

Background

NCB's engagement with Jersey began in 2009 when a PEAL (Parents Early Years and Learning) taster session was delivered at The Bridge. This was followed up with a day's training for 21 early years practitioners from a range of settings including nursery classes and the private sector. Feedback included the observations:

"Enjoyed the day, thought-provoking and reflective. Good to meet people from other settings."

"Today has inspired me with ways to improve my practice."

Subsequently, the training was repeated for the next three years and became an integral element of the City & Guilds Level 3 Award, Unit 16 – Working with parents to support their children's early learning.

Building on the PEAL programme, in 2014 the Department of Education, Sport and Culture (ESC) commissioned the delivery of REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) training and provided bursaries for implementing the programme. The project was supported by the Jersey Child Care Trust (JCCT) and ESC teams including Early Years, English as an Additional Language, the Library Service, Highlands College and the Speech and Language Department. A report is available upon request.

Early Childhood Development Programme

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programme, supported by UBS Optimus Foundation UK, started working in partnership with JCCT in 2016. This three-year programme is ambitious, attempting to facilitate capacity building in the early years sector and improve outcomes for young children and their families. Information is available at <https://www.ncb.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities/early-years/projects-programmes/our-work-jersey>

What is the REAL approach?

Making it REAL draws evidence from the original REAL project delivered by Professors Cathy Nutbrown and Peter Hannon at the University of Sheffield.

REAL uses a framework called '**ORIM**' (Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction and Model), which is based on the idea that there are four main ways in which parents can help their children's literacy development.

Teachers and practitioners share ORIM with families through a series of home visits and literacy events to support them to think about how they can use it to support their children's early literacy.

Implementing REAL

The Making it REAL in Jersey Outcomes-Based Accountability (OBA) report cards provide information on the programme as follows:

- How much was delivered – Training, home visits and literacy events.
- How well REAL did it – Quality of training, ongoing support, reach of programme, engagement of children and families.
- Is anyone better off? – Impact on practitioners, parents and children.

The report cards are available at the links below:

REAL Year 1:

<https://speakerdeck.com/ncbearlyyears/making-it-real-in-jersey-year-1-scorecard>

REAL Year 2:

<https://speakerdeck.com/ncbearlyyears/making-it-real-in-jersey-year-2-scorecard>

A REAL Approach to early Mathematics:

<https://speakerdeck.com/ncbearlyyears/making-maths-real-scorecard-in-jersey-year-2-scorecard>

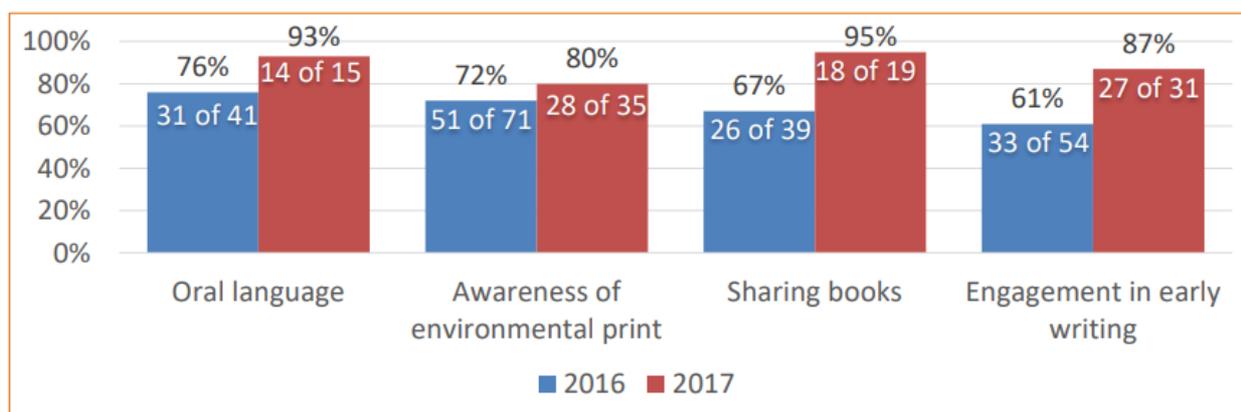


Figure 1 No. of children registering improvements between the start and end of REAL

It is evident that the implementation of an evidence-based approach has promoted high-quality early literacy practice. Settings have embraced REAL across different age groups: e.g. St Saviour's Primary has a whole-school approach to literacy and parents have a WhatsApp group where they design activities and say what they want in sessions. Practitioners have gained confidence and shared their professional knowledge with parents as the foremost educators of their children. As one practitioner said: "My relationship with parents has gone up a level."

REAL events have changed parents' views of school as they've taken time off work to attend. As a practitioner said: "Every parent came – we were swamped!" Parents reported that: "Dad was glowing", "I do far more with my younger child now" and, having stayed all morning, a mum said: "Oh, it isn't just about playing then."

Families have now joined the library when they previously didn't know where it was. Children have shown huge excitement at home visits and benefited from their parents' enthusiasm to continue with REAL activities.

Extending REAL

The ECD programme has enabled REAL to be extended to include:

- A REAL approach to Early Mathematics – Working with parents to support children's early mathematical development – training delivery and project implementation based on environmental maths, everyday maths, stories, songs and rhyme.
- Sharing REAL with parents – A programme of workshops sharing some of the ways parents help their children with early literacy, such as what works and why. Run in Jersey Library, this programme engaged families with babies and young children, plus mums, dads, grandparents and parents with English as an additional language (EAL). Parents gained an appreciation of the importance of their role in getting their children off to a great start with literacy from the very beginning by providing meaningful learning opportunities. They were delighted by some of the discoveries they made in understanding the ORIM (Opportunities Recognition Interaction and Model) framework and the impact of the home learning environment. Through fun and friendship in the workshops, they have become ambassadors for REAL. One parent has joined the Best Start Partnership strategic group on a voluntary basis.

“Since the training, I have been discussing with all my families the importance of literacy and why it's never too early to start.”

Family Support Worker and REAL participant

REAL innovation

The ECD programme has undoubtedly built momentum and this has provided the opportunity for innovation:

- Training for nannies, childminders, family support workers, childcare registration officers, school liaison workers, speech and language therapy, early years and maths advisers, the early years inclusion team, English as an additional language, and the Brighter Futures staff. Even healthcare workers can promote the inclusion of REAL in their everyday practice. A member of the Family Nursing and Home Care Service reported that: “We are singing rhymes together, talking to parents and giving ideas on how to extend opportunities when out and about in the community. Also, talking to parents at the two-year development check about the benefits of using our local library and encouraging parents to share books with their children.” An Early Intervention Family Support Worker said: “Since the training, I have been discussing with all my families the importance of literacy and why it's never too early to start.”
- Training for childcare and early childhood degree students at Highlands College incorporating REAL into the BA (Hons) Childhood Studies and CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education programmes (see Making it REAL Case Study 4 below).
- REAL involvement with the Jersey Annual Festival of Words. In 2017, I-Spy in the Supermarket (Waitrose, Co-op, Iceland, M&S) focused on environmental print. In 2018, Make Your Mark was a mark-making and early-writing event on Long Beach supported by the Minister for Education. Ian Rolls, a local artist, marked out a labyrinth in the sand. In Jersey Library, reading Bumblebear, early years settings displayed their creativity in activities for children and families, with the children having a wonderful time making flags. Many families said: “We hope you're going to do this again!”



Home visits provide important opportunities to learn

- The inclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities has been promoted in REAL activities through the Child Development Centre, e.g. with visual symbol timetables, sign-matching games, bark rubbings and making nameplates. Mont l'Abbe School has conducted REAL home visits on a Sunday morning to a child with autism to avoid disruption to their routine. As the practitioner said: "I learned more in that hour than I would have done otherwise. Home visits gave me a different perspective on the child. Word of mouth has meant other parents want to take part."
- Appreciation of different cultures and languages has been promoted throughout the programme. Home visits have been conducted by dual-language practitioners with a Portuguese teaching assistant supporting town schools. REAL materials for parents are translated into Portuguese and Polish.
- The development of a REAL Champion programme has engaged the early years advisor, children and young people's librarian, teachers, early years practitioners and Highlands staff. Having undergone training in REAL delivery and OBA methodology, the Champions have contributed to training, supported settings and events, and they have shared their knowledge, skill, experience and resources offering hints and tips on what works.

Making it REAL case studies

The creation of seven case studies complemented and expanded learning with the following objectives:

1. Bel Royal School Nursery – Linking REAL with Jersey Premium to extend its impact.
2. D'Auvergne Primary School – The impact of REAL for bilingual families.
3. First Tower School – Implementing REAL in a town school.
4. Highlands College – Demonstrating how REAL training can be integrated into programmes for childcare and education students.
5. Leeward Childcare – Delivering REAL through a private day nursery.
6. St Saviour's School – Explaining how REAL supports a whole-school approach to literacy.
7. Village Pre-school – Implementing REAL in a pre-school environment and the impact on children, parents and practitioners.

Key learning

Starting off:

- Engaging the support of key agencies (statutory and voluntary) in planning was vital from the outset. This initially took the form of funding, e.g. Department of Education, Sport & Culture; fundraising, e.g. Association of Jersey Charities contributing to the delivery of PEAL training; in-kind administrative support, e.g. JCCT; and accommodation, e.g. The Bridge.
- The commitment of head-teachers and settings managers is vital in facilitating practitioners' delivery of programmes.
- The PEAL programme provides a sound foundation on which to build REAL.
- Embedding programmes within an accredited framework gives recognition for practitioners.

Even better if:

- It would have been even better if (at the outset) attendance by all head-teachers and settings managers had been secured at information sessions to ensure they appreciated the nature and requirements of the programme along with the potential impact on the children and their families. In particular, this would have provided an opportunity to explain the value of home visits.

What works:

- The excellent link with Jersey Library has provided invaluable support for the implementation of REAL.
- Tailoring training and programme delivery have promoted take up through a flexible approach.
- Inviting local practitioners who are passionate advocates of REAL to contribute to training has inspired participants.
- Settings have been very generous in sharing their learning at network meetings and their resources: e.g. Cheeky Monkeys held a Christmas literacy event at Durrell, the second part of which they opened to the general public.
- Local delivery partners are key to supporting implementation both in terms of administration and professional practice along with consistency of support from NCB in delivering training and co-ordinating activity.
- The development of local materials is highly valued, e.g. The REAL films and 10 practice examples illustrating home visits and literacy events across the four strands of literacy in a range of settings. The full length Making it REAL film can be found at <https://beststart.je/useful-resources/>
- Understanding of the unique characteristics of island life in Jersey, e.g. the need to work and return to work early, has been vital in personalising the REAL programme.
- Integrating REAL into student training is not only an investment in the future workforce but has given students insight into the importance of early literacy: e.g. a Year 2 student who reads to three children as part of Every Child Our Future explained how much she'd appreciated the training as it had made her realise the relevance of what she was doing.

Keeping it REAL

- It is vital to build on Making it REAL and to embed the innovations to ensure sustainability with a key requirement being strategic support.
- REAL is recognised as an example of an evidence-based programme to support children in receipt of Jersey Premium.
- Exploring links with other programmes, e.g. Every Child Our Future, has the potential to be mutually advantageous.
- There is an opportunity to further promote REAL through the Children's Voluntary Sector Cluster and through briefings, e.g. as requested by Autism Jersey.
- Learning from the case studies indicates a strong desire to introduce a REAL Beginnings Programme for younger children. It would be interesting to consider co-producing this through a Partners in Practice model.

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Case Study 1: Bel Royal School Nursery

Case study objective: Linking REAL with Jersey Premium to extend its impact.

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About your setting

Bel Royal School Nursery is a 30-place nursery. We work as part of Bel Royal School. Staffing includes one teacher, one nursery officer and a nursery assistant. A special needs assistant may support a child or children depending on the needs of the cohort. Our school has an Additional Resourced Centre provision.

What did you do?

I started my REAL journey in the first cohort of REAL training. I decided to attend the training as I think literacy is the most important area of learning in the early years and I wanted to be able to work more closely with our families, by providing something that would make a significant difference. I then delivered my first REAL events and home visits in the spring of 2015. These children are now in Year Three of the school. I had four children that I visited at home and they each had three home visits. My events for the cohort of 26 children included a book camp and visit to Waterstones book shop. Two of the parents were heavily involved in the development of REAL in the nursery. We wisely spent the grant money on fiction books for the nursery.

In the autumn of 2015, I delivered REAL again. My REAL events for the cohort of 32 children included a mums' mark-making morning at which Cathy Bithell from Jersey Library visited us and encouraged the parents to join the library. We also visited the library. We had a 'Wear print to Nursery' event and we book-shared with Year 5. Each year, I have added new events to those that existed previously. Three children had two home visits. We spent our grant money on non-fiction books.

In the autumn of 2016, we had a new cohort of 21 children. Our new events included European Day of Languages, National Poetry Day, and Elf & Fairy Day (a writing-based day). I also introduced a daily book share, which involved five parents regularly sharing books with children and staff. I then undertook the REAL maths training. Again, this was an amazing opportunity. For the autumn cohort of 2017, I delivered REAL maths where three children had two home visits. Our events for 21 children included a maths buddy morning with Year 6, Maths in the Park, and number rhymes and songs celebrated during National Nursery Rhyme Week.

In December 2017, we looked at the possibility of using REAL as a way forward for our Jersey Premium children. A member of staff was employed in January 2018 for three mornings a week in Nursery to help improve language and communication. There were 12 Jersey Premium children in the cohort of 21 children and over half of these were EAL children. In the summer of 2018, this member of staff attended REAL training. During autumn 2018, this member of staff worked closely with me delivering REAL. Her hours have been increased to three days a week. All six of the Jersey Premium children in this cohort of 20 children will be having home visits. These home visits will be shared between two members of staff. You have to be flexible and adaptable. The activities need to suit the needs and interests of the individual children. Where it has been impossible to undertake a home visit, we have found a quiet place in school to deliver the content.

Who has been involved?

- a) There are two teachers trained in REAL and one school assistant.
- b) There are two teachers trained in REAL maths.
- c) There has been whole school inset delivered by N. Hay on REAL. N. Hay has also trained Nursery staff in the REAL approach.
- d) Numerous parents and volunteers have been involved in delivering the REAL approach since 2015.

Outcomes

The programme has made a difference to the children's love and understanding of books. Looking closely at their achievement through Development Matters, this has been significant. REAL has become a whole-school initiative with the development of the school library, Book Week across the school and a 'wear print to school' day.

Encouraging parents to become more involved in their children's learning is always a good thing. We have been able to encourage a number of practitioners to work with REAL even if they haven't been directly on the training. This has been delivered in-house.

Our views of REAL:

"At first, K sat a long way away from me when we shared books, but gradually he came closer and closer; he opened like a flower and blossomed." CQ, Nursery officer

"Using everyday objects makes maths come alive and, as a parent, you can easily bring maths into the home." Dr B, parent/mother

Why it works: What the learning to date demonstrates

The simplicity of the framework is the key to its success. The framework is like a skeleton that you can hang your creativity on. REAL is used as part of experiencing interactions in the EYFS during play-based learning. There have been challenges, of course, but nothing that can't be overcome if you want REAL to work. The Festival of Words event on the beach was fantastic and it was lovely to pull everything together for a whole-island event.

Jersey Premium money has allowed us to employ a communication assistant to develop high-quality language provision in the early years. This will raise the level of language skills at the start of literacy on the journey to reading and writing.

Next steps

I think being able to have the funding from Jersey Premium and linking it to REAL ensures it will continue. Human resources, continued training and funding are essential. We need to embed engaging parents into our practice so we increase children's ability to talk about books and up-skill parents in their children's learning.

It would be very useful to have trained Portuguese and Polish speakers. This would ensure all families could be reached.

At Bel Royal, REAL is going from strength to strength. The next step will be to introduce a pre-Nursery group, with songs and rhymes and books.

Case Study 2: D'Auvergne Primary School

Case study objective: To demonstrate the impact of REAL for bilingual families.

Contact details: Katty Knight, Nursery Teacher: k.knight@dauvergne.sch.je

About your setting

D'Auvergne is one of the largest primary schools on the island with three-form entry in some year groups and a 45-place nursery. Forty percent of the children have English as an additional language. Home languages are Thai, Portuguese, Polish, Spanish, French, Romanian and Shona.

What did you do?

I started my REAL journey at my previous school, Plat Douet, where I (a Reception teacher at the time) and a Nursery officer worked together to run some events and home visits to promote early reading to the children at our school. I ran three cycles of REAL at Plat Douet, which included six home visits and nine events.

During my time at d'Auvergne, I have run two cycles each year. Altogether, I have put on approximately 27 literacy events and made 12 home visits. Each time I have run REAL, I have taken a literacy focus. However, I can see how easily the project can be transferable to maths and I plan to run some REAL maths in the future.

Since working at d'Auvergne and being the lead for Jersey Premium, we have used REAL and the ORIM framework to design a parent and toddler group, which has been a great success. The sessions are for one hour once a week where d'Auvergne parents can drop their children to school, have a cup of tea or coffee with the other parents and then bring their baby or toddler (any child under school starting age) to the session. The group focuses on singing and rhyme, books and early mark-making including sensory play. The group is led by one of our Nursery officers, which allows families to have a familiar face when their child is ready to start Nursery.

Planning and organising REAL events has been easy. I used the ORIM framework along with some child-initiated activities in the classroom. The really important part is the small sign (information card), which I put out for parents to read. This explains how the activity supports their child's early literacy and gives other suggestions of ways to promote this.

The main challenge for me to begin with was the home visits. I struggled to find an appropriate time as the children were in Reception. It was a legal requirement for them to be at school and I was not able to take them home early. I overcame this by partnering one of the teaching assistants (TA) in Reception and we visited the children after school. We had a few simple activities prepared, which we could leave with the family for them to use again.

I hadn't noticed that we were making much difference to our bilingual families until I had several conversations with parents from Poland and Portugal. I realised that a common theme during my literacy events was for bilingual parents to approach me and talk about how they did not learn like this when they were at school. They had never understood that learning took place through play until it was explained to them.

Now that I am in Nursery, there is more flexibility for home visits. I also have a Polish speaker on my Nursery team. I intend to visit any bilingual children with a native speaker to make the experience more relaxed and informal, and to ensure there is a good level of understanding of why we are doing each activity.

Who has been involved?

- a) REAL – Raising Early Achievement in Literacy – two practitioners
- b) A REAL approach to maths – one practitioner
- c) Others who have been involved include 15 parents and colleagues from across the setting

Outcomes

Children: I have a fantastic connection with the children who I visited at home. One particular child will say: *"Will you come to my house again soon?"* every time I see him, even though he is now in Year 3 and it has been several years since I visited him at home.

Parents: I also have a great relationship with the parents who were involved in REAL. I have noticed that I have become a 'safe' person who they can ask questions of even if I am no longer their class teacher. I often have parents approach me asking for ideas on how to support with handwriting or spelling as these are targets from their new teacher.

Practitioners: I am yet to train up the remaining members of d'Auvergne Foundation Stage in REAL. This term I will be doing so. I look forward to seeing the vast impact REAL will have at our school when Nursery and Reception are all putting on events and completing home visits at the same time.

Others/the setting more widely: I have found a fantastic resource in Cathy at the library. As part of our Jersey Premium projects, I now ensure that every class in the whole school visits the town library at least once a year.

Why it works: What the learning to date demonstrates

What especially worked? Explaining the process of learning to read and write with parents, plus highlighting when children are moving to the next stage and how to support them. Approaching parents and asking: *"I was wondering if you could please help me with my project?"* rather than: *"Can I come to your house?"* This makes it much less formal and parents tend to feel happy to help.

What really helped? Having the funding to give flexibility to be able to pay a TA and purchase new resources for the children to keep. I think if we tried to recycle the resources we already use in Reception/Nursery, the children would not be as excited.

What do you need to have in place to ensure it works? Simple ideas, an informal approach for parents and lots of fun to engage the children.

What do you need to be especially careful about? Getting felt tips out at a home visit when there is a toddler around. (Future graffiti artist!)

What else are you doing that supports REAL? Parent and toddler group and home visits before children start Nursery. We also run various parent workshops throughout the year. For example, a colleague from Speech & Language Therapy spoke with Nursery parents about supporting early language skills at home.

Next steps

1. Train the Foundation Team as a whole to broaden our reach and impact
2. Continue to run at least two cycles of REAL each year
3. Try a cycle of REAL maths



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Case Study 3: First Tower School

Case study objective: Implementing REAL in a town school

Contact details: Mrs Kathryn Mahrer, Nursery Teacher, k.mahrer@firsttower.sch.je
First Tower School, La Route De St Aubin, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3SD.

About your setting

First Tower School is a non-selective inclusive two-form-entry town school with a 40-place nursery. It is on the edge of town and caters for children with a wide range of needs. Everyone within the school community is encouraged to join in and the school is well supported by its parents and the wider community. We are an established school that opened in 1901, after which there was further building to cater for greater demand.

What did you do?

I attended the two-day training course in 2016 after hearing good feedback from colleagues who had attended the REAL pilot on the island. Since 2016, we have run a cycle of REAL for every cohort. This has involved three home visits for three families and at least three REAL events/trips. One of my Nursery officers attended REAL training in 2018, which enabled us to share the home visits and will help us reach more families in the future.

To date, we have worked with 12 families on a one-to-one basis, and we have run 12 REAL events with approximately 35 families at each event.

Running a cycle of REAL for a cohort (home visits, REAL events) is not too onerous as the paperwork is simple and straightforward to complete. And once you have done a round of REAL, it becomes quicker to plan the home visits and events.

We ensured that the home visits were tailored to each child/family and their particular needs, e.g. support with mark-making, story sharing etc, but we tended to keep the REAL events the same each year as they worked really well. We have new families each year, so the events are new to them when we hold them. Our REAL events are centred around mark-making, environmental print and stories. We hold one event in the nursery, one at the local beach and one at the local library. We also promote literacy by holding Print Day where children and adults wear clothing with print to Nursery. We have Play & Stay sessions once a term where the focus may be on an area other than literacy but we always ensure one activity is literacy based.

We have been fortunate to be able to purchase good-quality story sacks and literacy resources, such as wooden nursery-rhyme figures and wooden story characters to take with us on our home visits, as well as lots of mark-making resources as these have to be replenished frequently.

Alongside the home visits and REAL events, I set up a Story & Rhyme Time Programme where up to four parents and their children are offered four sessions (one per week) with me where we share stories, rhymes and games based on the four strands of REAL. The children get to take a Story & Rhyme Bag home each week as well as a literacy game to play. During the 15-minute session, I do some modelling and demonstrate how to say initial letter sounds. I then support parents as they also do this with their child. We end the session with the sharing of a familiar nursery rhyme and the children take some props home to reinforce the learning during the week. The groups run throughout the year and are open to all parents.

Who has been involved?

A Nursery officer and I have completed REAL training and are responsible for conducting home visits, planning our REAL events and ensuring that everyone is aware of REAL.

I run the story and rhyme sessions with the aim of training the Nursery officer so that she can also run them and we can reach more families.

Every REAL event we host involves the whole Nursery team. My two other Nursery officers have not received REAL training but we have kept them up to date with what we have been doing in our home visits and the Story & Rhyme sessions, and we plan the REAL events as a team so that we all have the opportunity to share ideas for what we can do next.

Outcomes

We have noticed that the majority of children who attend the Story & Rhyme sessions enter Reception above age-related expectations in literacy. In our first year of REAL, we tracked children to the end of Reception. These children exceeded early learning goals for both reading and writing.

REAL events are very popular and we have had excellent attendance for every one. The mark-making event at our local beach was one that parents enjoyed as they could see that learning to write didn't have to involve pen and paper!

The Story & Rhyme groups always start off with only a few parents signing up but when the other parents see the group in action or see the other children taking home the Story Sacks, they ask if they can be part of the next round.

Why it works: What the learning to date demonstrates

REAL is an easy and straightforward initiative that can be tailored to meet the needs of the families we work with. It enables parents to see how they can support their children with early literacy skills and provides them with a model that is easy to follow. The REAL sessions are hands on and fun and informal, which appeals to parents who may have had negative experiences of school when they were young. We have found that by doing the home visits in the spring term, parents are more open to letting us go into their home as we have already built solid and trustworthy relationships with them in the autumn term. REAL works because it gives parents confidence.

Next steps

We will continue to run our Story & Rhyme groups throughout the year and will continue to promote literacy in our setting.

We have more REAL events planned and will collaborate with other Nursery settings to see what they have provided so that we can expand what we offer.

We are planning to attend the next REAL maths training so that we can also support our families with maths.



Case Study 4: Highlands College

Case study objective: Integrating REAL into childcare and education courses.

Contact details: Lorna Morgan, Course Tutor: lorna.morgan@highlands.ac.uk

About your setting

Highlands College is a further- and higher-education college in Jersey. The college offers a range of courses in Childcare & Education including CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare & Education (Early Years Educator) and BA (Hons) Childhood Studies.

What did you do?

Our REAL journey started when the Childcare & Education course tutor attended the REAL training to review its relationship to CACHE Level 3. Subsequent conversations between NCB and the course tutor to integrate REAL into students' training and to plan a programme of delivery ensued and a one-day programme of REAL was co-produced.

The training was tailored specifically for students. All four strands of literacy and the ORIM framework were included along with the events DVD. The REAL bingo activity provided a recap of learning in a fun way. Each student was provided with a pack of REAL resources. Following the training, each student was required to undertake a project, producing a REAL event plan to deliver to three children and parents in their placement setting.

In 2017, the programme was delivered to two groups of childcare and education students, and separately to a group of degree students. It was successful, and was delivered again in 2018. The training was evaluated and refined following the first year of delivery. The language used was updated to ensure that REAL was embedded into the course curriculum rather than as a separate enrichment programme. Hence, links were made explicitly in relation to links to particular units, such as:

- CACHE Level 3 – Unit 9, Emergent Literacy: working with others to support literacy, working closely with parents and carers. Evidenced by REAL event plan and delivery.
- CACHE Level 3 – Unit 8, Professional Practice Portfolio: Personal Social & Emotional Development, and Communication, Language & Literacy evidenced through REAL.

Each student was observed delivering their REAL event by the Placement Coordinator. This contributed to a Personal Development Profile completed each term by the Placement Supervisor. CACHE external quality assurance approval was achieved, and REAL incorporated as part of the degree students' Professional Development Portfolio.

Who has been involved?

The course tutor has been involved with all REAL training delivered by the NCB. She is a REAL champion who has attended OBA (Outcomes-Based Accountability) literacy and mathematics training.

Outcomes

REAL has made a difference to:

- a) **Students** who have gained confidence in how to approach, build relationships with and work with parents. This is vital preparation for those who become keyworkers, nannies, childminders and teaching assistants.
- b) **Children and parents** – REAL has given parents a powerful way of giving children a strong foundation in literacy at a young age.
- c) **Others/the setting more widely** – Students who are in settings already engaged with REAL have received excellent support and encouragement, which has had a very positive impact.

"It's been an amazing opportunity for students to put their own learning into practice and gain confidence in working with parents. Their REAL project gives students purpose for their learning and puts it into context." Director of Enterprise & Professional Studies

"REAL is more than a box-ticking exercise. It's real." Student

"It's been amazing to go and see students putting theory into practice. It works, it makes a difference, the students value it." Placement tutor.

Why it works: What the learning to date demonstrates

The use of Jersey REAL materials (practice examples and film) particularly engaged interest. Including a session on ways of working with parents as a student to identify potential barriers and ways of overcoming these helped give students confidence.

Close working between the NCB trainer and course tutor ensured that there was recognition of the different needs of students. Students are training to be practitioners as opposed to practitioners who are trained.

Integrating REAL into the CACHE accreditation requirements for completion while on placement reduced student workload by their creation of an activity plan linked to the CACHE criteria. It provided an opportunity to create an activity plan, deliver a reflective task and contribute to their portfolio through a tutor-completed observation record.

What really helped?

- Arranging a programme of bite-sized activity-based sessions.
- Having support in the placement setting was crucial.
- The funding provides an opportunity for students to learn to manage a budget and gives more ownership of their project.
- The standing of an NCB programme gives credibility to both student and setting.

What needs to be in place to ensure it works?

Personal tutors who actively check in with students, provide support for their REAL event planning and encourage students to reflect on their learning.

What else are you doing that supports REAL?

Making the connection with the Knowledge Makes Change seminars and newsletters for students as opportunities to extend their learning and develop their practice.

Case Study 5: Leeward Childcare



Case study objective: Sharing the learning from delivering REAL through a private day nursery

Contact details: leewardchildcarejersey@yahoo.com

About your setting

Leeward Childcare is a private day nursery that holds 95 children at any one time. We are open 51 weeks a year from 8am until 5.45pm.

The setting is divided into three areas: a baby area that has 24 babies aged 0-20 months; a toddler area that has 36 children aged 20 months to three years; and a Pre-school area that has children aged 3-5 years.

What did you do?

Our first member of staff who trained in REAL was trained in 2015. We had been sent information about the REAL project from the Jersey Child Care Trust and wanted to know more about it. When our first member of staff had completed the training, she returned to the setting full of enthusiasm about the project. This led us as a setting to continue to send staff on training when available.

The REAL project has been carried out in both the toddler and pre-school areas. It has run six times since we began in 2015, four times in literacy and twice in maths. Over the years, we have had approximately 100 children take part in REAL events and 21 children take part in home visits.

Planning for both types of REAL projects isn't too time consuming as the training gives practitioners a lot of ideas to take away with them. We gave staff two hours to plan and gather/make resources needed for home visits and events.

Who has been involved?

We have seven staff members trained in REAL literacy and four trained in REAL maths. One member of staff is a REAL champion.

Outcomes

The difference REAL has made to:

Practitioners:

REAL literacy and maths training has resulted in staff coming away with new ideas that they have brought back to the setting. It has also boosted their confidence. Evidence of this is shown on our weekly planning where previously some staff would struggle with covering maths activities. Our knowledgeable staff now offer a wider range of activities to the children.

From completing the REAL training, staff are now more aware that children's interests can easily be adapted into a maths or literacy activity. This gives us more opportunities to support children's development where needed.

Children, parents and practitioners:

Carrying out the REAL project has benefited the children, parents and practitioners. We have had nothing but positive feedback from parents and practitioners. Children's interest in literacy and maths seems to be progressing too.

Through REAL, practitioners have appreciated – and shared with parents – that you do not need to spend a great deal of money to develop your child's skills. A simple conversation about environmental print on a walk goes a long way!

Why it works: What the learning to date demonstrates

As a setting, we feel REAL has really enhanced our practice and built relationships with parents. We especially feel that having the REAL events on a Saturday morning works well for us as the majority of our parents work during the week. As we are a full-time childcare setting, we would struggle to host them at any other time.

The REAL events are the highlight of taking part in the REAL project, and it's a great opportunity for parents to take part in specific activities with their children. The staff are always on hand should they have any questions.

The most difficult part with REAL for us was carrying out the home visits. Most of our parents work full time so finding a time that suited both staff and parents was tricky. One way around this was to carry out home visits at weekends. Again, this could sometimes be difficult as that's when children take part in extra-curricular activities.

Parents' views of REAL:

"I thought it was really helpful to have tips on how I could help my child's development on the block-building activity i.e. discuss the colour of blocks, count the blocks, talk about short or tall."

"We really enjoyed the event, and the activities gave us some inspiration for things to do at home."

Next steps

We support REAL by helping and advising students who come into our setting and are completing their training.

As we have a REAL champion, they will help new staff to understand the REAL project.

We will continue REAL by holding at least two REAL events a year and by continuing to have maths and literacy activities available for children daily.

Case Study 6: St Saviour's Primary School

Case study objective: How REAL supports a whole-school approach to literacy

Contact details: Becky Peckham r.peckham@stsaviour.sch.je

About your setting

St Saviour's is an inclusive one-form-entry primary school on the outskirts of town. It has a Nursery and an additionally resourced centre (The Haven) for pupils with autism and social and communication difficulties.

St Saviour's has a family atmosphere and a strong sense of community. Through the way staff model positive relationships, and within the context of a strong inclusive ethos, pupils are encouraged to be kind, responsible and supportive members of the school and wider community.

The school is multi-cultural with representation from a range of ethnic/cultural backgrounds/countries including Portuguese/Madeiran, Polish, Ukrainian, Thai, Hindu/Indian, Muslim/Pakistani, Jehovah's Witnesses, French and Kenyan.

What did you do?

Literacy projects:

Events Our literacy events are for pupils in Nursery and Reception. We typically have 28 pupils in each class and include all pupils with the literacy events. We decided to launch our REAL projects with a school-based event to encourage and enthuse as many families as possible. These are brilliant times for parents and family members to be welcomed in to school and share a particular focus, and they are a real celebration of learning. Events are not always at school and we try to take advantage of our local community and incorporate trips and visits. Our events have included teddy birthday parties, visits from the mobile library van, Father Christmas moving his toy workshop to the Nursery class, woodland walks, spring celebrations and rhyme parties.

Home visits We match literacy activities to each pupil's needs and interests. It can be daunting for a child to have a teacher come and visit at home so we wanted to ensure that they were really excited about the activity we would bring and then leave for them to explore. These have included making playdough, making a family scrapbook with photos, making sock puppets and making a unicorn land. As part of the initial home visit, we provide each pupil with a new pencil case, a range of different mark-making tools, and a notebook so that they can continue to experiment with making marks at home. Activities are carefully modelled while at home, and parents are encouraged to participate. We include either a story or rhyme with each visit to model storytelling and interaction during reading a story.

Who has been involved?

Over a period of three years, three teaching staff have been trained in REAL. They have cascaded this knowledge and approach to a team of 10 within early years and KS1. All staff have immediately seen the benefits and are confident to talk about promoting early literacy.

As a REAL champion, I have been privileged to co-deliver training to students at college, giving them an insight from an educational point of view into the practicalities and advantages of embracing REAL.

Outcomes

The difference REAL has made to:

Parents: *"I felt supported because the teacher took the time to come and visit my son at home and talk to him. She showed me how to experiment with messy play, using foam, lentils, soil and sticks. We have these at home anyway so I didn't have to buy anything extra. I now understand that writing isn't just using a pencil and a book and it can actually be fun."*

- Impact on parents: 83% of parents reported increased confidence in terms of them being able to support their child's early literacy.

Practitioners: Practitioners are given skills and training to support early literacy, and also skills in developing ways of engaging and interacting with families that can be hugely beneficial. Confidence therefore has risen and, as a result, we have more mark-making taking place in our setting. We placed a real emphasis on valuing all mark-making and showing the progression of skills. As a result, pupils feel valued and proud.

- Impact on practitioners: 100% trained stated it was either excellent or very good in terms of 'increasing knowledge of engaging with parents to support learning'.

Children:

- Impact on children: 79% of parents reported their child's literacy, language and communication had improved.

Why it works: What the learning to date demonstrates

What especially worked?

- Keeping home visits simple and planned so that the time used was effective.
- Planning the timings for visits in advance so families have time to prepare.
- Knowing if a sibling will be at the visit so you can prepare additional resources.

What really helped?

Doing the home visits in pairs, so while one adult was modelling and interacting with the pupil, the other could reinforce what was happening to the parent. We also used Year 6 pupils to support events in case any parents could not attend. This meant that all pupils had someone to work with and play alongside.

What do you need to have in place to ensure it works?

- A clear understanding as a setting about what you want to achieve.
- A good and trusted working relationship with families.
- Being organised with resources for events.

Next steps

I am really interested in continuing with REAL for our setting, as well as introducing it for younger siblings who we know will be in our catchment by hosting a Mini Me REAL.

Case Study 7: Village Pre-School

Case study objective: REAL and the impact on children, parents and practitioners

Contact details: Kathy Holley – The Village Pre-school
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About your setting

The Village Pre-school is a small community school in St Peter's Youth & Community Centre that takes children aged from two years to Reception. We support each child by providing for their individual skills, interests and needs, encouraging them to become independent learners. We have a particular passion for books, storytelling, movement and music.

What did you do?

Our journey with REAL started in 2014 and, since then, we have run three literacy projects and one on maths. Across both projects, we have completed approximately 22 home visits, with more literacy visits planned for 2019. To date, approximately 70 children aged from 16-60 months have been involved. The majority of resources used for the events and home visits were things that we already had at pre-school. So, we were able to use the funding to purchase anything more specific that was needed. This also meant that there was funding available to buy things for the child/family to keep. One practitioner, for example, gave each of the children participating in home visits a literacy fun pack and a maths fun pack containing items to support and encourage the child's early skills.

Prior to a home visit, the practitioner would complete the child's pre-observation sheet that would indicate the strands of literacy or maths in which the child and parent would most benefit from additional support. The practitioner would then plan activities based around these strands. Each home visit began with practitioners giving the parents a brief explanation of the aims of the home visit and what strands of literacy or maths the activities would focus on. Then, with the practitioner guiding them, the parent and child would participate in the activities together, during which the practitioner would explain the purpose behind the activities and give the parent tips and ideas. The home visit would end with the practitioner leaving an activity or resources for the parent and child to enjoy together.

Literacy projects:

Our literacy events have included:

- Music & Movement adult and child workshop – focusing on song, rhyme and the link between physical communication and literacy development.
- Early Writing Workshop – with a wide variety of activities to support early writing skills, promote gross and fine motor development, and encourage writing in the home and the local environment.
- Environmental Print Walk & Photo Challenge in the local community.

Home visits have included themes and activities such as:

- Planes and airport theme – based on the child's interest, activities included:
 - Reading a story about planes.
 - Drawing a large-scale airport and runway.
 - Decorating planes and drawing planes to add to the large-scale airport.
 - Looking through a non-fiction book about the airport.
 - Leaving behind the books as well as an airport sticker book and some printed airport mark-making ideas.
- Buster's Egg – activities included:
 - Reading the 'Buster's Egg' story
 - Writing a shopping list for the ingredients to make an egg and cress sandwich.
 - Making the sandwiches – peeling the egg, fork to mash, spoon to mix, knife to spread, scissors to cut cress.
 - Writing a menu for lunch, including pictures of the ingredients.

- Baking theme – based on interest that Mum had communicated, activities included:
 - Reading 'The Great Dragon Bake Off' story.
 - Looking at a cake recipe.
 - Using a wipe board for the child to write and draw a picture of the ingredients needed to make a cake.
 - Drawing a picture of what they wanted the cake to look like.
 - Leaving a recipe and the story with the family.

Maths projects:

Our maths events have included:

- Spots & Teddies Event with a wide variety of spots and teddy-themed maths activities.
- Environmental Maths Print Walk & Photo Challenge in the local community.
- Early Maths Workshop – with a wide variety of activities focusing on supporting early maths skills, such as through maths songs and books, supporting maths using everyday objects, supporting maths through meals and snack times, and maths in the local environment.

Home visits have included themes and activities such as:

- Baking / cooking theme, with activities including:
 - Singing 'Five currant buns' song.
 - Making playdough cakes and counting how many went in the baking trays.
 - Reading 'Goldilocks and the three bears'.
 - Measuring ingredients to make porridge using a measuring spoon and jug.
- Trains theme – based on the child's interest, activities included:
 - Making trains with a given number of carriages.
 - Measuring different lengths of carriages.
 - Ordering different lengths of train track.
 - Counting out quantities of trains to match numerals.
 - Leaving behind a list of train-themed maths activities and two number stories that we would be looking at during the next home visit.

Who has been involved?

Two practitioners have completed the REAL literacy training and another practitioner is currently undertaking their REAL literacy training. One of these practitioners has also completed the Making Maths REAL training and is a REAL champion. A total of 53 parents have been involved in REAL, either through attending events or participating in home visits.

One of our proudest results from REAL is that of a parent whose first language is Hungarian participating in home visits (both literacy and maths) and volunteering at projects. She has subsequently completed the Sharing REAL with Parents course and is currently undertaking Early Years training. She has now become a member of our team.

Outcomes

Outcomes for children

- Our most valuable outcome from REAL is the closer relationships between practitioners, children and parents.
- We feel it has had a positive effect on the child seeing their parents working closely with Pre-school practitioners.
- The children are benefiting from the parents' increased knowledge of the importance of early literacy and maths development.
- In literacy, we have observed a growth in children's involvement in mark-making activities and in their awareness of environmental print.
- In maths, we have observed a growth in children choosing to use resources to explore maths skills.

Outcomes for parents

- Parents have told us how as a result of REAL their understanding of how their child's development has increased.
- Parents have commented that, as a result of the events, they have gained a greater understanding of the purpose behind the activities we provide.
- Our experience was that parents were more confident discussing their child's learning within the privacy and comfort of their own home.

"It was eye-opening that I could use things from around the house and our daily routines to help me help my child's maths. I learnt that you don't need lots of expensive maths resources, you just need to count the peas!" Parent who participated in home visits.

The parent who completed the Sharing REAL with Parents course and is now working as part of our Pre-school team found the REAL project and the training was a great opportunity that helped her support her own children along with the pre-school children. She shared that: *"It was lovely to meet other people. The best part was learning about environmental print and, as a parent, I realised I wasn't pointing it out, which I make sure I do now."* As a practitioner, she is recognising the early literacy and maths opportunities and encouraging the children to engage in these activities. *"Doing the REAL training, I now know how important it is working in Pre-school to model language, point out objects and print in the environment for maths and literacy."*

Outcomes for practitioners

- As practitioners, REAL has emphasised the importance of building strong relationships with families to support the children's early development.
- Practitioners have shared that they have a greater awareness, enthusiasm and confidence for what they can do to support the children's literacy or maths development, feeling more confident sharing this with parents.

REAL has become a vital element of our pre-school. As a result:

- We have reviewed our approach in both literacy and maths, particularly developing our use of natural and everyday objects to support maths skills.
- Children are regularly given the opportunity to participate in literacy and maths environmental print hunts and walks.
- We extended some of our events to our toddler group families and are considering how we could extend REAL to support the toddler group.
- We are making REAL events part of our annual planning and hope to open the events up to families in the local community.

Why it works: What the learning to date demonstrates

Each of the practitioners who completed REAL training felt that it was the two-day training and pack of practice examples that helped them most in preparing them for the home visits and events. They valued the opportunity to draw on everyone else's examples, tips and ideas.

Next steps

We are committed to making REAL part of our Pre-school ethos, which is reflected in our planning and provision of literacy and maths resources and activities.

We plan to hold literacy and maths events on an annual basis and aim to extend this to the toddler group and the local community.