

Reading Gladiators

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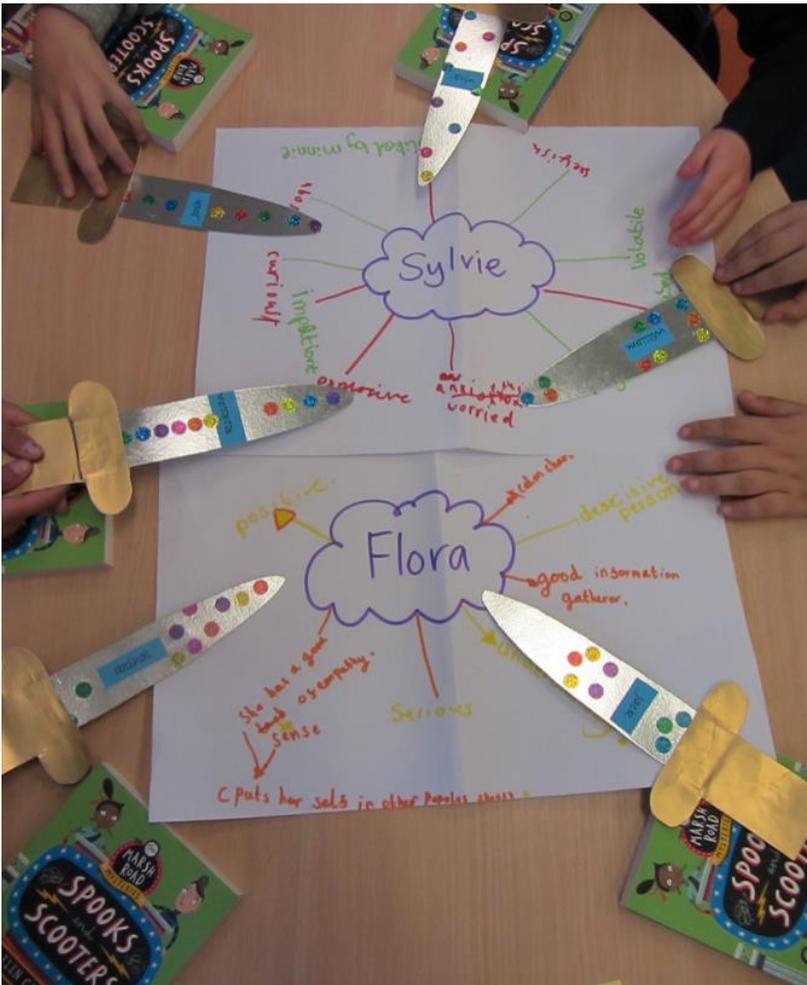
Background

We were inspired by the Teachers as Readers research to start the Reading Gladiators programme in our school.

<http://readinggladiators.org.uk/>

The programme uses a book club format, and each Reading Gladiator group has between 6-8 children. Reading Gladiator sessions are weekly and last for 30-45 minutes each time. They take place outside the classroom in a suitably quiet environment, for example, the library. They run at the same time every week, at a convenient time decided on by the lead teacher in order to fit in with other teaching commitments. Suggested activities arising from the reading include role play, drama, art and performance.

Teachers are supported by excellent online resources from the Reading Gladiators website as well as: programme notes detailing suggested activities and time scale for each text, regular Webinars, an interactive blog, and mini-challenges to motivate children. Teachers are encouraged to post their own ideas for activities, to share with other schools using the programme.



Promoting a reading culture

Lilly, Year 4: "When we do Reading Gladiators we get to feel really special! We do all sorts of fun activities. I've also found I'm reading much more at home."

When Reading Gladiators have finished a book, they make a short presentation to their class. That particular title is then incorporated into classroom book corners and into our Free Reader section in the library, so that all children can access a copy.

It is extremely inspiring to see how our Gladiators have acted as "Ambassadors for Reading". There is a palpable "buzz" among the Gladiators when the title for the next month is revealed. We have also noticed general excitement in the library when the children spot other books by the same author as the Reading Gladiator titles.

Teachers who lead the Gladiator Groups have also become more adventurous as readers themselves, as well as teachers of reading:

“The programme has encouraged me to read a wider variety of books appropriate for my year group. It is true to say, that the benefits are not just for reading; I have noticed that exposure to high quality texts in Reading Gladiators has enabled children to transfer literary devices and effects in to their own writing. I feel we are seeing better cohesion, more adventurous vocabulary choices and an improved awareness of audience.”

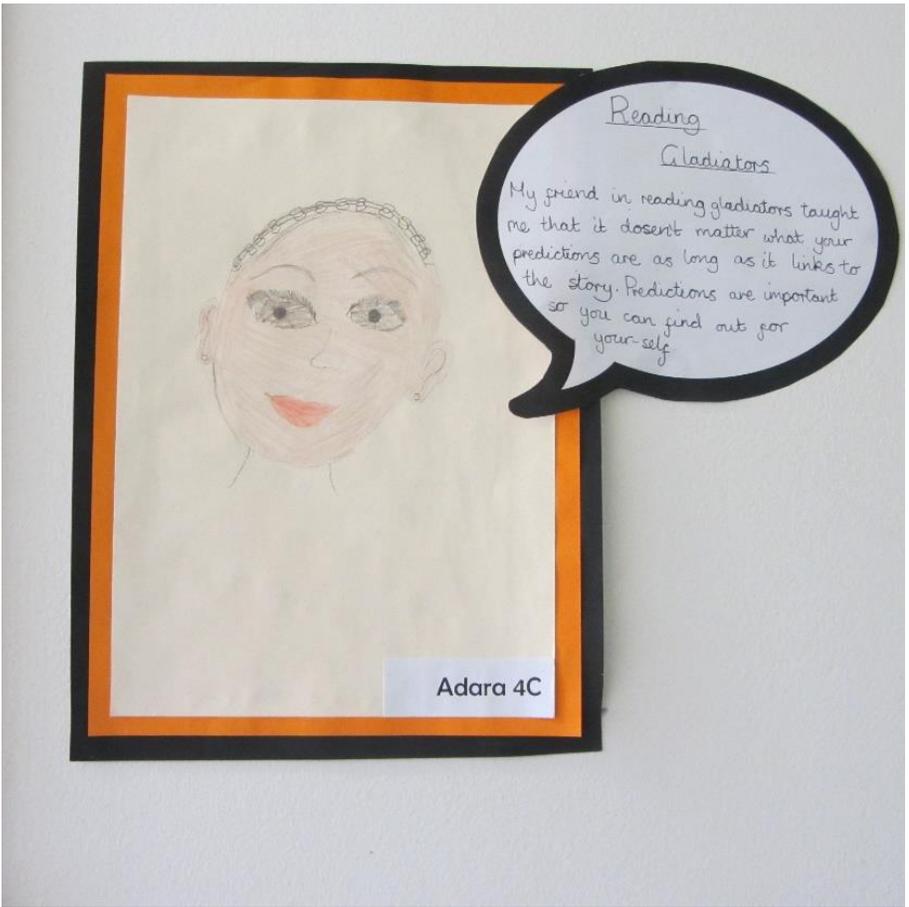
“The quality titles that are brought into the school enrich our library and our books corners, while at the same time broadening the literary repertoire of teachers and students alike. In my view, the Reading Gladiators programme constitutes a very astute use of a limited school budget because the multiple positive effects represent a win-win situation for our reading community.”

Some teachers thought the extended reading would be a challenge for some children, but have found the opposite – that children really want to be challenged by their reading.

Christelle, Year4: *“Normally, I read in my head, but in Reading Gladiators I actually get the chance to be heard by other readers. When I performed a poem last week I got good comments and feedback.”*

Ray, Year 4: *“I’m doing different activities. Plus I get to be with my friends. I’m very proud to join the Reading Gladiators group.”*







Reading Gladiators has had an impact not just on the children taking part but also on the wider school community. We have seen how the activities have impacted on children's reading choices, making them more adventurous – and this has caused us to re-evaluate the texts we were using in classrooms, in book corners and in the library. We appreciate the way Reading Gladiators exposes children to a range of genre and authors and can sometimes take children out of their comfort zone. We find also that talking together in a book club format has helped children to respect the points of view of others, and has enabled them to work better together as a team.

Adara, Year 4: "My friend in Reading Gladiators taught me that it doesn't matter what your predictions are as long as it links to the story. Predictions are important so you can find out for yourself."

