

Highly Commended in the Egmont Reading for Pleasure Award
In partnership with the OU and UKLA, 2018

Whole School Award

Let's Talk about Reading: Book Conversations

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Context

Bishop Road Primary School is a large, four-form entry state school in Bristol. Books are at the centre of everything we do. Picture books, especially, are successfully used from Reception all the way up to Year 6 to stimulate discussion and extend children's thinking in the classroom. Each year we try to build on these successes, finding new ways to enhance our staff and children's enjoyment of reading. This whole school case study hopes to convey just some of the passion that we see every day in our classrooms and the projects we have been working on this academic year to promote reading for pleasure.

OU Research inspiration and rationale

This year we wanted to find new ways to enhance our reading for pleasure across the school and to really make visible our teachers as passionate readers to the children. After an inspiring INSET day led by Teresa Cremin at the start of the academic year, we honed in on strands 3 (*Reading for pleasure pedagogy*) and 4 (*Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach*) of the Teachers as Readers findings to further develop reading for pleasure in our school.

We were also inspired by the research conducted by John Hattie, especially the idea that: 'We rarely talk about passion in education as if doing so makes the work of the teacher less serious. Passion [...] be infectious, it can be taught, it can be modelled and it can be learnt.' *Visible Learning* (2009).

We didn't expect reading for pleasure to just 'happen'. We knew we were going to have to nurture, coax, model and teach it.

Aims

We are proud that at Bishop Road, our School Development Plan is based around exciting, dynamic whole school projects.

This year, one of our chosen SDP areas is '**Reading Conversations**', prompted by the desire to find different ways to encourage universal participation, enjoyment and engagement in reading across the school. Our project's aim is to:

- Promote book talk by creating more time and space
- enhance our children's reading experiences at home and at school
- expand their breadth of knowledge about illustrators and authors
- to help the children more visibly see their teachers as passionate readers
- to balance accountability pressures with reading for pleasure

Fundamentally, we wanted to develop the idea of reading for pleasure into a more organic, spontaneous entity, underpinned by pedagogy and teacher knowledge.

Outline

We wanted to achieve these aims by developing a number of current positive practices seen around the school.

1. Social reading environments

Although the reading corners in our classrooms have always been a focal point of each room, this year each member of staff made their class libraries a priority when setting up the room for the year. This effort meant that they created welcoming, colourful and friendly areas that were enticing to even the most reluctant readers.



In addition, each member of staff has really considered the way in which they want the class libraries to be used. In a lot of classes, the teachers have given the children full autonomy over the reading corner and they suggested a range of ways that the books could be ordered.



In KS1, there has been a big focus on modelling book talk and choosing a range of different books. Sitting down and really immersing oneself in a book for more than a couple of minutes has been modelled and rewarded.

We wanted the reading corners to be visually inviting, but we also didn't want them to be all style and no substance. They needed to also promote curiosity, wondering and spontaneous book talk:



We also wanted to promote and make much more visible teachers' different passions for reading. In the reading corners, staff chose to do this in a variety of ways.



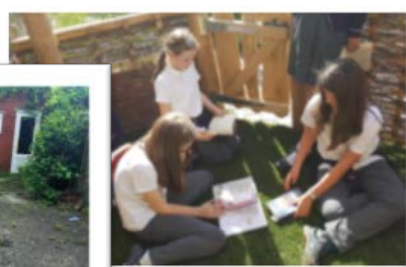


We also have started to use our reading corners in another way. We wanted the children to see reading for pleasure as a joyful and regular event at home so teachers have been trialling 'comfy reading time' with their classes. This encourages the children to think of and recreate a place or position that they would read in at home.



2. Under-used spaces

With significant help from the school PTFA we have been able to transform a tiny, disused patch of land between one of the school buildings and neighbouring houses into a very special story garden. Within the garden there is a covered area full of bean bags and two reading thrones where a whole class can go and be transported to another land. It is not used for time to catch up on guided reading or interventions, but is a secret garden filled with things for the children to discover.



Reading events with parents have been held here to help promote the value of reading for pleasure at home and to support parents in their role in reading to and with their children.

The Infant hall was another under-used space. A connection with a local carpenter meant that we could create another great reading space within the school, this time with a focus on picture books.

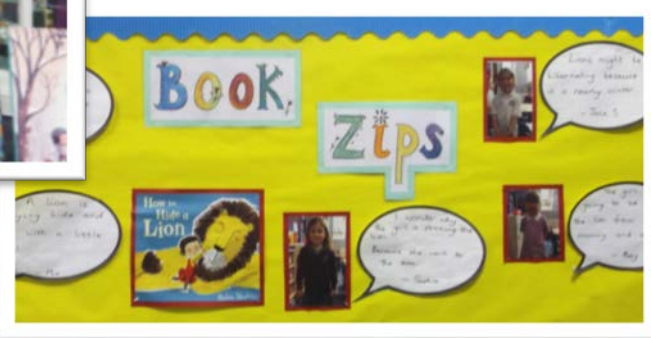


Our new infant library couldn't be further from most traditional libraries, with all forward-facing books. This has allowed our younger readers to connect with the books on a different level. Having an exclusively front facing library has allowed reception and KS1, regardless of age or reading ability, to make their own independent choices on what they want to read.



3. Reading displays

Another way of visually demonstrating reading for pleasure around the school has been to use displays both inside and outside the classroom. For example, we have created 'shared' texts that classes have read and enjoyed together – i.e. books in common. We also set up a poetry trail around the school, where each adult puts up their favourite poem each month. Book zips have also proved very popular.

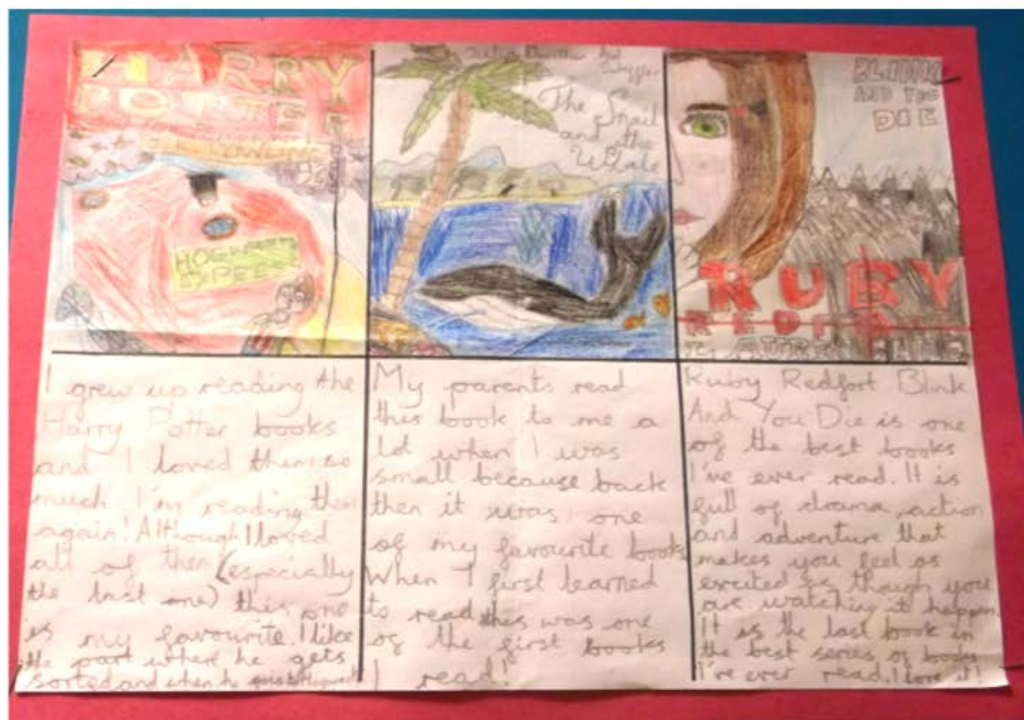
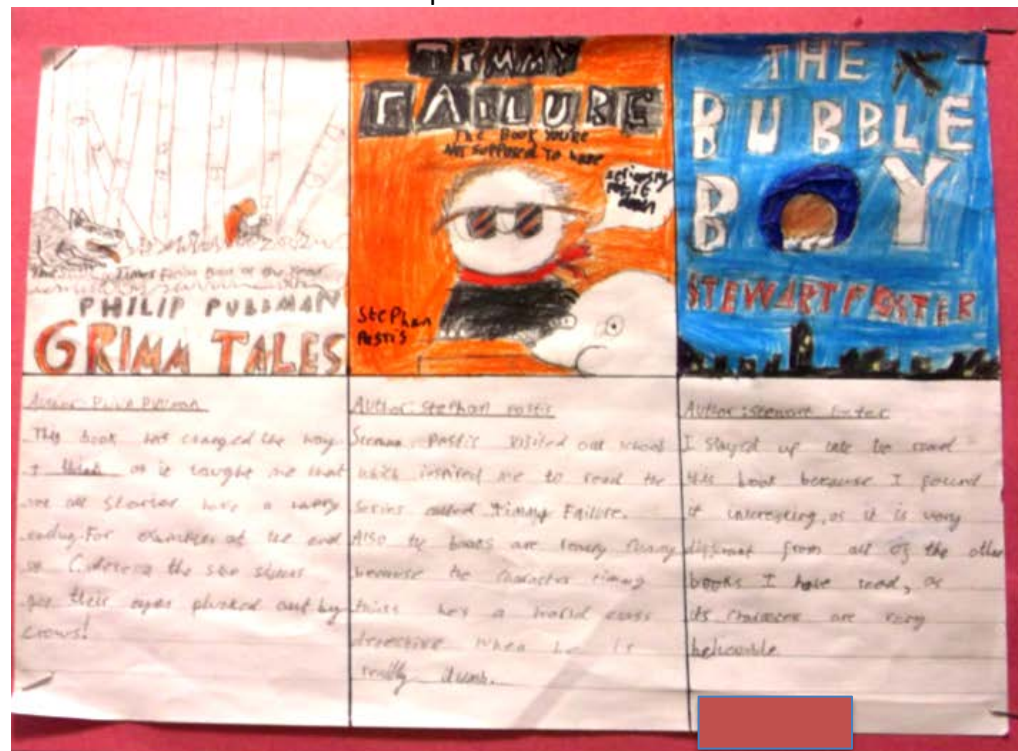


Some displays have been used to share teachers' own personal reading for pleasure habits.



4. Reading Challenges

The children have particularly enjoyed some new reading challenges. The whole school produced 'reading rivers' in September, with provided an excellent basis for book talk at the start of the year. Here are examples of year 6 challenges based on '3 books that have shaped me':



5. Bishop Road Book Festival

This is a week-long celebration of reading with events and visitors for the whole school community. We had bedtime books, visits from authors and illustrators as well as the chance for the children to make their own picture books.



Impact

This is an ongoing project, but it's impact has already been felt right across the community:

'My favourite time is when we go to the story garden and Miss Kingston sits on the throne and uses her funny voice'. **Year 2 child**

'I love the reading pod as it's peaceful in there. **Year 1 child**

'I like to see the pictures on [the books] tummies." **Reception child**

'I like how we can go in [the story garden] in the rain and read.' **Year 2 child**

'I got the Snow Leopard by Jackie Morris for Christmas!' **Year 4 child**

My class have enjoyed taking ownership of our book corner. The categories they came up with were fascinating. X even created a 'deep' section! **Ms. Robinson (Year 6)**

I am excited to see my classroom has become an environment where children recommend books to each other based on their likes and dislikes and have a go at different books. One of my reluctant readers was confident enough to bring in a series of Japanese graphic novels that he loved, and wanted to share with the other children. **Miss Upton (Year 4)**

Through our Desert Island Texts homework project, the children have been persuaded by their peers to try new authors, styles and genres. The parents have also commented how much their children enjoyed selecting their texts to share. **Mr Barr (Year 5)**

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

The TaRs research project clearly demonstrated that a core reading for pleasure pedagogy in our school needed to address reading aloud, informal book talk and recommendations, and independent reading time all within a highly social reading environment. In particular, the development of under-used space within our school has really provided beneficial time and space for children at our school to explore texts in greater depth, share favourites and talk spontaneously about their reading. It has been working very well in conjunction with high quality teaching of reading.

Our next steps will be to use these spaces and renewed energy to engage with parents further. In the next month we are holding a number of parent reading workshops in the story garden and infant library to help support our EAL learners and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Watch this space!