

# Pori Drwy Stori Nursery (Oracy) Evaluation 2018-19 Executive Summary



## The programme

Pori Drwy Stori Nursery (Oracy) (PDSN) is a bilingual programme designed to support oracy outcomes and parental engagement in learning for children aged 3-4 in Wales, within the Foundation Phase. It is delivered in schools and settings to children in their last two terms of Nursery. PDSN focuses on developing children's oracy skills through sharing rhymes and songs, and through reading for pleasure and sharing books. The programme is based on two sets of resources, each designed to be used in the school/setting and at home over approximately half a term. PDSN is funded by the Welsh Government Education Directorate.

Oracy in the Foundation Phase in Wales includes 'speaking', 'listening', 'discussion and collaboration'. It also involves skills such as developing confidence and attention, and links closely to early speech and language development.

The aims of the PDSN programme are to:

- improve oracy-related outcomes for children;
- increase parents and carers engagement with their child's learning, specifically in relation to activities which support oracy outcomes;
- increase practitioners' knowledge and understanding of, and practice relating to,

how they can improve oracy outcomes for children, especially by engaging parents and carers.



Specific **children's oracy outcomes** were identified by drawing on research evidence and with close reference to the outcomes in the

Foundation Phase Framework. They included: increasing children's recognition of rhythm and rhyme; increasing their confidence to join in with activities and to talk and express themselves; and increasing children's ability to listen and join with rhymes, songs, books and stories. PDSN also aims to increase the amount of time children spend sharing rhymes, songs, books and stories, and their enjoyment of these activities, in both Welsh and English.

Aims relating to **parent and carer engagement in their child's learning** focused on increasing communication between the home and Nursery and supporting a strong home-school/setting link. They also included encouraging behaviours known to support oracy outcomes (e.g. sharing rhymes, songs, books and stories more often; re-reading the same books; talking about books) and increasing enjoyment of these activities.

## The Evaluation

Approximately 10,000 children took part in PDSN during the spring and summer terms of 2018-19. The programme was evaluated by Iaithe and Wavehill between October 2018 and September 2019. The full report can be found at <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/globalassets/resources/research/btc-pori-drwy-stori-nursery-oracy-evaluation-november-2019-final.pdf>

The evaluation was based on a mixed-method approach and engaged parents, children, practitioners, LA and Consortia staff. It used a before and after parent and carer survey with parents and carers of children who had and had not taken part in the programme to

establish a comparison group.

Schools and settings were also asked to provide formal pupil oracy data.

Practitioners delivering the programme took part in telephone interviews and site visits, undertaken by the evaluation team. Site visits included parent interviews/ focus groups, discussion with pupils, observation of PDSN in use and discussion with leadership teams.

To find out more about Pori Drwy Stori visit [www.booktrust.org.uk/poridrwestori](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/poridrwestori)

To discuss the Pori Drwy Stori programme or to find out more about BookTrust's work in Wales, please contact

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## Evaluation: Key findings

### Oracy outcomes

The evaluation found that 'the PDSN programme exerts a modest, positive influence on a wide range of skills for children'. Overall, there were statistically significant improvements to children's oracy related outcomes during the programme period. These included:

- Improvements during the programme period for participating children (most notably in children's expressive language).
- An increase in children's expressive language skills and rhyme recognition, specifically children's ability to express themselves clearly when talking about books, recognition of rhythm and rhyme, increased ability to talk and express themselves, and knowledge of different rhymes and/ or songs.

Findings from practitioner interviews and surveys identified:

- Positive impacts for children including increased confidence, demonstrating good listening skills by joining in, identifying the words that would come next in rhymes, and modelling sharing the rhymes to other children.
- Increased parental awareness of the importance of rhymes and books and stories for developing oracy as a result of the PDSN resources.
- An increase in practitioner understanding of the role that rhymes and songs have in children's oracy development.

Results from focus groups and interviews suggested that parents and carers felt that the PDSN resources had been useful in helping their child to develop speaking and listening skills, increasing interaction with children, involving siblings, increasing enjoyment of reading, and supporting learning at home.

Oracy outcomes appear to have been stronger for boys and for children who are not eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM). More work could be done to identify and share practice that can support boys' oracy, and to identify how to increase outcomes for eFSM children.

Practitioners also noted specific improvements observed in two specific groups: pupils who have English/ Welsh as an additional language (EAL/WAL) and children with speech and language difficulties e.g. through increased confidence to join in with the rhymes. NB Some EAL/WAL families needed additional support to access the programme e.g. through interpreters.

Over half of practitioners (58%) said that they were using the programme to specifically support oracy outcomes. The evaluators recommend more support for practitioners to further engage with the oracy focus of PDSN, and to communicate to parents and carers the importance of oracy, sharing rhymes and songs, sharing books and reading for pleasure.

### Increasing parental engagement in children's learning

The evaluation demonstrated progress in this area from across the data sources. Responses to the parent and carer survey gave some indications of progress, although the picture was mixed in relation to some outcomes. Key findings in relation to parent and carer engagement were:

- There were increases in certain parent and carer behaviours: reading the same book over and over again, talking about books more often, reading books and sharing rhymes in Welsh more often, and reading a book for fun.
- Parents and carers often attributed these increases to Pori Drwy Stori Nursery. Between 27% and 48% report that they do these things more since taking part in PDSN; more than 90% of these attributed at least some of these increases to PDSN.
- Practitioners felt there had been impacts in relation to parent and carer engagement and developing insight about the home learning environment:
  - 75% of practitioners who took part in the telephone interviews reported that the PDSN programme had a positive impact on communication with the home

- 67% said it created an opportunity to talk to parents and carers about the importance of speaking and listening with children
- 92% said that children spoke to them about using the PDSN resources at home.
- The programme was successful in supporting schools and settings to develop parental engagement, including those where it was not yet established.
- Practitioners developed new and increasingly effective ways of communicating with parents and carers and developing home-school/setting links, including using social media and classroom apps.
- Consistency and sustained communication were key to engaging parents and carers: those reporting they often spoke to practitioners about PDSN were more likely to report increases in parental engagement.
- The programme enabled two-way communication between the home and school/ setting, supporting practitioners to gain insight into home learning environments.
- There was evidence of wider family engagement e.g. siblings and grandparents.

### Bilingualism and the Welsh language

The bilingual nature of the programme supported the development of Welsh

language skills, particularly for children who are not from Welsh-speaking backgrounds (in Welsh and English medium schools and settings). It supported practitioners who are less confident with Welsh, as well as parents and carers and children.

Practitioners reported increased use of Welsh songs, rhymes and books in Welsh and English medium schools. Parents and carers could be encouraged to make more use of the Welsh audios/ films on the PDSN website.

### The Pori Drwy Stori programme model

The Pori Drwy Stori programme model was effective in supporting outcomes: high quality resources to be used over a period of time in the school/ setting and at home; a recommended structure for using the programme with flexibility for practitioners to adapt to their local needs; a 'universal' offer i.e. resources for every eligible child in the school/setting.

Practitioners felt that the free resources encouraged parents to spend time at home using them with children. In some locations, the resources inspired practitioners to reconsider how they introduced literacy and language in their curriculum.

The programme was more effective when the approach taken by schools and settings was structured and planned. This could be at a school level (e.g. linking to School Development Plan) or at the level of Foundation Phase and/ or classroom planning.

### Programme quality

Nearly all parents and carers surveyed (96%) agreed the resources were clear and straightforward to use; 94% thought they were 'fun and interesting for my child'; and 93% said their child enjoyed using the resources.

Practitioners reported that training and information sessions were useful in helping them to prepare for the programme; this meant that they were able to use the PDSN resources promptly when they were delivered to schools and settings. Those who attended sessions tended to be more engaged in the programme. The majority of practitioners thought BookTrust Cymru's email support

was good or very good. The evaluators recommend that BookTrust Cymru explores webinar/online-style training to increase accessibility.



## Impactful delivery: key recommendations for Nursery practitioners

The evaluators made a number of recommendations for practitioners delivering PDSN:

- Introduce the programme to parents and carers before starting it with children, and introduce the rhymes and books to children in school/ setting before taking the resources home.
- Make parents and carers feel included and help them to understand their role in the programme. Encourage them to engage other family members. Make sure they know about online materials to support the programme.
- Use a range of methods to maintain communication with parents and carers throughout e.g. in person at

drop off/collection or via social media. Encourage parents and carers to speak to practitioners about their use of the PDSN resources at home so that transfer of knowledge should be two way i.e. school-home and home-school.

- Target parent and carer engagement activities to support parents of eFSM children.

The evaluation suggests that using the programme resources over a longer period better supports oracy outcomes, whilst using them over a shorter period is more likely to support parental engagement. The evaluators recommend that the resources are introduced separately, with time to focus fully on each set, but that schools/ settings use them over a concentrated period of time to maintain the momentum of parent and carer engagement.

## Impactful delivery: key recommendations for settings and schools

The evaluators recommend that schools and settings:

- Incorporate PDSN into the School/Setting Development Plan.

- Emphasise the opportunities to map the PDSN programme to Foundation Phase outcomes and other oracy targets.
- Plan wider Foundation Phase activities around the PDSN resources to extend impact, including classroom activities linked to the rhymes and books.

## Other key recommendations for BookTrust Cymru

- Explore web-based options for training and information sessions.
- Provide additional guidance and support to enable practitioners to further engage with the programme's oracy focus, and to

share these messages with parents and carers, especially in relation to reading for pleasure and shared book reading.

- Support practitioners to try new classroom approaches based on PDSN, including to support curriculum planning and through sharing good practice.

## Key findings for decision makers

The evaluation finds that the evidence provided by practitioners is overwhelmingly favourable and appreciative of the PDSN programme. The vast majority of practitioners thought the resources were

very suitable for children's interest and for home and school use. The programme supported a wide range of skills (including Welsh language development) and helped children realise that they can learn at home as well as at school.

**The evaluators' report concludes: 'The positive evidence of impact provided by practitioners supports the view that this programme has significant value for those involved and thus should continue'.**