Design and Technology: Sequencing; supporting with planning for the 'making' question." (Phase I school, consultant report, April 2016)

Likewise, in interviews teachers and literacy leaders also describe at length the numerous strategies inspired by OGM CPD and resources that they have started to use in class, and the progress they have noticed thanks to the OGM training and guidance that teachers receive.

*"Other things, we've been promoting key words, key vocabulary, um... Starting to correct spelling a lot more. What else?... I think just making a lot more effort in our... basically we've banished the writing frame, so we're having to be a lot more inventive about what we're doing. (...) because I think the kids are getting really bored with the way we're teaching art studies because if we do it the same way from Year 7 to Year 13 and they're just churning it out... So it's good for them to kind of think on their feet. You know, even just pushing annotations, making sure they write an evaluation. All of those things that have just slipped off the edge of our curriculum, maybe just because we weren't confident enough to do them properly." (Art teacher, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*"I've tried to do a lot more of the high-five strategy which [the literacy coordinator] put into place last year. Which has actually been really good, and particularly with my Year 10, working towards assessments, they have to do sources from the real world, so that's been really useful for that. All my classes have glossaries where they write definitions and things. Um... with writing, I tried the literacy coordinator's... in English they use the ice-cream cone paragraph, so I tried to use that. But I found it didn't really work in History, so we started doing like a burger paragraph, and we spent quite a lot of time working on how to structure an answer." (History teacher, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*"[The Science subject lead], it's had a massive impact on her teaching. (...) As a result of the training, she decided that every lesson, they'd read something. So rather than all being teacher-led – PowerPoint, Q&A – which she's very good at, but which has some problems when it comes to the dynamic and making sure that all the students are reached, she's decided that now she would give the students some information about what the lesson was going to be about, no more than an A4 sheet. But she's said that's transformed their learning. That they've made much better progress, and they're much more able to engage in the written responses at test, as a result of having accessed the knowledge by reading." (Deputy Headteacher, Phase I school, April 2016)*

There is therefore a wealth of evidence, from the surveys to the consultant reports and various teacher testimonies, to suggest that classroom practices have indeed improved when it comes to the teaching of literacy. Plenty of practitioners acknowledge in interviews that there is more

they would like to do and that they need more time to implement the vast number of strategies that they have acquired from the OGM CPD, but the change in teaching approaches is already recognised by the teachers themselves, their managers and the consultants.

### Better practices in English as well

The examples above demonstrate that OGM has successfully engaged teachers from a variety of backgrounds and departments, including those where literacy is not traditionally considered a priority (such as Science or D&T). This is not to suggest that English teachers have been neglected by the programme, or that they have not also gained in skills to impact on classroom practices. Admittedly, fewer English teachers took part in the programme, mainly because they already promote and teach literacy as part of the regular curriculum, and OGM is not designed as a specialist English-teaching programme. There is however some evidence that the English teachers who were involved in OGM benefited as much as their colleagues, if for slightly different reasons.

*“Because you get into a habit, particularly within our subject, where we have certain stock ways of teaching reading and approaches to reading, and it's coming out of that comfort zone a little bit and looking at those... particularly the before reading tasks and teaching it a lot more explicitly. (...) By breaking it down, the students are much more confident with the text. And again, for me, it's remembering that breaking it down makes it easier and gives them the opportunity to talk about what they've read before they carry on. So it's reminded me of approaching reading for all levels of ability and developing their confidence in understanding as well.” (Head of KS3 English, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*“There was much greater range too in the type of writing that the teacher was asking for in the English lessons – sometimes the student was required to respond to straightforward ‘comprehension’ questions and at other times write in a narrative form. It appeared from the work that the student felt stimulated and motivated by this.” (Phase II school, consultant report, April 2016)*

### Marking for literacy

Marking for literacy has been a key aspect of improving the promotion and teaching of literacy for students, and very much a focus for several schools and OGM consultants. Firstly, because marking books is one of the main channels of communication between teachers and students, where students can receive written feedback that they must address; secondly, because marking can very easily and obviously address writing efforts, therefore directly relating to literacy in any subject; finally, marking is a convenient focus point for consultants and school leadership because it leaves a trace which can then be reviewed and commented on.

As a result, evidence of marking for literacy comes up repeatedly in consultant reports and it is one of the main sources of evidence for improved practices, or areas needing further efforts:

*“His English book showed that his teachers were attempting to develop his skills in a logical and methodical way. The marking noted the progress he was making (‘Lots of details here, well done!’ ‘Great, you’re using capital letters at the start of each sentence and full stops at the end. Well done!’) and set achievable, realistic goals to mark further progress.” (Phase II school, consultant report, April 2016)*

*“Chemistry: The marking did at times focus on matters of spelling – often of the names of chemicals – and interestingly, the teacher encouraged students to use vocabulary appropriate to the idiom of the subject.” (Phase II school, consultant report, April 2016)*

*“Other Inset has supported the development of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, targeted/ time-related) ways of marking and of strong, yet time-efficient methods for feedback, which are now evident across the curriculum in the sample seen.” (Phase II school, May 2016)*

*“With regard to marking, the group considered some research that had looked at the effectiveness of particular teacher comments, seeing that those comments that challenged learners to make additional steps in their learning were often the most successful.” (Phase II school, consultant report, November 2015)*

*“A new marking policy has been introduced along with reflection time for the students to consider their responses to the teachers’ comments. A new approach is being trialled – teachers provide written feedback; students then peer assess their work based on the teachers’ comments before responding to the teachers’ feedback. In this way there is a layer of teacher quality assurance built into the process (this technique has been called ‘triple effect marking’).” (Phase II school, consultant report, June 2016)*

An Assistant Headteacher points out that in her opinion, impact on marking will be one of the legacies of the OGM programme in her school:

*“And probably, I think it's had a lasting impact on marking. So people aren't only marking for content, they're also marking for skills.” (Assistant Headteacher, Phase II school, May 2016)*

### Case study example

Below is an example taken from a Phase I school where a case study was conducted in February 2016.

The most visible and satisfying outcome of the OGM programme at [the school] is also the most recent: the three Heads of department who took part in the programme developed a marking scheme for literacy which was just finished and rolled out through the school at the beginning of February 2016. This was as a direct result of the visit from the OGM consultant in December 2015 who suggested that marking on spelling, grammar or punctuation would be more effective if it was the same across all subjects, to facilitate the students' review and correction work. Following this suggestion, the three Heads of department worked together and created the framework. This was brought up by every interviewee in relation to OGM.

*“[the OGM consultant], when he came, he did a book review and he produced a report, it was useful, there were points of that, where we thought we can do something on that. Not everything, obviously, but some of it. One of it was a marking code. So we sat down with other departments and talked about how people mark (organised by all us three Heads, and Head of sixth form). And then we moved to each department, and we produced a marking code. So this is standardised across the school.” (Head of English)*

*“I know we have a marking scheme now. Like sp for spelling, // for paragraph, you know we've got a marking scheme we're just rolling out, a universal... so that's a new initiative.” (intervention HLTA)*

*“Following [the OGM consultant]’s visit in December, we harmonised our literacy marking system. So, we used to just highlight words that were wrong, but now, we tell the students if it’s spelling or grammar, etc. We also have a range of signs for marking, like a circle or underline, which are the same across all departments for literacy.” (Head of Geography)*

*“And... really what we’ve got out of it is that we’ve got a whole school... what do you call it? Agreement on how to mark for literacy. That would be the one concrete thing that has come out of it. There’ll be other things as well, but if you want, as the Head, getting something out of it’s quite important isn’t it? And these people have done that.” (Headteacher)*

## POSITIVE WHOLE SCHOOL OUTCOMES: LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Besides the direct outcomes for teachers and their classroom practices for literacy, OGM has also generated change for schools at the level of literacy leaders and senior management when it comes to literacy strategies and whole school approaches.

### Teachers are better supported in literacy in their school

Teachers feel more supported in teaching literacy after the two-year programme. According to the survey, more teachers at the end of the programme feel that they get helpful literacy CPD and support (78.5% vs. 47.8%) and that they get all the support they need from their colleagues to help support children's literacy skills (75.3% vs. 44.9%)<sup>14</sup>. On the other hand, the percentage of teachers who feel that other staff could benefit from literacy support has not changed significantly over the course of the programme (pre 61.9%; post 69.8%)<sup>15</sup>.

### Inset days and training

Support for teachers came not only from the OGM CPD sessions and the OGM consultant. Based on case study findings through interviews, the consultant reports and the half-termly tracker reports sent by the school to the programme team, it appears that the OGM subject leaders in participating schools have done an enormous amount of work to disseminate among their departments, and further through the school, their learning from the CPD, the OGM resources, and feedback and advice from the consultant. Some of the literacy leaders have also been particularly active in seeking information and expertise from OGM and from other available sources of research and resources, to share findings with their colleagues across the whole school.

*"Our literacy team (consisting of members of Science, Maths, English, Sociology and Government & Politics, History and Geography) led a whole school literacy Inset session last week. We set up six stations of strategies developed through OGM that staff worked their way around. The strategies were informed by an audit of literacy issues arising from recent Year 11 mock exams. Feedback so far shows that 91% of staff who attended plan to use some of the strategies in their teaching. 73% have said that they have a better understanding of how literacy skills can be developed in their subject areas after attending the session." (Phase 1 school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)*

*"At the start of term 3 we shared the reading priorities at a whole staff meeting. During this meeting staff were given a range of strategies to look at for reading, focusing in particular on the BDA (Before During After) strategies. In faculty groups they picked a couple of methods each to try over a five-week period. Across the five weeks strong examples that had been seen by the literacy lead and subject literacy leads were shared during staff briefings and in the staff newsletter. At the end of the five weeks, staff came together in mixed groups to share their ideas. A wide range of strategies were adapted and used with strong outcomes. (...) The favourites seemed to be; the KWL, establishing meaning of key vocabulary 'before', during strategies to analyse*

<sup>14</sup> Getting helpful CPD: beginning: Mdn= 3, end: Mdn= 2; Mann-Whitney U(423)= 12545.000, z= -6.987, p< .001, r= -.340; getting all the support they need: beginning: Mdn= 3, end: Mdn= 2; Mann-Whitney U(424)= 13597.500, z= -6.114, p< .001, r= -.267

<sup>15</sup> p= .252



*text, and after strategies to clarify key ideas using AFL strategies.” (Phase II school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)*

Inset days also took place in three of the case study schools, although they were not directly recorded in tracker reports. The work of the Head of Science on literacy and her participation in an Inset day for her colleagues on literacy in a non-English subject has already been mentioned above.

*“Well, in terms of what [our literacy coordinator] has been doing, (...) in terms of pushing literacy, she's just been absolutely amazing. She's sent emails, she's done Inset days, she's driven it quite hard.” (Art teacher, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*“The subject leads did the Inset, I didn't lead it at all. I bookended it for them, and it was very very successful. [The Science subject lead] ran a Science lesson with the sort of reading that the youngsters would need to engage with, and skimming and scanning. (...) [The Head of RE] gave them the sort of reading they might encounter in History, a newspaper article. Then [the Head of KS3 English] did some BDA (before, during and after reading) stuff. How you might get kids into a text in a fun way, with visual stimulus.” (Deputy Headteacher, Phase II school, April 2016)*

### Peer coaching

Outside of specifically allocated training and Inset days, the OGM subject leaders and the literacy leaders do most of their work in coaching colleagues in literacy. This is directly encouraged by the OGM programme, which notably provided CPD sessions for literacy leaders on how to coach colleagues in the second year of the programme. The OGM consultants also provided advice and guidance for literacy leaders on how to provide useful and targeted information to colleagues in a way that is convenient for them.

*“I pass on [the OGM and NLT resources] directly to other departments, or I've put them up in the staff room so people can just pick them up, rather than just emailing everyone all the time. But I have made it clear that there are resources available. And I think that'll be something I'll push again in September. Because I think at the moment everyone's focusing on their exams, and I think you have to be careful... [the consultant] has used the concept of drip-feeding things, because if it's too much overload, they just shut off.” (Literacy coordinator, Phase II school, May 2016)*

*“I've just been trying to feed in just a couple of initiatives to my department, I don't want to overload them, so I haven't used any others. I've used that one, and also I've tried the high-five strategy that [the literacy coordinator] brought in during the last academic year. So we've done these two. (...) I've tried to get them involved as well, because obviously literacy is a school-wide initiative. So trying to get them interested in it as well.” (Head of KS3 MFL, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*“Mentoring of Heads of department, suggesting strategies and helping with planning. Strategies shared in faculty bulletin. Arranged for literacy support from literacy coordinator to plan for assessments to support students with weak literacy.” (Phase I school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)*

*“My plan for next year is to disseminate much more widely, get other departments on board, I'm thinking of co-coaching. So if RE wanted to lead, she could co-coach throughout humanities.” (Deputy Headteacher, Phase II school, April 2016)*

### Case study example

In one of the case study schools (Phase II school, visited in March 2016), the visit revealed that the literacy coordinator was using the OGM resources particularly effectively to provide support and guidance to her colleagues on literacy. She seemed to perceive her role as an integral part of the school's teaching and learning approach, a good example of how the OGM cascading effect is intended to work.

The plan for literacy at [the school] is ambitious, but the literacy coordinator has clear priorities. The current focus is writing, and especially for teachers to model writing in class. This is partly dictated by the Ofsted inspection which highlighted a need to improve pupils' writing.

Part of the strategic plan for the development of literacy involves the literacy coordinator mentoring, supporting and training her colleagues. She has embraced that aspect of her role and keeps track of what the various OGM subject leaders are doing. She seems to strive to lead by example and provide helpful support to colleagues.

*"I've shown it to colleagues, oh, look at this student's writing, see how much it has improved, here's what I have done and what you can do to support your students' writing. I found it very powerful! So I've found that a quite helpful process."* (Literacy coordinator)

*"In terms of my two subject B leaders, I'm trying to empower my KS3 teachers in Science. I realise, I'd initially gone for KS4 because she's very proactive, but then I thought no, this is KS3. So she attended the CPD and I'm going to be working with her, because at the moment, it's me developing the modelling resources and things, and I need her to do some."* (Literacy coordinator)

*"I did a one-to-one coaching session with [the DT teacher], because I had to shift her, because they're so keen to do the right thing, they're pushing the booklets, they've got the marking encoded, and they thought they'd just tick literacy, but then their evaluations were just three questions, and they were getting sporadic sentences. So I worked with her individually, we've gone through the teaching sequence, and she says she feels so much more confident, she's developed an exemplar text and is trialling that and is hoping to feed that into the rest of DT."* (Literacy coordinator)



## Evidence of strong strategic vision for literacy

The OGM programme is original and unique in that it supports both teachers delivering literacy to students, and literacy leaders providing support to teachers and delivering a school's literacy strategy. This two-pronged approach is crucial to the programme because it guarantees first the efficacy of improved teacher practice, because they are supported by literacy leaders, and secondly the sustainability of changes taking place in schools. OGM intends to leave behind a legacy of better literacy teaching strategies, but also to build up the capacity of literacy leaders to think strategically and implement effective literacy policies.

This was achieved notably with CPD days dedicated to upskilling literacy leaders on mentoring and coaching, and strategic thinking. The OGM consultants also played a vital role in encouraging literacy leaders and school management to plan their literacy efforts effectively.

*"The consultant meetings are really helping in developing a strategic plan for how to move literacy forward in school. They are also really valuable in terms of having someone to bounce ideas off and talk through plans." (Phase I school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)*

*"The whole school review carried out by our consultant in November was helpful in order to identify strengths and to reassess priorities. Her report has informed our literacy development plan. For example, findings evidenced the 'Universal Presentation slide' as a useful initiative. In order to help address the need to build in time for students to respond to feedback, an immediate action was to introduce a 'Universal DIRT slide' to help structure this. Learning walks and work scrutiny have evidenced more consistent use of 'PUSH' and the Universal slide across departments to improve the accuracy and presentation of students' work. This was also recognised positively in our last monitoring inspection visit by Ofsted." (Phase II school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)*

"Strategic vision" is admittedly a term that can encompass a number of aspects. In order to more clearly translate the positive changes reported in school reports, case studies and consultant reports, we have broken it down into sub-sections.

## More concerted efforts towards promotion of literacy

It would be completely incorrect to suggest that participating schools had no literacy strategies before OGM. On the contrary, most of them had a vision for literacy, and the schools who had the most positive experiences with the programmes were those who had decided to enrol because OGM fitted in with their own literacy objectives.

However, case studies reveal that OGM has made the schools' literacy efforts more focused, targeted, and much better coordinated among teachers.

*"Obviously in the staff body (...) everybody has to teach literacy, everybody knows and understands that it's going to help the kids in the long run, particularly around access, which is a big issue. But I think what [the literacy coordinator] has done is just kind of bring people together really. So I think the staff team were kind of already aware of the benefits and were trying to do it, but it was probably happening in lots of different pods... So the English department were doing this, the Science department were doing that... And I think what [the literacy coordinator] has done is 'Why don't we come together and we'll try out these strategies', and make it consistent so that the*

*experience has been the same for kids as they've gone around. So whether it's a Maths lesson or a Science lesson, the same literacy objectives have been applied and the same literacy strategies have been applied. (Assistant Headteacher, Phase I school, February 2016)*

In some schools, the literacy coordinator together with the OGM subject leaders have become a "literacy leading team" taking charge of disseminating best practices through departments, and providing skills training as well as encouragement and support to their colleagues.

*"There has been a definite shift with subject leads involved in the programme who have been vital in driving change by taking part in some action research, trialling different approaches from the CPD training and disseminating good practice across their teams." (Phase I school, consultant report, April 2016)*

Consultant reports show evidence of how effective literacy strategies were being rolled out across the school, although admittedly, this did not go without challenges and seemed to require time and determination on behalf of the literacy team.

*"Whole school literacy strategies have been embedded into assessments – for example in History the writing process was seen from brainstorm → skills audit → question-based homework → extended writing response → self-assessment." (Phase I school, consultant report, April 2016)*

*"In RE, whilst strategies and resources developed have been shared with the department and are being utilised by many, peer coaching as an opportunity for support and reflection is something we will look at developing as part of our half-day consultancy." (Phase II school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)*

*"Geography: Peer coaching is in its initial stages and this is something the subject leader will look at developing as part of our half-day consultancy scheduled for 10th March with our consultant." (Phase II school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)*

*"Strongly structured Inset provided by the leadership team, in response to the foci provided by the National Literacy Trust, OGM consultancy visits and the Ofsted school report, has supported the development of the literacy initiative and has enabled real progress to be achieved." (Phase II school, consultant report, May 2016)*

*"The school is moving forwards in a planned and productive way, putting the main focus on ways of building effective teaching strategies into lessons at KS3." (Phase II school, consultant report, April 2016)*

It should be noted as well, that based on case studies, the schools with the most positive and effective experiences of OGM are the ones where senior management is directly involved in the project and providing clear support to the literacy leaders, not only in words, but also in allocating time and budget. This is not the case in every school, but three of the case study schools demonstrate particularly strong senior management participation. Below are a few examples taken from interviews.

*"So, [the literacy consultant] works really closely with R. who's the Head of faculty, R. sits on the Head of faculty group which has every Head of faculty on it and disseminates information that way. The literacy coordinator has been invited to the leadership team and she's done some work with us there." (Assistant Headteacher, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*"When I think about what could have gone better, I think that sort of things, meeting with the Head this time of year, thinking ok what do we want to do come September, is a better way to go about it. Last year I sent various emails but there wasn't the level of interest that there is now. So OGM's also helped raising awareness among the senior staff." (Literacy coordinator, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*"Because now they have [the literacy coordinator] as Head of literacy, so now she's in charge of that bit. So I think they've given her more power and they're putting more emphasis on it, yeah. So it's good." (Head of KS3 MFL, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*"One of the other things I've been working on is to revise our teaching and learning policy. And within that, literacy is going to be very central." (Deputy Headteacher, Phase II school, April 2016)*

*"[Senior management] has been duly diligent in setting up regular dates for the monitoring of student workbooks, with a very specific analysis of the feedback within departments and by individual teachers. Furthermore, some departments are completing their own checks to ensure the highest possible standards in assessment for learning linked to literacy. Subject leaders are checking random books to ensure that the departmental approach is being developed. Systematic and structured analysis of student outcomes and teacher feedback is an essential component of good practice, but the school also values quality oral feedback as effective in developing student responses." (Phase II school, consultant report, May 2016)*

### Case study example

One of the Phase II schools (visited in April 2016) demonstrated a particularly strong example of OGM subject leaders working together to disseminate OGM learning throughout the school and promoting effective literacy strategies across their departments.

Besides the impact which the OGM CPD sessions have had on the subject leads, they have also noticed that they are now more likely to think of how their colleagues in non-traditional literacy subjects can teach literacy, and what role they can play in supporting them. (...) They also appear to be working more effectively as a team following their involvement in the programme.

*"There was a stage where the three of us [subject leads] went and observed each other with a particular reading focus. So we saw each other utilising the practice that we picked up in the training, and then gave each other feedback on trialling what worked and what didn't work really. So we could get it down to the practices that would be best to disseminate to the rest of the school." (Head of KS3 English)*

*"The best bit, I think, was the encouragement of developments between the other representatives (of the school) and myself. (...) Actually, with us learning a lot from each other and sharing resources we'd develop and creating joint resources, that's been really really beneficial." (Head of RE)*

*"So what we sort of focus on is developing and focusing our ability to use literacy in our lessons, and then sending that into CPD and Inset. [So] we can start trickling down ideas and opening it up to teachers who might need support for literacy. They can come to us and we can share our own skills."*

*And we can also upgrade our own skills in teaching literacy. I guess that's our focus. It's how we can empower teachers.” (Head of RE)*

### Better planning for more sustainable change

Planning is of course a key aspect of the literacy strategic vision for the schools. And there has been a lot of planning between subject leads and literacy coordinators, with senior management, and with the consultants. Evidence of plans for the following years and beyond are crucial to assess the success of OGM as a programme, as it demonstrates its potential for sustainability and a longer-term impact, notably on students. This is particularly important as most interviewees recognise that achieving in-depth change takes time, and that outcomes for students are still emerging at the time of the evaluation. A Deputy Headteacher in a Phase II school described the importance of sustainability particularly well:

*“The thing that keeps me awake at night, like all senior leaders, is avoiding episodic change. You’ve got your big Inset, everybody goes away, and they’re morally committed to doing what you want to do, but then... everyone goes back to work and it just doesn’t happen.” (Deputy Headteacher, Phase II school, April 2016)*

In this respect, the OGM approach of three CPD days for subject leaders, an additional three for literacy coordinators, and consultant support over a year (or two for Phase I schools) is particularly appreciated:

*“It’s a programme of training, it’s not a one-off Inset. And there’s benefits to it being a programme, because one-off Inset days... everyone knows a one-off Inset doesn’t change practice. You go away for a day, it costs you £400 + expenses, and then they come back, no one knows about it, and then it just doesn’t change practice.” (Deputy Headteacher, Phase II school, April 2016)*

Evidence of planning beyond the scope of the programme can be found in consultant reports, notably in the final reviews, as well as in the interviews conducted for the case studies:

*“The focus in the action plan for the next year is for the extended use of wider reading texts to support the learning in the classroom across all subjects and the continuation of AR in tutor time and English lessons.” (Phase I school, consultant report, May 2016)*

*“Health and Social Care: to continue using the approaches in the new specification – giving time to the exploration of the terminology in Year 10; use of visuals and colour coding; continuing to ensure that terminology is contextualised.” (Phase I school, consultant report, April 2016)*

*“The literacy lead has been a driving force at [the school] and has ensured that she has left a well-embedded literacy strategy as she moves on to her next position in Northamptonshire. This includes a very clear and user friendly Handy Guide to SPaG for all staff and training for all departments is taking place before she leaves.” (Phase I school, consultant report, May 2016)*

*“From September there will be calendared meetings bringing together those with responsibilities for literacy in the EBac departments, along with the literacy coordinator, the second in English and the member of the Senior Leadership Team with oversight of literacy. Literacy marking policy has been reviewed, revised and is being relaunched. Literacy is a frequent agenda item on department and SLT meetings. The literacy coordinator has collected all the long-term plans from departments and is using them to identify possible opportunities for collaborative literacy work and also to*

*find areas where there might be some extended writing. This approach came out of the work scrutiny that was carried out and the consequent discussion of work that followed it.” (Phase II school, consultant report, June 2016)*

*“We have one goal, and that's quite clearly stated: it's that all of our students should reach their chronological age in reading by the end of Year 9. That's not the case yet, so we've got quite a lot of catch up to do with that. One of the other key goals, everybody essentially needs to have a good pass in English. We're quite a way from that. (...) So, we're typically sitting at about 60% there, so we've got another 40% to go. But... you know, only three or four years ago, we were just around the 50/50 mark, so that's an improvement.” (Headteacher, Phase I school, January 2016)*

*“I think for us carrying it forward it's going to be working with [the subject leads], and other people to try and disseminate and move it forward. (...) You want them to go 'Right, you've got all this information, now could you run for other middle leaders some more training sessions'. I think we're probably going to do that, actually, we'll probably ask them to share their learning with other teachers, but that's going to be an independent thing for us to do. (...) And I think we're going to do a lot more work next year to raise the profile of literacy. There's different plans in place for potentially having specific groups of people working on certain areas, so literacy might be one of them.” (Assistant Headteacher, Phase II school, May 2016)*

### Case study example

The Deputy Headteacher of the school is a former English teacher and he is currently acting as literacy coordinator for the school. Throughout the visit, he demonstrated a clear and strong vision for literacy at the school and how the OGM programme fits in with the school's journey to improved literacy practices and literacy outcomes.

*“I want to do a literacy audit this term, and I've constructed it already, and I've decided to keep that for Years 7 and 8, with the idea that the earlier work on literacy there is, the better the effect. But I don't want it to become... oh we've done this, the kids know this from Year 7. I want to keep revisiting and have that good practice consistent whenever the youngsters are engaging with text.” (Deputy Headteacher)*

The programme has been the opportunity for the Deputy Headteacher and the team of OGM subject leaders to spend a lot of time and energy planning and preparing for the following years. At the moment, three subject leaders are taking part in OGM. They are jointly attending the CPD sessions and working with the OGM consultant to an extent, while the Deputy Headteacher is attending specific literacy leader training and working more closely with the consultant. In following years, this will lead to various efforts to spread literacy improvement across the school:

*“So there's a plan in place. My effort this term is really to set us up for September, so that literacy is front and centre in September in all classroom practice. So that's where we are!” (Deputy Headteacher)*

*“What I need to do is be able to get [the Science subject lead] in a position where she's really secure with what she's doing on a literacy focus, and then able to practise coaching as well. We can do that, but again, that's my phase 2.” (Deputy Headteacher)*

*“I think it will take a few years for everybody to really put changes in place. And hopefully, it won't be just literacy... It's not 'Look, I'm doing my literacy flag here'! I think it should be a part of what we do every single day. I think that's how I would expect lessons to be for literacy.” (Head of RE)*



### The ability and honesty to identify needs for improvement

In part, strategic planning also means the ability and honesty for schools and literacy leaders to recognise challenges and areas for improvement in order to address them. Some very encouraging evidence of this can be found in the school half-termly trackers and in the consultant reports, which show there is a truly reflective process within schools to bring about effective change and a positive impact on students.

*“Difficulties working with creative arts and understanding of how and where literacy is relevant. Lacking specialist subject knowledge to develop understanding of literacy in this area.” (Phase I school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)*

*Consultant and literacy coordinator conducted a mini-audit before Christmas talking to students and staff about their views on literacy. Lesson observations were done and a report was written. It was established that there are still inconsistencies in marking and the students’ ability to write as subject specialists. The demands set by the teachers were also shown to be varied depending on subject. Students were, however, described as eloquent and mature. We are continuing our whole school approach to sort out marking and feedback by book samples and moderating work produced by students.” (Phase I school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)*

*“It was noticed that, in spite of the considerable efforts of the school to bring about uniformity in the use of ‘S.I.R’ marking, there was still inconsistency within and between departments. It was also noted that there appeared to be similar inconsistency in the level of literacy challenge between subjects and of expectations of the students too. For example, errors of punctuation, spelling and expression were routinely addressed in English, but less so in other subjects.” (Phase II school, consultant report, November 2015)*

## School provision for literacy

Literacy teaching does not only happen in the classroom. There are plenty of other opportunities in a school to engage students with reading, writing, speaking and listening. The OGM programme notably encouraged that through various channels: sharing resources with teachers and literacy coordinators about ways to engage students with literacy via the National Literacy Trust Network; the creation and dissemination of book lists; the organisation of writing competitions specific to Oxfordshire aimed at OGM pupils; and the organisation of literacy festivals at the end of the school years where students met with authors and literacy professionals in a university setting.

Based on the survey, more teachers at the end of the programme are aware of provision for literacy in their school. For example, more teachers at the end of the programme say that literacy is included in their school improvement plan as a top priority (38.0% vs. 20.7%) and fewer of them don't know (17.3% vs. 23.0%)<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, more teachers say that literacy is included in their department or faculty action plan as a top priority (18.0% vs. 12.9%) while fewer of them don't know (10.0% vs. 15.3%)<sup>17</sup>.

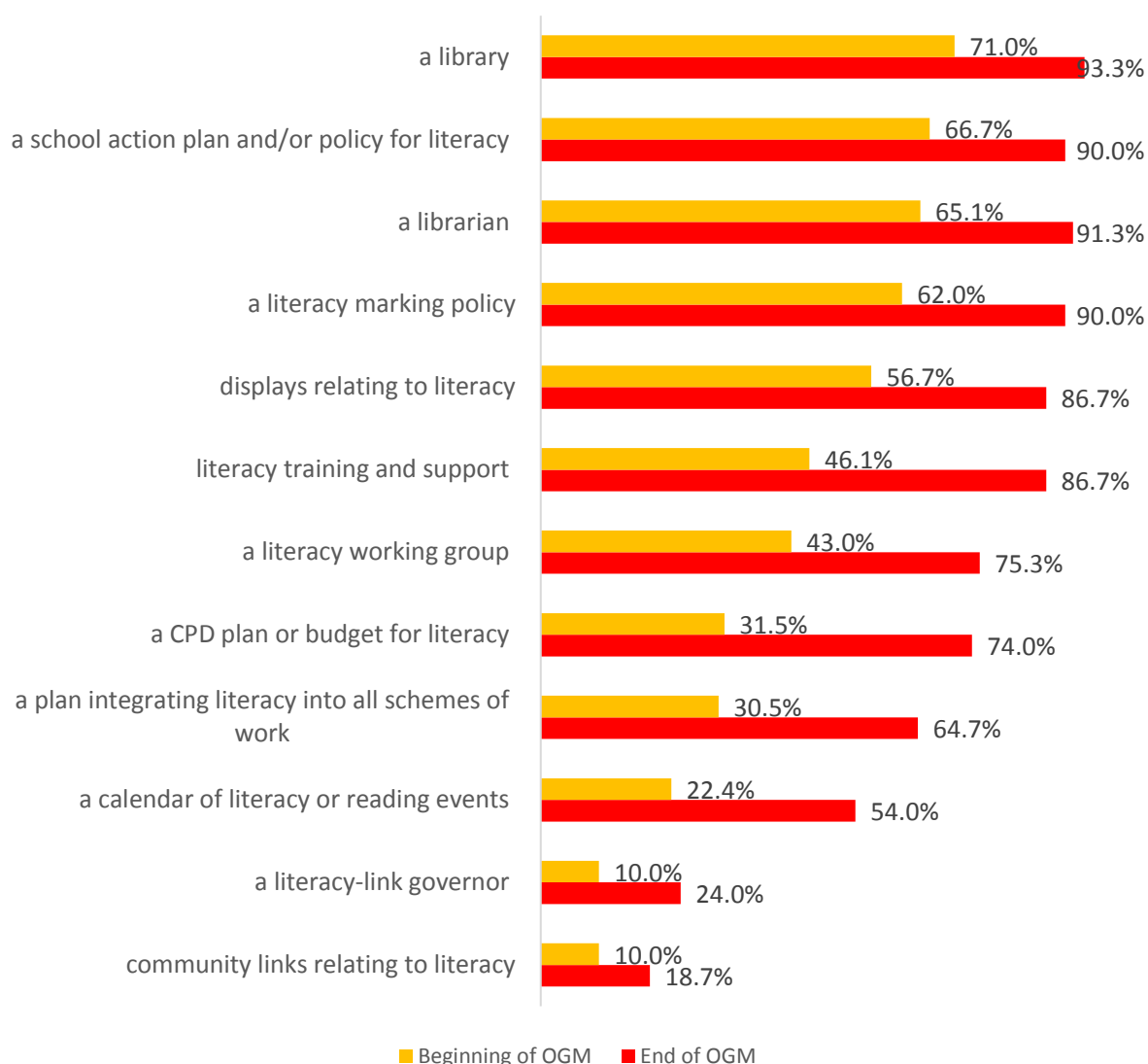
The surveys also show that more teachers are aware of particular efforts towards improving literacy in their school (see **Figure 3**)<sup>18</sup>. For example, more of them say their school has a literacy marking policy (90.0% vs. 62.0%), which is consistent with the findings from interviews and consultant reports mentioned above. Likewise, more teachers say that their school has a CPD plan or budget for literacy (74.0% vs. 31.5%) and a literacy working group (75.3% vs. 43.0%) this year.

<sup>16</sup>  $\chi^2(3, N=406)=15.678, p=.001$ ; Cramer's  $V=.197$

<sup>17</sup>  $\chi^2(3, N=405)=11.129, p=.011$ ; Cramer's  $V=.166$

<sup>18</sup> Marking policy:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=38.874, p<.001$ ; Phi=.287; calendar:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=46.457, p<.001$ ; Phi=.314; training:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=69.539, p<.001$ ; Phi=.384; plan:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=69.539, p<.001$ ; Phi=.384; library:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=29.768, p<.001$ ; Phi=.251; action plan:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=28.999, p<.001$ ; Phi=.248; displays:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=41.059, p<.001$ ; Phi=.295; CPD plan:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=74.729, p<.001$ ; Phi=.398; librarian:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=36.061, p<.001$ ; Phi=.277; working group:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=42.961, p<.001$ ; Phi=.302; governor:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=16.293, p<.001$ ; Phi=.186; community links:  $\chi^2(1, N=471)=6.957, p=.008$ ; Phi=.122;

**Figure 3: Levels of teacher awareness of literacy provision in their school over time**



There is ample evidence of whole school literacy provision as well in the half-termly trackers, consultant reports and case study reports. Teachers, as the survey demonstrates, have noticed the numerous efforts made by their school since joining OGM to promote literacy and can name various initiatives that they are implementing.

*“There's definitely a literacy buzz in this school. With various different things, from posters, highlighters to mark literacy words, the literacy coordinator sharing resources of what other people have been doing. There's obviously school literacy policies, like connectives, spelling, things like that, that I've been trying to bring into it [literacy in the Art department], so I guess yes, the English department have had an input into it and I'm sort of just reflecting from Inset days and things like that.” (Art teacher, Phase 1 school, February 2016)*

*“It's been positive! I think, er... initially as a school it'd be fair to say... we sort of do this initiative, and then this one, this one, this one... so we've sort of got too much, (...) because then we start them all up in September and then things start dropping off by Christmas. But I think we've really stuck with literacy. Every classroom has literacy posters in there, they've got a copy of the high-five hand, every department's*



*got their own high-five hand as well. The literacy toolkit has been put together. The students and teacher planners all have a literacy focus and different ideas on how to get a literacy activity into a lesson. I think it's good, I think even if teachers just use the one activity like I've done. Well, I've chosen two, I'm doing the high-five and the pictures as text. I think if you just stick to a couple of new things, it's quite easy to get them embedded and then you can just move on to other things. So I think other teachers have done that as well, and it's quite positive, I think, from a school point of view."* (Head of KS3 MFL, Phase I school, February 2016)

Efforts are particularly focused on reading and writing for pleasure, rather than speaking and listening. The festivals organised by the National Literacy Trust included some spoken word performances which were very successful among students based on anecdotal evidence gathered during and after the events. In schools, however, more is being done on reading and writing, and around the school library.

*"A general promotion of the importance of reading for pleasure across the school has improved through reading in tutor groups, new reading circles in the library as well as staff showing students that they read by putting a sign on their doors showing their current read."* (Phase I school, half-termly tracker, February 2016)

*"The school library is used for at least one hour a week as part of English lessons throughout Key Stage 3. The library has also been active in supporting and promoting the Readathon which has been rolled out as part of a charity initiative for all of Year 7 including reluctant readers. (...) Books are displayed and organised clearly according to genre, an approach that children find easy to follow to find books that they are interested in reading. Some said they were encouraged to try different books while others said they go to the areas they know. (...) The library is also used for several book clubs and the peer reading scheme, which involves older children reading with younger peers to act as positive reading role models and reading support champions. This has been very successful."* (Phase II school, consultant report, May 2016)

*"The recent, highly successful event for the Guinness World Records Book Day, the Carnegie shadowing events and the high numbers of pupils using the library in break and lunchtime demonstrate that many pupils are highly engaged with reading."* (Phase I school, consultant report, April 2016)

*"- Students being very much involved in creating book lists: The Hot List which was [the school's] own top 100 reading list which really engaged all the students in the school by having a real focus and prominence in assemblies, displays, pupils voting for and collating the list.*

*- The book club – where pupils came each week to discuss books they were reading with champions from the older years encouraging the younger pupils to attend - numbers had doubled.*

*- Author visits – in particular Terri Terry and Andy Mulligan had created a real buzz around reading with copies of Trash and Mind Games proving extremely popular.*

*- Book Buzz where all Year 7s received a free book and were encouraged to write reviews – all pupils had taken out a book prior to the receiving of their free one.*

*- [The school] has its own YouTube channel celebrating reading successes/ book recommendations/ assemblies"* (Phase I school, consultant report, April 2016)

*"The librarian would 'order any books that pupils requested' (according to students). (...) The library and the librarians have been and continue to be an outstanding resource for [the school] as acknowledged by the student panel. [The literacy*

*coordinator] works very hard with staff, students, local bodies and authors to promote reading for pleasure. There has been tangible increase. Reluctant readers are being catered for in the library.” (Phase I school, consultant report, May 2016)*

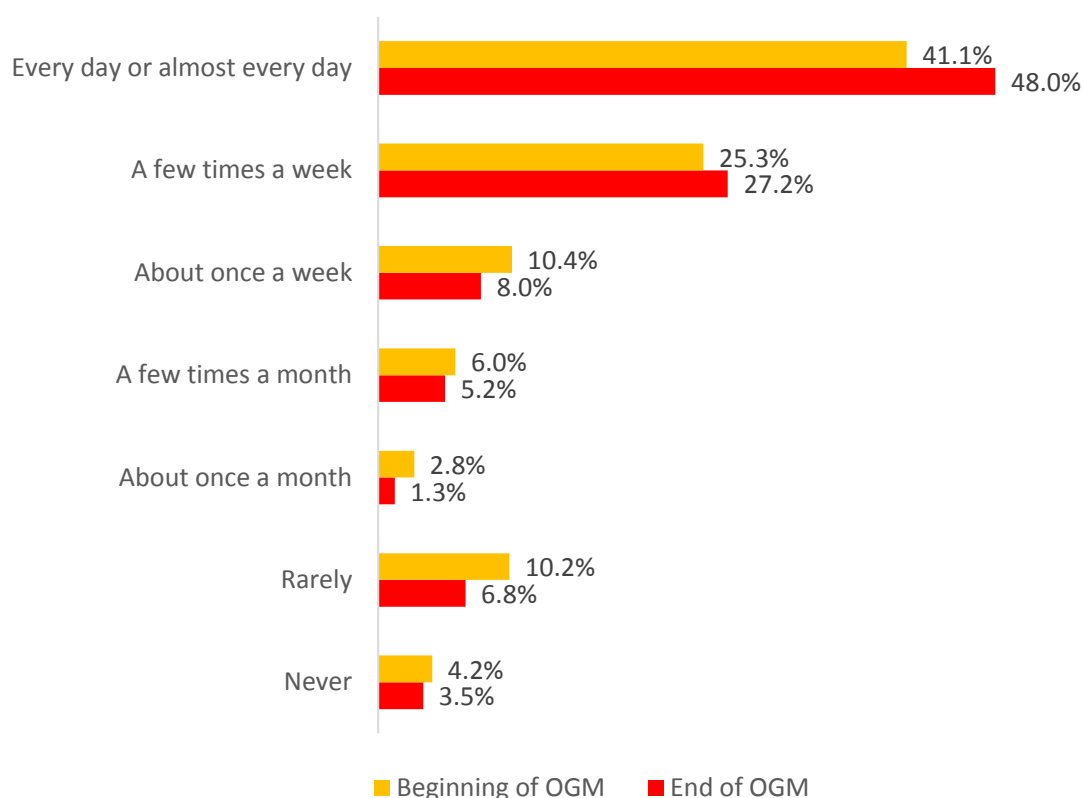
## EMERGING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR STUDENTS

The OGM programme aims to raise literacy levels of all pupils in participating schools via sustainable and effective system change at school level. The evaluation therefore seeks to measure whether change has been achieved for students in OGM schools. Based on findings from the survey, attainment data shared by schools, consultant reports and interviews with teachers about what changes they may have noticed, it appears that the programme has had a positive impact on students' literacy attitudes and skills.

### Attitudinal and behavioural change

Children read more frequently outside class at the end of OGM than at the beginning<sup>19</sup>. **Figure 4** outlines this difference over time in percentages and shows that there was a 16.8% increase in the number of children who read daily outside class over the course of the project, with 48.0% of pupils reading outside class daily at the end of the programme compared with 41.1% at the beginning. Similarly, while 14.4% said at the beginning of the programme that they rarely or never read outside class, only 10.3% say the same at the end of the programme.

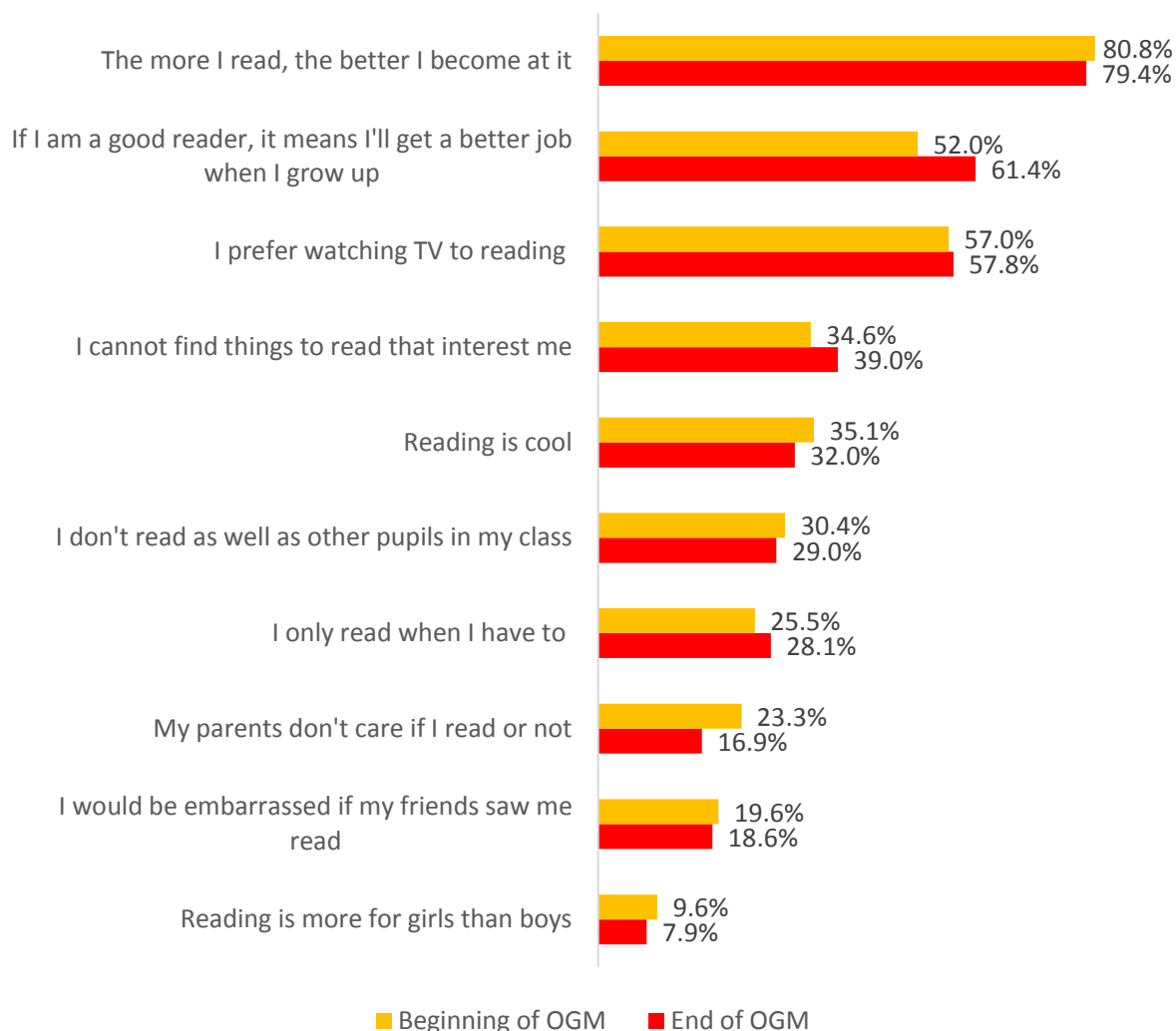
**Figure 4: Year 7 and Year 8 pupils' reading frequency in percentages at the beginning and end of OGM**



<sup>19</sup> Beginning: Mdn= 2; end: Mdn= 2; Mann-Whitney U(2,484)= 647326.500, z= -4.373, p< .001, r= -.088

Pupils' attitudes towards reading have also become more positive over the course of the programme<sup>20 21</sup>. **Figure 5** looks at the agreement with individual reading statements in percentages and shows that the items which best illustrate the improved attitudes include "if I am a good reader, I'll get a better job when I grow up" with an increase of 18.1% (61.4% vs. 52.0%) and "My parents don't care if I read or not" with a decrease of 27.5% (16.9% vs. 23.3%).

**Figure 5: Year 7 and Year 8 pupils' agreement with individual reading attitudinal statements in percentages at the beginning and end of OGM**

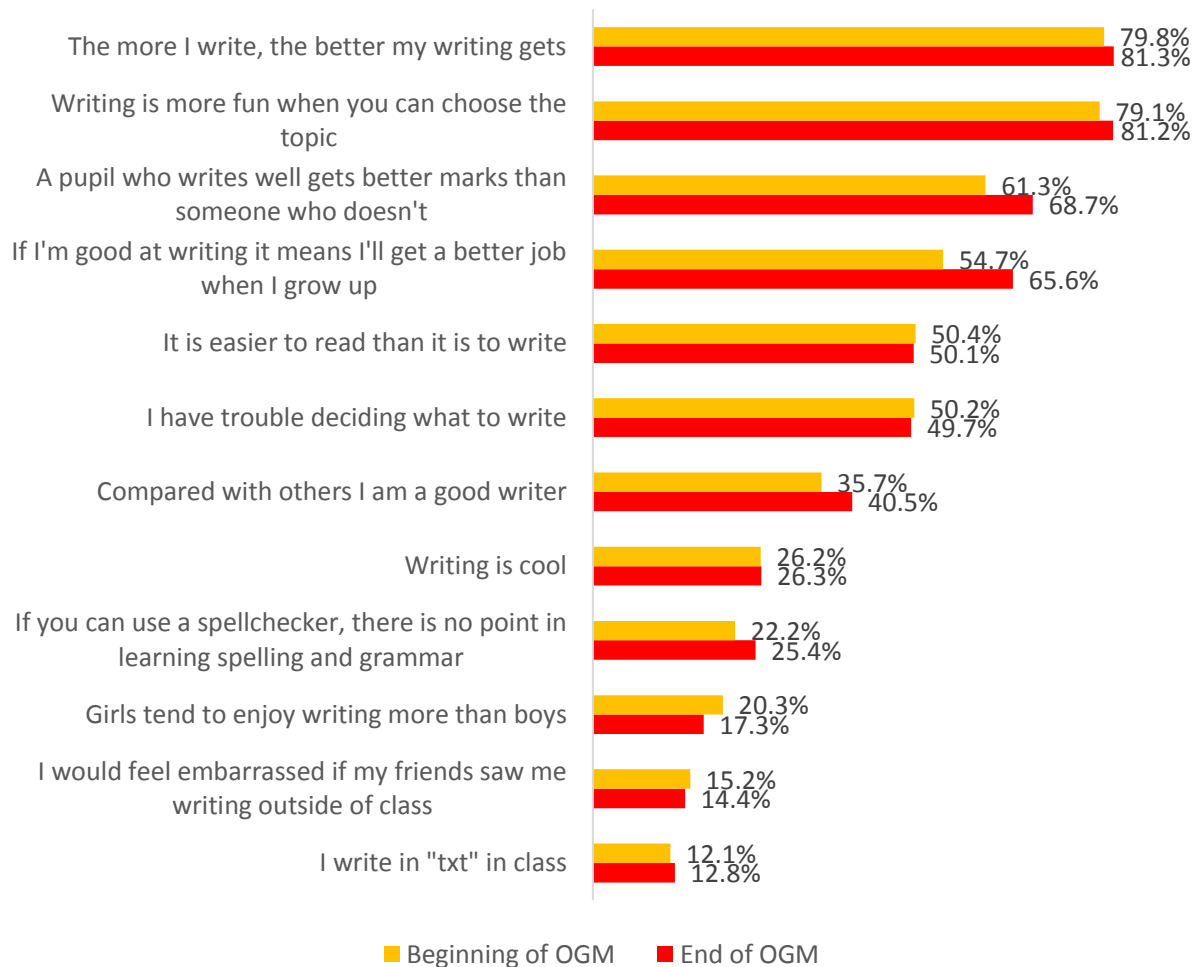


<sup>20</sup> The variances were significantly different; therefore, a Welch's t-test was conducted instead of independent samples t-test. Beginning: M= 2.83, SD= .857; end: M= 2.63, SD= .713; Welch F(1, 2208.351)= 39.124, p< .001, Cohen's d= .256

<sup>21</sup> A principal component analysis with direct oblimin rotation showed that the 10 attitudinal items loaded on 2 factors. However, combining all the statements into a scale resulted in the most acceptable Cronbach alpha (.805). Therefore the 10 attitudinal items were combined into a scale: the more I read, the better I become at it; reading is cool; if I'm a good reader, it means I'll get a better job when I grow up; I cannot find things to read that interest me – reverse scored, I don't read as well as other pupils in my class – reverse scored, I only read when I have to – reverse scored, I prefer watching TV to reading – reverse scored, reading is more for girls than for boys – reverse scored, my parents don't care whether or not I read – reverse scored, and I would be embarrassed if my friends saw me read – reverse scored

Attitudes towards writing have also improved over the course of the programme<sup>22 23</sup>. **Figure 6** looks at the agreement with individual writing attitudinal statements in percentages and shows that, for example, more pupils see the value of writing on their future, with more pupils at the end of the programme agreeing that if they are good writers they will get a better job in the future (65.6% vs. 54.7%). In addition, more pupils at the end of the programme agree that a pupil who writes well gets better marks (68.7% vs. 61.3%).

**Figure 6: Year 7 and Year 8 pupils' agreement with individual writing attitudinal statements in percentages at the beginning and end of OGM**

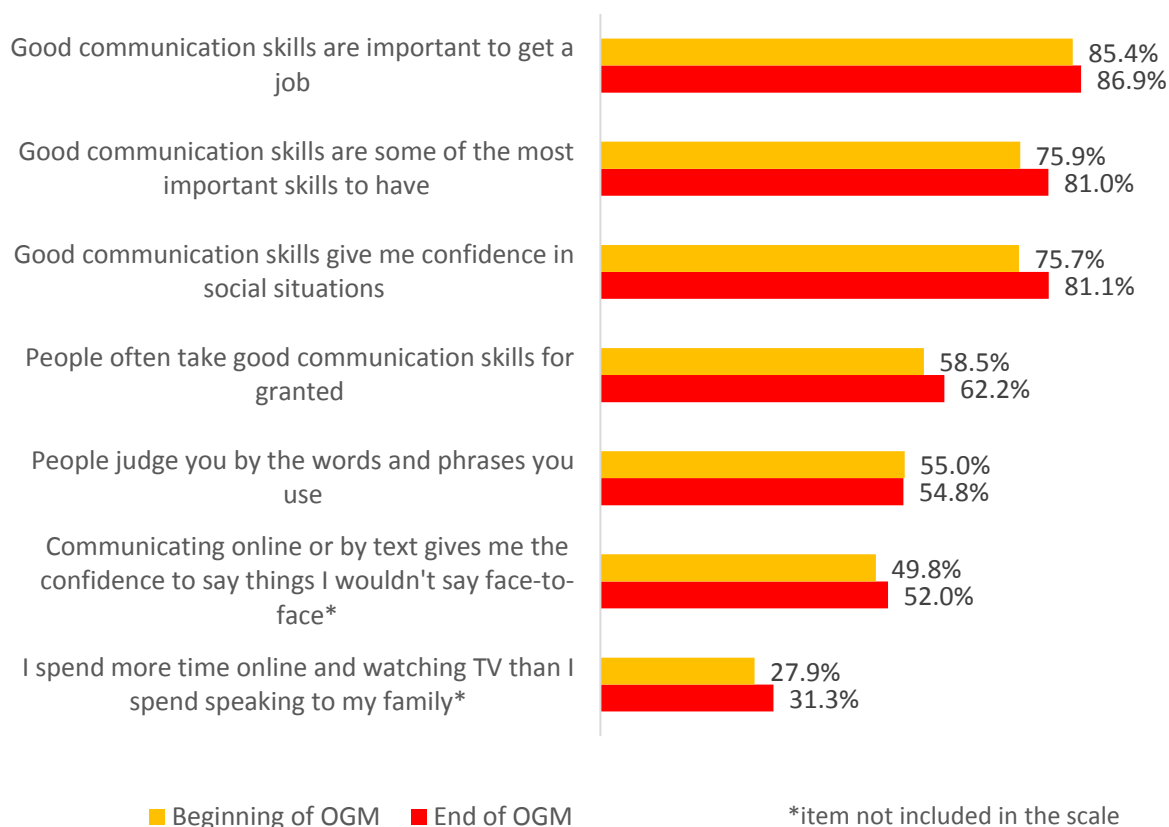


<sup>22</sup> The variances were significantly different; therefore, a Welch's t-test was conducted instead of independent samples t-test. Beginning: M= 2.81, SD= .737; end: M= 2.53, SD= .504; Welch F(1, 2323.021)= 118.756, p< .001, Cohen's d= .444

<sup>23</sup> A principal component analysis with direct oblimin rotation showed that the 12 attitudinal items loaded on 3 factors. However, combining all the items into a scale resulted in the most acceptable Cronbach alpha (.762). Therefore 12 attitudinal items were combined into a scale: compared with others, I am a good writer; a pupil who writes well gets better marks than someone who doesn't; the more I write, the better my writing gets; writing is more fun when you can choose the topic; writing is cool; if I'm a good writer, I'll get a better job in the future; I would be embarrassed if my friends saw me write outside class – reverse scored; I have trouble deciding what to write – reverse scored; it is easier to read than it is to write – reverse scored; girls tend to enjoy writing more than boys – reverse scored; I write in "txt" speak in class – reverse scored, and if you can use a spellchecker there is no point in learning spelling and grammar

Finally, pupils also have more positive attitudes towards communication skills at the end of the programme<sup>24 25</sup>. For example, as **Figure 7** shows, more pupils agree that good communication skills are some of the most important skills to have (81.0% vs. 75.9%) and that good communication skills give them more confidence in social situations (81.1% vs. 75.7%).

**Figure 7: Year 7 and Year 8 pupils' agreement with statements about communication skills in percentages at the beginning and end of OGM**



The findings from the survey are corroborated by findings from qualitative interviews conducted in school with practitioners. Teachers seem to have noticed that children are engaging with reading and writing more than they used to.

*"I think firstly, the stigma of reading, of books, of it being geeky, boring... I think [our literacy coordinator] has worked really hard to change... (...) I think there's a general assumption within the student body now that reading will help you. It will help you not just with English, not just with your English GCSE, but it will help you access everything. And I think that more students understand that, [the literacy coordinator] has been able to break down the barriers. Kids go into the library to read different things... (...) Reading is ok! It doesn't matter what it is, if it's a magazine, a newspaper,*

<sup>24</sup> The variances were significantly different; therefore, a Welch's t-test was conducted instead of independent samples t-test. Beginning: M= 2.31, SD= .935; end: M= 2.02, SD= .635; Welch F(1, 2248.997)= 76.720, p< .001, Cohen's d= .363

<sup>25</sup> A principal component analysis with direct oblimin rotation showed that the 7 attitudinal items loaded on 2 factors. However, when items were combined into scales to reflect those factors, only items loading on one of the factors resulted in acceptable Cronbach alpha (.753). Therefore 5 attitudinal items were combined into a scale: good communication skills are important to get a job; good communication skills are some of the most important skills to have; good communication skills give me more confidence in social situations; people often take good communication skills for granted, and people judge you by the words and phrases you use

or a novel, or some non-fiction or whatever.” (Assistant Headteacher, Phase I school, February 2016)

*“The students use the library and they use the materials not just in lessons but at lunchtime as well, they use the resources on the computer. And our pupil premium students, they use the computers, they research things on the internet. Maybe they don't straight away go to books, but they engage with text nonetheless with the computers or on their phones, so that's the kind of practices that are useful for them as well. So they're aware of literacy being not just reading a book and not just academic, and that's something we've been working on as well.”* (Literacy coordinator, Phase II school, May 2016)

*“[The students] will bring a pen into the [Music] lesson. Which I think is a big shift, believe it or not!”* (Music subject lead, Phase II school, May 2016)

*“The Ox Tales story competition as well was great to promote writing, it's been a big success and I think it's really raised the profile of writing. (...) And all the initiatives outside of lessons, I'm thinking of the author visits, I think that's made a lasting impression on them. That's a memory that they will constantly attach to developing their literacy skills.”* (Literacy coordinator, Phase II school, May 2016)

*“Pupils are more self-reflective – they have a developing understanding of the literacy issues that affect their work. Accelerated Reader has been introduced and this has contributed to the development of reading culture within the school. Time had already been given to the students to pursue private reading, but now the allocation has been increased. The Accelerated Reader programme appears to be working, and more funding has been given to purchase a bigger stock of books. The reading age data is held on a central information management system and all staff are making use of it. In addition, reading is celebrated through assemblies, it is discussed at parents' evenings, and there are reading lists available on the website and so on.”* (Phase II school, consultant report, June 2016)

## Festival feedback

On June 17 2016, 83 students from eight OGM schools attended a literacy festival at Oxford Brookes University. One student from each school attended a theatre workshop with an actor and director from The Globe to create a mini-representation of *Macbeth*. The rest of the students participated in a carousel of workshops with spoken word artists, poets, authors and dramatists. They also presented the results of their work at the end of the day.

One literacy coordinator from a Phase I school sent the following feedback after the festival:

*“Congratulations on the fabulous Voices festival on Friday. My students really enjoyed it -- and for a few of them, I think the day may have been transformational. One of the most reluctant readers/writers said that he used to hate English, but as a result of the day he has changed his mind completely. Another told me she was incredibly proud of herself and the poems she wrote; and a third student, who has had significant behaviour issues (she is adopted after an abusive early childhood) was delighted with her performance in Macbeth.”*

She also provided feedback about specific students and shared the results of the day in a short report with her colleagues in the school:

*“J wrote a beautiful poem that she was so pleased with that she read it to the entire audience at the end of the day; as I drove back into school, she said 'I'm really proud of myself'. She also talked about the idea of going to university at Oxford Brookes as she loved it there -- this*



*is the kind of ambition we would like to see from pupil premium students. I selected her as my prize winner for the day, so she received a free book (she was thrilled)."*

*"G, who has an end of KS3 target of 4a, had his name read out/rhymed by Dreadlock Alien in the introduction session; then he wrote a 'Fruit vs Veg' banter poem with Dreadlock Alien in the afternoon session -- G was so happy he couldn't stop smiling, and read his hilarious rhyming couplet poem in front of our small group (we had each of the session leaders to ourselves). At the end of the day, he told me that he used to feel that he hated English, but this day had changed his mind -- 'English is actually really fun!' "*

## **Skills progress and attainment**

Attainment data were requested from all participating schools for their students in Years 7 and 8 at the beginning and end of the academic years 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16. The evaluation was intended to explore if there was any change in the average level of students at the end of Years 7 or 8, and/or if there was a change in progress over the year in Years 7 or 8. To do so, we compared the first year of OGM with its second year, and used the 2013/14 cohort as a comparison group. Moreover, the evaluation was seeking any evidence of change for boys, girls, children who receive free school meals, those who do not and the overall school cohort.

Data were obtained from seven schools. It was particularly difficult to obtain data as by the end of the programme, there was no standard attainment measures at Key Stage 3 (due to the removal of National Curriculum sublevels in 2015). As a result the attainment data were shared in a variety of formats, making comparisons between schools difficult if not impossible.

Data from less than half the participating schools are not sufficient to draw conclusions about the overall impact of OGM on attainment. The available data show no difference either in average level or in progress between the three cohorts of participating pupils (pre-OGM, first year of OGM and second year of OGM). No difference is visible either for any of the sub-groups mentioned above over time.

Nonetheless, although it is not reflected in attainment at this stage, teachers and consultants alike seem to have noticed some progress in students' attainment skills, in response to the strategies used in class by better-trained and motivated teachers. They have apparently noticed changes in all areas of literacy: reading, writing and use of talk.

*"So for example, Year 7 last year they read The Graveyard Book. Current Year 7 have read Treasure Island. So it's like a step-up thing. And we've put a lot of work into helping them access that, partly over the [name of strategy] and talking about different ways that they can figure out various vocabulary and how they can figure out a text even if they don't quite understand some of the vocabulary, how they can guess and use context. And I think they've accessed that way better than I imagined." (Head of KS3 English, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*"I'm seeing some of the best writing I've seen for a long time! I've seen the connectives start to come through now, and a lot of students who are probably quite weak in terms of literacy, using connectives because we've drummed that in. And yes it's a small step, but it's such an important one. (...). I do definitely think it's had an impact on students, and I notice that in the way they talk, the way they give verbal feedback and in their written work, they make use of better language, just sentence structure and things like that." (Art teacher, Phase I school, February 2016)*

*"What we've seen is a good impact on the reading skills of students and how they're progressing towards using reading in their learning. (...) In terms of students'*



*confidence, mostly. Not being quite so freaked out at a piece of text, because we break it down and we talk about it. It's been particularly good."* (Head of RE, Phase II school, April 2016)

*"I've definitely seen students using the terms for the reading strategies more, and I know from being in the English department that vocabulary has been something we've been really focused on. And they'll also be using terms that are the same in the English curriculum [in other subjects] you know, 'this conveys', 'it shows'..."* (Literacy coordinator, Phase II school, May 2016)

Most interviewees do admit that they have not been able to see any particular progress in attainment due to their improved practices or due to the school's participation in OGM. Most attribute it to needing more time before they can see and evidence impact.

*"It's very gradual. There's more of an awareness. And it's not something you can change overnight, but it's something gradual that will impact upon new schemes of work. Probably looking mainly towards next year."* (Music subject lead, Phase II school, May 2016)

*"I think to see any impact, it's really difficult to see it now."* (Assistant Headteacher, Phase II school, May 2016)

*"I don't think we've had enough time or focus to measure the attainment of certain groups of students. And because it's only been the three of us, we don't have the same students as a crossover. So yeah, attainment we haven't been able to measure, so much. (...) [but] By introducing them across my department and encouraging my team to use these strategies, I would expect to see attainment rise as a result of that."* (Head of RE, Phase II school, April 2016)

Based on attitudinal and behavioural changes evidenced by the online surveys completed by the pupils themselves, it is indeed possible that progress in attainment will follow through Key Stage 4. Likewise, the improved practices report by teachers, literacy coordinator and consultants, as well as the strategic changes to literacy across the curriculum throughout the participating schools, may indeed lead to improved levels for future Key Stage 3 students. This would need to be evidenced by further, more longitudinal research.

## CONCLUSION

The OGM evaluation has demonstrated that the programme has had a positive impact on participating schools. First and foremost, teachers appear to have more positive attitudes towards teaching literacy, which has led to improved classroom practices around literacy. OGM subject leads notably have gained skills and knowledge from the CPD sessions, and further, throughout the schools, teachers are better equipped to teach literacy in class and via students' books. One of the successes of the programme was notably to engage non-English teachers so that after participation in OGM, strong literacy practices can be seen throughout Science, Maths or Art departments.

Additionally, it appears that thanks to the programme, and notably the consultant support, literacy leaders (and teams) have developed strong strategic plans for whole school literacy, with improved whole school provision and a keen effort towards sustainable change in favour of strong literacy practices across the curriculum. Again, the programme was designed to do more than upskilling teachers, by raising the profile of literacy throughout the schools, engaging senior management and building the capacity of literacy leaders, so that students would be effectively provided with excellent literacy teaching at any and all points of their school experience.

The evaluation of the programme also revealed some positive student outcomes. Namely, attitudes towards reading and writing have improved over the two years of schools taking part in OGM. Students have gained in confidence and seem to read more outside class. Teachers have also noticed a change in attitudes towards literacy among their students, although they rely mostly on anecdotal evidence. There was no evidence of improved attainment among Year 7 and Year 8 students in schools who provided their attainment data, although again, teachers say they have noticed improvements and are expecting that they will be reflected in attainment in later years. According to most teachers and literacy coordinators, effecting student change takes time, and with the OGM programme mostly focused on upskilling and supporting practitioners, impact on students will mostly emerge in future years. The early survey findings revealing a positive shift in attitudes are indeed encouraging and it may be interesting to continue with further research, for example a longitudinal study of current Years 7 and 8, to evidence whether initial positive changes have a sustainable impact, notably on attainment.