

A Reading Community



@DogmersfieldSch

Dogmersfield Church of England Primary School

Context

Dogmersfield Primary School is a small Primary School (currently 132 pupils) in North Hampshire. The school vision is to enable the whole Dogmersfield family to be able to learn for life. The school serves a predominantly white British community with pupils with a wide range of needs. The school recognises that being able to read for pleasure can promote well-being, empathy and imagination, all vital skills for life-long learning. As a school there is a continual search to enable the curriculum to engage children by developing their imagination, understanding of others and inquiring minds. Reading for pleasure helps to promote all of these skills and is part of the school development plan (Priority 2): 'to develop opportunities for pupils to want to read for pleasure'.

OU Research inspiration and rationale

After reading 'Building Communities of Engaged Readers' and focusing on how to build 'a reading for pleasure pedagogy' (Chapter 7), we realised that we wanted the whole school community to value and enjoy reading. We also focused on 'Teachers as Readers and Readers who Teach' as a way of improving staff knowledge of children's literature.



Aims



The aims of our project were to:

- 1) Develop teachers and parents own knowledge and understanding of children's books so that they can be reading role models for the children in the school.
- 2) To create a 'book buzz' in the whole school community through the sharing of texts both inside and outside of the classroom.

Although some children were enjoying reading at home and school, the school was very focused (prior to this

improvement priority) on reading being something that is taught and then tested.

Outline

We introduced a half termly newsletter called 'The Book Corner', this was for parents and children to share together, but also for teachers to share with their classes. Many different staff started to write reviews for the newsletter e.g: office staff and also



parents and children were invited to recommend books that they had read too.



We provided opportunities for staff to talk about books by encouraging them to go to the OU/UKLA book group (held at the school). Staff loved sharing the books that they had read with others and hearing about new fiction. They were also keen to develop some of the strategies that the book group promoted e.g: finding out about the variety of children's reading at home.

As a school we set up a regular KS1 and KS2 story time with the Headteacher and the Headteacher then asked if the children would like to borrow the books that she read from. There was soon a waiting list for the books that were shared in these sessions.



Children were also paired with reading buddies across the school, so that they could share favourite texts

with one another. Older children were paired with younger children and 'book buddies' sessions happen each week on a Thursday. The children are always very excited to be with their buddies and there is a huge buzz around school when this happens.

Lunch clubs were also set up where children could choose to stay in for lunch play and hear stories. There are two separate sessions one for KS1 and one for KS2. Numbers started to grow, once children began to talk about books that were being read.

Teachers were encouraged to display what they were reading on their classroom doors and this promoted lots of discussion with the children about who was reading what! Teachers also ensured that there were set times for story time each day and would often read to themselves during these sessions, modelling reading for pleasure.

The Library has now also been opened each Friday after school for parents to visit with their children and to borrow books. Parents have really enjoyed this opportunity and younger siblings have been made familiar with the library and have enjoyed looking at books and sharing them with parents in the school setting.



Impact

There is evidence of a book buzz across the whole school community. An example of this is when the Headteacher visits a class, children immediately talk to her about the books that they have finished and whether they will be next on the list to borrow a book that has been shared with them!

Children also recommend their own reads to their class teacher and to other members of staff. Without being prompted to do so, children have also written to their favourite authors and been thrilled to receive letters back!

There has been a significant increase in the number of children wanting to come to story time at lunch time. In KS2 the club started off with just 3 children and has gradually increased to 25. In KS1 there has been an increase from 8 children to 17.



When the school initially launched the newsletter 'The Book Corner' (almost a year ago) it was difficult to get any extra book reviews from the school community, but now there are usually too many reviews to be printed in each issue.

Teachers have also been



tweeting about the children's books that they have read and communicating about the books that they have read with one another. They often share what they have read in staff meetings, but more often than not in



conversations with one another in the staffroom. Staff are not afraid to model being readers themselves and often take the time to read to themselves when the children are

quietly reading.

Parents, Governors and staff have commented on how much they have enjoyed 'The Book Corner, showing influence of Reading for Pleasure beyond the school gates.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

This is the start of an on- going project to improve reading for pleasure across the school. We were influenced by attending the Teachers Book group and learning from other teachers and librarians. We have used the researchrichpedagogies website to carry out further research and have been inspired by the work of others.

As a school we are finding out about our children as readers and have recently asked the children to create 'reading rivers' so that we can reflect on their reading and how we are supporting it. We know that we would like to order a much wider variety of children's comics and magazines and have asked for help from librarians to support us with recommended titles. We also want to look at the reasons why some of our children are still not reading for pleasure and how we can help reluctant readers and our children with SEN. We now need to interview children that still don't often choose to read for pleasure to try and find further ways to support them.

Finally we would like to start an after school parent and children's book club.

We still have a long way to go and a lot of work to do, but have seen a significant impact on the book buzz in our community.