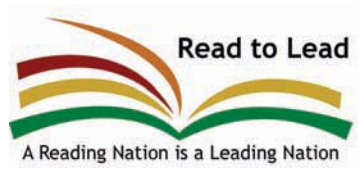


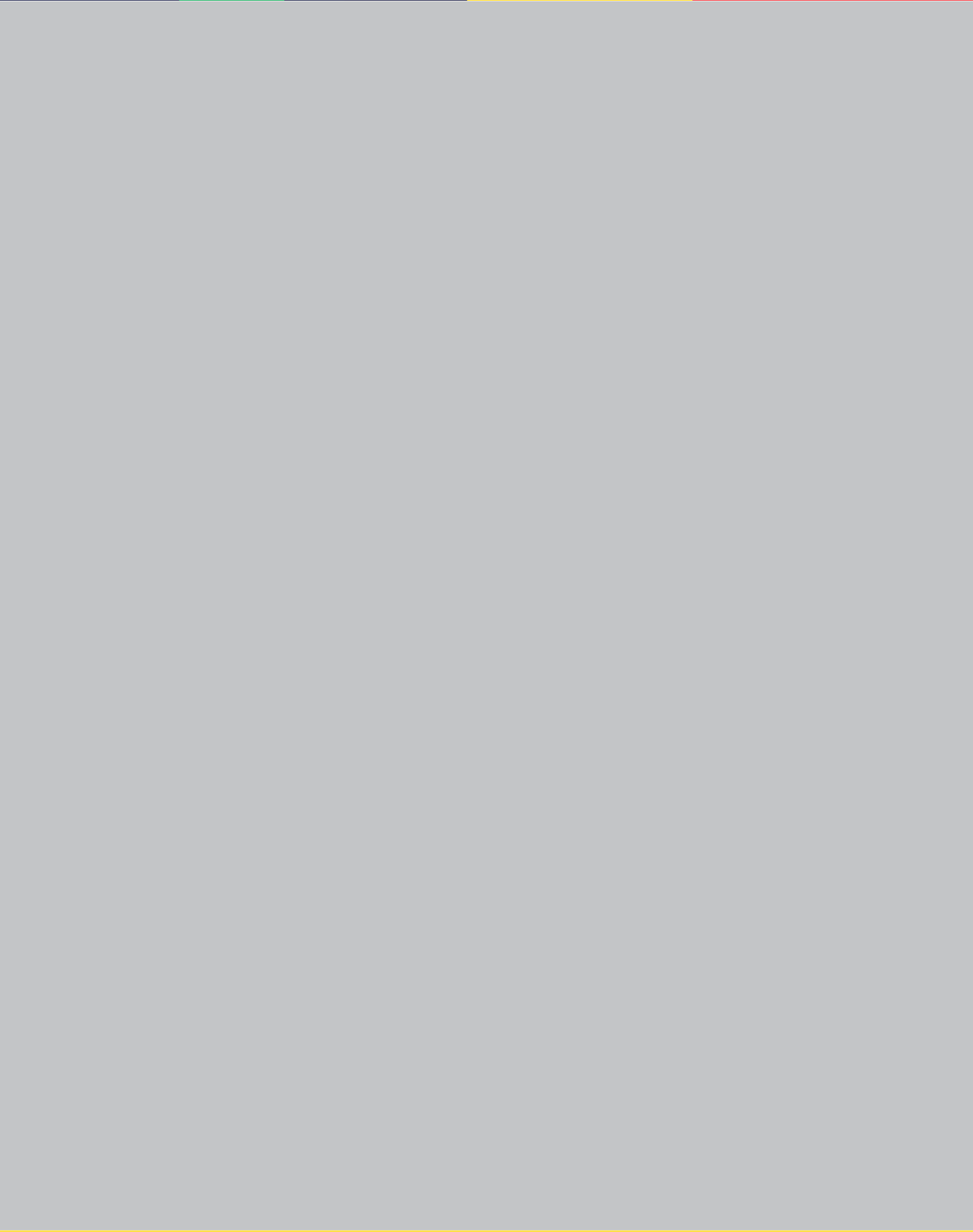
***The Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS):  
In-depth Case Studies Of Home Language Literacy  
Practices In Four Grade 2 Classrooms in Treatment 1  
and 2 Schools (October 2016 to January 2017)***

***January 2017***



**basic education**  
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## ***Acronyms***

<b>CAPS</b>	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
<b>DBE</b>	Department of Basic Education
<b>EGRS</b>	Early Grade Reading Study
<b>FP</b>	Foundation Phase
<b>HL</b>	Home Language
<b>HOD</b>	Head of Department
<b>HSRC</b>	Human Sciences Research Council
<b>LTSM</b>	Learning and Teaching Support Material
<b>T1</b>	Treatment 1
<b>T2</b>	Treatment 2

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## Executive Summary

### 1. Purpose and aim

The purpose of case studies of four Grade 2 Setswana Home Language (HL) classrooms was to investigate the impact that two of the EGRS interventions had on teachers' instructional practices in two rural and two urban schools that were average performing on both the base line and the EGRS' midline assessment of learners' HL literacy, but who had shown various levels of change between the two data collection points. The aim was to try to gain a better understanding of which elements of the two interventions implemented by the service provider, Class Act, in two districts in the North West Province were successful in changing Setswana HL instructional practices, and which aspects were less successful in changing teacher behaviour in the sample schools.

Teachers in the two interventions (Treatment 1/T1 and Treatment 2/T2) that are the focus of this report were provided with scripted lesson plans aligned to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), curriculum trackers/pacers, EGRS literacy support material (posters, flash cards etc.), and graded readers (Molteno's Vula Bula series) for group-guided reading. The difference between the two treatments was that T1 trained the teachers on how to use the lesson plans and accompanying materials through central training sessions whilst T2 provided on-going support to teachers consisting of regular on-site coaching from specialist 'reading coaches' and meetings with the coach and a small cluster of nearby T2 schools.

### 2. Case study methods

Three activities were undertaken over a four day period (Monday 17 October – Thursday 20 October 2016 – one day per school) in the second week of the fourth term: lesson observations; teacher interviews; and examination of classroom documents, specifically: timetables to assess time allocated to Setswana HL; lesson plans and work schedules or year plans; learners' workbooks and exercise books; assessment records including availability of records of individual learners' levels of progress.

### 3. Findings

#### a. Elements of the interventions which appear to be successful

The following elements were identified as having been relatively successful regarding the four teachers' Setswana HL teaching:

- Teachers were amenable to and seemed confident about having their lessons observed.
- Classroom documentation (assessment records, work schedules etc.) was readily available and fairly well-organised. Teachers were making daily use of the EGRS scripted lesson plans and regular use of the EGRS curriculum coverage
- Classrooms had EGRS print material on walls. DBE workbooks and class exercise books were reasonably neatly stacked and organised on shelves or stored in boxes in classrooms. Classrooms

## *Executive Summary*

had reading corners or similar. Seating was arranged so that all learners were able to see the front of the classroom.

- Schools had allocated more than the minimum time required for Setswana instruction. Teachers were giving 'extra' time before school started to help learners who were lagging behind to catch up. The division of time in lessons indicated that the allocation of time for instruction in the various activities (e.g. Listening and Speaking, Phonics etc.) was generally informed by the CAPS with a balance between individual seatwork tasks, whole class instruction and group reading. Systems for time management routines were in place (for example, for handing out books) in classrooms; transition periods (times when classes are transitioning from one activity to another) in lessons were usually fairly quick, teachers responded to learners who were disruptive and ensured they had the attention of learners for whole class instruction.
- Regular phonics, handwriting, group guided reading instruction and individual seatwork (writing) was taking place. Teachers explained the meaning of phonics words and got learners to use phonics sounds in different ways. They stressed the importance of leaving spaces between words, starting sentences with capitals and ending them with full stops in handwriting lessons. They made use of the Vula Bula graded readers provided by the EGRS for group guided reading and used flash cards to get learners to read new words prior to reading readers. The size of groups for guided reading was manageable and all members of each group were given opportunities to read aloud. Teachers asked questions about the text read.
- Teachers and learners appeared to have been inducted into the culture of using graded readers, EGRS flash and phonics cards, pictures and posters. DBE workbooks were being used as source for seatwork and for texts for shared reading.
- Work in exercise books was organised systematically by date. The provisioning of writing activities in the EGRS lesson plans was playing a role in motivating teachers to give classes more writing tasks, and learners were completing written work on most school days.
- Assessment records indicated that a programme of assessing learners was in place for phonics, reading, writing and listening and speaking. Teachers regularly checked written exercise books and workbooks.
- Teachers were having collaborative discussions about teaching Setswana HL with Grade 2 teachers in other EGRS schools.

The EGRS scripted lesson plans, pace setter and the 'curriculum pacing/tracking' messages teachers received via WhatsApp appeared to be working to help teachers cover the Grade 2 Setswana HL curriculum and set up routines for managing the use of time in class. The provisioning of phonics and writing activities in the lesson plans seemed to be playing a role in increasing the regularity of phonics and frequency of writing done in class. The graded readers provided teachers with an essential tool for implementing group guided reading and for piquing learners' interest in reading. Teachers had embraced the notion of working through the readers sequentially with their learners, even though they appeared to be using the same readers with all their groups. Other EGRS resources such as the posters and flash cards provided teachers with useful and stimulating additions to their literacy teaching material. The contact with coaches and the workshop presentations seemed to be providing teachers with much needed structure, information and motivation.



**b. Aspects that appear to be constraining impact**

The following appeared to be constraining the impact of the interventions:

- Contextual and classroom conditions such as school days that are not always predictable; large class sizes; and learners' socio-economic backgrounds and inability to concentrate for long stretches of time due to hunger or tiredness. In particular:
  - High numbers of children in classes made it difficult for teachers to provide learners with the individual attention they required. If teachers have the CAPS recommended two sessions of guided reading with groups of six learners in large classes, the proportion of learners in the class who do not get guided reading in a lesson is greater than in smaller classes. If teachers try to compensate for this by increasing the size of groups to the suggested maximum of nine learners then the time available for each individual in the group to read is likely to be reduced.
- An absence of a culture of reading for enjoyment and limited exposure of Grade 2 learners to books besides readers and workbooks. Classrooms that were not particularly colourful, inviting or engaging in terms of literacy, for example, with stimulating texts or pictures, learner-generated writing or drawings, etc. on the walls.
- Learners were not provided with sufficient opportunities to practise reading extended text and with adequate and appropriate opportunities to practise generating more complex spoken and written texts or to produce their own texts. The amount of time that learners themselves were actually engaged in reading extended text during lessons was limited especially when only those learners who had group guided reading had opportunities to practise reading extended texts. Writing tasks mostly comprised reproducing or copying texts into books (low cognitive demand) and writing single words, phrases and sentences (low writing demands) rather than whole paragraphs and longer extended texts. Oral language practice was limited by predominantly information-retrieval or closed questions that made low verbal and cognitive demands.
- Learners struggled to answer more open-ended interpretative type questions and appeared to experience difficulty with answering questions which required more autonomous thinking and generating their own responses. Because of this teachers reduced the complexity of more cognitively challenging writing tasks. Instead of providing the kind of mediation that would enable learners to complete more demanding writing tasks independently, teachers tended to use whole class activities to 'over demonstrate' what was required. It was as if the main concern was that the required written work was reflected 'correctly' in learners' books (to demonstrate 'coverage'). The fact that learners completed writing tasks whilst teachers were busy with group guided reading was a constraint to some extent; teachers were unable to spend time with individuals who were struggling and/or determine when it was necessary to provide additional mediation for individuals or the whole class.
- Teachers were not differentiating reading and writing activities in classrooms in ways that allowed more capable learners to do additional, more challenging work.
  - They were not using the graded readers according to individual learner's level of reading ability and did not keep good enough track of individual differences in learner's reading progress.

## Executive Summary

- They were expanding writing opportunities for slower learners through the provision of 'extra time' before lessons but not expanding opportunities for more capable learners. In-class seatwork was paced more to the 'middle' group than the 'slowest' but the same amount of time was made available for faster learners to complete exactly the same written work as the 'middle' group. For example, they did not use the DBE workbooks or other sources to give those who had finished their seatwork tasks ahead of the rest of the class additional work. There appeared to be a tension for teachers between the idea of offering the same opportunities to all learners and differentiating literacy activities in classrooms in ways that allow more capable learners to complete additional more challenging work.
- Teachers displayed a 'restricted' understanding of what it means to teach children to read independently. None of the teachers demonstrated understanding that in order to read texts independently and self-correct, learners need to be taught a variety of strategies such as using semantic and syntactic clues and cues. There was an over-reliance on teacher-directed strategies (e.g. telling learners what words were) and using pictures when learners got stuck on a word when reading extended text.
- A lack of a passionate commitment to improving literacy could result in teachers becoming apathetic when on-going EGRS support is no longer present.

## 4. Conclusions

Differences between the T1 and T2 classrooms were not overtly discernable in the four case studies. This could be because differences depended on the 'starting point' of each of the teachers. All four of the EGRS teachers seem to have gained an instrumental understanding of literacy instruction and development rather than a principled understanding. For example, they do not necessarily understand the principles underpinning the concept of differentiation in group guided reading; or what it really means or takes to teach children to read, write and speak independently. This 'instrumentalism' is not surprising since the focus of the EGRS is on improving practices rather than knowledge. Nevertheless, it is feasible to expect overall improvement over the year in the Grade 2 EGRS classes, particularly in phonics and writing as learners in the four schools were 'doing phonics' and writing regularly. It seems likely that schools that had lower 'starting points' in the pre-tests will show the greatest gains (as long as teachers have been implementing the programme in classrooms) because there is more 'room' for improvement in these areas. However, it also seems unlikely that very marked gains in the quality of writing and especially reading outcomes will be evident in the EGRS schools in the short term.

This is not to say that teaching practices and literacy outcomes are not open to further improvement using the existing EGRS model and resources, but it seems that, unless the teachers' literacy practices become more knowledge-based and they become more resourceful and truly passionate and dedicated in their commitment to improving their learners' literacy, there will be a 'threshold' in terms of learning gains in schools such as those in the sample. Making larger gains will most probably require substantial inputs geared towards increasing teacher capacity by significantly improving the quality of teachers' knowledge and understanding of literacy acquisition and development

## 5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made regarding the EGRS model:

- The principles underpinning the structure and design of scripted lessons should be made explicit for teachers, so that they are in a better position to be more innovative and resourceful when necessary.
- Teachers need to know how to make better use of the different levels of readers. They need to know how to use individual assessment to establish and deal with various levels of reading as well as how best to identify and deal with those children who are unable to or are struggling to read.
- To provide the kind of mediation required for learners to gain confidence and complete more demanding writing tasks independently, teachers need to be very clear about what tasks are intended to achieve (for example, what the purpose is of a 'sequencing task').
- Teachers need to know how to elicit conversations or open up discussions with learners in ways that provide learners with opportunities and the confidence to produce responses that take the form of longer language units and more complex language structures.
- It appears that the classroom resources most needed to meet the goal of fostering an interest in and love of reading and making reading habitual are Setswana picture books and story books which are entertaining to read, appeal to the imagination, and which are worth reading over and over again.
- Classrooms should be provided with large clocks that can be placed above chalkboards to enable teachers to teach learners how to pace themselves when doing writing tasks or completing classwork.
- The EGRS needs to investigate why there appears to be a tension for teachers between the idea of offering the same opportunities to all learners and differentiating literacy activities in classrooms in ways that allow more capable learners to complete more challenging work. For example, are teachers afraid of not knowing or keeping track of what everyone in the class had done, or do they think it is unfair for more capable learners to get 'extra' opportunities?
- Ideally Foundation Phase class sizes at schools should be reduced. Classes of over thirty five limit the amount of time that teachers can devote to guiding and monitoring individual learners' reading.

## **Introduction**

### **1. Introduction**

In August 2016 the consultant, Dr Cheryl Reeves, was appointed by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to conduct comprehensive observations of literacy practices amongst four Foundation Phase teachers participating in two of the Early Grade Ready Study (EGRS) interventions being implemented in the North-West Province by the service provider, Class-Act. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has appointed Class Act to implement interventions aimed at improving the acquisition of early grade home language literacy in two districts in the North West Province (Dr Kenneth Kaunda and Ngaka Modiri Molema) in which the main home language is Setswana. Class Act started work with the Grade 1 classes in 2015 for a two-year period, following the same learners into grade 2 in 2016.

### **2. The purpose of the lesson study**

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) is serving as the evaluator of the impact of the EGRS. The quantitative side of the impact study evaluates the impact of changed instructional practices in Setswana as home language on learner outcomes. Data collected on schools and teachers includes assessment of learners' Home Language literacy as evidence of changes in learner outcomes from the baseline to the end line and between intervention and control schools (the evaluation includes data on 80 control schools).

One of the core assumptions in the theory of action in the EGRS study of system-wide instructional improvement is that external interventions lead to changes in teachers' instructional practices which in turn lead to changes in learner achievement or outcomes. Although the HSRC's impact evaluation is collecting evidence of changes in learner outcomes, this data generates little evidence on possible changes in teachers' practice. To remedy this gap a qualitative lesson study has been developed to assess the impact that the EGRS interventions are having on the instructional practices of Foundation Phase teachers participating in the interventions.

The two interventions (Treatment 1 and Treatment 2) that are the focus of this study are being implemented in 100 schools. Teachers in both Treatment 1 and Treatment 2 interventions are provided with exactly the same set of instructional materials (scripted lesson plans and learning support material). The lesson plans are aligned to the curriculum as specified in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for home language literacy in the Foundation Phase. They incorporate the use of the government-provided workbooks and the additional learning support material (posters, flash cards etc.) provided by the EGRS. Graded readers (Molteno's Vula Bula series) are also provided as a resource for teachers to use in group-guided reading and individual work so as to facilitate reading practice at an appropriate pace and sequence of progression.

However, there is a fundamental difference between the two treatments. Treatment 1 trains the teachers on how to use the lesson plans and accompanying materials through central training sessions, each lasting two days, and occurring twice yearly. Instead of central training sessions, Treatment 2 provides on-going support to teachers consisting of regular (monthly) on-site coaching from specialist 'reading coaches'. In addition, there are meetings with the coach and a small cluster of

nearby Treatment 2 schools. These meetings are held four times a year, generally during the week before the start of a new term.

A key purpose of the lesson study is to try to gain a better understanding of which elements of these two interventions were successful in changing Setswana Home Language instructional practices, and which elements were less successful in changing teacher behaviour. The lesson study incorporates the larger-scale data collection in 40 sites in intervention schools and 20 sites in control schools

(Phase 1 mentioned above) as well as the in-depth qualitative observations in four intervention schools reported on in this report.

### **3. The contractual work**

The contractual work reported on in this report was preceded by a phase which entailed the development of instruments and fieldwork training for the larger scale data collection involving lesson observations, reviews of classroom documentation and interviews with teachers in 40 sites in intervention schools and 20 sites in control schools. A separate report has been written on this Phase 1 which ran from 17 August 2016 until 12 October 2016.

Phase 2 of the contractual work reported on here, entailed conducting the more in-depth case study observations of the use of literacy materials and practices in four intervention schools and the writing of this report. The purpose of the observations of the use of literacy materials and practices in four intervention schools was to provide a narrative to the larger-scale fieldwork. Phase 2 ran from 12 October 2016 to 16 January 2017.

### **4. Methods**

Three activities were undertaken for the in-depth case studies

- Lesson observations;
- Teacher interviews; and
- Examination of classroom documents and records.

The Phase 2 classroom document review of each of the teachers whose lessons were observed involved a degree of overlap with the Phase 1 instruments used by the fieldworkers in the larger scale study. Specifically the protocol covered an examination of Grade 2 teachers'

- Timetables to assess time allocated to Setswana HL
- Lesson plans and work schedules or year plan
- Learners' workbooks and exercise books
- Teachers' assessment records including availability of own notes, comments or records of individual learners' levels of ability, development and progress



## Methods

The focus of the review was on curriculum planning; instructional alignment and macro pacing; curriculum coverage; opportunities to write (the number of pages of work in learners' workbooks, the number of days' work in learners' exercise books, type and frequency of writing in learners' workbooks and exercise books); teachers' assessment of written work and the frequency and quality of information in reading, writing and assessment records (to check for alignment with CAPS assessment requirements).

The interview with teachers whose lessons were observed explored teachers motivation, attitudes and experience of the EGRS programme in a slightly more nuanced and open-ended way than the instruments used by the fieldworkers in the larger scale study. It also attempted to explore teachers' understanding of the literacy practices associated with teaching children to read independently by assessing a) if the EGRS teachers were able to recognise elements which typify 'positive' conceptions of literacy practices relating to teaching children to read independently; and b) if they were able to recognise any negative aspects representing some of the practices deemed to work against reading fluently and for meaning.

As far as the in-depth qualitative lesson observations were concerned, a less standardised and structured protocol was used. Expert judgement needed to be exercised during each observation based on experience gained in similar projects in similar schools, for example in Limpopo and the Western Cape (see Reeves et al, 2008; Reeves 2010). The intention had been to use frequencies from the data collected in the larger study to orientate the in-depth lesson observations. However, because of an overlap between fieldwork data collection (from 13 to 28 October) and the Project's end-line data collection, the consultant's visits to the four schools were scheduled to ensure that that did not clash with the end-line data collection. As a result the in-depth case study observations commenced earlier than originally planned on Monday 17 October to 20 October before the larger-scale data collection had been completed. As a compromise the Fieldwork Manager for the larger-scale data collection was able to send the consultant data collected on twelve schools on the first two days of the fieldwork (13 and 14 October) giving the consultant a day to consider available information before visiting the schools.

The focus in the lesson observation was on keeping a 'rich' time-base record describing and tracking what the teacher was doing and what the learners were doing during different phases of the lesson with attention being paid to the following aspects:

- Classroom environment
- Literacy and language instruction
- Time on task and curricular pacing
- Learner's opportunities to read, write, listen and speak
- Teachers' and learners' use of books and other learning material
- Level of cognitive demand
- In-class assessment of learners
- Homework

Although there was likely to be a Hawthorne effect in that teachers could present 'rehearsed' lessons, insight could be gained through the lesson observations into teachers' best efforts or interpretation of what the EGRS required.

## 5. Sampling

The Project Management Team took responsibility for drawing the sample of four schools for the consultant's in-depth qualitative observations. Their method was to find two rural and two urban schools that are average performing on both the base line and the midline, but who had shown various levels of change between the two data collection points. The Team provided the consultant with the names of the four schools for the in-depth studies and compiled a short report on the schools, based on the information that had been collected during their baseline and midline data collection.

Below are the basic descriptors of the four schools identified as the most appropriate for the in-depth case studies (the names of the schools have been changed to protect the identity of participants):

1. Anna Primary School: a rural Treatment 1 (T1) school near Mahikeng.
2. Major Primary school: an urban Treatment 1 (T1) school near Zeerust.
3. Bagele Primary School: a rural Treatment 2 (T2) school near Mahikeng.
4. Baloyi Primary School: an urban Treatment 2 (T2) school near Wolmaranstad.

## 6. Piloting

Draft versions of the protocols for the teacher interview and classroom document review were piloted in two classrooms in two schools at the same time as the instruments for larger-scale study were piloted. The Project Management Team selected the two schools for the pilot (one control school and one intervention school), communicated about the pilot visits to the schools and teachers (via a letter as well as telephonically), and provided the consultant with the relevant contact details and dates for the visits. Piloting of the interview and document review protocols took place at the schools on Wednesday 28th (Intervention school) and Thursday 29th of September (Control school). Thaidzo Tshivhombela from the DBE accompanied the consultant to assist with translating Setswana into English during the lesson observations.

The HSRC took responsibility for obtaining ethical clearance and addressing participant consent for the research. On 3 October 2016 protocols for data collection were submitted to the HSRC and Project Management Team so that instruments and participant consent forms could be cleared by the HSRC's Ethics Committee prior to the school visits.

## 7. Data collection for the in-depth case studies

The Project Management Team communicated about the visits and observations to the schools and teachers, and provided the consultant with the relevant details for a one day visit to each of the four schools. Data collection took place over a four day period (Monday 17 October – Thursday 20 October 2016) in the second week of the fourth and final term. Four Setswana Home Language lessons (one Grade 2 teacher at each school) were observed for an entire lesson regardless of how long the lesson lasted. After the lesson observations, the teachers were interviewed and the relevant

## **Data collection**

classroom records and documents reviewed. An intern from the DBE, Sasabona Mabasa, who could understand Setswana assisted the consultant with navigation and with translating, particularly during the lesson observations.

The plan was to arrive at the schools before the start of the day (i.e. 07h30). Arrival at one school (Baloyi a T2 school) was ten minutes late (at 07h40) because of heavy rains in the area. If Grade 2 Setswana HL lessons at the schools did not start in the first period, teachers were asked if it was possible to reschedule their lesson to the beginning of the school day so that the document review and the interview schedule could be administered as soon as possible after the lesson observation had taken place. Fortunately all four teachers agreed to start the day with the HL lesson.

In some cases the interviews were conducted during break/s but in others the teacher gave learners work to go on with in class while the interview was being conducted. For the document review we emphasised that we would need to see all the books/files that reflect learners' Setswana HL written class and homework for Terms 3 and 4 including classwork exercise books, creative writing books, handwriting books, phonics books, spelling books, books for doing homework, and assessment books, etc.); all documents that show teachers' plans of work for Term 3 and 4 and lesson/s Setswana HL; and all records of Grade 2 learner assessment for Setswana HL for 2016 including the teacher's own notes, comments or records of individual learners' levels of ability, development and progress if s/he kept such records; and the Grade 2 timetable.

## **8. Findings**

### **8.1 The context**

Section 8.1 provides a brief overview of the four schools, the Grade 2 teachers, and the classrooms and classes where data collection took place.

#### **8.1.1 The schools**

All four schools appeared to be reasonably maintained. Only one of the schools was in a poor condition (not due to lack of maintenance but because it was very old) and appeared over-crowded.

Staff informed us that a new school was in the process of being built nearby. The following extracts from field notes provide first impressions of the schools:

Anna Primary (T1) was visited on Monday 17 October 2016. This school is located in a settlement on the outskirts of Mahikeng. Although the grounds and buildings have been maintained, most of the school buildings were old and shabby. There were two or three 'container classrooms', a rather run down row of brick classrooms and a somewhat newer looking office block. However the HoD informed us that a new school was being built for them nearby. The staff had expected to move to the new premises in 2016 but they were now hoping that school would be ready for them to move into in the New Year.

Major Primary (T1) was visited on Tuesday 18 October. The school is based in a rural settlement outside of Zeerust. Although the building was old and had large cracks in some walls, the office was well-kept and looked cared for and organised.

Bagele Primary (T2) was visited on Wednesday 19 October. The school is based in Mahikeng. The school buildings comprised four blocks of classrooms plus an office block which looked in reasonable condition. Security on the outside of the office building was good with plenty of burglar bars and a Chubb Alarm sign on the wall. According to a plaque in the grounds, the school had been opened in 2002. Although the grounds were dusty, there was a courtyard with a lawn (which is unusual) and plants which looked well-tended.

Baloyi Primary (T2) was visited on Thursday 20 October. The school is based in a rural settlement outside Wolmaranstad. The school buildings looked new and were in very good condition. All the windows were well burglar-barred. The quads between the buildings were immaculate. There was plenty of covered parking for cars and covered walkways between the school buildings.

Most of the children and teachers at the four schools seemed to arrive on time as the following extracts from field notes illustrate:

When we arrived at Anna Primary (T1) at 07h25, five minutes before school was scheduled to start, most of the learners were already on the school grounds waiting for school to begin.

When we arrived at Major Primary (T1) at 07h25, most of the teachers and staff appeared to have already arrived at the school. We went straight to the office at 07h30 where we met the principal.

When we arrived at Bagele Primary (T2) at 07h20, many children were already there. By 07h30 it seemed that most of the teachers had also arrived.

Due to heavy rains, we arrived at Baloyi (T2) at 07h40 ten minutes after school had started. The principal and HoD were expecting us and welcomed us. We were taken directly to a Grade 2 teacher's classroom.

## The teachers

### 8.1.2 The teachers

All four teachers reported that they had Matric plus a four year teaching qualification.

**Table 1: Qualifications of teachers observed at each of the four schools**

Treatment	1		2	
School Rural/urban	Anna Rural	Major Urban	Bagele Rural	Baloyi Urban
Teacher's highest level of formal education	Matric plus four year teaching qualification	Matric plus four year teaching qualification (B.Ed)	Matric plus four year teaching qualification	Matric plus four year teaching qualification (ACE plus FDE)
Teacher's area of specialisation	Intermediate Phase	'Primary in general'	Senior Phase	Foundation Phase

Although all four teachers were 'qualified', only one of the four teachers said that her area of specialisation was in the Foundation Phase. One of the teachers said her area of specialisation was in the Senior Phase as opposed to the Primary Phase.

Table 2 shows that the youngest teacher was 39 and the oldest 57.

**Table 2: Age of each teacher**

Treatment	1		2	
School Rural/urban	Anna Rural	Major Urban	Bagele Rural	Baloyi Urban
Age	43	57	39	49

The 57 year old teacher said that she had been teaching at the school (Major T1) for thirty four years and planned to retire in two years' time. The teacher who was a senior phase specialist (Bagele T2) said she had only been teaching in the Foundation Phase for two years.

### 8.1.3 The classrooms

The following are extracts of descriptions from lesson observations that indicate the physical condition of each of the classrooms:

At Anna (T1) where a new school was in the process of being built, the classroom was in a poor state through no fault of the teacher; it was old and too small to comfortably accommodate the fifty learners. There was barely space for the teacher to move between the desks. The chalkboard was old but usable as it had recently been re-painted black.

At Major (T1) the classroom was old but the room was quite large; it looked cared for and did not seem over-crowded or cramped. However, the teacher was unable to keep the door closed without locking it as the mechanism was broken. The constant squeaking noise that the door made as it swung in the breeze during the lesson was quite disturbing and irritating.



At Bagele (T2) although the school buildings were in a fair condition on the outside, the inside of the classroom was somewhat shabby. The plaster on the walls had 'pockmarks' in it and the walls could have done with a fresh coat of paint.

At Baloyi (T2) the classroom was also in reasonably good condition. Although the buildings looked relatively new, about half the tiles on the floor had come off the cement floor.

We noted that none of the classrooms visited had broken windows.

#### 8.1.4 The Grade 2 classes

Three of the schools had three Grade 2 classes and one school had only one Grade 2 class. Table 3 shows that the size of the Grade 2 classes observed ranged from thirty eight to fifty three. (The implications of the size of the classes will be discussed later).

**Table 3: Number of Grade 2 classes at each of the four schools, size of classes observed and number of learners absent**

Treatment	1		2	
School Day Rural/Urban	Anna Monday Rural	Major Tuesday Urban	Bagele Wednesday Rural	Baloyi Thursday Urban
Number of Grade 2 classes at the school	3	1	3	3
Number of learners in the class observed	53	49	47	38
Number of learners absent from the class on day of observation	3	3	1	2

Judging by the number of learners present in the class on the day of the observation, absentee rates did not appear to be high. There were only one to three Grade 2 learners absent in the classes observed.

Section 8.2 discusses elements of the two interventions that appear to have been relatively successful regarding the four teachers' Setswana Home Language teaching. The discussion focuses on commonalities across the four classrooms.

## 8.2 Elements of the interventions which appear to be successful

### 8.2.1 Teacher confidence and attitude

All four teachers at the school were amenable to and seemed confident about having their lessons observed even though three of the schools had already been visited by fieldworkers collecting data for the larger-scale study and had not realised that a second lesson observation was on the cards. As

## *Teacher confidence*

there was more than one Grade 2 teacher at two of these three schools, we were able to arrange to observe a different teacher from the teacher who had been observed for the larger-scale study.

At Major (T1) there was only one Grade 2 class thus the teacher had already been observed the previous week. At first she appeared somewhat taken aback that she was to be observed again but agreed to allow us to watch her Setswana lesson on the day of our visit. At Baloyi (T2) the teacher was very willing for us to observe her lesson. Unlike the other three schools we visited, this school had not yet had EGRS fieldworkers coming to observe a Grade 2 teacher. Nevertheless, all four teachers demonstrated appropriate attitudes and commitment to teaching Setswana Home Language during the observations and a willingness to open up their classroom practices to scrutiny.

In the interviews teachers asserted that, since getting involved in the EGRS they felt more enthusiastic about teaching and found teaching Setswana more satisfying. For example, when asked about the biggest change she had made to the way she teaches Setswana HL since becoming involved in the EGRS, the teacher at Baloyi (T2) said that she now does much more reading with her class because she feels she knows more about the procedures to follow for group guided reading as compared to shared reading. The teacher at Bagele (T2) said that she felt better equipped to comply with policy requirements regarding the 'spread' of literacy activities because of the scripted lesson plans, for example, she now taught phonics for the recommended amount of time according to the CAPS. The teacher at Major (T1) said that through the use of the Vula Bula graded readers and flash cards and pictures provided by the EGRS, she felt more confident that she was using the 'proper method' for teaching group guided reading.

Overall, retrieval of the documents we requested at Anna (T1) and Major (T1) was organised. All documents requested were readily available with the exception of the EGRS Term 4 lesson plans which had not yet been delivered to the Treatment 1 schools. The teacher at Baloyi (T2) was easily able to retrieve all the documents we requested. Her documentation was very organised and a full set of the requested documents was readily available. When asked to provide her record of formal assessment tasks for the whole year, the teacher at Bagele (T2) initially could not find the records for the first two terms. After searching she managed to locate mark sheets for three terms.

### **8.2.2 Print rich classrooms and organisation and storage of DBE workbooks and exercise books**

All four classrooms were relatively print-rich. All of the rooms had print material on walls such as word walls with words organised by common phonetic features; cursive writing posters; and flash cards with pictures. All four teachers had some form of storage arrangement (mostly shelves) for learners' exercise book and workbooks. All of them were keeping the children's workbooks and exercise books reasonably neatly stacked and organised on shelves or stored in boxes. The following are extracts of descriptions from lesson observations that illustrate the above:

At Major (T1), the classroom was very print-rich. There were no notice boards but numerous items (including 4 EGRS/Class Act posters) had been stuck on the walls with prestik. There were plenty of shelves full of exercise books, workbooks and other books along with other teaching and learning material/resources.

At Bagele (T2), the classroom was fairly print-rich. There were notice boards on the walls but these were in poor condition. The teacher had used prestik to stick up various items above the notice boards and the chalkboard. There was a word wall on the back wall of the classroom where words were grouped together phonetically. There were 'flashcards' with all the letters of the alphabet including capitals in cursive writing above the chalkboard. Most of the items on the walls were not commercially made. Workbooks and exercise books were neatly organised and stacked on shelves.

At Baloyi (T2) the class room was fairly print rich with mainly non-commercially made items (flash cards, matching pictures and words, letters and examples of cursive writing). The children's workbooks and exercise books were neatly stacked in piles on shelves.

At Anna (T1) – where space was a major constraint in the room and wall space was limited - the classroom was also fairly print-rich. There were no proper notice boards but the teacher had used prestik to stick up various items on the back wall and above the chalkboard. The items included two of the colourful EGRS posters, a 'word wall' with words organised by common phonetic features and a poster with letters in cursive writing. Most of material did not look commercially-made. There was one steel cabinet and the teacher had constructed shelves for the workbooks etc. using planks and bricks. Some of the learners' workbooks and exercise books were stacked on these shelves at the back of the room but this storage space was inadequate so the teacher had improvised by using a number of cardboard boxes stacked against the walls to store books and other resources.

### 8.2.3 Reading corners and carpets or mats

Table 4 shows that three of the classrooms had book corners and that three of the classrooms had carpets or mats for the children to sit on for shared or group guided reading or 'read alouds' by the teacher.

**Table 4: Availability of reading corners and mats/carpets in the classrooms**

Treatment	1		2	
School	Anna Rural	Major Urban	Bagele Rural	Baloyi Urban
Book/reading corner	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Mat or carpet for children to sit on	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

## ***Seating arrangements***

Two teachers had specially designated book stands clearly labelled 'library' – one in English and the other in Setswana. At Anna (T1), there was simply no room in the classroom to fit a mat or carpet or accommodate a designated space for a book corner. The books were kept on a shelf alongside other Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM).

### **8.2.4 Classroom seating arrangements**

The seating arrangements at the schools differed in each classroom but all four teachers had arranged learners' seating so that when the teacher provided front of class teaching or demonstrations, all learners were able to see the teacher, the chalkboard, posters or other material being used for teaching clearly. None of the children had their backs towards the front of the classroom.

At Anna (T1) the children were seated at desks in pairs or threes. The desks were all facing the front of the room.

At Major (T1) learners' two-seater desks were clustered together and arranged in four long 'rows' lengthwise/sideways along the classroom so that all learners could see the front of the room without having to turn around. Learners had individual chairs to sit on rather than benches attached to desks.

At Bagele (T2) children were seated in pairs on chairs at two-seater desks grouped together and arranged in five rows (arranged length-wise across the classroom). None of the learners had their backs to the chalkboard.

At Baloyi (T2) children were sitting in pairs in four rows of desks which had fixed/attached benches. The desks were all facing the front of the classroom and were not organised in group or clusters.

### **8.2.5 Use of lesson plans and tracking curriculum coverage**

All four teachers said they were using the EGRS lesson plans to plan their years' work for Setswana HL in the Foundation Phase and that they were implementing the EGRS series of lesson plans. Key features of the EGRS plans are that they are aligned to the curriculum as specified in the CAPS and are very comprehensive. They specify daily phonics activities, reading activities, writing activities and listening and speaking activities for learners. They provide extensive details on the content and skills to be covered and an assessment plan is integrated into the plan of work. They incorporate the use of the DBE workbooks and the additional learning support material (readers, posters, flash cards etc.) provided by the EGRS.

When the teachers were asked to show their plans of work for Terms 3 and 4, both the teachers at the Treatment 2 schools were able to provide their EGRS plan for Term 3 and for Term 4. They said their EGRS coach had delivered the EGRS series of lesson plans for Term 4 the previous week. At the two Treatment 1 schools, the teachers said that they had no plan available for the fourth term as they had not yet received the EGRS plans for Term 4. They were able to provide their EGRS plans for the Term 3. It was evident that all four teachers were relying on the EGRS lesson plans to plan their teaching and that, once the plans arrive the teachers at the T1 school would use them. Indications were that the EGRS lesson plans were in constant use.

The EGRS curriculum coverage tracker or pace setter for Grade 2 HL was available at all four schools. There was clear evidence at three schools of teachers tracking actual teaching implementation against the overall plan through the EGRS provided curriculum pace setter. For example, at Major (T1) the EGRS curriculum coverage tracker or pace setter was on the wall in the classroom and we could see that the teacher was using the plan to track her curriculum coverage. At Anna (T1) the EGRS tracker was available but it was unclear to us whether the teacher was actually using it to manage her implementation. In the interview, the teacher from Baloyi (T2) said that one of the elements she most appreciated was the 'curriculum pacing' messages she received via WhatsApp.

When we checked the content of the lesson we observed at the Treatment 2 schools, Baloyi and Bagele, against the plan for Term 4 we noted that the lesson observed appeared to be in line with the work scheduled for the week and day, in other words the content appeared to be up-to-date according to the Term 4 work plan. As the two Treatment 1 schools had not received the plans for Term 4, their lessons were not aligned to the lesson plans but were 'repeat' or 'revision' lessons from Term 3 plans. (This aspect will be discussed further under Section 8.3.3). Nevertheless, judging from the written work in the workbooks and exercise books (see Section 8.2.10) it seemed that teachers were up-to-date according to the work plan up to the end of Term 3.

### 8.2.6 Instructional time for Setswana Home Language

The timetable for Grade 2 operated on a five day cycle at all four schools. According to the CAPS (p. 8) the minimum time for HL in Grade 2 is seven hours and the maximum is eight hours. Table 5 below shows that the amount of time allocated to Setswana HL at the four schools varied from seven and half hours to eight hours.

**Table 5: Day and duration of lesson observation and timetabled time for Setswana Home Language lessons**

	Treatment 1	Treatment 2	Treatment 1	Treatment 2
School	Anna	Baloyi	Major	Bagele
Number of hours of Setswana timetabled per week	8hrs	7 ½ hours	7 ½ hours	7hrs 45 minutes



## Instructional time

All four schools had allocated more than the minimum time required for Setswana instruction. All four schools had planned their HL timetable according to CAPS requirements. At Anna (T1) one and half hours were timetabled for Setswana on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; and two hours on Wednesdays. At Baloyi (T2) one and half hours were timetabled on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and one hour on Wednesdays. At Major (T1) we found the timetable more difficult to interpret. It seemed that one and half hours of Setswana was timetabled on each day of the week. At Bagele (T2) two hours were timetabled for Setswana on Mondays and Thursdays, one and half hours on Tuesdays, one hour on Wednesdays, and one hour and fifteen minutes of Fridays.

Table 6 below shows that in all four Grade 2 classes observed, the duration (number of minutes) of the lessons more or less matched the time allocated for Setswana Home Language for the day on the timetable. The lesson we observed at Major (T1) was fourteen minutes shorter than was timetabled but this difference was because the start was delayed due to our negotiations with the teacher before the lesson started (this was the teacher who had been observed the previous week).

**Table 6: Day and duration of lesson observation and timetabled time for Setswana Home Language lessons**

Treatment	1	2	1	2
School	Anna	Baloyi	Major	Bagele
Day of observation	Monday	Thursday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Duration of lesson observed	90 minutes	90 minutes	76 minutes	67 minutes
Timetabled	90 minutes	90 minutes	90 minutes	60 minutes
Number of hours of Setswana timetabled per week	8hrs	7 ½ hours	7 ½ hours	7hrs 45 minutes

Judging by the dates of daily work in learners' exercise books and DBE workbooks (discussed later) all four teachers appeared to be following the timetable and teaching Setswana Home Language on most school days. The teachers also reported devoting more time to Setswana Home Language. In the interview with the teacher from Bagele (T2), the teacher said they were implementing a system whereby learners who were struggling had 'extra time' classes before school started to help them catch-up. We saw evidence that this was happening in both the Treatment 2 classes, for example:

During the observation at Baloyi (T2), when the guided reading group returned to their seats, the teacher told those learners who had not finished their writing task that they could complete the work when they had 'extra time' tomorrow. She then proceeded to collect all the outstanding exercise books.

At Bagele (T2) the teacher called out the names of seven learners and told this group of children to come to the front of the class and sit around her chair on the carpet. She explained to us that the rest of the class had already been briefed about the seatwork exercise they had to do in their DBE workbooks as she had given them 'an extra time' lesson before school started. The learners already knew what work to do.

### 8.2.7 A variety of literacy activities within lessons

Table 7 summarises the range of language and literacy activities that were observed during the lesson observations in the four schools. The schools have been ordered on the table so that information can be compared across Treatment 1 and Treatment 2 teachers relative to the length of each lesson observed.

**Table 7: Core activities observed in Treatment 1 and 2 teachers' lessons**

Treatment	1	2	1	2
School	Anna	Baloyi	Major	Bagele
Day	Monday	Thursday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Lesson length	90 minutes	90 minutes	76 minutes	67 minutes
Whole class 'kinesthetic' activity		✓		
Phonics instruction		✓	✓	✓
Handwriting instruction			✓	✓
Creative writing instruction		✓		
Letter writing instruction	✓			
Group guided reading	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Shared reading	✓			✓
Story reading (teacher 'read aloud')		✓		
Listening and speaking		✓		
Verbal instructions for seatwork tasks	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reading of instructions for seatwork tasks	✓			
Individual seatwork	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Review of seatwork	✓			

The EGRS lesson plans structure activities in the daily lessons in such a manner that a lesson observed on a Monday is not strictly comparable to a lesson observed on a Tuesday. Thus, for example, creative writing might not be evident in lesson observations on certain days of the week which could create the impression that creative writing is not being covered in some classes. Nevertheless, information on Table 7 shows that a wide range of literacy activities took place in all four lessons.

## ***Structured literacy***

Three out of the four classes had phonics instruction on the day of the observation (recommended for four days of the week) suggesting that regular phonics instruction is taking place. The fourth lesson was observed on a Monday but the two Treatment 1 teachers reported that they had not yet received the Term 4 lesson plans from EGRS and were improvising by doing Term 3 'revision' lessons. It is possible that the teacher at Anna and Major did not adhere rigidly to the original scripted lesson plans or had used plans for different days of the week. Two of the four classes had handwriting instruction (recommended for three days of the week). Instruction on creative writing occurred in one class but another class had some instruction on letter writing. There was group guided reading in all four lessons, indicating that regular group guided reading is taking place. Three of the lessons had two groups each whilst one lesson only entailed one group guided reading session (CAPS recommends two groups per day). We observed shared reading taking place in two of the lessons (recommended for three days of the week) and in one of the other lessons the teacher read a story aloud to the class - who did not have the text to follow. Children in all four lessons completed individual seatwork (writing - recommended for three days of the week). Three of the lessons had two sessions of completing written tasks. The teacher at Baloyi (T2) had two Listening and Speaking activities: one took the form of a short 'kinesthetic' song and the other involved the use of an EGRS poster.

### **8.2.8 Evidence of structured literacy instruction**

#### **8.2.8.1 Phonics instruction**

Three out of the four classes had phonics instruction on the day of the observation. All three teachers showed an awareness of the need to explain the meaning of 'phonics' words used as is illustrated in the extract from field notes at Bagele (T2) shown below where the teacher promoted word recognition and developed phonemic awareness by segmenting words into phonemes:

At the start the lesson the teacher told the class that they would start off with a phonics session. She had already written the heading 'phonics' (in Setswana) on the chalkboard with 'tsw' written below the heading. Underneath this she had written a list of words which incorporated 'tsw', namely: tswelela(appear); letswalo(conscious); latswa(lick); tswinenyana(taste); botswa(lazy); tswakanya(mix); setswanlonyana(lid); letswai(salt). The teacher used a pointer to point at each syllable segment of each word and systematically read each segment, for example, tsi/nen/yana; le/tsw/ni or tsa/kan/ya aloud to the class. Each time she read a word the class repeated what she had read in the same manner. The teacher pointed to each syllable segment as the class read in unison. They repeated this process three times after the teacher had read each word.

She then asked learners to explain the meaning of each of the words. Children put up their hands and the teacher asked individuals by name to say what different words meant. The teacher told the class she was going to hold up flash cards with each of the words which she had written on the chalkboard (which incorporated the sound tsw). First she held up a card with the word 'tswakanya'. Children put up their hands to read the word and the teacher selected individuals to read the word. She followed the process with each of the words she had written on the board and congratulated each child who read the word. None of the children who were chosen read the words incorrectly.

In one of the lessons the teacher also got learners to use some of the phonics words in sentences:

At Major (T1) the teacher started the lesson by holding up a phonics card with 'mme' (mother) written on it. The whole class repeated the sound after the teacher three times. The teacher then stuck the card on the chalkboard with prestik. She held up a flash card with the word 'mmino' (music) on it. She told the class to raise their hands and she chose a learner who had her hand up to tell her what the word was. The rest of the class then chanted the word in unison three times. The teacher stuck this flash card on the chalkboard under the previous card. She followed the same pattern using flash cards with the words: mmopo (mop), mmabana (mother) and mmagwe (their mother). She asked the class what each of the words meant. For example, she asked them: What does a mother do? Children put up their hands up and individuals were chosen to answer the question. The whole class then chanted the word together a number of times before the teacher stuck the card on the board.

She then referred the class to an A4 sheet of paper which she had stuck on the board earlier with the words 'mme' (mother) and 'mmina' (music) written on it. The class chanted these two words in unison a number of times. She referred the class to two drawings on the sheet of paper stuck on the chalkboard – one drawing of a 'mother' and the other representing 'music'. She then held up flash cards one at a time with the words: mmelegi (the one who gives birth); mmeli (body); mmaarona (our mother); and mmatsale (mother-in-law). After showing them each flash card and telling them the meaning of each word, the teacher asked individual children to read each word aloud. The rest of the class then chanted each word 3 or 4 times. After this three children were asked to make up their own sentences using each of the words. When the teacher asked one of the boys to make up a sentence using the word 'mmatsale' (mother-in-law), the boy said: My mother-in-law is my friend. The teacher laughed and asked a girl to say her sentence. The girl said: The mother-in-law is a bride. The teacher asked another child who said: The mother in law is mother to the bride. The class clapped. The teacher said: Do you know that you will all be married one day? She then elaborated further on the meaning of mother-in-law.

What was clear about the phonics sessions is that the learners were being given opportunities to practice using phonics sounds in different ways.

### **8.2.8.2 Handwriting instruction**

Both teachers who gave handwriting instruction during their lessons showed a consciousness of the importance of 'getting it right', of making sure there were spaces between words, and of starting sentences with capitals and ending them with full stops, as is reflected in the following extract from field notes:

## Structured literacy

At Major (T1) the teacher told the class that they were going to cover the letter 'm' in handwriting. She told the class to make the letter sound. They all said 'mmmm' in unison. The teacher told the class to pay attention as she wrote the letter m repetitively as mmmm in cursive script on the chalkboard, writing between 2 lines. She said they were to write 'm' in the air in the same way as she had done on the board. First the 'right-handers' would do this and then the 'left-handers'. The class practised writing 'm' cursively in the air – it appeared that all of them except one boy was right-handed. After each writing activity, the left-handed boy was afforded a 'practice' session after the rest of the class. The teacher instructed the learners to pretend to write the letter 'm' on the floor and then on each other's backs. She said that next they would write words which had the letter 'm' in them. She wrote the words mmala (colour), mmaagwe (his/her mother); mmelenyana (small body) and mmakau on the board (in cursive between two lines). The whole class chanted each of the words three times after the teacher had said them. She then got the class to 'write' each of the words in the air sounding out the letters as they were 'writing' each word.

The teacher wrote ssss in cursive on the chalkboard (between two lines below the row of mmmm). As she wrote she told the learners to watch how she wrote the letter 's'. She asked them if they were watching her and the class chanted in unison 'Yes Ma'm' (in Setswana). She got the class to write the letter 's' in the air chanting 'up and down' in Setswana as they moved 'through' the cursive form of the letter. She told them to write in the air 'with confidence' and got them to repeat the motion again. She asked who wanted to come to write the series of cursive s's under her example on the board. She chose a volunteer, a boy, who began to write sss... between the two lines. While he did this the rest of the class wrote ssss (cursively) in the air. They then watched him as he completed a whole row of s's. The teacher told him to be patient when making the 'curve on the s'. She thanked the child when he finished.

She told the class that they were now going to 'do sentence construction'. She said the sentence: 'Her mother is here' (in Setswana) and got the class to repeat this sentence in unison. They then repeated the sentence after the teacher again with the addition of the word 'full stop' (in Setswana) at the end. The teacher asked them if 'full –stop' was a word in the sentence. The class responded that it was not. She told them to repeat the sentence again saying full stop at the end. She told one of the learners to say the sentence on her own (including 'full stop' at the end). She asked the class how to start a sentence when they write it. Learners raised their hands and the teacher asked one of them for an answer. The child said sentences started with a capital letter. The teacher wrote capital M between two lines on the chalkboard. She then wrote the rest of the sentence: Mmaagwe o teng. She asked a learner to confirm that she had written the sentence correctly. The child said that the sentence was 'right' (in English).

In the extract above we see the teacher providing learners with opportunities to write cursive letters in a variety of ways including more 'tactile' ways before they actually wrote in their exercise books in the seatwork task that followed. During the session, the teacher also ensured that the left-handed learner in the class was given opportunities to participate in the various writing actions.



### 8.2.8.3 Creative writing instruction

The following extract from field notes provides insights into the creative writing instruction provided at Baloyi (T2).

The teacher started the session by writing the heading 'Kwalo' (Writing) on the board. She asked the class to tell her what they had done in their previous session on Tuesday. Children put up their hands and the teacher selected a learner to answer her question. The teacher praised the child who gave the appropriate response saying she was impressed that they remembered. She said they were going to do some revision of Tuesday's lesson to see what they could recall. She began by asking the class questions related to the story they had read. One boy gave the answer 'step mother' in English to one of her questions and the teacher laughed and told them what the word is for stepmother in Setswana. She said the story was a 'made up story' (in Setswana). She asked the class to tell her what it meant if a story was made up. A child replied: 'You come up with the story on your own'. She was trying to get them to understand the notion of fiction.

The teacher asked the class for the term that is used to describe the people in a story. One of the learners who had put up his hand replied after the teacher had selected him to answer and said: 'Characters' (Mogaba). The teacher wrote this Setswana word on the chalkboard and led a discussion by referring to the TV series 'Generations' to expand and elaborate on the concept of a lead/main character (Moanelwa mogolo). She wrote the term for lead/main character on the chalkboard as well.

She explained the notion of characteristics of characters. She said they were going to list the three main characteristics of the lead character in the story they had read. She wrote the following on the chalkboard:

Moanelwa mogalo: Letsabi

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

She called upon learners to name three characteristics of the lead character: Letsabi. The class put up their hands and the teacher selected learners who each provide three different characteristics, namely, bothhale (intelligent); pelonomi (sweet); ratega (lovable). The teacher elaborated on what each of these characteristics meant and wrote the words down next to the numbers on the chalkboard.

She wrote:

Mogaka: Mmagwe letsatsi

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

on the chalkboard



## Creative writing

She asked the children to name three characteristics of the character Mmagwe Letsatsi (Letsatsi's stepmother). Once again the children put up their hands and the teacher selected three children to provide answers. She wrote each answer next to the numbers on the chalkboard. 1. bosula (horrible); 2. bogale (angry) 3. lefufa (jealous) before elaborating on what each of these characteristics meant. She continued by asking the class to name other good characteristics that people/characters could have. She said they should think of characters in the TV series 'Generations' saying that they should think of a character who is 'pretty on the inside as well as the outside'. Children put up their hands to answer and the teacher called on individuals by name to respond. Learners gave answers such as abelana (generous); lerato (loving); thusa (helpful) and the teacher wrote each word on the chalkboard.

After she had written the list of 'good' characteristics on the chalkboard which included those of the lead character, Letsabi, she told the class to think of 'opposite' characteristics to those on the chalkboard. Once again individual children suggested appropriate antonyms for the list she had written on the chalkboard. The teacher chose individuals who put up their hands and wrote each word next to its opposite. The following are some of the characteristics she listed: bosula (horrible or ugly); bogale (angry or mean); lefufa (jealous); ntwá (fight); kgothatsa (comfort); letlhoa (hate); kgansa (proud). She asked the class: 'What do we do before we begin to write a story?' Children put up their hands and the teacher selected a learner who answered: 'Plan'. She asked what they should do after that. Learners came up with various responses each time she asked this question, for example: 'Re-read the story'; 'Re-write the story'.

She erased what she had written on the board and wrote

Mogakawa me ke: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

After she had written the above on board, two boys were told to get the creative writing books and hand them out to the class. The teacher wrote the date on the chalkboard. She explained the writing task to the class telling them that they had to use the two lists of negative and positive 'characteristics' that she had written on the chalkboard earlier to develop their own character for a story.

The extract above shows the teacher providing some scaffolding for creative writing: the teacher explained the process of developing characters. There was also some evidence of the teacher promoting some of procedures involved in planning, drafting, writing and editing text when she re-enforced the strategies of planning, re-reading and re-writing. Some vocabulary development (synonyms and antonyms) was also evident.

### 8.2.8.4 Group guided reading

Group guided reading sessions observed in all four lessons involved manageable groups of six to nine children (the CAPS recommendation is that groups should involve six to ten children). The size of different groups was consistent within the lessons. The class with the largest number of learners (fifty three) had the biggest groups (nine learners). Table 8 shows the size of the groups in each guided reading session and the range and type of activities that took place.

**Table 8: Size of groups and activities in Group 1 and Group 2 guided reading sessions in Treatment 1 and 2 teachers' lessons**

Treatment	1	2	1	2
School Day	Anna Monday	Baloyi Thursday	Major Tuesday	Bagele Wednesday
Number of learners per group	9	7	6	7
Introducing new words. Group repeating/reading new words after teacher	✓ Group 1 Group 2 N/A	✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2	✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2	✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2
Discussion of the illustration on the cover of the book and/or reading the title		✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2	✓ Group 2	✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2
Teacher reading each page with learners following silently			✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2	
Group reading aloud together without the teacher		✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2	✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2	
Each group member reading aloud whilst rest of the group follow silently in their books	✓ Group 1		✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2	✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2
Group reading aloud simultaneously but each at own pace		✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2		
Discussion and questions about illustrations on each page of reader		✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2	✓ Group 1	
Discussion and questions about the text read	✓ Group 1		✓ Group 1	✓ Group 1 ✓ Group 2

## Guided reading

Table 9 outlines the sequences of activities used by each of the teachers for their Group 1 and 2 guided reading sessions.

**Table 9: Sequence of group guided reading activities**

Treatment	1*	2**	1*	2**
School	Anna	Baloyi	Major	Bagele
<b>First Group</b>	1.Introducing new words. Group repeating/reading new words after teacher 2.Each group member reading aloud whilst rest of the group follow silently in their books 3.Discussion and questions about the text read	1.Introducing new words. Group repeating/reading new words after teacher 2.Discussion about the illustration on cover and reading the title 3.Discussion and questions about illustrations on each page of reader 4.Group reading aloud together without the teacher 5.Teacher standing behind each member (reading aloud simultaneously) to monitor each one 6.Group reading aloud simultaneously but each at own pace 7.(No discussion of text read)	1.Introducing new words. Group repeating/ reading new words after teacher 2. Each group member reading aloud whilst rest of the group follow silently in their books 3.Discussion about and questions about illustrations and text 4.Teacher reading each page with learners following silently <b>and</b> group reading each page aloud together (after the teacher had finished each page) 5.Each member reading one page aloud with the rest of the group following silently 6.Discussion and questions about the text read	1.Discussion about illustration on cover 2.Introducing new words. Group repeating/reading new words after teacher 3.Each group member reading 1-4 sentences with the rest of group following silently 4.Discussion and questions about the text read

Table 9: Sequence of group guided reading activities (contd)

Treatment	1*	2**	1*	2**
School	Anna	Baloyi	Major	Bagele
<b>Second Group</b>	N/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introducing new word</li> <li>2. Discussion about the illustration on cover and reading the title</li> <li>3. Discussion about illustrations on each page of reader</li> <li>4. Group reading aloud together without the teacher</li> <li>5. Teacher standing behind each member to monitor each one</li> <li>6. Group reading aloud simultaneously but at each own pace</li> <li>7. (No discussion of text read)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion about picture on the cover of the book</li> <li>2. Introducing new words</li> <li>3. Identifying and reading title of the reader</li> <li>4. Teacher reading each page with learners following silently <b>and</b> group reading each page aloud together (after the teacher had finished)</li> <li>5. Each member of the group reading one page aloud with the rest of the group following silently</li> <li>6. (No discussion about text read)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion about illustration on cover</li> <li>2. Introducing new words</li> <li>3. Each group member reading with rest of group following silently</li> <li>4. Identifying and reading the title of the reader</li> <li>5. Discussion and questions about text read</li> </ol>

Tables 8 and 9 show variations in the ways in which the different teachers covered their group guided reading sessions as well as some variations in the way teachers covered the two sessions within their own lessons. Nevertheless, certain common features were evident. All four teachers used the Vula Bula graded readers and introduced and got learners to read ('look and say') new words prior to the children reading the text themselves. For example,

At Major (T1) the teacher sat with the small group seated at the front of the room. She read a list of words from the front of their reader. She then wrote the following words on the chalkboard: mmutla (rabbit); mabelo (speed); khudu (tortoise); tenege (patience); sianang (run). She read each word out aloud and the six learners repeated each word twice after her in unison. She made each one of the children in the group read all the words from the reader that she had written on the board independently using a pointer. Each of the children 'slid' the pointer along under each word as they pronounced each word. The children all read the words loudly and confidently.

## Guided reading

All four teachers got each group member to read aloud during the group guided reading sessions. Three of the groups had opportunities to read aloud individually. In one class, all members of the group read aloud together. However the teacher told them to read at their own pace and monitored each one (sometimes standing behind their chairs and listening to them as they read). In a sense by monitoring the children as the whole group read, she 'maximised' the amount of time each child in the group was able to read. The following extracts from field notes illustrate:

At Baloyi (T2), the teacher stood behind each child in the group briefly listening to each one monitoring how they were reading. Some of the children were struggling to keep up with the others. She went and sat in her chair in front of the group and told the group that they should each read at their own pace. She said that if they were not struggling, they should read ahead and not wait for others who were slower readers. The whole group kept reading aloud but each at his/her own pace. When she heard one learner struggling to read a word, the teacher tried to give her clues as to what the word could be.

It was not always possible to hear and interpret everything that was said in each guided group reading session, but there was some evidence of teachers giving individualised instruction. For example, there was evidence of teachers getting learners to pay attention to punctuation as is illustrated in the following extracts from field notes:

At Major (T1) when each of the children in the group had finished reading a page of the reader, the teacher put an exclamation mark after the word 'Sianang!' (Run!) on the chalkboard. She asked the group why she had done this. The children put up their hands and she selected a learner to answer. One of the children said: 'To show a sense of urgency'. Later on she encouraged them to try to read with expression and drew a link between her earlier reference to the exclamation mark and the idea of reading with expression.

At Baloyi (T2) the teachers asked one of the girls who was reading: 'Where is the capital letter? The girl responded: 'At the beginning of the sentence'.

Two of the four teachers discussed the illustration on the cover of the reader and/or got learners to read the title in their first guided reading session (Group 1). Two of the teachers got learners to discuss and answer questions about the illustrations on each page. For example,

At Baloyi (T2) the teacher told the group to look at the cover of the reader and tell her what they could see in the picture. The group put up their hands and the teacher asked one of the learners to answer. The learner said: 'a lion and a mouse...'. The teacher discussed the picture on the cover. She pointed to the title of the reader and the group read the title aloud together: Tau le Peba. Later, she got the group to page through their readers making them look at each illustration on each page and asking them questions about each picture or about the things that were portrayed in each picture. For

At Baloyi (T2) the teacher told the group to look at the cover of the reader and tell her what they could see in the picture. The group put up their hands and the teacher asked one of the learners to answer. The learner said: 'a lion and a mouse...'. The teacher discussed the picture on the cover. She pointed

Two of the groups also read the text aloud together without the teacher. Three of the four teachers discussed and asked learners questions about the text they had read. For example,

At Bagele (T2) the teacher began to ask the group questions about the text they had read in the reader. For example, she asked 'What ingredients did the grandmother and children use to bake cakes?' Different members of the group named different ingredients. She asked, 'What kind of cakes were they baking?' One of the girls replied 'Cupcakes'. She asked, 'What did the children do to help the grandmother?'; 'What are the names of the children in the story?'; 'When will the cupcakes be eaten?' etc.

### **8.2.8.5 Shared reading**

In the two lessons where there was shared reading, Anna (T1) and Bagele (T2), both teachers got the children to read the text themselves and engaged learners in oral or written activities based on the text as is reflected in the extracts from field work notes below:

At Bagele (T2) the teacher began the shared reading session by holding up flash cards with sight words from the text to be read. She said each word and the class then chanted each word in unison twice. She told the whole class to open their DBE workbooks and turn to page 32 and 33. She said she was going to read a passage in the workbooks and the whole class should follow in their books. Most of the class followed as the teacher read the extended text. When the teacher had finished reading the passage, she told the class that they should read the paragraphs she had just read aloud together. They read the first and second paragraphs together with the teacher. Everyone seemed to be engaged in trying to read although not all the children were managing to read all the words at the pace set. Nevertheless, the whole class was trying to follow as the class read together. The teacher told the class to try to read faster (more fluently).

The teacher then told the class that the text they had just read was about a boy called Dan. She got one row of learners at a time to read a paragraph together. She asked the class a few questions about what they had read before asking a child who was sitting at the front of the class to read the first paragraph aloud alone. She told the rest of the class to follow in their workbooks. She chose another learner to read the second paragraph of the passage. The teachers asked a question about the second paragraph: 'On what day did Dan forget his school bag in the bus? She selected a third child to read the 3rd paragraph. After a fourth child had read aloud alone, the teacher told the class that the passage they had read was from Dan's diary; it was about what happened in his daily life. She proceeded to ask the learners more questions about what they had read.



## *Listening and speaking*

This teacher started by demonstrating how to read the text fluently. When the whole class read the text with the teacher she encouraged them to try to read more fluently. After individual learners read each paragraphs aloud to the rest of the class, she asked comprehension questions.

### **8.2.8.6 Listening and speaking**

None of the four teachers 'mixed' languages during the Setswana lesson (code mixing) allowing for stronger HL development. In interactions all four teachers referred to learners by their names (rather than, for example, just pointing at learners when questioning the class). Teachers generally asked different learners to answer questions.

The following extract from field notes describes the teacher (at Baloyi T2) using an EGRS posters in the Listening and Speaking activity in her lesson. The teacher demonstrated an awareness of placing the poster in a position of the chalkboard where all the children could see the images. She got the class to pay attention before proceeding and used the poster to develop their Setswana vocabulary.

After the teacher cleaned the chalkboard, she told the class they were having the 'Listening and Speaking' session. She held up an EGRS poster and told the class they must 'listen and understand'. She attached the poster to the chalkboard so all the learners could see it. The teacher told the whole class to pay attention and focus on her. She told the class that the theme of the poster was 'objects that can move' and wrote 'Dilo tse di tsamayang' on the chalkboard. She asked the class to look at the poster for 'things that can move'. When the class put up their hands, the teacher chose individuals to name the objects and come up to the poster and point to the objects. The teacher was very expressive during the session, for example, she made the noise of a motorbike when a child pointed to the bike depicted in the poster. All the class were very engaged in looking at the poster. As children gave their answers, the teacher corrected them if they used the incorrect terms for the objects (for example, 'three wheeler' instead of 'tricycle' in Setswana).

At the beginning of the lesson, this teacher got the whole class to sing the song 'Heads and shoulders' (in Setswana) whilst touching the relevant parts of their bodies as they sang. They seemed to enjoy this 'kinesthetic' 'Listening and Speaking' activity. It appeared to have the effect of settling them down at the start. The song was appropriately brief taking less than a minute.

### **8.2.9 Availability and use of Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM)**

Tables 12-15 on pages 25-28 provide information on the materials used during each of the lesson observations. The tables show that materials used included Term 3 & 4 DBE workbooks, the Vula Bula graded readers, EGRS flash cards, the chalkboard, pencils, erasers, rulers and an EGRS poster.

### 8.2.9.1 EGRS LTSM

Teachers and learners in all four classrooms appear to have been inducted into the culture of using graded readers, flash and phonics cards, pictures and EGRS posters.

Graded readers (Molteno's Vula Bula series) are provided as a resource for EGRS teachers to use in group-guided reading and individual work so as to facilitate reading practice at an appropriate pace and sequence of progression. All four teachers made use of the readers for group guided reading during the lesson observations. In the interviews all four teachers reported that these readers were the only readers they used with their Grade 2 classes. The teacher at Major (T1) acknowledged that without the readers she would not be able to implement 'the proper method' for group guided reading. In the interviews, teachers said they felt that the availability and use of the readers had raised learners' interest in reading; they said they had noticed that learners were more eager to read than write. We saw evidence of this enthusiasm to read the readers during the lesson observations as is illustrated in the following extracts from field notes, the first extract is from the observation at Bagele (T2) and the second from the observation at Major (T1):

At the start of the second group guided reading session, the teacher held up flash cards with new words in the text as she had done previous with the group guided reading group. She said each word and the learners then chanted each word three times in unison. The teacher reminded them to look at the flash cards when they read the words. Whilst this was taking place some of the learners in the rest of the class looked up to listen to what the group were doing. One child in the class said the words as the group repeated them.

During the group guided reading session, the teacher noticed that a number of children from the rest of the class were watching and listening and told them they should not listen; what she was doing with the group was the group's 'secret' and the rest of them would have a turn later.

All four of the teachers used flash/phonics cards for teaching phonics and/or in their group guided reading session. One teacher [at Bagele (T2)] used an EGRS poster during her lesson observation. The teacher at Major (T1) had four EGRS/Class Act posters stuck on the walls with prestik and the teacher at Anna (T1) had two EGRS/Class Act posters on the walls.

### 8.2.9.2 Other reading and writing material

#### **Writing equipment**

Three of the teachers demonstrated awareness of the need to ensure that all the children in the class had access to necessary writing equipment for written work such as pencils, rulers etc. At Anna (T1) the teacher initially did not seem to notice that at least half of the class were not writing in their exercise because only about half of them had pencils. After two minutes, she had asked the class if they were finished their short task, and only then did she ask a child where his pencil was. When she realised learners did not all have pencils, she gave out 5/6 pencils and told children to share the pencils. The teacher at Baloyi (T2) walked around the classroom with an eraser rubbing out work in

## **Books**

some children's handwriting books when they indicated that they had made errors and wanted to correct their errors. She told others in the class to raise their hands if they needed her to come and erase any of their work. A boy in the class handed out rulers to the whole class.

### **DBE workbooks**

Each child in each of the four classes had their own copy of the Term 3 & 4 DBE workbook and learners in all four classes appeared to be using and handling the workbooks regularly. Workbooks at all four schools looked well used. At Anna (T1) the workbooks were somewhat tatty. At Bagele (T2), the books did not look tatty and some (not all) of them were covered. At Major (T1) and Baloyi (T2) the workbooks looked cared for and were covered with plastic.

During the lesson observations two of the four teachers (Bagele T2 and Anna T1) made use the DBE workbooks. Both teachers used them as a source for seatwork for learners as well as for texts for shared reading; the teacher at Bagele used an extract from a diary in the workbook as a text for shared reading and the teacher at Anna used a letter.

It seemed that teachers were also using the workbooks indirectly in ways that helped develop a concept of print (turn the pages from right to left, identify page numbers and find headings) as is illustrated in the extract from lesson observation notes from Anna (T1):

Once the books were handed out, the teacher told learners to turn to page 70. Learners spent some time paging through the workbooks to find the right page but in the process showed they had developed some concepts of print. Page 70 of the workbooks comprises a letter. The teacher told the class that the text they were going to read was a letter and that they would learn about how to format a letter. At 08h32, the teacher told the class to read the heading on the page.

### **Exercise books**

All the classes had more than one exercise book for written work. The various books were each clearly identified with children's names and labelled as being used for specific purposes, for example, homework. At Anna (T1), learners had a book for language exercises; and separate books for handwriting; for phonics; for spelling; and for assessment. At Major (T1), they had a book for language exercises; a book for creative writing; one book for handwriting and phonics (combined); and separate spelling books and homework books. At Bagele (T2), learners had one book for handwriting and creative writing; one book for phonics and spelling; one book for listening and speaking; and one for assessment. At Baloyi (T2), they had separate books for homework, for handwriting, for phonics, for spelling, for language exercises, for creative writing, and for listening and speaking. Class exercise books at all four schools looked well used. At Anna (T1) the exercise books were somewhat tatty; at Bagele (T2), the books did not look tatty and some (not all) of them were covered; at Major (T1) and Baloyi (T2) exercise books looked cared for and all the books were covered with plastic.

Work in all four classes was organised systematically in the various exercise books by date. During the lesson observation all four teachers instructed learners to write the date and heading for each piece of daily work they completed. For example,

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher at Major (T1) wrote the date and the heading phonics (in Setswana) on the chalkboard. She then asked the class to tell her what the date was. She told them that they were going to write all the words they had just covered in class in their phonics books.

Teachers also seemed aware of ensuring that work in the books was written sequentially and that learners wrote in the 'correct' spaces or places. For example, at Baloyi (T2) the teacher walked around the classroom telling individual learners exactly where they should begin that day's work in their exercise books.

### 8.2.10 Frequency of written work

There were fifty eight possible school days on which learners could have had Setswana HL lessons during the period under review in the document review (18 July – 17 October). The information on Table 10 below suggests that learners in all four Grade 2 classes had completed written work in their workbooks and/or exercise books on most days during that period.

**Table 10: Number of Term 3 & 4 DBE workbook pages and number of pages of daily work in exercise books in Term 3**

Treatment	1		2	
School Rural/urban	Anna Rural	Major Urban	Bagele Rural	Baloyi Urban
Number of Term 3 & 4 workbook pages completed (58 days of schooling)	17	37	52	38
Number of pieces of daily written work in exercise books for Term 3 (53 days of schooling)	41	43	38	19
<b>Total</b>	58	60	90	57

What is clear from the information on the above tables is that learners are writing regularly in class. In the lesson observations learners in all four classes were given opportunities to write. In three of the four lessons observed [Major T1; Bagele (T2), Baloyi (T2)], learners were given opportunities to complete two written tasks (refer Table 7: Core activities observed in Treatment 1 and 2 teachers' lessons) suggesting that learners tend to do more than one piece of written work in most lessons. The information on Table 10 indicates that the class at Bagele (T2) had done written work on at least fifty two of the possible fifty-eight school days, whereas the class at Baloyi (T2) had done written work on at least thirty-eight of the possible days. In the interview, the teacher from Anna (T1) expressed her appreciation for the 'writing activities which are provided in the EGRS lesson plans' suggesting that the provisioning of these activities had played a role in motivated teachers to give their classes more writing tasks.



There was evidence in at least two of the classes that learners were also doing written homework. At Major (T1) and Baloyi (T2) learners had designated books for homework. At Baloyi, there was evidence of learners doing written homework in the exercise books about three times a week. At Anna (T1) we found some homework in learners' exercise books although it seemed that written homework was given less often than once a week.

**8.2.11 Division of time in lessons**

In the interview the teacher at Anna (T1) said that the biggest changes that she had made to the way she teaches Setswana related to her lesson planning, in particular the amount of time and the ways she spent her time teaching Setswana HL. The teacher at Bagele (T2) similarly reported that she was 'now better able to comply with the CAPS requirements' with regard to the division of activities.

The following table summarises the division of time recommended in the CAPS for various activities for Grade 2 Home Language (pg 9 & 10)

**Table 11: Recommended weekly division of time in the CAPS for Grade 2 Setswana HL**

Listening and speaking	15 minutes per day for 3/4 days
Reading and Phonics	Phonics: 15 minutes per day for 4/5 days Shared reading: 20 minutes per day for 3 days or 15 minutes per day for 5 days Group (guided) reading: 30 minutes per day (2 groups each for 15 minutes) for 5 days
Handwriting	15 minutes per day for 3/4 days
Writing	20 minutes per day for 3 days

Tables 12 – 15 shows how much time (in minutes) each of the various activities occurring in each of the lessons observed took, the materials used during each activity, and what learners were required to do during each activity in terms of reading, writing and listening and speaking.

Transition periods shown on the tables are defined as times during lessons when teachers and learners were transitioning from one activity to another or when the class was being prepared for the next activity. For example, when teachers or learners were handing out books for the next task and/or making sure that all the learners had pencils etc., or when learners were moving to the front of the classroom for group guided reading or returning to their desks from the carpet at the front of the class after the teacher had read aloud to the class, or when the teacher gained the class' attention before proceeding to the next activity.



Table 12: Division of time in the lesson at Anna (T1) visited on a Monday

Duration	Activity		Material Used	Learners	
1 minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Handing out workbooks				
4 minutes	<b>Whole class letter writing instruction without interaction:</b> Teacher introduces the text to be read (letter in DBE workbooks) and explains the format of a letter.		DBE Term 3 and 4 workbooks Chalkboard	Listening	
5 minutes	<b>Shared reading without interaction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole class reading of letter in DBE workbooks aloud with teacher</li> <li>Whole class reading letter together without the teacher but with the teacher joining in every few sentences.</li> </ul>		DBE Term 3 and 4 workbooks	Reading	
12 minutes	<b>Whole class discussion of shared reading text read:</b> Oral questioning about letter including questions based on workbook activities.		DBE Term 3 and 4 workbooks Chalkboard	Listening and speaking	
3 minutes	<b>Individual seatwork.</b> Learners write answers to workbook exercise they had covered with the whole class.		DBE Term 3 and 4 workbooks Pencils	Writing	
5 minutes	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for whole class workbook activities				
½ minute	<b>Reading of instructions for whole class task:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher reading instructions for workbook exercise aloud to whole class. Learners following in workbooks</li> <li>Whole class re-reading instruction together</li> </ul>		DBE Term 3 and 4 workbooks	Reading	
1 ½ minutes	<b>Shared reading continued:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole class reading the letter without the teacher</li> </ul>		DBE Term 3 and 4 workbooks	Reading	
½ minute	<b>Verbal instructions for whole class task:</b> Teacher explaining instructions they had read two minutes earlier.			Listening	
7 ½ minutes	<b>Whole class discussion of shared reading text read:</b> Oral questioning about the letter read using follow-up sequencing exercise in workbooks.		Chalkboard Pencils	Listening and speaking	
1 minute	<b>Verbal instructions for individual seatwork task.</b>			Listening	
1 minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for group guided reading and individual seatwork for the rest of the class.				
14 minutes	<b>Group guided reading</b> 9 learners	<b>Material used:</b> Flash cards Vula Bula reader.	<b>Individual seatwork:</b> Rest of the class <b>creating their own sentences</b> to complete a further follow-up exercise in DBE workbook.	DBE Term 3 and 4 workbooks Pencils	41 learners writing  9 learners reading (5 mins reading and 9 mins listening and speaking)
½ minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Guided reading group returned to their desks. Teacher briefly walks around gauging a few learners' progress based with seatwork task .				
8 ½ minutes.	Additional <b>verbal instructions with interaction:</b> to assist the class in completing the individual seatwork task.			Listening and speaking	

## Division

5 minutes	<b>Individual seatwork:</b> Class continues working on the same DBE workbook exercise <b>creating their own sentences.</b>	DBE Term 3 and 4 workbooks Pencils	Writing
20 minutes	<b>Whole class review of seatwork with interaction:</b> Teacher reviewing learners' answers to the DBE exercise.	DBE Term 3 and 4 workbooks Chalkboard	Listening and speaking
90 minutes	<b>Total</b>		

Table 13: Division of time in the lesson at Major (T1) visited on a Tuesday

Duration	Activity		Materials used	Learners
6 minutes	<b>Transition period:</b> Setting up for phonics instruction. Whole class seated around teacher in the front of the classroom.			
13 minutes	<b>Whole class phonics instruction with interaction:</b> Oral questions related to phonics words.		Phonics/Flash cards A4 piece of paper with two pictures and words Chalkboard	Phonics
1 minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Whole class returning to desks from front of classroom.			
21 minutes	2 minutes. <b>Transition period:</b> for guided reading group: Group waited while teacher checked that the rest of the class were beginning their individual seat work.		Blank sheets of A4 paper Pencils Sheet of paper with spider word diagram and words.	40 learners writing 6 learners reading (14 minutes reading; 5 minutes listening and speaking)
	<b>First group guided reading</b> 6 learners (19 minutes)	<b>Materials used:</b> Vula Bula reader Chalkboard Pointer		
3 minutes	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for handwriting instruction.			
15 minutes	<b>Whole class handwriting instruction with interaction.</b>		Chalkboard	Listening and speaking
4 minutes	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for guided reading and handwriting task.			
2 minutes	<b>Verbal instructions for individual seatwork task:</b> Teacher explaining individual seatwork to the rest of the class.			Listening
11 minutes	<b>Second group guided reading</b> 6 learners	<b>Materials used:</b> Vula Bula reader Chalkboard Pointer	<b>Individual seatwork:</b> Rest of the class <b>copying</b> handwriting from the chalkboard into exercise books and doing sentence construction task.	40 learners handwriting 6 learners 11 minutes of reading
76 minutes	<b>Total</b>			

Table 14: Division of time in the lesson at Bagele (T2) visited on a Wednesday

Duration	Activity			Materials used	Learners
7 minutes	<b>Whole class phonics instruction with interaction.</b>			Chalkboard Pointer Flash cards	Phonics
½ minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for group guided reading and individual seatwork.*				
15 ½ minutes	<b>First group guided reading</b> 7 learners	<b>Materials used:</b> Vula Bula reader Flash cards	<b>Individual seatwork:</b> Rest of the class completing an (unknown) exercise in their DBE workbooks.	DBE Term 3 & 4 workbooks Pencils	39 learners writing  7 learners reading (12 ½ minutes reading; 3 minutes listening and speaking)
½ minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for writing instruction.				
11 ½ minutes	<b>Whole class handwriting instruction without interaction.</b>			Chalkboard Writing exercise books Pencils	Listening
½ minute	<b>Verbal instructions for individual seatwork task.</b>				Listening
½ minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for group guided reading .				
13 minutes	<b>Second group guided reading:</b> 7 learners	<b>Materials used:</b> Vula Bula reader Flash cards	<b>Individual seatwork:</b> Rest of the class <b>copying</b> handwriting from the chalkboard into exercise books and completing a sentence construction task.	Writing exercise books Pencils	39 learners handwriting  7 learners reading (9 minutes reading 4 minutes listening and speaking)
1 minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for shared reading session				
13 minutes	<b>Shared reading with interaction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher reading diary aloud to whole class with class following in their books.</li> <li>Whole class reading diary aloud together without the teacher.</li> <li>Four learners each reading a paragraph of diary aloud with the rest of the class following in their books .</li> </ul>			Flash cards DBE Term 3 & 4 workbooks	Reading
4 minutes	<b>Whole class discussion of shared reading text read:</b> oral questioning about the content of the diary.				Listening and speaking
67 minutes	<b>Total</b>				

## Division

\*Learners already had their workbooks and writing exercise books on their desks when the researcher entered the classroom. The class had already been briefed about the exercise they had to do in their DBE workbooks. This briefing had taken place when the teacher had given them 'an extra time' lesson before school started so time was not spent handing out books or setting up for the first seatwork task during the observation period.

**Table 15: Division of time in the lesson at Baloyi (T2) visited on a Thursday**

Duration	Activity			Materials used	Learners
½ minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Introduction of visitors to class.				
½ minute	<b>Whole class 'kinesthetic' activity:</b> Singing 'Heads and shoulders' (in Setswana) touching parts of their body to settle class.				Speaking (singing)
10 minutes	<b>Whole class phonics instruction with interaction.</b>			Chalkboard	Phonics
1 minute	<b>Verbal instructions for individual seatwork task.</b>				Listening
5 minutes	<b>Transition period:</b> Setting up for group guided reading and phonics task.				
16 minutes	<b>First group guided reading:</b> 7 learners	<b>Materials used:</b> Flash cards Vula Bula reader	<b>Individual seatwork:</b> Rest of the class <b>reproducing</b> phonics spider word diagram.	Rulers Pencils Phonics exercise books Eraser	29 learners writing  7 learners reading (12 minutes reading 4 minutes listening and speaking)
½ minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Group returning to their desks; preparation for creative writing instruction.				
20 ½ minutes	<b>Whole class creative writing instruction with interaction:</b> Characteristics of characters.			Lesson plan notes Chalkboard	Listening and speaking
2 minutes	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for creative writing task.				
1 minute	<b>Verbal instructions for creative writing task.</b>			Lesson plan notes	Listening
1 minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Setting group for guided reading.				
13 minutes	<b>Second group guided reading</b> 7 learners	<b>Materials used:</b> Flash cards Vula Bula reader	<b>Individual seatwork:</b> Rest of the class <b>selecting</b> characteristics of characters <b>from a list</b> and writing their list.	Lesson plan notes Creative writing exercise books Pencils	29 learners writing  7 learners reading (6 minutes reading; 7 minutes listening and speaking)
4 minutes	<b>Transition period:</b> Group returning to their desks and teacher collecting exercise books. Preparation for Listening and Speaking session.				
10 minutes	<b>Whole class Listening and Speaking:</b> Looking at poster and identifying and naming objects.			Lesson plan notes EGRS theme poster	Listening and speaking

½ minute	<b>Transition period:</b> Preparation for 'story reading'		
4½ minutes	<b>Story reading ('read aloud') with some discussion:</b> Teacher reads story aloud to class who do not have text to follow followed by a couple of questions on characteristics of characters.	Lesson plan notes	Listening and speaking
90 minutes	<b>Total</b>		

The division of time shown in the Tables 12-15 generally reflects a balance between individual seatwork tasks, whole class instruction/activities and group reading in all four lessons observed. The time devoted to each instructional activity indicates that the allocation of time for instruction in the various activities is generally informed by the CAPS.

### 8.2.12 Lesson coherence

On the surface the sequence or order of the activities within lessons appears to be underpinned by a conception of progression, for example, from phonics, to group guided reading in parallel with seatwork (reading and writing) to shared reading. This 'coherence' is probably largely a consequence of teachers broadly following the format of the EGRS lesson plans.

### 8.2.13 Classroom management

#### *Transition periods*

Transition periods can waste valuable teaching and learning time during lessons. Table 12-15 show that transition periods during all four lessons observed were usually fairly quick. Table 16 summarises the total time taken by transitions.

**Table 16: Total 'transition' periods during Treatment 1 and 2 teachers' lessons**

Treatment	1	2	1	2
School	Anna Rural	Baloyi Urban	Major Rural	Bagele Urban
Number of minutes of lesson	90	90	76	67
Total time taken for 'transitions'	7½ minutes	13½ minutes	13 minutes of for first guided reading group 11 minutes for rest of the class	2½ minutes

Three of the classes observed seemed to have efficient systems for handing out learners' work/exercise books (for example, by using monitors). At Anna (T1), there did not appear to be an efficient system for handing out books. No learners were involved in the process and the teacher alone handed the books out one at a time; this situation arose because of the space issue; there was barely room for anyone to move around the classroom.



## Classroom management

At Major (T2), the first guided reading group had to wait for a couple of minutes before starting while the teacher walked around the class checking that the rest of the class were actually beginning their seatwork task which was to copy the words from the chalkboard. At Bagele (T2), where only 2 ½ minutes was spent on 'transitioning' in the sixty seven minute lesson, learners already had their workbooks and writing exercise books on their desks when the researcher entered the classroom. The class had already been briefed about the exercise they had to do in their DBE workbooks. This briefing had taken place when the teacher had given them 'an extra time' lesson before school started so no time was spent handing out books or setting up for the first seatwork task during the observation period.

The longest time spent on 'transitioning from one instructional activity to the next in the observations was at Baloyi (T2) (a ninety minute lesson). Teachers often struggle to get learners to settle down after transitions. At Major (T1) learners became quite rowdy as they returned to their seats (from sitting on the mat at the front of the classroom). Some children argued over chairs or squabbled over sitting places. However, the descriptions provided below of what took place during the seven transition periods and the time taken for each transition illustrates that, even in the lesson which had the longest transition period (Baloyi T2), transitions were fairly smooth and very little time was wasted moving from one activity to the next giving us the impressions that transitions were reasonably 'standardised' within lessons.

1. The lesson started at 07h55 before the siren went at 08h00. The teacher introduced us to the class and asked them to be on their best behaviour in front of 'the visitors'. (½ minute)
2. At 08h07 she told a learner (who could have been a class monitor) to hand out the relevant exercise books to the rest of class. Whilst the teacher redrew the spider word diagram on the chalkboard, the child handed out the books. At 08h10 the teacher began to walk around the classroom pointing at each learner's exercise book to show them where on the next page they should begin to write. A boy in the class handed out rulers to the whole class. The teacher called a group of seven children by name to come to the front of the class for group guided reading. The group sat on the mat in front of the teacher's chair. The teacher handed out Vula Bula readers to them. She removed some flash cards from under the chalkboard where they had been stuck with prestik (5 minutes)
3. Whilst the teacher collected the outstanding exercise books from the rest of the class, the reading group continued reading aloud together. At 08h28 the teacher told the group to put their readers back and return to their desks. She told the whole class to sit up straight and fold their arms. She made sure they were all paying attention to her and told them to concentrate and watch her as she wrote on the chalkboard (½ minute)
4. At 08h49, after she had finished writing on board, two boys were told to get the creative writing books and hand them out to the class. The teacher wrote the date on the chalkboard and told the group who had been involved in the group guided reading earlier that they now had to catch up and complete the phonics word spider diagram that the rest of class had done earlier during the group reading session as well as complete the task she was now giving the class. At 08h50 the teacher walked around the classroom telling individual learners where they should begin that day's work in their exercise books (2 minutes)

5. At 08h52 the teacher said that the second reading group would come up to the front to sit on the mat. She said she had changed the groups so that they were now grouped according to ability. She said she could not recall who was in the group but the group that was to come up was the first ability group. The group gathered on the mat in front of the teacher's chair (1 minute).
6. At 09h06 the group returned to their seats. The teacher told those learners who had not finished their writing task that they could complete the work later when they had extra time. She proceeded to collect all the outstanding exercise books. At 09h07 the teacher cleaned the chalkboard and told the class they would be having the 'Listening and Speaking' session. She held up an EGRS poster and told the class they must 'listen and understand'. She attached the poster to the chalkboard so all the learners could see it on the chalkboard. The teacher told the whole class to pay attention and focus on her (4 minutes).
7. At 09h20 the teacher said she was going to read the class a story. She took out her reading glasses and told the class to fold their arms and concentrate (½ minutes).

These findings together with the findings discussed below suggest that time management routines were in place in classrooms for getting work done.

### ***Awareness of the need to monitor seatwork***

When the teachers gave the rest of the class individual independent seatwork to do while they worked with small groups for group guided reading, there was evidence of all four teachers showing a degree of awareness of the need to pay attention to what was happening with rest of class as is reflected in the following extracts from field notes:

At Bagele (T2)...the teacher kept looking over heads of the reading group to see what the rest of the class was doing. When the class grew noisier, she chastised them.

At Anna (T1)...the teacher seemed concerned that the rest of the class were not all busy with the seatwork task and was somewhat distracted by this fact. She kept looking over the heads of the small reading group in front to see what was happening with the rest of the class and chastised some of the learners who were not writing. She asked them: Are you finished?

At Baloyi (T2)... when the teacher was getting the group to look at and discuss the cover of their reader, identify and read the title and answer questions about the pictures on each page as she had done with the previous group, she kept looking over their heads at the rest of the class to check what they were doing.

... The teacher stood up and told the rest of the class to behave and be patient while the group was reading because they would have their turn later. She told them that if they had not finished their written task, they should hurry up as the writing session was almost over

At Major (T1) ...the teacher sat with the small group seated at the front of the room. She read a list of words from the front of their reader. She then wrote the following words on the chalkboard: mmutla (rabbit); mabelo (speed); khudu (tortoise); tenege (patience); sianang (run). She read each word out

## ***Responding***

aloud and the six learners repeated each word twice after her in unison. The teacher quickly surveyed the room to check that the rest of the class were on task.

.... The teacher began to read the sentences on each page of the readers to the group. All six learners in the group then read each page in unison after the teacher. When the teacher got up from her chair to check that the rest of the class were doing their work, the children in the group carried on reading aloud without her.

### ***Responding to learners who are disruptive***

In the lesson observations, there was evidence of the teachers responding to learners who were disruptive. For example,

At Major (T1) when the whole class moved to the front of the classroom for phonics instruction, the teacher noticed a boy at the back of the group being disruptive and told him to move to the front of the group. Later when she was writing on the chalkboard if any children were not paying attention to her writing or were being disruptive she called them to attention by name.

At Anna (T1) the teacher chastised a learner for swopping seats.

At Bagele (T2) the teacher chastised a boy (in the class while she was busy with group guided reading) telling him to sit and do his written work.

At Baloyi (T2) when the teacher (who was busy with her guided reading group) saw that some of the children who had finished their seatwork were no longer sitting in their seats, she told them they must all return to their places and remain seated.

### ***Focusing attention on the teacher***

Teachers also tried to ensure that they had the attention of learners for whole class instruction as the following extracts from field notes illustrate:

At Baloyi (T2), the teacher told the class to sit up straight and fold their arms. She made sure they were all paying attention to her and told them to concentrate and watch her as she wrote on the chalkboard.

At Major (T1), whenever the teacher noticed children who were not paying attention, she told them to focus on her.

At Anna (T1), the teacher wrote the word yesterday (in Setswana) on the board and wrote 'papapheti' (the day before) next to it. She repeated the words and said 'Hi Five' to get the whole class' attention.

### 8.2.14 Assessment and records of assessment

The review of learners' workbooks and exercise books showed that written work in learners' exercise books was being checked regularly by the teachers. At Major (T1) and Bagele (T2) the work in learners' exercise books appeared to always be marked. At Baloyi (T2) and Anna (T1) work in the various exercise books appeared to be mostly marked. During the lesson observations we saw evidence of learners handing in their exercise books for marking. Work in the Terms 3 and 4 workbooks at Baloyi (T2) was mostly marked. At Bagele (T2) and Major (T1), the teacher sometimes marked learners' work in the workbooks. However, at Anna (T1) it seemed that none of the work in the Terms 3 and 4 workbooks had been marked.

The requirements for Formal Assessment in the CAPS (p.10) are that, in Grade 2, in Term 1 learners complete only one Formal Assessment Task. In Terms 2, 3 and 4, they should complete two Formal Assessment Tasks per term – however, each 'Task' should be made up of a number of parts dealing with different aspects of language. Table 17 shows findings on the number and types of assessment records found in each teacher's records.

**Table 17: Number of Setswana Home Language assessment records in 2016**

Treatment	1		2	
School	Anna Rural	Major Urban	Bagele Rural	Baloyi Urban
Total number of records for Term 1, 2 and 3 in 2016	28	33	28	30
Number of records for phonics in Term 3	2	2	2	2
Number of records for reading in Term 3	5	5	4	2
Number of records for writing in Term 3	4	4	4	4
Number of records for listening and speaking in Term 3	1	2	2	2
Total number of records for Setswana Home Language in Term 3	12	13	12	10

The number of records for the year ranged from twenty eight to thirty three. Records shown on Table 17 indicate that a programme of assessing learners was in place for phonics, reading, writing and listening and speaking in all four classes.

## Discussions

### 8.2.15 Collaborative discussions with other teachers

In the interviews it became apparent that teachers are also having collaborative discussions with teachers at other EGRS schools. For example, the teacher at Baloyi (T2) said she was involved in a WhatsApp group comprised of other teachers. She said she 'used this method to consult with others about minor difficulties', for example if she does not quite understand a lesson plan. The teacher at Masega (T1) said she 'likes the idea of using Whatsapp messages to talk to colleagues at other schools about problems'.

The findings discussed in Section 8.2 show that on the surface many of the literacy practices the EGRS hoped to instil appeared to be in place. Section 8.3 delves into aspects which could be constraining the impact of the EGRS.

### 8.3 Aspects that appear to be constraining impact

Section 8.3.1 discusses conditions extraneous to the interventions that appeared to have constrained the Grade 2 teachers' Setswana Home Language teaching.

#### 8.3.1 Contextual and classroom conditions

Although it was evident that learners in all four Grade 2 classes had completed written work in their workbooks and/or exercise books on most days during the period under review, evidence from the school visits indicated that the situation in the schools is such that it does not always allow for optimal time and opportunities for HL literacy teaching to take place. For example, interviews for promotion posts were taking place at one school and the teacher seemed anxious about not being available for the interviews during our lesson observation. At another school, teaching started later than scheduled as the staff had a prolonged staff meeting. Shortly after we had left, one school appeared to close early before the official end of the school day. It seems that the schools' days were not always predictable.

Foundation Phase class sizes of over forty and particularly over fifty are also a constraining factor for teachers in classrooms where learners have limited exposure to literacy practices outside of school. There is little doubt that high numbers of children in a class make it difficult for teachers to provide learners with the individual attention they require. For example, if teachers have the CAPS recommended two sessions of guided reading with groups of six learners in large classes, the proportion of learners in the class who do not get guided reading in a lesson is greater than in smaller classes. If teachers try to compensate for this by increasing the size of groups to nine learners then the time available for each individual in the group to read is likely to be reduced.

This constraint is exacerbated when combined with small classrooms where limited space means that teachers can't move around easily to give individual assistance to learners. Classroom management also becomes more of a challenge, for example, handing out books is less efficient. At Anna (T1) learners had to huddle standing around the teacher for group guided reading as there was no space for them to sit. There was insufficient space for the teacher to have a designated area for a book corner. In addition two of the teachers did not open the windows during the lesson which meant that the class rooms became increasingly stuffy.



In all four of the classrooms visited notice boards on the walls were either old and damaged and unusable or did not exist at all making it more difficult for teachers to make their classroom particularly attractive and inviting in terms of literacy. Only two classroom (Major T1 and Baloyi T2 ) had desks with individual chairs (rather than desks with 'fixed benches') which make it easier for teachers to re-arrange seating and move chairs to the front of the class if necessary, for example for whole class story time 'read alouds'. Also noted was the fact that many children do not appear to have basic equipment of their own for writing such as pencils, erasers and rulers. Teachers sometimes had to provide small quantities of this type of stationery for learners to share in class.

Learners' socio-economic background is a constraint. Factors outside the classroom appear to be affecting children's ability to concentrate as is illustrated by the following field notes made during the lesson observation at Anna (T1) and Baloyi (T2):

The lesson ended at 10h00 when the woman who distributes food for the feeding scheme arrived in the classroom and began to dish out bread, beans and apples in silver dishes to the whole class. The children ate their food with gusto using their hands. Most children looked as if they came from very impoverished backgrounds and seemed to be extremely hungry.

The lesson ended when the siren went at 09h25. A woman from the feeding scheme entered the classroom and started to dish out food on stainless steel plates to the children. The learners seemed quite tired and very hungry by this stage.

Indeed we noted that a number of learners appeared too hungry and/or tired to concentrate by the second half of the lesson observations (discussed further under Section 8.3.6.2).

Section 8.3.2 discusses aspects of the actual interventions that appear to have been less successful regarding the four teachers' Setswana Home Language teaching.

### **8.3.2 Poor distribution of EGRS lesson plans**

The Treatment 2 schools had term 4 lesson plans delivered by their coach but the fact that the two Treatment 1 schools had not received the Term 4 plans by the second week of the term suggests that EGRS lesson plans for Treatment 1 need to be more efficiently or better distributed.

### **8.3.3 A culture of dependency**

The teacher at Baloyi (T 2) had her lesson plan notes in her hand during her lesson and kept referring to them to check what she was supposed to do next. In the absence of EGRS Term 4 lesson plans neither of the Treatment 1 teachers took responsibility for developing their own plans. Instead they said they were 'repeating' or doing 'revision' lessons from Term 3. Both teachers were waiting for direction from the EGRS lesson plans rather than taking the initiative themselves. It may be that Treatment 1 teachers decided to present 'repeat'/'revision' lessons from Term 3 because they were afraid of going ahead of the programme and covering work (for example in the workbooks) that



## Reading

would be covered in the Term 4 lesson plans. Nevertheless, this dependency on the EGRS scripted lesson plans reflects a degree of passivity and lack of initiative on the part of teachers.

### 8.3.4 Absence of a culture of reading for enjoyment

It is very difficult to make reading habitual without introducing young learners to a wide variety of books, in particular authentic texts in real stories as opposed to text designed specifically for the teaching of reading. An inhibiting factor in terms of developing a reading culture in all four classrooms seemed to be a shortage of the kind of reading material which makes it possible to build a culture of reading for enjoyment and pleasure.

In the interviews the teacher from Major (T1) expressed appreciation for the Vula Bula readers 'because they allowed learners to choose books for themselves'. Indeed learners do need to be provided with the experience of selecting books for themselves. However, other than the Vula Bula readers and the DBE workbooks, there appeared to be limited exposure to other books in the classrooms. In the two lessons where shared reading was observed, Anna (T1) and Bagele (T2), both teachers used texts from the DBE workbooks (a letter and a diary). Neither text was particularly stimulating in terms of encouraging reading for enjoyment.

Table 18 shows that only one teacher reported in the interview that she used any other texts besides the DBE workbooks and the Molteno readers for teaching literacy; a textbook and a phonics series.

**Table 18: Other texts used for teaching literacy**

Treatment	1		2	
School	Anna	Major	Bagele	Baloyi
Textbooks used	No	Macmillan textbook 'Ditharabololo tsa botlhe' Setswana Toto phonic series 'Buka ya Borara' published by Shuter and Shooter.	No	No

Three teachers had book corners but these mainly comprised the graded readers and big books; classrooms seemed under-resourced in terms of picture books and story books, for example, to keep learners occupied when they had finished seatwork etc. A further constraining factor was the lack of libraries at schools; only one of the teachers at the four schools (Baloyi T2) reported that the school had a library and said that her Grade 2 class visited the library at least once a week.

At Anna (T1) we noticed that, in the office where we were waiting, there were three shelves of unused new books including Via Africa readers and other non-fiction books, some of which were still in plastic wrapping. It may be that these books are being stored until the new school building is available but this instance does indicate that there could be books in schools that are not being used.

Although the walls in all four classrooms were reasonably print rich (for example, with flash cards, word walls, and examples of cursive writing etc.), there were few if any items on the walls that were particularly stimulating or exciting in terms of literacy. Classrooms were not very colourful or inviting with engaging pictures etc. There was also little evidence of any acknowledgement of learners' own literacy efforts; the classroom at Baloyi (T2) was the only classroom of the four we visited where we noted that the teacher had some children's work on display but this took the form of a row of pots that the class had made which were lined up on the window sill. None of the classrooms had displays of learner-generated writing or drawings.

### **8.3.5 Less than optimal use of time and opportunities for learners to participate in speaking, writing and reading**

Table 19 presents an analysis of the amount of time learners in each lesson spent listening and speaking, doing phonics, reading extended text and writing regardless of the particular type of instructional activity (i.e. phonics, group guided reading, shared reading, listening and speaking, etc.). The schools have been ordered on the table so that information can be compared across Treatment 1 and Treatment 2 teachers relative to the length of each lesson observed.

## Reading

Table 19: Amount of time learners in each lesson spent listening and speaking, doing phonics, reading extended text and writing

School	Anna T1 50 90 minutes	Baloyi T2 36 90 minutes	Major T1 46 76 minutes	Bagele T2 47 67 minutes
Learners present Length of lesson				
<b>1. Listening and speaking</b> Whole class	53 ½ minutes	37 ½ minutes	17 minutes	16 minutes
<b>2. Phonics</b> Whole class	0 minutes	10 minutes	13 minutes	7 minutes
<b>3. Reading extended text</b>				
Shared reading Whole class	7 minutes	0 minutes	0 minutes	13 minutes
Group guided reading of <b>extended text</b>	<b>Group 1:</b> 14 minutes - 9 learners • 5 minutes reading • 9 minutes listening and speaking <b>Total for Group 1:</b> 12 minutes	<b>Group 1:</b> 16 minutes - 7 learners • 12 minutes reading • 4 minutes listening and speaking <b>Total for Group 1:</b> 12 minutes	<b>Group 1:</b> 19 minutes - 6 learners • 12 minutes reading • 7 minutes listening and speaking <b>Total for Group 1:</b> 14 minutes	<b>Group 1:</b> 15 ½ minutes – 7 learners • 12 ½ minutes reading • 3 minutes listening and speaking <b>Total for Group 1:</b> 25 ½ minutes
	N/A	<b>Group 2:</b> 13 minutes – 7 learners 6 minutes reading 7 minutes listening and speaking <b>Total for Group 2:</b> 6 minutes	<b>Group 2:</b> 11 minutes - 6 learners 11 minutes reading 0 listening and speaking <b>Total for Group 2:</b> 11 minutes	<b>Group 2:</b> 13 minutes – 7 learners 9 minutes reading 4 minutes listening and speaking <b>Total for Group 2:</b> 21 minutes
<b>4. Writing</b>				
Handwriting Whole Class	0 minutes	0 minutes	0 minutes	13 minutes
Seatwork writing Whole class	22 minutes	29 minutes	32 minutes	15 ½ minutes
<b>5. Transition periods</b>	7 ½ minutes	13 ½ minutes	11/13 minutes	2 ½ minutes

The tables show that at Major (T1) learners spent 42% of the seventy six minute lesson on writing tasks and at Bagele (T2) learners spent 43% of the sixty seven minute lesson on writing tasks. Learners in both of the ninety minute lessons spent a smaller proportion of time in the lesson writing. At Baloyi (T2), they spent 32% of the lesson on writing tasks and at Anna (T2) they spent 24% of the lesson on writing tasks. However, in these 'longer' lessons learners spent a higher proportion of the lessons listening and speaking than learners in the 'shorter' lessons. At Anna (T1) learners spent 60% of the lesson listening and speaking and at Baloyi (T2) they spent 42% of the lesson listening and speaking. Whereas at Major (T1) learners spent 22% of the lesson listening and speaking and at Bagele (T2) they spent 24% of the lesson listening and speaking. Of major concern, however, is the amount of time learners themselves were actually engaged in reading extended text during all four lessons observed.

Analysis of the amount of time learners in each lesson spent listening and speaking, doing phonics, reading extended text and writing regardless of the particular type of instructional activity, indicates that opportunities to listen and speak and write were being privileged over opportunities to read extended text.

### 8.3.5.1 Reading practice

Table 19 shows that in two of the lessons (at Baloyi T2 and Major T1) only those learners who had group guided reading practised reading extended text. The rest of the class did not have the opportunity to practice reading extended text during the lessons.

At Major (T1), six (13%) of the learners read extended text for twelve minutes (16%) of the seventy six minute lesson and six (13%) of the learners read extended text for eleven minutes (14%) of the lesson. As an illustrative example, the following is a detailed breakdown of the division of time during the first group guided reading session at Major (T1) which took a total of nineteen minutes with six learners:

- 2 minutes: Sight reading of flash card with new words
- 3 minutes: Individual reading of Vula Bula graded reader
- 3 minutes: Discussion about the text and illustrations
- 5 minutes: Teacher read each page with learners following silently; group read each page aloud together after the teacher had finished each page
- 4 minutes: Each member of the group read one page aloud with the rest of the group following silently
- 2 minutes: Discussion about the text

The remaining thirty four learners in the class did not have the opportunity to practise.

At Baloyi (T2), seven (19%) of the learners read extended text for twelve minutes (13%) of the lesson and another group of seven (19%) of the learners read for six minutes (7%) of the ninety minute lesson. The remaining twenty two learners had no opportunity to practise reading extended text during the lesson.

## Writing practice

The whole class at Anna (T1) (i.e. fifty learners) spent seven minutes (8%) of the ninety minute lesson reading extended text. Nine (18%) of the learners spent an additional five (6%) minutes of the lesson reading extended text in their group guided reading session.

The best scenario in terms of opportunities to read extended text during the lesson observations was at Bagele (T2) where the whole class (forty six learners) spent thirteen minutes (19%) of the sixty seven minute lesson reading extended text. One group of seven learners (15% of the class) spent an additional twelve and half minutes (19%) of the lesson reading extended text in their group guided reading session, and another group of seven learners (15% of the class) spent nine minutes (13%) of the lesson reading.

None of the teachers gave learners any reading homework during the lesson observations.

If learners do not get enough practice at reading and interpreting instructions for tasks independently in class, it is difficult for them to work out on their own what is required in formal assessment situations. Thus also of interest is that in all four lessons instructions for tasks were explained verbally by the teachers. Only one teacher (at Anna T1) got the whole class to read the instructions but then explained the task requirements and kept repeating the instructions, continually asking: 'Is that so?' in Setswana.

### 8.3.5.2 Writing practice

A second major concern is the amount of time teachers allowed for learners to complete written work (seatwork tasks) relative to the type of writing and cognitive demands made on learners. In the interviews two of the teachers complained that the EGRS entailed 'too much writing'. However, in the lesson observations the writing tasks given to learners made fairly low demands on learners both in terms of the type of writing required and cognitively.

For example, after the teacher at Baloyi (T2) had completed the phonics session on the 'ngw' sound, learners had to reproduce the spider diagram that the teacher had erased from the chalkboard in their exercise books using the 'ngw' words that had just been covered in class and written on the chalkboard. The cognitive and writing demands of the task were low: learners were required to reproduce what had been on the board from memory by drawing a simple diagram and re-writing single words. They had sixteen minutes to complete this task.

The second writing task at Baloyi (T2) followed the creative writing instruction session on 'characterising characters' already discussed in section 8.2.8.3. During the session the teacher, with input from learners in the whole class discussion, had written two lists on the chalkboard, one a list of positive characteristics and the other a list of negative characteristics of people. The task that learners were given was to use the two lists of negative and positive 'characteristics' that were on the chalkboard to develop their own characters for a story by writing three character traits of two characters. The teacher further structured the task by writing the following on the chalkboard:

Mogakawa me ke: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Essentially this task entailed selecting words from the lists provided and copying the selected individual words from the chalkboard. Both the cognitive and writing demands were low. Learners were allowed a minimum of thirteen minutes to complete the task as shown in the scanned copy of work from a learner's exercise book below.

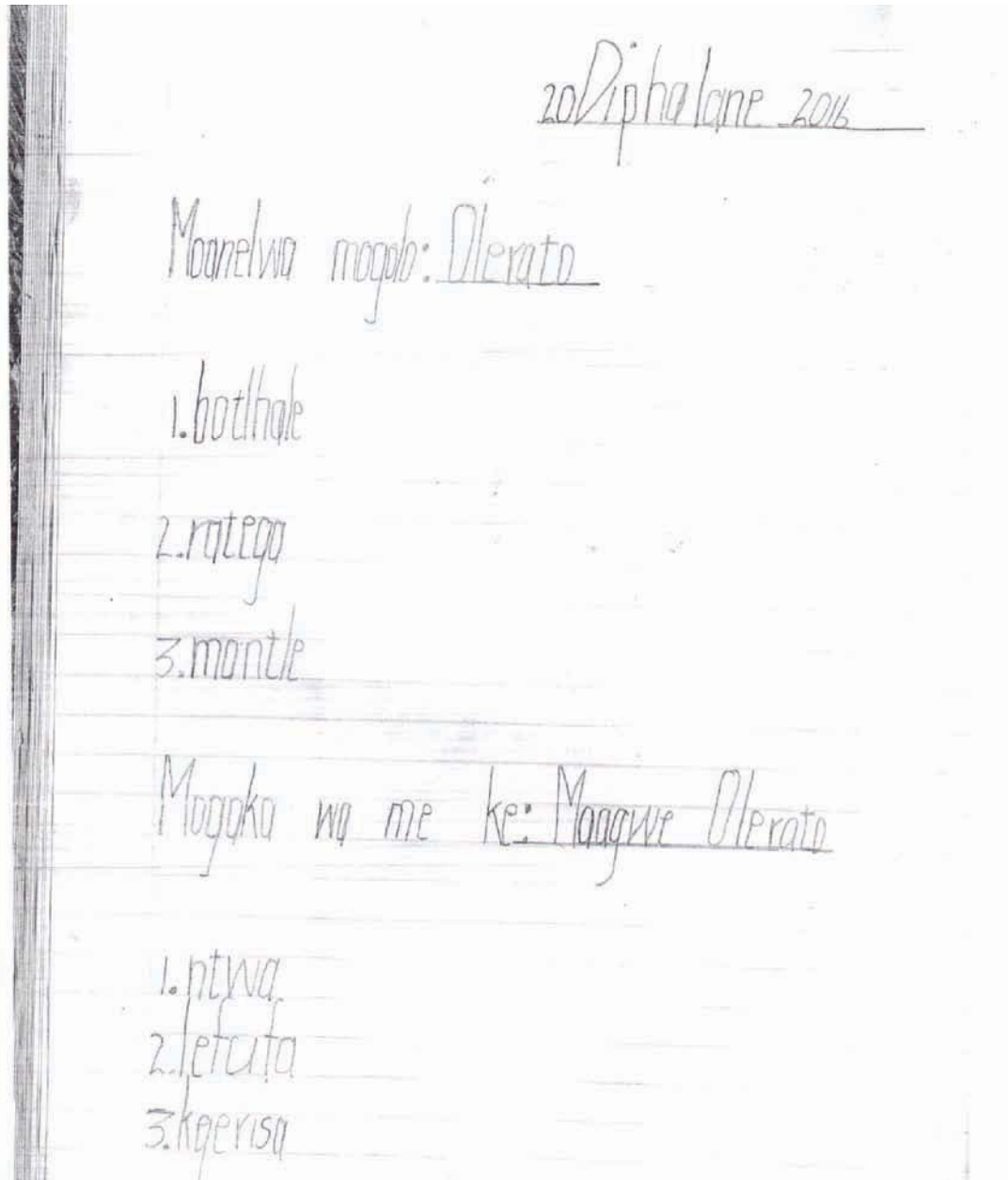


Figure 1: Copy of a learner's creative writing work





At Bagele (T2), learners in the lesson at spent 43% of the sixty seven minute lesson on writing tasks. Learners were giving the handwriting task of copying the following sentences into their exercise books. The teacher had written the work very neatly on the chalkboard between lines drawn on the chalkboard:

Mokwalo (Writing)

19 Diphlane (October) 2016

Neo Natal Nong.  
Moabi Methusele.  
Mosaneng.  
Bana ba ile ma maikhutsong Kwa Natal.  
Bomme ba pleme bese go ya Kwa Mosaneng.

111111111  
NNNNNNN

Learners' handwriting seatwork task was to reproduce what was on the chalkboard by writing the short and long sentences as well as the 'letter patterns'; a task that was moderately demanding in terms of the writing demands for Grade 2 but not demanding cognitively. They were allowed at least thirteen minutes to complete the task shown in the scanned copy overleaf of work from a learner's exercise book.

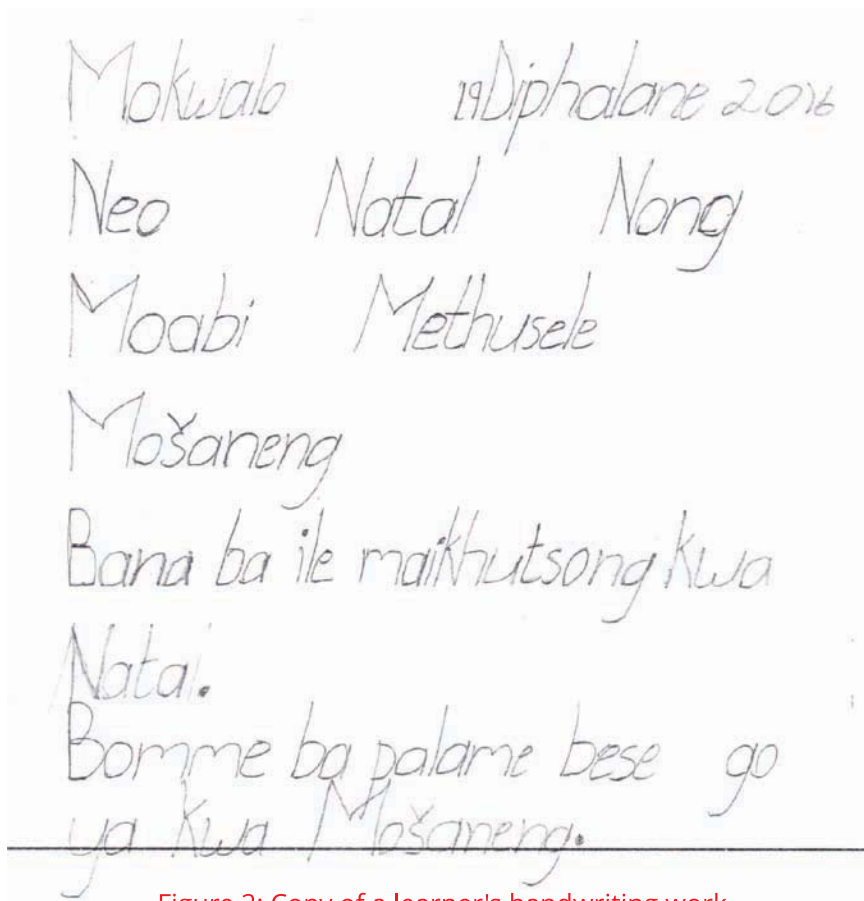


Figure 2: Copy of a learner's handwriting work

As mentioned earlier both Treatment 1 teachers said they were doing 'revision lessons' with their classes, that is, repeating work covered previously through use the EGRS lesson plans in the third term, by implication, learners should have been familiar with the content and possibly the tasks.

At Major (T1), learners spent 42% of the seventy-six minute lesson on writing tasks. Learners' first seatwork task entailed copying the phonics words that the teacher had written on the chalkboard and drawing a 'spider word' diagram with phonics words covered in class onto A4 sheets of paper. They were allowed twenty-one minutes to complete the task. The second task was a handwriting task where learners had to copy words (with the letter m) and the short sentence/phrase, 'Mmaagwe o teng', that the teacher had written on the chalkboard. Both the cognitive demands (copying) and the writing demands (a simple drawing, writing single words and a simple sentence) of the tasks were low. Learners had a minimum of eleven minutes to complete this exercise.

The first writing task that learners at Anna (T1) were given was to answer the questions about the text read (a diary) on the bottom half of page 71 of their DBE workbooks. However, the teacher had just covered all three questions with the class so all learners were required to do was copy the correct answers. The task thus involved replicating the text by writing numbers and single words (dates); both the cognitive and writing demands were very low. Below is a scanned copy of page 71 showing the task (on the second half of the page) as completed by a learner.

*Diphlane*

**A re kwateng** Buisa lokwalo gape, mme morago o tshwaye karabo e e nepagetseng ka letshwa. ✓

Ke mang yo o kwadileng lokwalo?

A Bongi  
B **Suzy**  
C Zinhle

Ditsala tsa Susy ke bomang?

A Zinhle le Robbie  
B **Zinhle le Lizzy**  
C Lizzie le Sandy

Konsarata e tlaa nna ka kgwedi efe?

A Phatwe  
B **Lwetse**  
C Diphlane

Ke eng se Lizzy a se dirang mo konsarateng ya sekolo?

A **Bina**  
B Nna rametlae kana mmametlae  
C O buisa leboko

**Phatwe**

Masupologo	Lababedi	Laboraro	Labone	Labotlhano	Lamatshato	Letshipi
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Buisa lokwalo ka kelotlhoko. Leka go bontsha letlha le malatsi tse di leng mo kwateng. Di bontshe mo khalelatseng. Morago o arabe dipotso.

Suzy o kwadile lokwalo ka dikae? *20 Phatwe*

O kwadile lokwalo ka la bokae? *20*

O kopane le Bongi ka dikae kwa bolotloeng? *21*

O kopane le Bongi ka la bokae kwa bolotloeng? *Labotlhano*

TEACHER: Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ 71

Figure 3: Copy of a learner's reading comprehension work

## Writing practice

Learners at Anna were also required to complete an activity on page 72 of their DBE workbooks. This activity involved sequencing three sentences in the correct order in line with the text (a letter) that the class had just read. The task required that learners write the numbers 1, 2 or 3 next to the appropriate sentence. The writing demands were thus low and, although the sequencing task itself was quite demanding, the following extract from fieldwork notes shows how the teacher reduced the cognitive demands of the task by turning it into a whole class activity. Most learners simply had to copy the correct numbers next to the relevant sentences because other learners had provided the answers and the teacher had already written the answers on the chalkboard.

The teacher read the instructions for the activity on page 72 of the workbooks while the class followed in their workbooks. She then got the class to read the instructions in unison. She told them that they should refer back to the letter to answer the questions. She told the class to re-read the letter aloud in unison. Some of the learners started to read the letter together again but only about a third of the class was engaged in reading. One child had his head resting on the desk. The teacher asked him what was wrong. She complained that only one row of learners was doing all the reading; she could not hear the rest of the class reading. The class read louder and more children got involved in reading. She told the class to turn back to page 72. She repeated the instructions for the task explaining to them they must sequence the sentences in the right order in accordance with text in the letter. She told them to write the number 1 next to the sentence that they thought should go first. Half a minute later she asked a girl to read out her answer. She asked the rest of the class if they agreed that the girl's answer was correct. Some children chorused: No. The teacher asked another child for his answer. This child identified the correct sentence. The teacher then explained why this choice was correct within the context of the letter. The learners completed the rest of task as a class with the teacher asking different learners for the sequence of the two remaining sentences. She wrote the answer on the chalkboard 3, 1 and 2.

The sentence completion task on page 72 of the DBE workbooks which was also given to learners at Anna (T1) was the most demanding seatwork task observed across all four lessons because learners were required to generate their own unique text and complete whole sentences. The following extract from field notes describes the process:

The teacher told the class to begin the next task on page 72 which was to write about themselves – 'what you did today; what you did yesterday; what you are doing tomorrow'. Once again she kept repeating the instructions to the class, continually asking: 'Is that so?' in Setswana. She repeatedly explained that the sentences in their workbooks started with the words yesterday, today and tomorrow and that they had to complete the sentences.

After fourteen minutes when the teacher had finished with the group guided reading session, she briefly walked around checking whether learners had done the work. When she found that some learners had written in the wrong place and that others had not written anything, she spent eight and half minutes giving the class additional instructions and assistance in completing the task while learners were working. She told learners to 'think ahead' to what they would be doing tomorrow. To facilitate the process, she got some learners to tell the others in the class what they would be doing

the next day and told these learners to write down what they had told her. She told the class that, once they had written their sentences, they should re-read what they had written to check that what they wrote made sense. Some children started reading their own sentences aloud but she said she meant that they should read their work silently to themselves to check their own work. Other children seemed bored. One child who had finished the task was secretly trying to read a reader under his desk. The teacher began to show signs of frustration at the slow pace of work by some learners. She reminded them what they had to do in a loud voice. She told the class they had five minutes left to 'fix' their sentences. After five minutes the teacher began to review learners' answers with the whole class.

All writing tasks given to learners during the four lesson observations involved reproducing or copying texts with the exception of the task at Anna which involved generating own text. Significantly, some learners in the classes seemed to struggle to complete the tasks independently in spite of the amount of time allowed to complete the written task. At Anna (T1) for example, learners had at twenty seven and half minutes to complete the four sentences on the second half of page 72 of the DBE workbooks as shown in the following scanned copy of one learner's efforts.



Figure 4: Copy of a learner's sequencing and sentence completion work



## Writing practice

Table 20 and 21 provide information on the main types of written work evident in learners' workbooks and exercise books for the third term. The information on the tables confirms that, although learners in all four classes appeared to be writing regularly, writing was mainly restricted to single words and sentences.

**Table 20: Number of Term 3 & 4 DBE workbook pages completed that mainly comprised the following types of writing exercises or tasks**

Treatment	1		2	
School	Anna	Major	Bagele	Baloyi
Patterns in preparation for joined script or cursive writing			1	
Letter, vowels, syllables or phonemes				
Whole words	7	14	19	15
Short sentences of phrases (fewer than 6 words)	7	12	7	2
Longer sentences (more than five words)	1	7	14	7
Whole paragraph				
Longer extended text (more than one paragraph)				
Other (non-text writing such as matching words to pictures, drawing)	2	4	11	13
<b>Total</b>	17	37	52	38

**Table 21: Number of pages of daily work in class exercise books for Term 3 that mainly comprised the following types of writing exercises or tasks**

Treatment	1		2	
School	Anna	Major	Bagele	Baloyi
Patterns in preparation for joined script or cursive writing		11		
Letter, vowels, syllables or phonemes	1	3	15	
Whole words	28	19	16	7
Short sentences of phrases (fewer than 6 words)	12	4	4	1
Longer sentences (more than five words)		6	3	6
Whole paragraph				
Longer extended text (more than one paragraph)				
Other (non-text writing such as matching words to pictures, drawings)				5
<b>Total</b>	41	43	38	19

Because of the variety of exercise books used in the Grade 2 classes, it is difficult to know for certain if one is seeing all the written work done. Although it seemed from the written work done that teachers at Bagele (T2), Major (T1) and Baloyi (T2) were covering the Grade 2 HL curriculum to a large extent and Anna (T1) to a slightly lesser extent, we saw no substantial evidence in any of the four classrooms of learner writing whole paragraphs or longer extended texts. This finding seems to confirm that the type of writing demands that were being made on Grade 2 learners by the beginning of the fourth term were not demanding enough in relation to curriculum expectations.

The teacher at Bagele (T1) said that in her opinion some of the writing activities provided in the plans were 'too difficult'. She said that she often had to repeat the work or tasks the next day before school opened to 'reinforce' what learners had done the day before. Indeed, in the lesson observations it seemed that the type of seatwork tasks was constrained by the low level of some learners' ability. Because most learners seemed to experience difficulty completing more cognitively demanding tasks, teachers were reducing the complexity of such tasks by over stating instructions and turning tasks into whole class activities so that learners simply had to reproduce or copy answers into their workbooks or exercise books that had already been covered with the whole class. Because of this practise it was not feasible to assess the cognitive demands of written work in workbooks and exercise books.

### 8.3.5.3 Oral language practice

Learners in both of the ninety minute lessons spent a smaller proportion of time in the lesson writing and a higher proportion of the lessons listening and speaking than learners in the two 'shorter' lessons. However, it is not only the amount of time learners in some lessons spent listening and speaking that is of concern, but the type and demands of the oral language practice that learners were mostly engaged in.

The following two extracts from field notes during lesson observations (at Major (T1) where learners spent 22% of the lesson listening and speaking and Anna (T1) where learners spent 60% of the lesson listening and speaking) show that, although learners' answers were appropriate and directly related to the text they had read, the predominantly closed questions limited oral language practice because they elicited one word answers or phrases rather than full sentence answers. Most questions made low verbal and cognitive demands on learners.

During the group guided reading session at Major (T1) the teacher began to ask the group questions about what they had read, for example, Who was running in the race?; Which is faster, the hare or the tortoise?; Which animal gave up quickly?; Which animal won the race? The children in the group put their hands up to answer and the teacher chose different learners to respond. All those who answered gave the correct answers.



## Oral language

At Anna (T1) when the class had finished reading the letter in their DBE workbooks:

...the teacher told them to close their workbooks and began to ask them questions about what they had read. For example: Who wrote the letter? Who was Suzy's friend? Most children put up their hands to answer. When no one could answer the fourth or fifth closed question, the teacher told them to open their workbooks again and refer to the text. The class spent some time paging through their books to find page 70 again. Not all the class looked at the text to find the answer. At 08h47 the teacher told the class to look at page 71 of their workbooks. She asked them to tell her 'today's date' (17 October 2106) in Setswana. She asked the class 'What date was the letter written?' She reminded the class to raise their hands if they wanted to answer and, when they did so, chose different learners to answer her questions using their names to identify them. She referred the class to the calendar on page 71 and continued questioning the class asking: Which day does the month (on the calendar) start? Which day is the 1st of the month? Which day is the 31st of the month? The whole class clapped when the answer was correct and chanted 'Well done, well done!' in English. The teacher asked the class: On which date did Suzy write the letter? A learner called out the day (the child had used the calendar to cross reference the date on the letter to find the actual day) but the teacher said she wanted the date not the day which was a bit confusing for learners as they had been using the calendar not the letter as a point of reference at this stage of the lesson. The teacher repeated the date of the letter: 20 Phatwe (August). She then asked what day that was (according to the calendar). A learner who had her hand up answered: Wednesday (in Setswana). The teacher wrote the word 'Laboraro' (Wednesday) on the chalkboard. She asked the class: If the letter was written on the 20th, then what was the date of the day before it was written? A learner answered: the 19th. She asked the class: 'On which day did the 19th fall?' A boy stood up in an attempt to get the teacher to ask him to answer. The teacher laughed and remarked that he was jumping out of his seat to answer.

Most of the questions the teachers asked about the text read were information retrieval questions. The importance of these types of questions should not be underestimated as they help the teacher to check for basic comprehension of text. Instructing learners to refer to the text to find the answers or to try to recall what they have read is important as it teaches learners that their responses to the questions should be based on the text read rather than on their own personal / everyday experiences. Thus it is significant that learners' answers in the classes observed were based on the text read. Nevertheless, the most difficult and 'least linear' question asked (in these two extracts) was the question: If the letter was written on the 20th, then what was the date of the day before it was written? (Anna T1), because the 'if... then' construction entails a 'backwards, forwards' relationship, however, in this case the relationship is not causal thus the question is not very cognitively demanding.

Of interest is that, on the few occasions where teachers did ask more open-ended interpretative type questions learners seemed to struggle to answer as is demonstrated in the following two extracts from the lesson observation at Bagele (T2) (where learners spent 24% of the lesson listening and speaking):

The teacher asked the guided reading group: What did they use to decorate to cupcakes? Children provided answers such as 'icing'. As the teacher proceeded to ask more questions, some of the group started to look for the answers in their readers. The teacher told them not to look in their books for the answers but to try to remember from what they had read. When she asked them two slightly more interpretative questions: 'Was the grandmother happy with the cakes?'; 'Why was she happy?', the children were slow to respond and seemed to find it difficult to answer. Eventually, the teacher gave learners the answer to the last question saying: 'Because she was with her grandchildren'.

During the shared reading session, the teacher asked the class: 'Why was Dan late for school?' Learners put up their hands and the teacher decided which of them would answer. The teacher asked, 'Which day did Dan wear his home clothes to school?' She chose another learner who had his hand up to respond. The learner answered: 'Thursday'. The teacher asked: 'On which day did he forget his school bag at school?' After a learner had answered this question correctly, she asked a more open-ended question: 'Were the things that happened to Dan good or bad?' None of the learners seemed able to answer this question so the teacher simply told them they were bad things and explained why. She then tried to assist learners to identify the 'bad things' that had happened each day by asking them to recall what happened each day of the week starting with Monday.

Children put up their hands and the teacher selected a child to answer each question using their names. For the question about what had happened on Monday, a child said: 'He forgot his bag on the bus'. When she asked what had happened on Tuesday, the teacher told the learner who responded that he had given the wrong answer; he had told them what happened on Friday rather than what had happened on Wednesday. She told them to look at the passage again and said that the story in the diary followed the order of the days of the week. Once she had covered all the days of the week, the teacher asked the class: 'On the day when Dan fell asleep in the classroom, what had happened that made him sleepy?' A learner replied: 'He had woken up very early to get to class so he was too tired later on'.

The second extract shows one of the few incidences where learners provided full sentence answers. It also shows how the cognitive demand of the original 'evaluative' question: 'Were the things that happened to Dan good or bad?' had to be reduced because learners appeared to struggle to answer the more open-ended question.

When teachers provided front of class instruction or in classroom discussions during the lesson observation there were a number of incidences of learners answering in unison or repeating responses after other learners. Teacher talk tended to dominate and the teachers at Anna (T1) and Baloyi (T2) explained work in extremely loud voices as if the learners would not take in the information unless they spoke very loudly. Only one child (at Bagele T2) asked the teacher a question during the four lesson observations; the question was about how to complete the handwriting task.

## Guided reading

### 8.3.6 Undifferentiated literacy tasks

It seemed that all four teachers had difficulty with responding appropriately to the diverse reading and writing needs of learners in their classes.

#### 8.3.6.1 Guided reading

Vula Bula graded readers are provided as a resource for teachers to use in group-guided reading to facilitate reading practice at an appropriate pace and sequence of difficulty. Although it was evident from the lesson observations that the Vula Bula graded readers were being used regularly for their group guided reading sessions and that teachers were using the series in a set sequence, observations indicated that teachers were not using the graded readers according to individual learner's level of reading ability or progress and that groups were not normally organised into groups by ability.

For example, at Major (T1), when the teacher was busy setting up seatwork for the rest of the class:

...one of the children in the small group at the front started reading his reader silently independently while he waited. It seemed that he could easily have moved onto a more challenging reader.

When the teacher at Baloyi (T2) called the second reading group to come up to the front of the classroom to sit on the mat, she said she had only recently changed the group so that they were grouped according to ability and could not recall who was in the 'first ability group'.

In all the three lessons where the class had two guided reading sessions with different groups, both groups used the same readers rather than different levels. Some learners also seemed very familiar with the readers that the group was using; some children were reciting without actually looking at/reading text, for example, at Major (T1):

While the teacher checked that the rest of the class were starting to do the seatwork, three of the children in the guided reading group at the front enthusiastically started to read their readers alone silently. When the teacher returned to her chair, she asked the group what they saw on the cover page of their readers. They looked at their covers and discussed what they saw. After this discussion, the teacher covered the 'new words' in the readers in the same way as she had with the previous group but the session moved faster (than the one with the first group) because she already had the 'new' words written on the chalkboard. The teacher pointed at each of the words and got the group to repeat them in unison three times after her. She then got individual learners to read all the words using a pointer, moving it along under each word as they read. She told them to look at the cover of the readers and read the title of their readers. They then turned to the first page of the book. The group read each page of the reader together after the teacher had read each page aloud. Next, each group member read aloud individually. The teacher told one of the boys who was not as competent as the others (when it was his turn to read) to hold his book in front of him when he read. He was holding his book against his face as if he was trying to block the teacher's and our view of him because he was embarrassed that he could not read as well as the others. The teacher told one of the girls

(when it was her turn to read) to follow the text using her finger to point. One boy seemed to know the text off by heart. When it was his turn, he recited the text aloud without looking at it. The teacher told him to look at the text. When he missed out a word, she told him to re-read the whole sentence. Even when he 're-read' the sentence the boy still seemed to be reciting rather than reading. He appeared to have an excellent memory.

The following extract from field notes made during the lesson observation at Bagele (T2) shows how the slow pace of some learners reading led to other members of the group losing interest. Waiting for slow readers is very boring for the rest of the group. Whilst more fluent learners are better able to keep rest of group's interest, getting them to read for longer means less practice for weaker learners who get to fall even further behind. For example,

....the first child in the first guided reading group began to read aloud from the reader with rest of the group following in their readers. The child read word by word haltingly, not fluently. She seemed to be finding the text quite difficult. When she got stuck on a word, the teacher told her what the word was. The rest of the children in the guided reading group gradually stopped paying attention. It seemed that they had become bored because the first reader was reading so slowly. When the teacher asked a second learner from the group to read, this learner also read haltingly word by word. The teacher told the child who was reading that when there was a full stop in the text she should pause. The rest of the reading group was no longer looking at their readers. When the teacher told the third child in the group to read, he seemed to have read only one sentence when the teacher asked the fourth child to read. The fourth child was a slightly better reader but she also read word by word and occasionally used her finger to point at words as she read. It seemed that some of the group members were allowed to read more sentences than others. The fifth child read for the longest time. When he read the rest of the group followed in their books because he read more quickly and fluently.

During the second group guided reading the first child in the group read whilst the rest of the group followed in their readers. The child read word by word, not fluently. The teacher reminded her to pay attention to the punctuation and to pause when she got to a full stop. The second child read faster but still read word by word rather than fluently. The others in the group continued to follow in their readers. The fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh child to read were faster readers than the previous three learners who had read. Nevertheless, all the children in the group tended to read word by word rather than fluently. This lack of fluency may have been because they found the text of the reader fairly challenging.

When we reviewed teachers' assessment records none of the teachers showed us on-going constructive and useful information and notes specific to the status of individual learners' reading levels. Teachers do not seem to be keeping running records of how well each learner is reading and the types of errors they make when reading aloud. Teachers do not seem to be keeping close enough track of individual differences in learner's reading ability and progress to organise guided group reading according to ability.



## Writing tasks

### 8.3.6.2 Writing tasks

All of the teachers seemed unclear about how to keep the entire class occupied without losing focus on or interrupting their guided reading sessions. For example, during the first group guided reading session, the teacher at Major T1

...kept looking over the small group of learners sitting at her feet to check what the rest of the class was doing. She seemed torn between getting the rest of the class to keep on task and disrupting the flow of the reading group.

When she was finishing with the second guided reading group towards the end of the lesson:

The 'low grade' noise amongst the rest of the class had grown. The sound was beginning to drown out the sound of the children reading in front. Some of the learners were sitting and waiting idly and most of them were becoming restless and bored. The teacher told one child to move back to his correct seat...

At Bagele (T2) while the teacher wrote the handwriting task (that the rest of the class had to do while she was busy with group guided reading) on the chalkboard, some of the children got a head start by immediately starting to copy the work into their handwriting exercise books on their own initiative. The rest of the class watched and waited until eleven and half minutes later when the teacher gave instructions to begin once she had written everything on the chalkboard as is reflected in the following extract from field notes:

...some children automatically started copying what she had written on the board. One child moved and sat on the mat in the front so that he could see better and wrote with his book on the floor.

...One of the children who had been copying the writing came to the front to ask the teacher a question about the sentence 'Bana ba ile ma maikhutso'. She wanted to know if the last part of the sentence which the teacher had written on the next line 'Kwa Natal' was a separate sentence. The teacher explained to the class that it was part of the same sentence but she had not had enough space to fit the whole sentence on the same line.

Five minutes after the teacher at Bagele (T2) began to work with the guided reading group and the rest of the class was meant to be busy with seatwork, some learners began to chat making it difficult for the teacher to give her full attention to whoever was reading:

Some of the children in the rest of class continued to chat, some seemed to have finished the class work whilst others who were chatting had not. There was a constant low grade noise of other children talking in the room. The teacher kept looking at the rest of the class over the heads of the group of learners in the front. She was concerned and trying to gauge whether and when it was necessary for her to say something to keep them quieter or on task. She seemed torn between saying something to the class and interrupting the 'flow' for the children who were reading in the front. Eventually she said: 'Shush' to the class.

There was no evidence of any of the four teachers using the DBE workbooks or other textbooks to give those who finished ahead of the rest of the class additional work. Although reading corners were available, none of the children in any of the classes fetched books to keep themselves occupied. For example, at Baloyi (T2) during the first group guided reading session:

...Whilst the teacher was busy discussing the illustrations in the readers some of the children from the rest of the class asked if they could go to the toilet. Six minutes after the group guided reading session started, those children who had finished their writing task waited; some learners were idly fiddling with their rulers, others put their heads down on the desk to doze.

As a result, it was sometimes impossible to tell the difference between learners who had actually finished the seatwork tasks and learners who had not finished and were not actually completing the tasks. The following extract from field notes provides an indication of what happened when the teacher at Anna (T1) was working with the guided reading group about forty five minutes into the ninety minute lesson and the rest of the class was meant to be busy with seatwork:

Whilst the teacher was working with the guided reading group in the front of the classroom, some of the learners who had finished the seatwork task or were meant to be doing the writing task put their heads on their desks and dozed. Others chatted to their friends. Others who had finished started to page through their workbooks. On their own initiative some of these learners started to read or work out answers to other exercises independently while they waited (without actually writing answers in the workbooks). It was difficult to tell who had actually finished the task and who had not or who had finished first. The teacher chastised a boy who had moved from his seat. One child in the group asked to go to the toilet and briefly left the room. The rest of the class was becoming increasingly restless. One child was crawling on the floor; another was poking his pencil up his nose.

The teacher was aware of the problem, chastised some learners (see Section 8.2.13 *Awareness of the need to monitor seatwork*) and showed signs of frustration at the slow pace of work by some learners.

In the interviews teachers complained that the pace of scripted lessons was 'too fast'. To compensate for low levels of learner capability, they said they were providing 'extra time' lessons for learners to catch up with written work before school thereby expanding opportunities for slower learners to write. In the timetabled lessons, learners who had finished with their seatwork tasks were not being kept fully occupied but in the lesson observations teachers did not give additional or new tasks to learners who had completed tasks and were coping well.

At Anna (T1), there was a gradual deterioration of concentration amongst learners and one hour and fifteen minutes after the start of the lesson (i.e. fifteen minutes before the end of the lesson) at least half of the class was no longer paying attention:



**Writing tasks**

At 0945 the teacher told another child to write her sentence starting with 'today' on the chalkboard. By this stage it seemed that at least half the class was not paying attention. The child wrote Ketla tswadi jana (...washing the dishes). The teacher made her read her sentence. Most of the class appeared bored and restless, especially learners at the back of the room. Five children appeared to be dozing. The teacher chastised a learner for swopping seats. She followed the same procedure as previously; asking the class what mistake the learner had made. Some learners had their hands up and the teacher chose one learner to correct the sentence. The teacher told the class that 'dishes' (in Setswana) is one word but the first learner had written it as two words...

This lack of engagement was the case until the lesson ended at 10h00. Although learner behaviour did not specifically appear to be a problem in any of the classes - and learners mostly paid attention to their teachers, it seemed that, whilst teachers are to be commended for putting in extra time before school, one of the difficulties with giving children extra time before school meant that learners had to concentrate for a longer stretch of time before first break. The schools started at 07h30. If teachers provided half an hour of 'extra time' starting at 07h00 and the Home Language lesson ran until first break at 10h00, then learners had three hours of class before break. In some cases, learners appeared too hungry (as well as tired) to concentrate in the second half of the lesson. It also seemed that a lack of a 'toilet break' after the earlier start resulted in learners constantly interrupting the teacher during the group guided lesson. For example, during the group guided reading session at Bagele (T2) when the rest of the class had begun to complete the exercise in their DBE workbooks:

....Some of the children (not in the group) approached the teacher and asked her for pieces of toilet paper so that they could go to the toilet. Two boys and one girl left the room.

When she was busy showing the group flash cards:

....A few more children came to the teacher and asked if they could go to the toilet and have toilet paper. They left the room. ...Other children from the rest of the class kept interrupting the group guided reading by asking if they could take toilet paper to go to the toilet. Yet other learners returned from the toilet.

During the seatwork task:

There was a fair amount of movement amongst those learners who were meant to be writing. Some learners were wandering around looking at others' exercise books. Some learners watched other learners working. Some learners paged through their workbooks. Various learners entered and left the classroom going to or coming from the toilet.

### **8.3.7 Insufficient understanding and knowledge of what it means to teach learners to read independently**

In the interviews each teacher was provided with a sheet of paper with three short descriptions of teachers' teaching reading. They were told that they would be asked some questions about the descriptions of teaching in the vignettes. The interviewer then read each description aloud while the teacher followed on the sheet of paper. After each description had been read, teachers were given the opportunity to re-read the description silently alone. They were then asked to give their opinion about what the teacher was doing. If a teacher did not think the teacher in the description was doing a good job, then the teacher was asked what the teacher (in the description) should have done. The idea was that teachers' responses to the vignette could be used to try to infer what their understanding was of what it means to teach learners to read independently.

The following are the three descriptions and each of the teacher's responses to each vignette;

#### **Description number 1**

Mrs Ncube is teaching her Grade 2 class reading. She tells the whole class to read the sentences she has written on the chalkboard. She uses a stick to point at each word as the children read. When the class gets 'stuck' on a word, she tells the class what the word is and gets them to repeat the word after her a number of times before continuing with reading the rest of the sentence.

At Anna (T1) the teacher said she thought that teacher Number 1 was 'doing a good job' because 'her approach meant that every learner in the class would know the word that the class got stuck on. By making the whole class repeat the word several times, she helped the whole class get it'.

At Major (T1) the teacher said she thought that teacher Number 1 was 'doing okay' but was not doing a particularly good job. Her approach 'was okay because she told the children what the word was when they got stuck and got them to repeat it. The problem was that the teacher did not refer the class to pictures'. At Bagele (T2) the teacher said she thought that teacher Number 1 'was doing a good job' because 'those learners who could not read would get the word and not forget it'. At Baloyi (T2) the teacher said she did not think teacher Number 1 'was doing a good job'. She asked the researcher whether there were any pictures that the class could refer to. When she heard that there were no pictures to show them, she suggested that 'the teacher should rather use pictures as a strategy for helping the class to identify words rather than simply telling them the word'.

#### **Description number 2**

Mrs Ntuli is reading a story called 'The Lonely Giant' to her Grade 2 class. She shows the children the picture on the cover of the book and asks them what they think the story is about. She checks that the learners understand what the word 'giant' means. Before she starts reading the text, she shows the class some of the pictures in the book and asks them what they think is going to happen. Whilst she is reading the book, she encourages her learners to ask questions and to talk about what they think

telling learners the correct word or directing learners to use pictures) as an aid for identifying words. Teachers' responses to description 2 showed understanding of the use of illustrations or pictures as an aid for reading independently and recognition of the need to test learners' comprehension of what they have read. None of the teachers' responses showed understanding that if learners have to keep relying on pictures as an aid for identifying words and the meaning, they will not develop other strategies readers use to read independently.

Teachers' responses to description 3 incorporate no or little recognition of the need to teach learners to use other strategies to make informed guesses about unfamiliar words and to self-correct. None of the teachers demonstrated understanding that in order to read texts independently and self-correct, learners need to be taught to use a variety of strategies such as using semantic (contextual) and syntactic (structural) clues and cues, for example, reading to the end of a sentence, to identify and understand an unfamiliar word rather than always relying on pictures or the teacher to tell them the words.

Although there was some evidence in the lesson observations of a teacher providing learners with strategies for self-correcting (for example, when the teacher at Baloyi (T2) heard one learner struggling to read a word, she gave the learner clues as to what the word could be), the observations indicated that none of teachers were able yet to take strategies to a more abstract level. Observations pointed to an over reliance on teacher-directed strategies (for example, during a group guided reading session at Bagele (T2) when a learner got stuck on a word, the teacher told her what the word was) and on using pictures as a strategy (an emphasis on the concrete). Teachers seemed to have 'restricted' understanding of what it means to teach children to read independently.

### **8.3.8 Absence of a passionate commitment to improving literacy**

Finally, whilst teachers in the sample appeared confident and said that they were more motivated and enthusiastic about teaching HL literacy as a result of the interventions, what was not evident in any of the four classrooms was an incredibly passionate commitment to improving literacy amongst young children. This absence of passion (possibly linked to teachers' own experience of early literacy) could result in teachers becoming apathetic when on-going EGRS support is no longer there.

## Description

about the story. After she has finished reading the story, Mrs Ntuli gives groups of learners photocopies of the illustrations from the book (muddled up) and a set of the text (muddled up) and asks each group to sort the illustrations into the right order and match each piece of text to the picture.

At Anna (T1) the teacher said she thought that Teacher Number 2 'was also doing a good job' because 'she checked the children's understanding and she got them to match the text to make a story. She also gave learners an opportunity to say what they thought the story was about'. At Major (T1) the teacher said she thought that Teacher Number 2 was doing a 'better job than teacher Number 1 because she got the children to look at the pictures and predict. Also, she drilled the new words and asked thought-provoking questions. She gave groups an activity which involved matching picture to text in order'. At Bagele (T2) the teacher said she thought that Teacher Number 2 'was also doing a good job'. She said that, 'if learners are not good at reading, picture reading really helps them'. She said 'the teacher's method of reading the text, showing the class pictures and reading words with learners was good'. At Baloyi (T2) the teacher said she thought that Teacher Number 2 'was also doing a good job'. She 'liked her approach because she explained what the word giant meant and discussed the pictures in the book and used the pictures to ask the children questions about what they thought the story was about before they read the text'. She thought the sequencing task 'was a good idea'.

### Description number 3

Mr Phoko has asked one of her Grade 2 learners, Winston, to come and read to her. Winston is reading from an illustrated reader. A sentence on page 4 of the reader is 'Isaac did not see the monkey hiding behind the bush'. When Winston gets to the word 'monkey', he hesitates. He tries to sound out the letters but still can't work out what the word is. On the opposite page of the book there is an illustration of the monkey hiding behind some bushes with Isaac walking past. Mr Phoko says, "Winston, skip the word. Carry on reading the rest of the sentence." When Winston has read the rest of the sentence, she says, "Now look at the picture and try to guess what the word is."

At Anna (T1) the teacher said that she thought Teacher Number 3 'was doing a good job because he used the picture to help the learner know the word by recognising the monkey in the picture'. At Major (T1) the teacher said that she thought Teacher Number 3 was 'not doing such a good job'. She was 'not sure whether the learner, Winston, would be able to guess the word if he skipped it and read the rest of the sentence'. She thought 'this strategy would be too difficult for him. Instead of telling him to skip the word, the teacher should rather tell him what the word is so that, if he sees the word 'monkey' again he will be able to read it'. At Bagele (T2) the teacher said that she thought Teacher Number 3 'was doing a good job because she told the boy to continue reading and to look at the picture and match the picture with the word'. At Baloyi the teacher said that she thought Teacher Number 3 'was doing a good job because he got Winston to read whole sentence, skipping the word when he got stuck'. What she liked was the fact that 'the teacher made Winston aware of the pictures in the book and of how they could help him gain clarity about the word'.

Teachers' responses to the first description showed some understanding of what it means to teach learners to read independently by recognising the need to teach teacher-directed skills (the teacher

## Conclusions

### 9. Conclusions

#### *Impact on teachers' literacy practices*

Based on past observations in similar schools (see Reeves 2008; Reeves 2010) it certainly does seem that aspects of teachers' classroom practice have changed. For example, teachers spent time teaching phonics and handwriting; they asked learners to identify where text began or the beginning and end of sentences; they demonstrated punctuation, upper and lower case, etc.; they made regular use of a reading series and provided group guided reading; they used illustrations in the readers provided to support learners in understanding text; all learners had records of work covered in class and were writing regularly in their workbooks and exercise books. All these aspects were largely absent in earlier studies. However, regarding the impact of the two interventions on the four teachers' practice, limitations exist in terms of the strength of any inferences made from the in-depth case studies.

Firstly, the strength of any inferences made is constrained by the fact that baseline data on the four teachers' classroom practice was not obtained prior to the commencement of the interventions. Secondly, because comparative in-depth data from control schools was not obtained in the case studies, it is difficult to discriminate between which changes have occurred because of the influence of the CAPS and which changes have occurred because of the influence of the EGRS. Hopefully data collected in intervention schools and control schools in the larger-scale study will shed some light on differences.

Whilst these limitations exist, findings from the in-depth case studies do suggest that the EGRS programme was being implemented in the four classrooms to a large extent. Indications are that the support systems provided by the EGRS interventions in the form of scripted lessons, workshops and coaching have helped teachers to develop some of the capacity necessary to better implement the CAPS. Whilst it is difficult to separate out the most probable sources of possible improvements, the scripted lesson plans, pace setter and the 'curriculum pacing/tracking' messages teachers receive via WhatsApp do appear to be working to help teachers cover the Grade 2 Setswana HL curriculum. The provisioning of phonics and writing activities in the lesson plans seems to be playing a role in increasing the regularity of phonics and frequency of writing done in class.

The graded readers are providing teachers with an essential tool for implementing group guided reading and for piquing learners' interest in reading. It seemed that all four teachers had embraced the notion of working through the readers sequentially with their learners, even though they appeared to be using the same readers with all their groups. The other resources such as the posters and flash cards provided teachers with useful and stimulating additions to their literacy teaching material. The contact with coaches and the workshop presentations seemed to be providing teachers with much needed structure, information and motivation.

Both the T2 teachers insisted in the interviews that they would have found the programme difficult to implement without the assistance of the coaches. They said the feedback from their coach's lesson observations were very useful because the coaches 'noticed mistakes they made' and 'provided



information about how to improve their literacy teaching strategies'. On the other hand, both the T1 teachers said they felt no need for additional support such as coaches. As to whether there were distinct discernable differences between T1 and T2 teachers or rural and urban teachers, few if any differences between the four cases were overtly discernable in the classroom observations. It could be that differences depended on the 'starting point' of each of the teachers or that T2 most benefits those teachers who have previously had limited or poor quality direct feedback on lesson observations.

### ***Anticipated improvements in literacy outcomes***

As to whether EGRS will achieve its aim of improving the early grade literacy in schools such as the ones in the sample, in South Africa, where teachers have tended to favour the development of spoken and listening skills above reading and writing skills, factors associated with learning gains in primary school classrooms include: teachers modelling good literacy practices; teaching phonics with a focus on meaning; reading for comprehension and the development of vocabulary and spelling;

learners interacting with texts individually; a focus on reading and writing extended texts; the use of books including textbooks, workbooks and readers and the provision of a print rich environment; on-going assessment of and explicit feedback to learners; improved and appropriate pacing and greater curriculum coverage; teachers adjusting the pace to individual learner ability or progress; and raising the levels of cognitive demand (see for example, Fleisch, 2008 and others in Hoadley, 2012).

Taking into account the above, it is feasible to expect overall improvement over the year in the Grade 2 EGRS classes, particularly in phonics and writing as learners in the four schools were 'doing phonics' and writing regularly. It seems likely that schools that had lower 'starting points' in the pre-tests will show the greatest gains (if teachers have been implementing the programme in classrooms) because there is more 'room' for improvement in these areas. However it also seems unlikely that very marked gains in the quality of writing and especially reading outcomes will be evident in the EGRS schools in the short term. Findings in the four case study observations showed that learners are not yet being provided with sufficient opportunities to practise reading extended text and with adequate and appropriate opportunities to practise generating more complex spoken and written texts or to produce their own texts.

### **In conclusion**

The four EGRS teachers seem to have gained an instrumental understanding of literacy instruction and development rather than a principled understanding. For example, they do not necessarily understand the principles underpinning the concept of differentiation in group guided reading; or what it really means or takes to teach children to read, write and speak independently. They seem to be able to reproduce the required lessons scripts but do not seem to be empowered or motivated to generate their own scripts or adapt or deviate from the scripts provided if and when necessary. This 'instrumentalism' is not surprising since the focus of the EGRS is on improving practices rather than knowledge.



## ***Recommendations***

This is not to say that teaching practices and literacy outcomes are not open to further improvement using the existing EGRS model and resources, but it does seem that unless the teachers' literacy practices become more knowledge-based and they become more resourceful and truly passionate and dedicated in their commitment to improving their learners' literacy, there will be a 'threshold' in terms of learning gains in schools such as those in the sample. Making larger gains will most likely require considerable inputs geared towards increasing teacher capacity by significantly improving the quality of teachers' knowledge and understanding of literacy acquisition and development.

### **10. Recommendations**

It is with the above in mind that the following tentative recommendations are made regarding the existing model:

#### **Teachers**

It seems that teachers need to consider more carefully how the time available in class can be used to the best effect to optimise opportunities for all learners to practice reading extended text independently. Clearly they also need to know how to make better use of the different levels of readers. It is challenging for teachers to keep track of individual learner's reading progress, establish and maintain groups according to different learners' ability, get the right level of graded readers for different ability groups (not too easy/too difficult), keep track of who has read what, and prepare different flash cards with new words linked to different readers for different groups within the same lessons. Indications are that the teachers need to be provided with clearer guidelines for doing all of the above. They need to know how to establish exactly which learners need help with what and how best to help them.

Teachers were trying to pace in-class seatwork more to the 'middle' group' than the 'slowest' but the same amount of time was made available for faster learners to complete exactly the same written work as the 'middle' group. They were expanding opportunities for slower learners through the provision of 'extra time' before lessons but not expanding opportunities for more capable learners. Evidently they need to be provided with ways of using differentiated writing activities to promote individual progress. They need to know how to use individual assessment to establish and deal with various levels of reading and writing as well as how best to overcome differences between those children who can read and/or write well and those who are unable to or are struggling to read or write well.

All writing tasks given to learners during the four lesson observations ultimately involved reproducing, restating or copying texts with the exception of one task which involved learners in generating their own text. Teachers reduced the complexity of more cognitively demanding tasks; mostly by turning them into whole class activities so that learners simply had to reproduce or copy answers (from the chalkboard) that had already been covered in class into their books. It was as if the teachers' main concern was that the required written work was reflected 'correctly' in learners' books (to demonstrate 'coverage'). Instead of providing the kind of mediation that would enable learners to complete more demanding writing tasks independently, teachers tended to 'over demonstrate' what

was required. To provide this kind of mediation, teachers need to be very clear about what tasks are intended to achieve (for example, what the purpose is of a 'sequencing task'). The fact that learners complete writing tasks whilst teachers were busy with group guided reading is a constraint to some extent; teachers were unable to spend time with individuals who were struggling and/or determine when it was necessary to provide additional mediation for individuals or the whole class.

It seems teachers also need to be made more aware of the importance of expanding learners' in-class oral language experiences from saying mainly phrases to speaking whole sentences. They need to know how to elicit conversations or open up discussions with learners that give learners opportunities to produce responses that take the form of longer language units and more complex language structures.

They need to be taught how to generate their own lesson plans. Perhaps if the principles underpinning the structure and design of scripted lessons were made explicit for teachers, they would be in a better position to be more innovative and resourceful, for examples when plans for the term do not arrive timeously.

## **Resources**

The guided readers were the only other book besides the DBE workbooks that learners in the Grade 2 classes got to handle and use. Regarding the supply of graded readers, when teachers were asked whether they needed any additional resources in the interviews none of the teachers mentioned that they needed additional Vula Bula readers. The teacher at Baloyi (T2) explicitly said she felt she had enough copies of the graded readers for her needs. It seems that the classroom resources most needed to meet the goal of fostering an interest in and love of reading and making reading habitual are more appealing picture books and story books, which are entertaining to read, appeal to the imagination and which are worth reading over and over again. Such books could keep learners occupied when they finished seatwork etc.

In the interview, the teacher at Baloyi (T1) said that if classrooms could be provided with large clocks which could be placed above the chalkboard, teachers would be in stronger position to train learners to work to time frames; they could get them to refer to the clocks and get them to keep track of how much time they had for each activity and how much time remained. This practical suggestion would enable teachers to show learners how to pace themselves when doing writing tasks or completing classwork.

## **References**



### **Classes**

Ideally Foundation Phase class sizes at schools should be reduced. Classes of over thirty five constrain opportunities for learners to read aloud individually and limit the amount of time that teachers can devote to guiding and monitoring individual learners' reading.

### **Further investigations for the EGRS**

There appears to be a tension for teachers between the idea of offering the same opportunities to all learners and differentiating literacy activities in classrooms in ways that allow more capable learners to complete additional or more challenging work. The EGRS needs to investigate why teachers are continuing to offer the same opportunities to all learners and are not differentiating reading and writing activities in classrooms in ways that allow more capable learners to do additional, more challenging work. For example, are teachers afraid of not knowing or keeping track of what everyone in the class had done, or do they think it is unfair for more capable learners to get 'extra' opportunities?

EGRS also needs to investigate if and why learners are experiencing difficulty with answering questions which require more autonomous thinking and generating their own responses. Such an investigation could shed light on the type of mediation learners in the EGRS schools require to learn how to cope with more demanding tasks and to become more independent.

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