

Improving reading comprehension and Inference Training:

Leicester City's Inference Training materials cover:

- Key barriers to comprehension
- How to undertake diagnostic conversations with individual pupils
- How to deliver a group intervention to boost comprehension
- Classroom strategies to support comprehension

The Leicester City Inference Intervention has been evaluated by Professor Greg Brooks as highly effective in the 2007, 2013 and 2016 editions of What Works.

The materials are appropriate for KS2 and KS3 pupils, but we are also able to offer training around comprehension development for Reception and KS1 staff.

Professional development

Our training materials contain engaging, professional development resources for school staff. Training sessions aim to improve adult awareness of the challenges some readers face across the curriculum, so that adults feel better equipped to help. It also includes a toolkit to have diagnostic conversations with pupils about texts to gain quick insights into what strategies pupils are using and neglecting.

Class teaching and learning strategies

The training draws on a range of up to date research and best practice regarding the class and group strategies likely to improve reading comprehension and enjoyment. Separate sections of the training materials address issues at KS1, KS2 and KS3. In secondary schools the training explores ways all subject teachers can work together to improve students' metacognitive strategies across the curriculum which particularly benefits Pupil Premium students.

A group intervention of 24 lessons-Inference Training

The training offers a group intervention for pupils who need extra support to recalibrate how they read. **Inference Training**, based on the work of Yuill and Oakhill, involves a teacher/teaching assistant having "instructional conversations" to help make comprehension strategies explicit. Four pupils work with an adult for 40 minutes, twice a week for 24 lessons. Through reading and interactive discussions, the group:

- Predict, ask questions/ think 'I wonder', and read on to find out
- Connect their background knowledge to the text
- Identify words/phrases they don't understand and use repair strategies
- Identify key words and phrases in the text and make connections between them to build a gist
- Generate inferences and the ability to infer word meanings
- Visualise important parts of a text and share personal responses to it

The materials

Our training materials include whiteboard resources for primary and secondary schools to use and a manual containing 75 text extracts with support notes for adults. The fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts include award winning titles which have been carefully chosen to offer rich conversation opportunities.

Impact

The latest pupil impact data from 899 pupils in KS2 and KS3 shows that during Inference Training sessions, most pupils made over 12 months gain in reading comprehension age over the 12-week intervention.

Training for Schools

Leicester City Council have several accredited Inference trainers who deliver training centrally in Leicester and out in schools locally and Nationally. We also hold a database of regional trainers who can deliver training in schools on a local level.

The grid below outlines a menu of training which can be tailored to meet the needs of the school. **Item 1 is an essential element included in all training packages**, but schools can select other components to meet their individual needs.

Training Menu	Approximate time	Training Menu	Approximate time
1. Characteristics of and barriers to reading comprehension	90 minutes	4. Classroom strategies to boost reading comprehension and enjoyment	Two 90-minute twilights
2. Diagnostic conversation training followed by trainer/teachers working with pupils to complete diagnostic conversations	Up to 4 hours (Or items 1 and 2 can be undertaken in one day)	5. Helping pupils prepare for Y6 Reading SATs through whole school collaboration	90-minute twilight
3. How to deliver Inference Training - the group intervention	Half day (for staff delivering the group intervention)	6. Follow up/coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For staff delivering the group intervention• And whole class teaching with trainer/class teachers	Half day Half day

Leicester City can also deliver twilight sessions to support Reception/KS1 staff with early comprehension development and are developing materials for use with KS4 pupils. Contact michelle.deeming@leicester.gov.uk for more details.

Costs of Inference Training

The costs of the training are agreed locally. Schools undertaking the training will require at least one Inference Training manual @ £65 (plus postage), which contains 75 texts and resources. Once one manual has been purchased schools can order additional sets of the texts for the intervention @£15, via their trainer.

It is useful for schools to know what the costs per pupil are for any intervention used. An Inference Training programme is 24 lessons, each taking 40 minutes. We estimate **the cost of teaching** the group intervention per pupil is around £130 if delivered by a Level 2/3 TA or £300 per pupil if delivered by a teacher. (Adults need 40 minutes teaching time for each lesson and 20 minutes for planning/ recording, so allow 22, one-hour adult sessions for a complete programme).

Who to contact

If you would like more information about Inference Training; would like details of central training or would like to find a trainer who can deliver sessions in your school contact:

National Trainer: Michelle Deeming

Email: michelle.deeming@leicester.gov.uk

Phone: 0116 454 4650

Address: **SEND Support Service, New Parks House**, Pindar Road, Leicester. LE3 9RN

Acknowledgements and feedback from schools

Our professional development materials and class teaching approaches are based on a wide range of research and best practice including: *Almasi and Fullerton, Clarke, Truelove, Hulme and Snowling, Didau, Cain, Oakhill and Elbro, Gunning, Keene and Zimmerman, Tovani, National Curriculum 2014 and OfSTED*. The group intervention: Inference Training was adapted from the work of *Yuill and Oakhill* by Tony Whatmuff, with acknowledgement and thanks to colleagues.

"The importance of evidence based practice in education is receiving increased recognition. Inference Training has a firm grounding in both the research into reading comprehension and the theoretical bases of comprehension. The programme provides sound and innovative ways to support children's reading comprehension and teaches them strategies that can be applied not only in literacy lessons, but across the curriculum."

Jane Oakhill

'You then set about training every teacher to be accomplished in teaching pupils the skills of reading comprehension. As a result, pupils are now practising these skills in all their lessons. These improvements in pupils' reading skills have made a positive difference to their abilities as writers.'

KS3 /4 Academy, Northwich Ofsted, May 2016

"The training was outstanding. It contained a practical and overarching framework to help staff understand the challenges some students face in reading comprehension across the KS3 curriculum.

It also outlined practical classroom strategies to impact on student attainment."

Mick O'Leary, The Compton School, London. Director of Teaching School (Associate Head Teacher)

"The training was a great success and every member of staff made a point of saying it was very useful and practical and were keen to implement it in their own classrooms."

Bangabandhu Primary, Tower Hamlets, London. Amanda Drummond (Lead Teacher-Literacy and Language)

(networker article)

Further reading about comprehension:

- Almasi, J. F. & Fullerton, S. K. (2012). *Teaching strategic processes in reading ((2nd edition)*. New York: Guilford Press
- Cain, K. (2010). *Reading development and difficulties*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Cole A.D, (2003) *Knee to Knee, Eye to Eye* Heinemann
- Keene, E. O. & Zimmermann, S. (2007). *The mosaic of thought: The power of comprehension strategy instruction (2nd edition)*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Kispal, A. (2008). *Effective teaching of inference skills for reading: Literature (google and on net) review (DCSF research report 031)*. London: DCSF.
- Oakhill, J. V., & Cain, K. (2012). The precursors of reading ability in young readers: Evidence from a four-year longitudinal study. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 16(2), 91-121.
- TES Pro 25 Jan 2013 Pupil Literacy? The plot thickens
- Tovani, C. (2000). *I read it, but I don't get it: Comprehension strategies for adolescent readers*. Portland, M E: Stenhouse Publishers