



**SHAPING SUCCESS ACTION
RESEARCH PROJECTS**

**FINAL REPORT ON THE SHAPING SUCCESS AR PROJECT –
PHONICS IN THE VOCATIONAL CLASSROOM**
Education and Training Collective

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For further information regarding the Shaping Success Action Research programme and this project go to <https://ccpathways.co.uk/practitioner-research/otla-7/>.

The programme was delivered on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation by -



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Final report - Phonics in the vocational classroom

Education and Training Collective

This project builds on work previously undertaken by English and maths teachers using phonics-based approaches to improve learners' English skills (OTLA 6, 2020). We extended our work to include vocational teachers and their learners. Vocational teachers at the college were introduced to phonics-based approaches and encouraged and supported in using them to enhance their learners' vocational literacy.

Summary

Redcar and Cleveland College, part of the Education Training Collective Group, operates in an area of social deprivation with lower-than-average academic performance. Our learners, like many FE learners, struggle with literacy which frequently inhibits progress in their subject specialist area. Additionally, learners often have low self-esteem, a history of underachievement and many barriers to learning.

This report discusses approaches the project team used to build on previous work, extending the project to vocational teachers seeking to improve their learners' vocational literacy. The English team worked with vocational teachers enabling them to gain skills, knowledge and understanding of phonics-based approaches to use with their learners to enhance, not only their literacy skills but, importantly, their confidence and self-belief.

As a result of the project, vocational teachers introduced phonics-based approaches into their teaching practice, leading to improved learner performance. Additionally, they extended their own skills and confidence in embedding literacy practices.

Rationale

Our intention was to address several significant issues:

- As one vocational teacher stated; "poor English skills is the biggest barrier holding our learners back". Therefore, we wanted to enhance vocational learners' literacy skills and limited confidence through introducing phonics-based approaches. Many of these learners have poor attendance at English sessions, are reluctant to engage in activities and sometimes display inappropriate behaviour. They often fail to understand the relevance of good literacy skills and over-rely on teachers or Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). They are generally reluctant to use vocational terminology both orally and, especially, in written work, which further inhibits progress.
- We were aware that many vocational teachers lack confidence, not only in supporting their learners' literacy skills, but in their own literacy abilities. By introducing them to phonics-based principles and practices, and supporting them throughout the project, we intended to enable them to confidently

embed literacy into their teaching so they could support learners more effectively and improve their practice.

- Through encouraging and supporting increased collaboration between the English and vocational teams, we intended to ensure learning was relevant to learners' needs, whilst strengthening relationships between the teams which would be mutually beneficial.
- Lastly, partaking in the project would support the team's personal and professional development, encouraging them to recognise and undertake educational research as part of their everyday teaching.

Approach

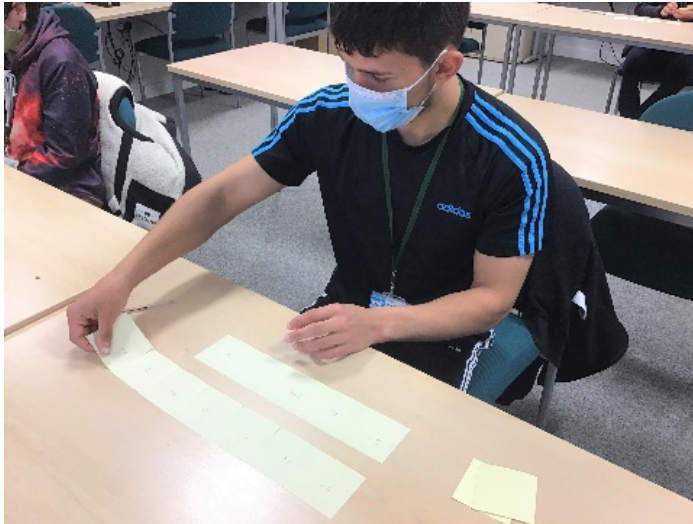
We followed an Action Research process (McNiff, 2017):

- We reviewed learning from OTLA 6 (2020), selecting a project team of English teachers and vocational teachers from Early Years, Hair and Beauty and Sports Studies. We later included Foundation Learning and the English Progress Coach, as engagement from some vocational teachers was limited.
- An external expert, Tricia Millar, provided specialist training, introducing vocational teachers to phonics-based approaches and their potential for improving learners' literacy. Tricia provided support throughout the project.
- Vocational teachers then observed experienced English teachers using phonics-based activities. This was reinforced by a buddying system with English teachers continuing to support vocational colleagues.
- Vocational teachers gradually introduced phonics-based activities into their classrooms, often with the English teacher present to support them. Shared observations and meetings continued with vocational teachers gradually gaining confidence.



- Activities were multi-sensory: Words were broken into syllables, with learners encouraged to say them aloud (Appendix 2). Learners next wrote the syllables onto individual whiteboards in separate word boxes of one grapheme per box, pronouncing the sounds as they wrote, aiding recognition of grapheme-sound relationships. They were encouraged to identify parts of the words spelled correctly, building confidence with the realisation they perhaps only needed to improve limited areas. We saw recognising success and building confidence as crucial in motivating learners to continue with the activities.

- Grapheme tiles and sticky notes were used to support word building (Appendix 3). Learners moved the tiles to form whole words which reinforced grapheme-sound relationships. Picture matching activities (Appendix 4) enabled learners to understand the meaning of words as well their spelling and pronunciation. Exit tickets and learner interviews were used to gain learner feedback.



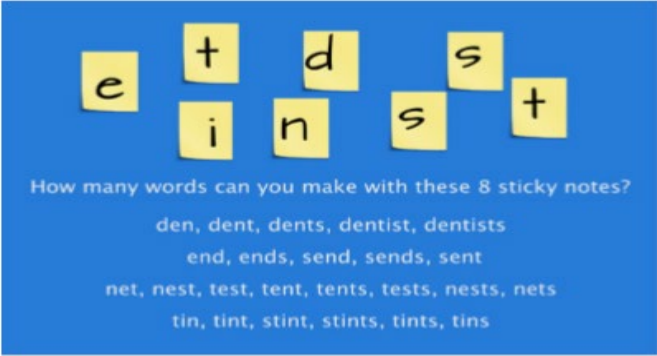
- New words were slowly introduced with teachers linking new to previous learning. Learners began to recognise spelling patterns, letter sequences and useful prefixes and suffixes, using examples from the Phonics Toolkit (see below, ETF, 2019) as a model. They were also encouraged to keep personal glossaries of key words appropriate to their learning.

Activity: Word stretching

Word stretching activity: write each grapheme /d/e/n/t/i/s/t/ on a separate small sticky note. Give a set to each learner or pair of learners. Ask them to build the word 'den'.


Change den to **dent**; change dent to **dents**; change dents to **dentist** – think about the sounds as you're moving the sticky notes around. It works best if learners are saying the sounds as they're working. Have them write each word after they've built it. How would they write '**dentists**'?

You can do this type of activity very early on with emergent readers and writers using graphemes and phonemes to build familiar words.



How many words can you make with these 8 sticky notes?

den, dent, dents, dentist, dentists
end, ends, send, sends, sent
net, nest, test, tent, tents, tests, nests, nets
tin, tint, stint, stints, tints, tins

 **Note:** double letters like **zz**, **ll**, and **ss** each go on one sticky note rather than two because they are each a single grapheme.

qu also goes on one sticky note even though it represents two sounds.


- Teachers kept reflective journals to review progress and regularly assessed learners' work to gauge progress (Appendix 5).

Exit ticket

What I learnt from this activity
.....

What I did not understand:
.....

What I need to know:
.....



Professional learning: Evidence of changes in teaching, learning and assessment practices

Most of the vocational teachers were unfamiliar with phonics-based approaches, not having encountered them in their education or teacher training. They initially struggled but appreciated the specialist training and ongoing support they received. They admitted to making a slow start but grew in confidence using the strategies more frequently as an integral part of their teaching sessions. As one teacher stated; "it's good to go out of your comfort zone and be open to new learning". This positive attitude is an essential element of continuing professional development and one the project management team sought to foster.

Several teachers indicated learning new approaches gave them deeper insights into learners' feelings when confronted with new and challenging material and activities, as this was exactly what they were having to do. They were increasingly aware of the importance of avoiding cognitive overload (Sweller, 2010) and gradually building learners' knowledge and understanding to reinforce learning. This has increased teachers' knowledge of their own and learners' learning processes.

The majority felt using phonics-based strategies should be part of every teacher's practice and appreciated the value of taking time to work on spelling and reading issues, rather than pressing on and largely ignoring the problem, hoping the English

team would address it later. This meant they no longer saw teaching of spelling, reading and writing as stand-alone activities or the responsibility of the English team, but as worth integrating into their sessions to promote learners' vocational literacy development. One teacher, in particular, stated he had improved his pronunciation of vocational terms, making the sounds clearer to learners, which helped their spelling.

Teachers believed they had increasing confidence and enthusiasm for teaching, taking part in a research project gave time and space for reflecting on practice and identifying future actions. Additionally, they developed toolkits for supporting learners, actively seeking and listening to their feedback which improved working relationships, increasing learner involvement in the project.

Evidence of improved collaboration and changes in organisational practices

In the hectic world of FE, it is often challenging for colleagues from different teams to meet and work together effectively. Striving to build collaboration and open up channels of communication was a major aim of this project.

English team members, experienced in using phonics-based approaches, provided ongoing support to colleagues. Following initial phonics training, they invited vocational colleagues to visit their classrooms to observe how they embedded phonics activities. They met regularly with vocational teachers, providing advice and guidance. Additionally, English teachers have visited vocational teachers' classrooms to both observe their phonics practice and support learning, which has been mutually beneficial.

This shared practice, although time-consuming, has been integral to the success of the project, enabling vocational teachers to grow in confidence whilst still having support at hand when necessary. Significantly, the process has not been one-sided, as both English and vocational teachers have encountered new teaching strategies and classroom management approaches, gaining insights into how learners can be effectively supported. Learners, too, loved seeing their vocational teachers taking on the role of student. This was particularly apparent when Natalie (Programme Lead) worked with Lee, demonstrating phonics approaches while he looked on and adopted the learner role (See Appendix 5, Teacher Reflection 3)

Team members engaged in both sharing and developing resources and reflective activities, further increasing their professional development and mutual respect. Teaching sessions were planned to reinforce learning, with learners actively encouraged to recall their phonics learning from previous sessions. Team members have become working colleagues, gaining valuable insight into challenges each team faces and how these could be overcome.

The team worked closely with LSAs and Progress Coaches who reinforced individual learning, providing any necessary ongoing support. The team valued this, recognising the importance of teachers and LSAs working effectively, thus consolidating work from our previous OTLA 3 project (ETF, 2018).

Without this active collaboration, continuing support and ongoing encouragement from the English team it is unlikely vocational teachers would have engaged so actively in the project.

Evidence of improvement in learners' achievements, retention and progression

As in our OTLA 6 project, there was concern vocational learners may be unwilling to engage with phonics. Many learners had previously openly expressed their dislike of English and reluctance to attend sessions. The majority lack self-confidence, have had chequered educational histories and many barriers to learning. Aaron, for example, was quite open in stating that he initially hated English and would leave sessions if he thought the work was too hard for him. He is now one of our shining stars, gaining many skills and qualifications and is only too willing to share his learning and enthusiasm for English with others (see Case Study, Appendix 6).



Another major success story belongs to Kirsty who has undergone a transformation since coming to college. She initially lacked self-belief, was withdrawn, extremely anxious and reluctant to put pen to paper. After working with phonics-based approaches over the last two years, and receiving support, she is hardly recognisable as the same individual. She has grown in confidence, actively contributes to lessons and, above all, enjoys her literacy work. So much so that she has now won a national Talent for Writing Award and her work is to be published in a Young Writers' Anthology (See Appendix 6).

Learners generally enjoyed the activities provided and now see them as an integral and important part of vocational sessions. Foundation Learners, for example, have demanded more challenging work from their teacher, a very different attitude from the beginning of the project (See Appendix 5, Example 3). Early Years learners have shared their new learning with colleagues in placement, enjoying being able to demonstrate their enhanced understanding of phonics. They too asked for more information resulting in Rebecca (Programme Deputy) leading an additional information session for them (Appendix 7). Sports Studies learners, who need to learn complex terminology have also benefitted:

"Discussion really helped my understanding and was made simpler to take in and remember".

"The thing helped me the most is when we used post-it notes to break the spelling down...made me able to spell the words more easily"

It is especially pleasing that learners now utilise their new learning in other classroom sessions, recalling and applying earlier learning from phonics-based activities. Their teachers encouraged them to do this and it has paid dividends with learners now applying previous learning to new experiences. They are much more willing to 'have a go' at spelling new words and more open to constructive criticism. This is especially aided by developmental, supportive formative feedback from their teachers.

Teachers believe phonics activities have helped learners' concentration, as they have become more active classroom participants, often supportively challenging each other – especially true of Sports learners who enjoyed an element of competition.

Learning from this project

Despite numerous challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, college closures and engaging learners in online learning, we believe we have made significant progress, enabling learners to make progress not only in English, as evidenced by examples of learners' work (Appendix 8) but in their vocational studies too. Additionally, vocational teachers are developing their ability to introduce meaningful English activities into their sessions.

Key learning points include:

- The importance of building on and enhancing project work previously undertaken, ensuring it continues to be used in the organisation to the benefit of all.
- The value of including a range of colleagues and subject specialisms in project work. The project has led to greater collaboration between teams, enabling teachers to actively engage in research, thus enhancing their personal and professional practice. This provided fresh insight into learners' needs, enhancing learning and cross-college collaboration. It was unfortunate some vocational teachers failed to significantly engage with the project; an opportunity relished by some. This may be attributable to the consequences arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, but more likely from vocational teachers' perceived lack of English skills, their unfamiliarity with phonics-based approaches and lack of confidence in using them. They did not have the same knowledge base as the maths and English teachers who took part in OTLA 6 and needed a great deal more support.
- These realisations clearly indicated further work is necessary to enable vocational teachers to build their skills and confidence. Consequently, a new coaching approach was piloted later in the project with the Project Lead working closely with a Foundation Studies teacher. This was particularly successful and will be a model to take the project forward in the next academic year. (See Appendix 9).
- It has become increasingly apparent that introducing and embedding phonics-based approaches requires time and commitment to enable the approaches to become part of both learners' and teachers' practice. This is evident from the learners whose long involvement with phonics-based approaches has led to newfound confidence, increased enthusiasm for learning and greater self-belief. They not only actively engage in learning activities, but now support peers struggling with the new, unfamiliar approaches. Similarly, teachers, who began using phonics-based approaches in our previous project, now successfully mentor their vocational colleagues further enriching their professional development.
- It has been challenging to tackle learners' entrenched spelling habits but, by persevering with the strategies, they are improving and showing less reliance on

others. Learners are slowly developing their strategies, gaining confidence in using and correctly spelling vocational terminology, rather than using simpler, non-vocational words.

- Significant learning includes an increasing awareness of the need to build learners' confidence, recognise their successes and ensure they receive the positive formative feedback so integral to their continuing engagement with the phonics approaches (Appendix 10).

We recognise there is much more work to be done to enable vocational teachers to enhance their ability to support learners' literacy development. This must be done through planned, regular, on-going support, similar to that which has paid dividends with our long-term phonics learners. We intend to continue our work in the next academic year to firmly embed and enrich the achievements we have made to date.

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Appendix 1 – The project team

Project Role	Name	Job Role
Project Lead	Natalie Chapman	Programme Area Lead for Maths and English
Deputy Lead	Rebecca Maynard	Course Leader for English
Project team	Graham Timms	Lecturer in Sports Studies
	Mark Watts	Lecturer in Public Services
	Emma Fletcher	Lecturer in Hair and Beauty
	Karen Chaytor	Course Leader for hair and Beauty
	Lee Bateman	Foundation Studies Teacher
	Lee Boynton	English Progress Coach
	Hannah Hill	Lecturer in Early Years
	Irene Walker	Lecturer in Early Years
	Catherine McPartland	Project Support
Project Mentor	Kirsty Powell (ccConsultancy)	
Research Group Lead	Tricia Millar (That Reading Thing)	

Appendix 2 – Syllable Breakdown

Examples of vocational terms broken into syllables to aid spelling

Work in the Sports Studies Classroom

polysaccharide

syllables: **pol-y-sacch-ar-ide** or **pol-y-sacch-a-ride**

graphemes: **p o l y s a c c h a r i d e** or **p o l y s a c c h a r i d e**

morphemes: **poly** – many **sacchar** – sugar **-ide** – a chemistry ending

monosaccharide oligosaccharide

arteriosclerosis

syllables: **ar-te-ri-o-scler-o-sis** or **ar-ter-i-o-scle-ro-sis**

graphemes: **a r t e r i o s c l e r o s i s** or **a r t e r i o s c l e r o s i s**

morphemes: **arterio** – artery – arterial

scler – hard (or **sclero**)

-osis - medical ending – state of disease

subscapularis

syllables: **sub-scap-u-lar-is** or **sub-scap-u-la ris**

graphemes: **s u b s c a p u l a r i s** or **s u b s c a p u l a r i s**

morphemes: **sub** – under, beneath **scapular** – from scapula **-is** - Latin ending

sarcopenia

syllables: **sar-co-pen-i-a**

graphemes: **s a r c o p e n i a**

morphemes: **sarco** - flesh (or **sarc** before a vowel) **penia** – lack of

leukopenia – lack of white blood cells

Appendix 3 – Using Grapheme Tiles

Using grapheme tiles to word build in the vocational classroom

g	ar	d	e
n	t	r	ow
el	f	er	ti
l	is	al	ci
i	c	o	m
p	o	st	ar
s	a	v	b
b	e	c	ue
able	d	b	i
de	a	u	re

Appendix 4 – Picture Matching Activity

Picture/Word matching activity in the vocational classroom



Gravel Compost Barbecue Fertiliser Solar
Biodegradable Agriculture Garden Artificial Trowel

Appendix 5 – Reflective Journal Entries

Teacher Reflections 1

OTLA 7 English Project 20/21

Briefly describe the activity you did with the learner(s)

In discussions with learners studying on the Supporting Teaching and learning Course level 2, that they were unsure about such as Phoneme and Grapheme. As the students support learning in schools it was imperative they understood these terms in practice.

- I discussed the student's difficulties with Natalie and we discussed beginning with underpinning the students' knowledge of key words and guide them to make a glossary to be used in their practice.
- To prepare for the activity I made some entry and exit cards. The entry and exit cards would allow me to identify each students' individual understanding at the beginning of the session and then gauge their learning within the session.
- I began the session asking students to complete the entry card.
- Next, I gave the students a matching activity. The activity was all cut up and the students needed to identify key words and then find the matching definition.
- Once the students had completed the activity, I gave each one a copy of a completed grid for them to assess how many definitions they had match successfully.
- The student could then keep the grid to use in their practice in the setting
- The students then took part in a quiz/discussions where I randomly asked them key descriptors and they gave me a definition.
- Finally the students completed an exit ticket to confirm their learning within the session.
- Students also asked if they could have more sessions which focused on phonics.

What happened as a result of the activity?

(e.g. Was the activity successful? Did learners engage? Did learners make any improvements in their spelling and English skills as a result of the activities? Did learners' understanding of vocational terminology improve?)

- On reflection the activity was extremely successful on a few levels.
- All the exit tickets confirmed that every student had learnt key terms within the session. Within the quiz the student had been able to give definition with no support which they had not been able to do at the beginning of the session.
- It was completed in a supportive environment, so the students were not embarrassed if they were unsure about a word/definition.

- At the end of the activity all students confirmed they would like more support in phonics in practice. To extend their knowledge and understanding.
- The students extended their English skills.
- The students extended their vocabulary.
- Improved the students' knowledge and their practice when supporting students.

What evidence do you have to back up your comments?

- Within the session I copied evidence of the entry and exit tickets and kept a copy of the activity I provided for them.

Do you feel more confident about supporting learners' spelling of vocational vocabulary?

How/give some examples of this?

- I do feel more confident now about supporting learners in their vocational vocabulary.
- I was not taught the vocational vocabulary at school either, so this also reinforced my knowledge and understanding.
- More confident has improved
- I have made a resource that can be used numerous times in practice, and I can share it with other teachers.
- I may share this activity with other groups to enhance their spelling and vocational vocabulary.

What have learners said about the activities? Give some examples of their comments.

- The student comments are on the exit tickets:
- They enjoyed the discussion, and it helped their understanding.
- They wanted more session on phonics.
- Making the activity into a game helped them and took the pressure off, achieving the correct answers.

What are you going to do next?

(e.g. How will you follow up on this activity? How will you embed the learning? What will you do differently next time?)

At first each week we will revisit the key vocabulary. To ensure all students understand.

I will give students activities for them to identify phonemes etc within texts.

One of the English tutors has offered to visit the class and complete a phonic session with the students.

Next time I will embed these activities within the Literacy units I teach all students to confirm and extend their understanding.

Teacher Reflection 2

Action Research Diary

Activity

Aim: To embed vocational terminology into my English session, I created a phonics activity to use in the English session as a starter activity. I based this around gardening as this is the topic that the learners are moving onto in term three.

I created a work booklet based on the following words:

Garden

Trowel

Fertiliser

Artificial

Barbecue

Solar

Gravel

Compost

Biodegradable

Agriculture

The booklet included the list of these words, a photo matching activity to aid learners understanding of

the words and a definition sheet with space for learners to research and define any words that were unusual to them.

What did I hope to achieve?

I hoped to not only introduce some new terminology to these learners that links to their vocational course and their upcoming project but to also encourage learners to use phonics as a spelling strategy to help with their spelling skills.

What actually happened?

I began the task with a spelling test on these 10 words. The learners had not seen the words prior to

this task and were told that I was checking their starting points before the activity.

Learners then worked with their LSA to mark their spellings and give themselves a score.

I then instructed the learners to work through the booklet completing the definition task and the matching activity. Once this was completed, I provided the learners with numerous graphemes cards to use to spell each word. I include a variety of graphemes cards ensuring that there were ones that didn't need to be used as these learners have previous knowledge on phonics as a spelling strategy so I wanted the task to stretch and challenge them.

Some learners worked either with myself or their LSA to establish the number of syllables in each word and then the sounds, matching the appropriate graphemes to these sounds and correctly spelling each word.

I noticed that two learners (AH and KS) were very confident with the activity. These two learners have previous phonics knowledge and have been using phonics as a spelling strategy in English sessions, maths sessions and their vocational sessions. They were able to independently identify the number of syllables in each word, the sounds and the letters that made these sounds and consequently, spelt all the words correctly using the grapheme cards.

The other learners in the group who have little phonics knowledge required a lot more assistance with the tasks but it was refreshing to see AH and KS being able to work so independently.

Did it have the effect I hoped for?

The learners clearly gained some new knowledge from the terminology which will hopefully be helpful for their vocational module.

All learners are now aware of syllables and the different ways to identify how many syllables are in a word – this was new to some learners.

Some learners were able to gain a new spelling strategy to use when they are unable to spell words. For other learners, (AH and KS), this was a refresher of phonics however it is evident to see that they are already using their phonics skills independently to spell words in all their sessions.

What did learner/s think? (Use their comments and feedback).

Natalie to conduct interview with learners

What next? (will you adapt the activity for future sessions?)

I will continue to use phonics as a spelling strategy within my teaching.

I have also created some grapheme cards for the hair and beauty department so they can use this spelling strategy with their learners.

I am also delivering CPD on phonics to learners on a teaching assistant course.

Any other comments?

N/A

Teacher Reflections Example 3

27/05/21

Briefly describe the activity you did with the learner(s)

I picked three words which we have been using on a regular basis (Communicate, concentration & assessment) this followed on from the week before using similar words such as communication and enrichment.

I got the students to say the words out loud and to count how many syllables they could hear. The students would do this by tapping the table or by putting their hand under their chin. The students would then split up the word they were spelling out into the number of syllables and attempt to spell the word.

What happened as a result of the activity?

(e.g., Was the activity successful? Did learners engage? Did learners make any improvements in their spelling and English skills as a result of the activities? Did learners' understanding of vocational terminology improve?)

The activity was successful as the students took on board what was said and used the information and techniques used in previous lessons to complete the spellings. If the students got a spelling wrong, this would be minimal and by going through that particular word again the students would see their error and correct the spelling.

The student's spellings have improved of the last couple of weeks and they are thinking more about trying to get the right spelling rather than just putting down something that sounds like the word.

What evidence do you have to back up your comments?

Improvements of the student's spellings in their work.

Do you feel more confident about supporting learners' spelling of vocational vocabulary? How/give some examples of this?

I was not confident at first in supporting the learners as this is a new experience for myself and I have only been working on the project for four weeks. However, once Natalie came into the classroom and showed me how to deliver the programme in different ways then I felt a lot more confident in what I needed to do.

The students seem to of picked up the way of how to use techniques to spell out the words.

What have learners said about the activities? Give some examples of their comments.

The students enjoyed the activities and are happy to do this each week.
One of the students said it was “too easy and wanted harder words”.

What are you going to do next?

(e.g., How will you follow up on this activity? How will you embed the learning?
What will you do differently next time?)

I have only been using the programme for four weeks so I am going to carry this on into the next academic year and the students are happy to also carry on with this.

I will have more confidence in myself as I know what I am doing and I have more time to complete this.

Appendix 6 – Case Studies

Case Study 1

Aaron is an 18-year-old learner with dyslexia and autism who has attended the college for several years and has made significant progress since beginning working with phonics. Aaron had a chequered school history, leaving unable to read and with very low self-confidence and poor motivation. His early days in college, where he began a Foundation Studies course, were very difficult for him and sometimes for those working with him. His reading and writing were poor meaning he struggled with his course work and with settling into college. He frequently displayed challenging behaviour, becoming frustrated when he could not easily achieve tasks or follow the concepts discussed in teaching sessions. He would often storm out of classrooms, openly stating he hated English and would only attend sessions reluctantly.

However, things changed dramatically when his teachers introduced him to phonics-based approaches, using fun activities in class to introduce the approaches. Last year on the OTLA 6 project he worked with his teachers and a supportive Learning Support Assistant on the basics of phonics. By the end of the year, he enjoyed coming to classes, was able to break words into syllables and could understand and apply the ideas he had been introduced to, for example using grapheme tiles and word building activities. Although still quiet, Aaron grew in confidence and enjoyed his English classes, stating it was now his favourite subject.



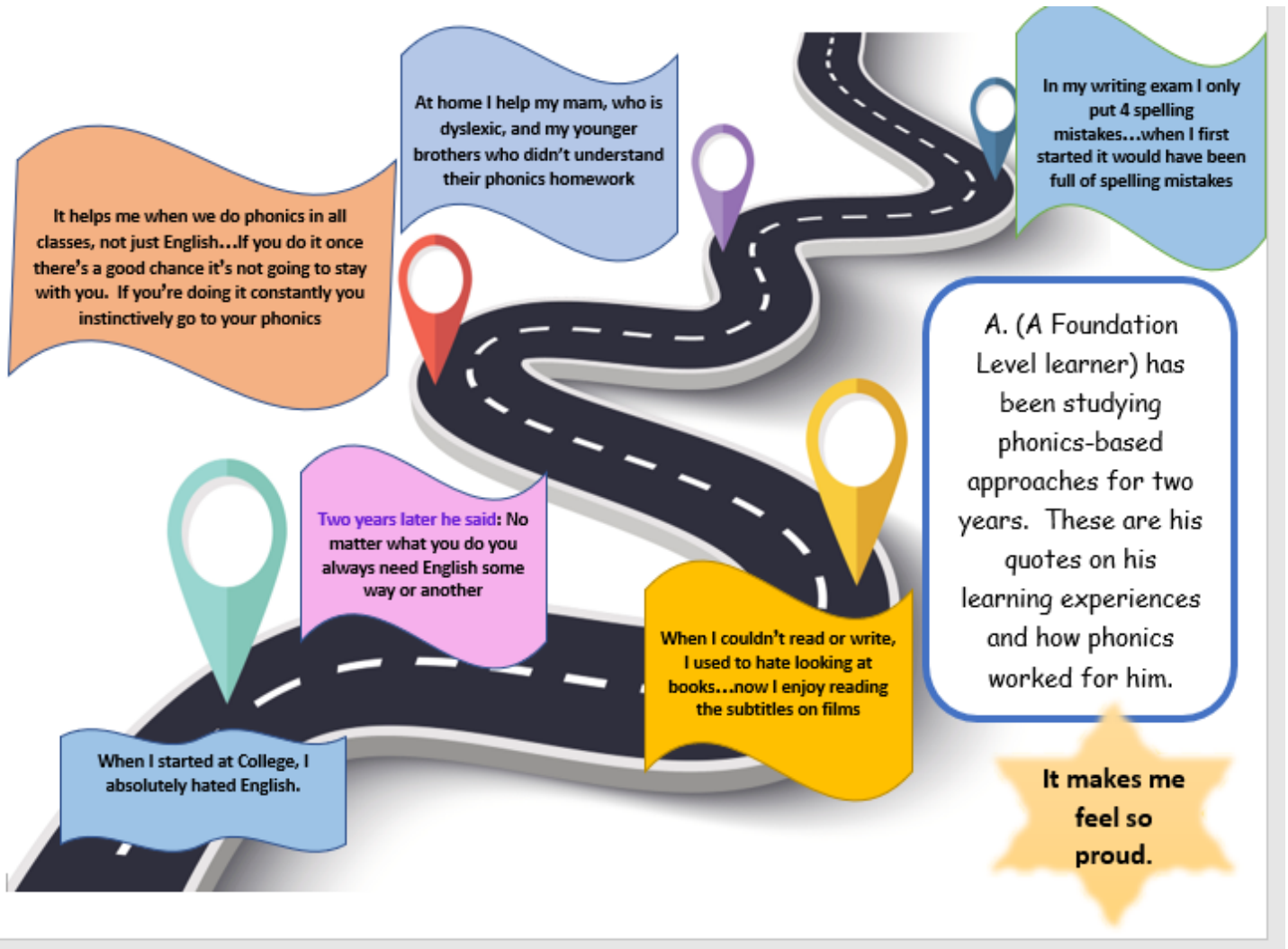
This year, on OTLA 7, he has continued his progress, surprising everyone, including himself, about how well he is doing. He has continued to apply phonics-based approaches in his learning and is so confident now that he is supporting his classmates, many of whom are new to phonics-based approaches. Additionally, during the COVID lockdown he supported his younger brothers with their school work, showing them the phonics-based approaches he was using, which enabled them to understand the English tasks set by their teacher.

His reading has developed exponentially and he enjoys challenging himself to read film sub-titles, which is something he would never previously have contemplated or attempted. He can see the benefit of the skills he has learned in other aspects of his life too as reading has helped in his leisure time gaming activities.

Overall, Aaron has been of our major success stories; something he readily acknowledges. Confidence and pride in what he has achieved over the last two years shines out and is a joy to behold. His improvement is due to the slow, steady and consistent embedding of phonics-based teaching approaches into his lessons, his teachers' support and encouragement and his own persistence and growing resilience. He is now prepared to stick at tasks, showing a determination to succeed which was previously missing. He readily acknowledges that working on phonics-based approaches over a long period has really helped him and given him an

advantage over his peers who have not had phonics-based approaches to support them in reading, writing and spelling.

Aaron's Journey



Examples of Aaron's writing and spelling

September 2020

Quarantine didnt effect me much abt Pat
sron not being abul to see my frens or
my mums ultrasound. I enjoyd the
pes ~~and~~ quiet i got sron not having to
leve my rom and eat I cud loc my ses
in my rom ~~and~~ hot wure abwt Coley. Ods
I got things dah in my own time.

Spellings:

- didn't

- effect

- allowed

- friends

Thank you for sharing
your lockdown
experience with
me Aaron.

Remember to use the
mini whiteboards
to help you with
your spellings 😊

An example of Aaron's work
in September with numerous
spelling and grammatical
errors

Tuesday 18th May
National Teen Self Esteem Month

Low self-
esteem

Healthy self-
esteem

Thinking your rubbish.

You are good.

Not able to do
anything.

Find the way you

consider.

Always messing up.

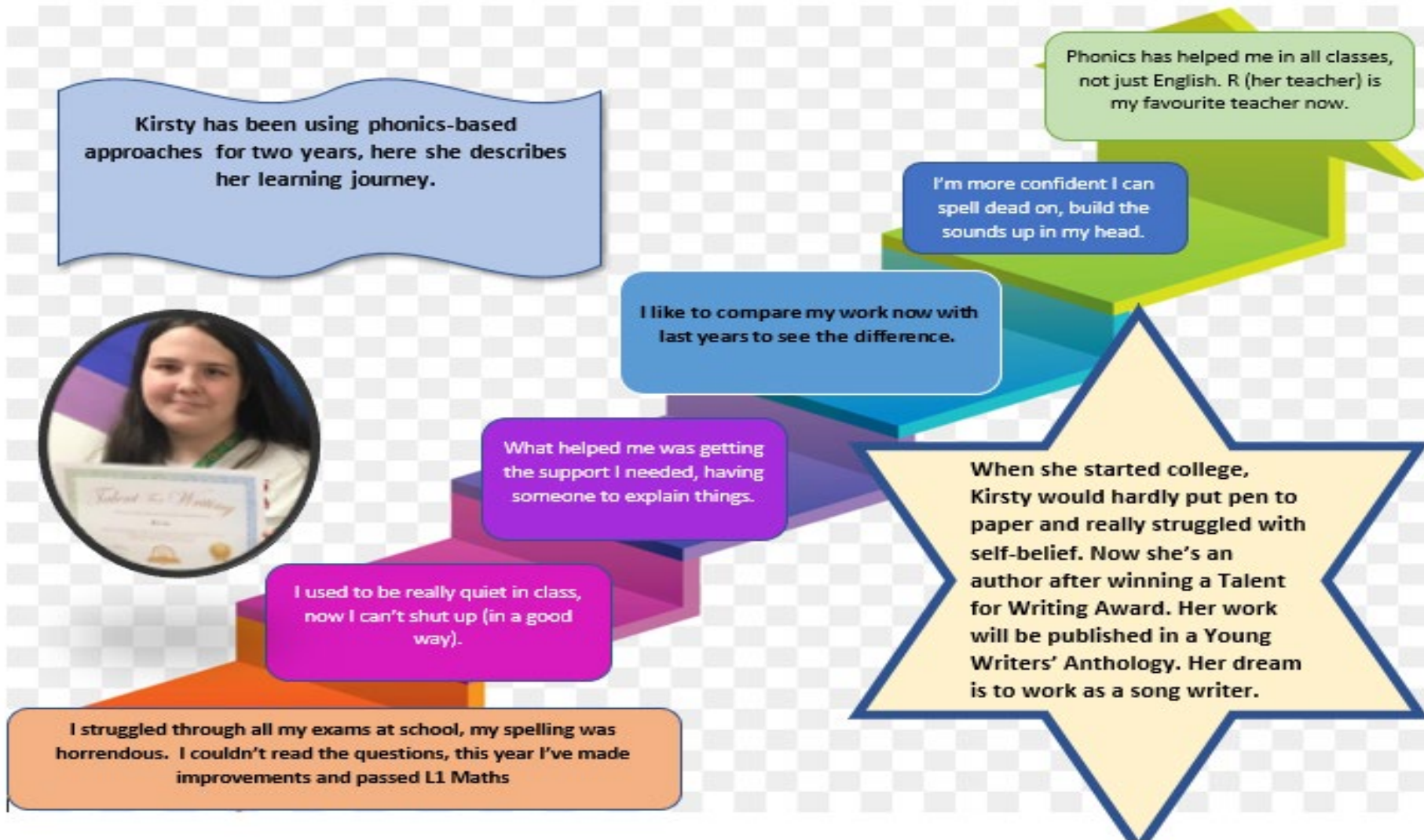
Everyone hates you.

Tell them what you like about them.

May 2021


This example of Aaron's from May 2021 shows far fewer spelling errors and his handwriting has also improved.

Case Study 2 – Kirsty



Appendix 7 – Phonics Information Session


Using Phonics as a Spelling Strategy




1

★

Overview

- What do I mean by phonics?
 - Words are made up from small units of sound called phonemes. Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes that make up each word. This helps children to learn to read words and to spell words.
- Key words you need to know:
 - Syllable
 - How many sounds are in the word
 - Phoneme
 - The smallest unit of sound e.g. ant
 - Grapheme
 - The written symbol which represents these sounds e.g. chin 

2

The first steps

- Identifying the number of syllables

ACTIVITY: Syllables
Sort the following into 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 syllable words. The answers are at the end of the chapter.

remain sweater lady October sea shape mountain
pronunciation as said fantastic through idea establishment

Syllables	Words
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Appendix 6 Phonics Information Session

3

Activity: Syllables (answers)

Syllables	Words
1	remain as said
2	swallow sea through
3	lady fantastic idea
4	shape mountain establishment
5	October pronunciation

4


Thinking about sounds

- One grapheme can represent many sounds

ea

beach bread break

5



6

Breaking up words

- Once you have identified the number of syllables, you can start to work on the sounds (phonemes)
- Split the sounds up into graphemes:
- Sister, cracker and winter

s	i	s	t	e
c	r	a	c	k

7



8

Appendix 8 – Examples of Learners' Work

Examples of learners' progress since beginning phonics work

Tony, A Foundation Studies Learner

Tuesday 22nd September 2020

prison break ^{This should be a capital letter or its the name show}

I like to watch prison break because it is a good series.
They break out of the prison. The characters are called
Mickel Scatfield and Lincoln. Mickel breaks out because his brother
is going to die in a electric chair and then they look for
a way out. Mickel smuggles peppercorns out all over the world.

I think prison break is good because it's eye catching and
there is not going on. I think people should watch it.
people

series

break

characters

chair

Head of complaints

44 west view

midwichebrough

TS1 4 92 1

effort that you have

put into this letter as you have gone above and beyond and taken your time!

please correct the underlined spelling Dear Mr Moore Mistake and add them to your glossary.

LM 23/02/21

I am writing to you regarding a terrible experience I have recently had at your restaurant, on Saturday 20th February 2021.

Firstly, we had to ask the staff to clean the table as it was filthy, which they ~~did~~ complained about. Additionally, the table that they sat us at was too small for how many people ^{SP} were in our party.

Secondly, the food was very expensive for what we ordered. ~~Next for a low cost~~ we could have gotten a better quality meal for a lot less!

Thirdly, we had to wait a shocking 45 long time for our food when it finally did arrive the food was ^{SP} freezing and inedible!


Because of our experience I would like to see the restaurant

Appendix 9 – New Coaching Approach


This was introduced following the realisation that on-going support is needed to successfully introduce phonics-based approaches, as opposed to one-off training events.




- Attend phonics information session.




- Observe experienced phonics practitioner's classroom practice.



- Work with the experienced phonics practitioner to prepare bespoke resources and activities for the vocational classroom.

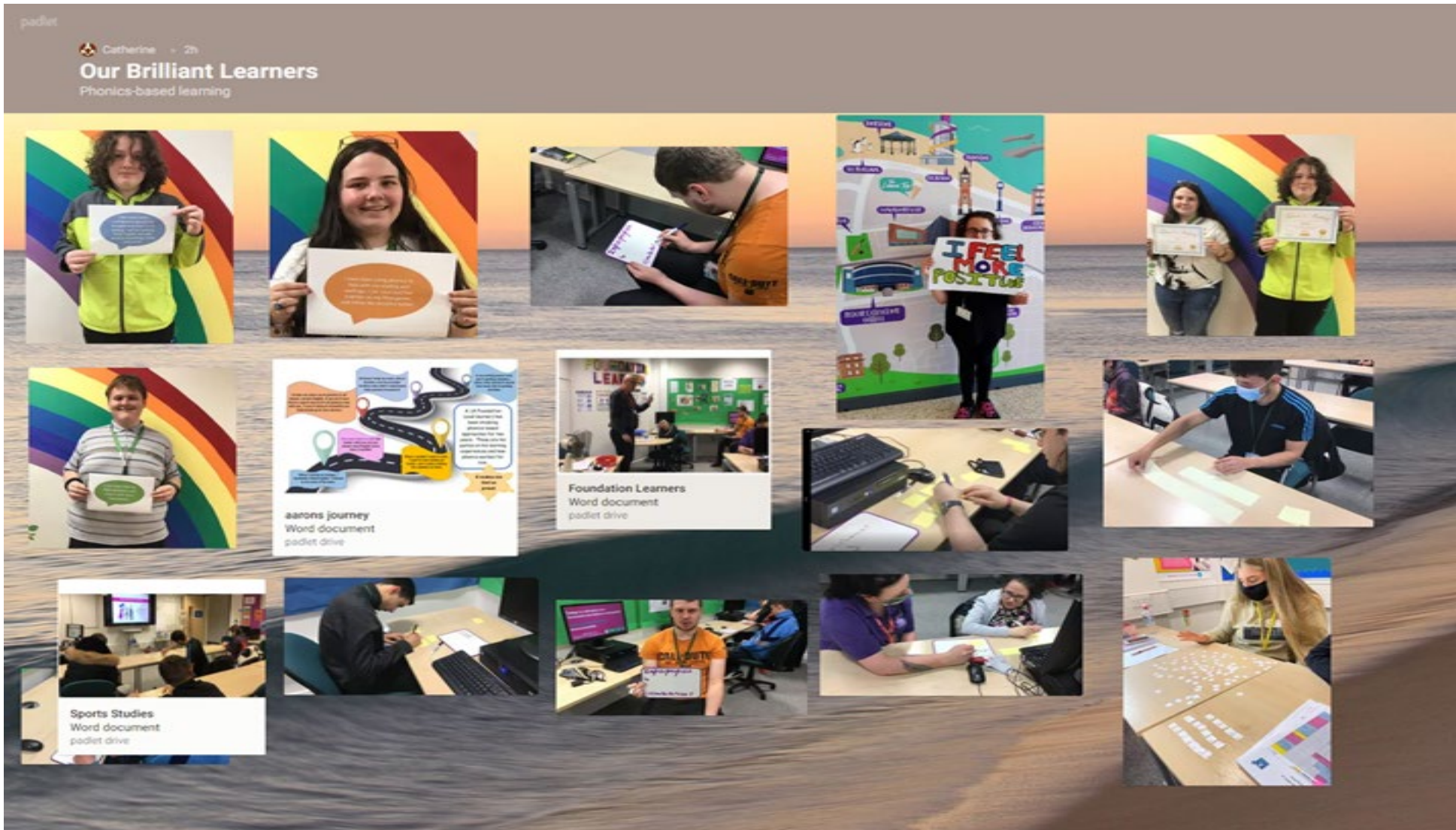


- Introduce phonics-based activities in own classroom, supported by an experienced phonics practitioner. Collaboratively reflect on outcomes of activities using learner feedback and focussed discussion.



- Continue to use phonics-based activities in the vocational classroom and receive regular on-going mentoring support from the experienced phonics practitioner.

Appendix 10 – Our Brilliant Learners



OUR PARTNERS



CLAIRE COLLINS
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ccConsultancy, That Reading Thing and Skills Digital are delivering this programme on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation.

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THANK YOU

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