

# The Lockdown Book Club

By Aileen Sellers



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## Context



- Lovelace Primary School is a 3-form entry school in Chessington, in the London borough of Kingston-Upon-Thames.
- Our prime SDP priority for this year was **Read to Succeed**: Ensuring consistently high-quality teaching of reading through a vibrant engaging curriculum.
- I am the school's English and Phonics lead teacher and I teach phonics and reading interventions across Years 1-3.



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## OU Research inspiration and rationale



The Teachers as Readers (TaRs) research that we were seeking to develop by initiating our Lockdown Book Club were:

1. Knowledge of children's literature and other texts
2. Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach
3. Develop reading communities that are reciprocal and interactive

The TaRs research found that these elements are essential for fostering children's reading for pleasure (Cremin et al. 2014).



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## Aims



We had two main aims when implementing our Lockdown book club.

- To expand our staff knowledge of children's fiction to enable them to confidently make recommendations to children
- To create a resource that could be accessed by the whole community to foster width and depth in children's fiction choices

We wanted to be left with a resource that provided a sustainable way for both of these aims to be met whilst inspiring the children to pick up a title they may not have considered before.



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## Outline

- We decided as a school that we wanted to improve teachers' knowledge of children's literature. We completed a reading survey at the beginning of the academic year 2019/2020 and discovered that there were gaps in our staff's knowledge.
- During lockdown we took the opportunity to develop these skills at a time when staff may have the opportunity to work from home and enjoy some children's fiction. We also wanted to disseminate this knowledge to the wider community and, at a time when the children were using online resources, felt that we could easily access the parental community.
- Initially, we completed a staff reading survey to work out what our starting point was and how we could provide targeted support to help expand that knowledge of children's fiction. As a result, while staff were largely working from home in April and May we ran the Lockdown Book Club.

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## Outline

- An initial list of titles was posted on our Google Drive, comprising new titles and some highly recommended classics.
- All classroom staff, wider support staff and senior leaders were asked to request a book from that list that was then bought through our school amazon account and delivered directly to their home address.

Louise Watts	The boy who grew dragons by Andy Shepherd and Sara Oglvie
Kristy Palmer	Diary of a Wombat by Jacki French & Bruce Whatley
Rob Meakin	The Storm Keeper's Island by Catherine Doyle
Carol Webb	The Wolf's footprint by Susan Price
Megan Emerson	There's a boy in the girls bathroom by Louis Sachar
Emma Sedgwick Charlotte Lovett Earles	Sky Song by Abi Elphinstone x2
Donna Gillett	How to Train Your Dragon by Cressida Cowell
Karen Lang	Holes by Louis Sachar
Mel Mulhall 10	The Somerset Tsunami by Emma Carroll
Debbie Pulham	Eric by Shaun Tan

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## Outline



Concurrent to this a Book Blog was created on J2 Bloggy<sup>1</sup>, which has now been relocated to Google Sites<sup>2</sup> using Google classroom<sup>3</sup> to interact. This has various pages related to creating a passion for reading in the whole school community.

- what to read next
- best E-books
- poetry
- storytime
- best audiobooks
- books for grown ups

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## Outline



Staff were asked to read the book they had been sent and provide either a short review or a video reading Jack-a-Nory style and upload to the Google drive or directly to the new site.



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## Outline



- We had a second round with the same books, swapped around and delivered for the summer holidays, after a respectable quarantine period naturally!
- This resulted in us having a bank of ideas, reading tips and recommendations that the whole school could access whilst at home.
- Round three will hopefully commence at the beginning of 2021 as we have restocked the staff selection with new titles. We will be operating it from the new school library on a more voluntary basis.
- The first Lockdown Book Club books are now available in the library awaiting the children's return. We have moved the blog over to Google Sites and Classroom to make it easier for parents and children to access and interact with.



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## Impact



- There has been a greater engagement in reading across the staff since The Lockdown Book Club was launched.
- Whilst it is hard to quantify, and anecdotal in nature, teachers are feeling more confident in making recommendations to the children.
- We also had a good level of engagement from support staff. Some of whom read aloud a chapter a day.

*"I feel more confident choosing the correct books to read aloud in class and recommend other titles to the children."*

Year 2 class teacher.



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## Impact

More classes have engaged with authors online and have had great pleasure from building these relationships.

- Year 6 contacted Lisa Thompson after reading *The Day I Was Erased* and *The Light Jar* and were sent a personalised message from her.
- Year 5 have recently had a Zoom call with Frank Cottrell Boyce listening to him read *Cosmic*.



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## Impact

- We asked teaching staff to complete a second Reading Survey as part of their Performance Management meetings in September of this year and the results show an improvement in the teachers' knowledge of children's literature, with 80% naming authors other than 'celebrity' names.
- An awareness of reading habits and the use of informal book talk has also increased throughout the school with teachers documenting that most now provide opportunities to discuss books and reading habits regularly.
- Families are beginning to interact with new Google site and are making comments on the Google classroom stream. It is slowly growing into the reading hub that we foresee it being.



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## Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice



- The TaRs research has led us to analyse our own knowledge of children's literature and how this permeates the school community. It has shown us where the gaps in our knowledge lie and given us pathways to address these.
- The new Reading Google site will be interactive through Google classroom which will enable all members of the community to contribute to the Book Blether.
- The new school library will be used much more by the staff, as well as the children, to access new fiction to widen their knowledge.



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