



Bradford Faces Literacy Challenges: Urgent Need to Improve Educational Attainment for Prosperity

By Noreen Khan, February 2025

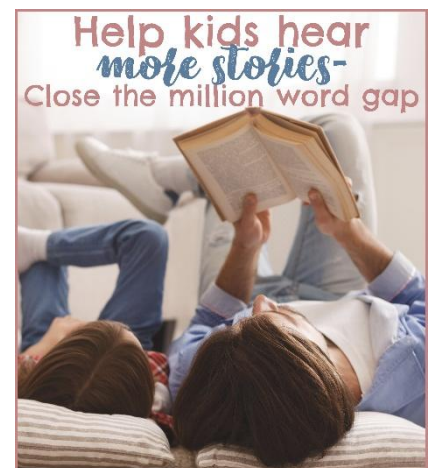
Bradford is grappling with a significant literacy crisis, one that poses a major barrier to the educational and economic prosperity of the city. Despite efforts from schools, local authorities, and community groups, the literacy rates in Bradford remain concerning low compared to the national average, which is causing alarm among educators, policymakers, and parents alike.

Recent reports indicate that a substantial portion of Bradford's young people are leaving school without the basic literacy skills required

for further education, employment, or successful integration into the wider economy. Statistics show that literacy attainment levels, particularly in areas of reading and writing, are significantly below the UK average, with children from disadvantaged backgrounds disproportionately affected. The challenges extend beyond the classroom. Poverty, low levels of parental education, and a lack of access to early learning resources have compounded the issue. As a result, many students face difficulties in engaging with the national curriculum, which sets a foundation for academic and vocational success.

Improving literacy levels is not only a matter of educational fairness but also one of economic necessity. A population with high literacy rates is more likely to secure stable, well-paying jobs, reduce reliance on welfare, and contribute to a more resilient local economy.

"For Bradford to prosper and compete on a national and global scale, it is essential that we close the literacy gap," said Uzma Rashid Chair of Neesie, a prominent advocate for educational reform in Bradford.



"Literacy is the gateway to learning and career success. Without it, the chances of young people securing meaningful employment or furthering their education are significantly diminished." Noreen Khan, Director, Literacy Lead

A Growing Need for Targeted Interventions



The head teachers working in collaboration with Literacy Lead programme have commended the programme and have said that a multi-faceted and triangulated approach is needed to tackle the literacy issue effectively. Improving literacy in Bradford requires better early years education, enhanced teacher training, community engagement, and investment in resources.

Through this pilot programme, our schools are already taking steps to address the problem. The programme offers twilight literacy sessions, reading interventions, and most importantly support with family literacy by engaging with parents of students which is proving to be a success factor.

Bradford's Path to Prosperity

While the statistics are stark, the potential for progress is clear. If Bradford can raise literacy levels, the city will unlock new opportunities for its young people, providing them with the skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly

digital and global economy. Higher literacy rates would also contribute to a more skilled workforce, making Bradford an attractive location for investment and business growth.

To secure a prosperous future for Bradford, it's crucial that we invest in education now. By prioritising literacy, we're not just improving attainment outcomes, we're building the foundation for a more equitable and prosperous community. It's a challenge, but it's also an opportunity.



As Bradford continues to work towards raising literacy levels, the importance of community involvement, financial support and funding from the National lottery Reaching Communities fund cannot be overstated. With the right interventions, Bradford's young people can secure the skills needed to thrive, ensuring a brighter, more prosperous future for all.

The Importance of Parental Engagement in the Literacy Lead Programme

A key factor behind the success of Bradford's Literacy Lead Programme has been its exceptional focus on



parental engagement. The programme has recognized that involving parents in their children's literacy journey is crucial to achieving long-term educational success. By providing targeted support and resources, the Literacy Lead Programme has empowered parents to become active participants in their children's learning. This has included offering workshops, home learning activities, and guidance on how to foster literacy skills at home. The positive impact of this engagement has been clear, as children with more involved parents tend to show improved reading and writing abilities. By prioritizing parental involvement, the programme has created a strong support network that not only enhances children's literacy outcomes but also strengthens the relationship between home and school, contributing significantly to the programme's overall success.

