

# DEVELOPING A READING SCHOOL



**LITTLE BOWDEN  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*'Working together to love learning'*

**Belinda Smithies**

# **Context:-**

- **Little Bowden Primary School has approximately 400 children on roll, from the ages of four to eleven.**
- **Built in 1907, it has long been at the heart of the local community.**
- **The teaching staff includes a healthy mix of experience and expertise.**

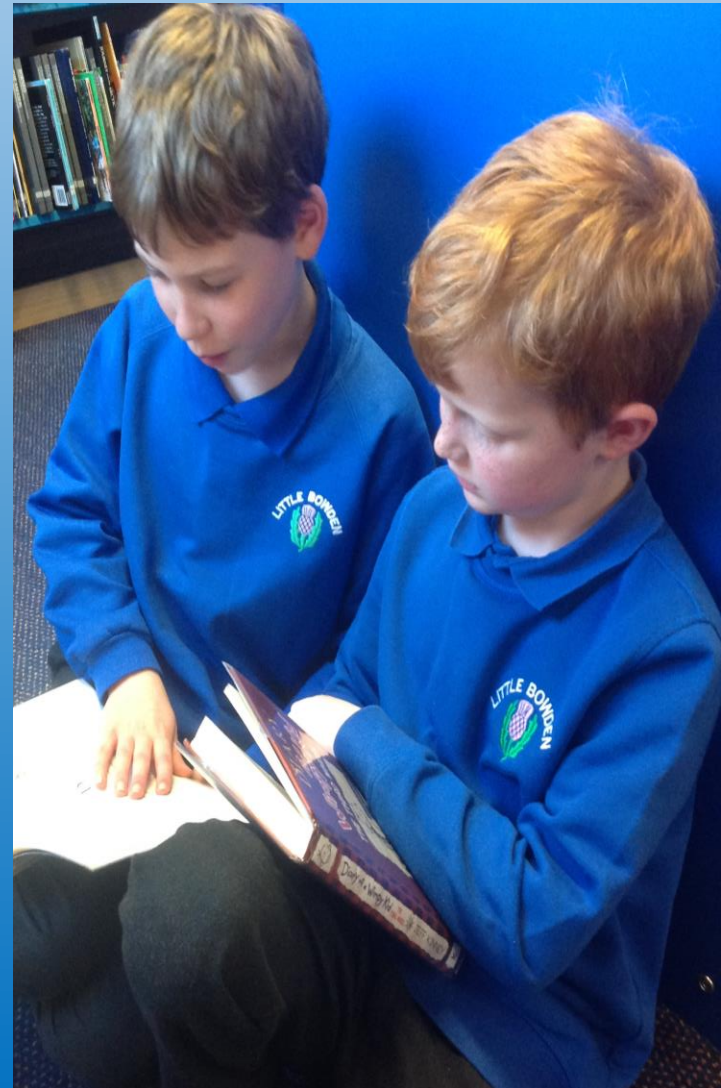




# OU Research inspiration and rationale

Having read 'Building Communities of Engaged Readers,' I had the vision to develop a 'Reading School' where teachers and children would be part of an active reading community where:

1) Teachers would have a **strong knowledge of children's literature** allowing them to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with children. This would also enable them to select books and texts to enhance English teaching .





**2) Children would enjoy reading for pleasure and be able to talk freely about books they have read with other children and adults. In short, a reading buzz would evolve and become part of the school's DNA.**

**This is a long-term project which will take a number of years. However I have begun to plant the seeds, in fact two seeds – one among teachers and one among the children.**

# **AIMS:**

**-To develop teachers' knowledge of children's literature and other texts.**

**-To develop a 'Reading for Pleasure Pedagogy' which includes social reading areas.**

# Outline

## Launch the vision

- I introduced my vision for **‘Developing a Reading School’** on a staff training day. We completed a reading habits survey, brainstormed children’s authors and completed a quiz.
- Teachers came to the conclusion for themselves that their knowledge of children’s literature was mostly limited to their own childhood reading or headline authors.

- I then shared the findings from the **OU Teachers as readers research**. Teachers began to realise that their lack of knowledge would restrict their ability to engage children in reading and writing . They had already started on the journey to become **‘Teachers who read.’**
- A gap task was set to read children’s books over the Summer holiday.



**Developing  
a reading  
school.**

**Creating  
lifelong  
readers.**



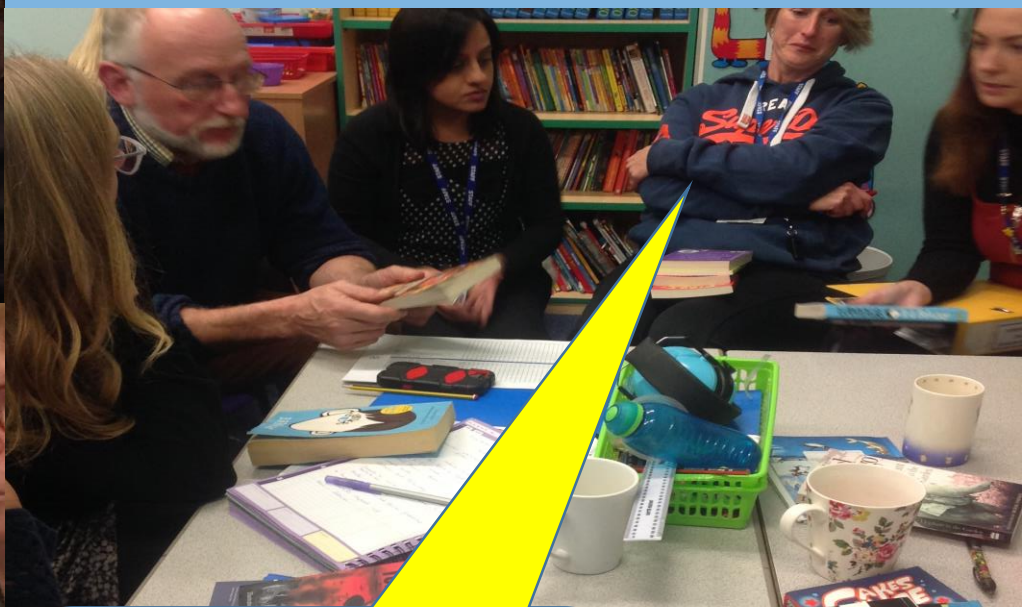




Teachers share their holiday reading.

The next book share has been set for next term.

When can we do this again?



I didn't realise there were so many brilliant picture books for KS2.





The books were left  
in the staff room for  
teachers to borrow.



# *The classroom seed is planted.*

Children in Year 3 and Year 5 classes completed a reading habits survey. One Year 3 and one Year 5 class have been involved in the project.

I managed to improve the book corner in my Year 3 classroom by buying a more child friendly bookcase. The PTA have also funded a class set of cushions.

## My Reading Survey .....

1. How much do you enjoy reading?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How confident a reader are you?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How much do you like to read alone?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How much do you like to read in a pair?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How much do you like to read to an adult?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How much do you like to read in a group?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How much do you like being read to?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How much do you like visiting the school library?	1	2	3	4	5
9. How much do you like having a book as a present?	1	2	3	4	5

10. Which types of books do you like reading?

Facts book



Story book



Comic



Magazine



Joke book



11. Where do you like to read?

home

bedroom

school

outside

other

12. What is the best book you have read? .....

13. Can you name any authors? .....





**Weekly paired reading sessions have been introduced in my Year 3 class. The emphasis is on enjoyment so the children were asked to make requests. Torches and cushions were at the top of the list!**

A Race to Read track has also been introduced to encourage reading at home as this was an area that has tended to fall off in KS2.





**A paired reading session has been set up with a Year 5 class. The library is used so children can read the library books if they wish.**



**The other half read in the year 5 class. The groups swap each week.**



# Impact

- The project 'Developing a Reading School' is in its infancy. After a full year, I will reissue the reading surveys to both teachers and children.
- It will be interesting to see if there is a difference between the Year 3 and 5 classes which have had extra reading activities compared to the classes which have not.
- These are early days to assess impact, but there are some encouraging signs.....

Early signs:



**I've recommended this to Year 4 as I know that they do a debate about zoos. I thought this would be a great way to stimulate class discussion.**

**Teachers have begun to spontaneously discuss books they have read and how they could use them with children. They are engaged with the project and many have already told me that they have started another book.**

The Year 3 children in my class love paired reading in the class. Cushions and torches are a hit. They also love that all reading choices are valued.



**Quick, let's read  
this to the boys. It  
will really scare  
them!**

There is a buzz in the class which wasn't there before.



# **Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice:**

The research presented in 'Building Communities of Engaged Readers' has made me realise the importance of developing reading communities within school.

If reading communities are established among teachers, they will eventually have the knowledge to influence children's reading and to improve their own teaching of reading and writing.

If reading communities are established among children, they will hopefully become lifelong readers.

I see this as a long term initiative which can only really gain momentum when teachers have a much wider reading repertoire. They will then have the confidence to become:

*Teachers who read and readers who teach!*