

Reading for pleasure and child led changes to reading

Rose, Alice and Megs

Norton C of E Primary School

Strive

Working hard to
reach our goals.

Think

Using our minds to
make the right choices.

Act

Making it happen
taking action.

Respect

Appreciating, caring
being polite.

Shine

Be the best that you can
be, being a Norton star.



We all shine like stars

Context

Norton Primary school is a rural school situated in the village of Norton, Gloucester. We currently have 149 children on role and have an on site preschool. In our last Ofsted (2017), they stated:

- Pupils explain how teachers encourage them to read frequently and widely, both at school and at home. Consequently, they read to me with fluency and understanding. There is a strong culture of reading in school with plenty of stimulating literature on offer. Those pupils who find reading more challenging use their good knowledge of phonics to read unknown words successfully. This,

However as staff we identified that although the reading culture is good there was still a lot of room for improvement.

Rose

I am a full time Year 1 teacher at Norton C of E Primary school. As part of my job role I am KS1 Reading and Phonics lead. Since starting this role I have broadened my knowledge of the importance of Reading for Pleasure (RfP) and have enjoyed working with colleagues to implement changes throughout the school.

Alice

I am the Year 4 teacher at Norton C of E Primary School. I have a passion for reading myself, and believe it is a fundamental and important life skill that children take enjoyment in reading.

Megs

I am the Year 5 teacher at Norton C of E Primary school. I have always been very passionate about reading and focussed my University Dissertation on 'how does reading promote empathy in children'. Having previously worked in KS1 and transitioning to KS2, I have reflected on the difference in 'reading cultures' across key stages and how this affects all children.

Research inspiration and rationale

Reading for pleasure:

‘We have a professional responsibility to understand and support their journey as readers, not just their decoding and comprehension skills. RfP is recognised as volitional, choice-led reading of any kind of text, and is linked to motivation, attitudes and children’s shifting identities as readers’ (The Open University)

In the last century, widespread research has concluded that although some children have access to literature at home, it is the school’s responsibility to provide a positive reading culture, which some children simply do not have at home. In KS1 this is even more significant as ‘young learners acquire language unconsciously and consequently stories are the most valuable resource you have’ (Slatterly and Willis, 2001). Ismawati (2018) furthers this stating how stories and storytelling is a technique that can ‘reach the emotional and effective realms of learners’ and as a school we must ensure children ‘want’ and ‘choose’ to read.

Reading environments:

Giving children ownership of their reading environment is incredibly important. As Cremin shares ‘give children options of who to sit with, where to sit, which text to read and share’ (Cremin, 2019). Therefore, in our class reading environments, children had the opportunity to choose the books and sort of book corner they wanted.

Whilst a tangible reading environment must be developed, children also ‘need to see in their teacher a role model of a keen reader’ (Lockwood, 2008), this is especially significant if the child does not have a positive reading role model in school, of which several of our parents are unable to read.

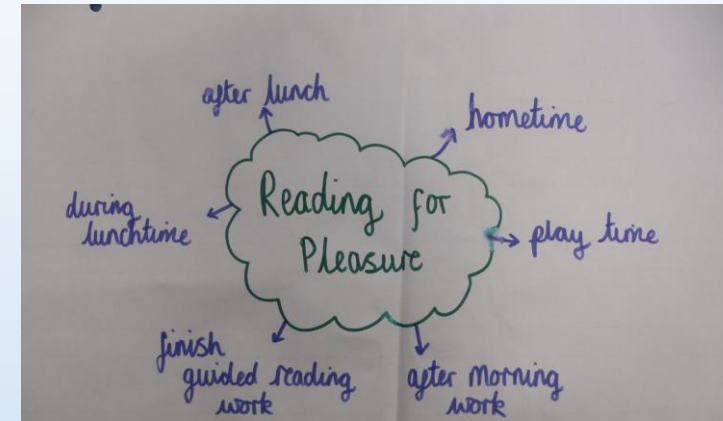
These findings and our own reflections influenced the following aims for the project.

Our aims

- To ensure children have the opportunity to take ownership of their reading environment and reading opportunities within class.
- To develop our reading environments.
- Ensure children have regular opportunities to read for pleasure and to reflect on their reading.

Outline

- Children in our classes were given time to reflect on their current reading experiences in within the school; when they were given opportunities to read and what these times looked like etl. From these discussions we identified class strengths and weaknesses.
- Staff and children reflected on our current reading environments and developed them with the children involved. We identified what their current reading environment was like, the likes and dislikes of this and how they could change it so that they'd use it more.
- We designated time for the children to read for pleasure within class, both independently and shared. During these times they also were able to reflect on what they had read and provide recommendations to friends.



What do the children think of reading at the start of the academic year (Year 5)?

'I don't like reading'

'It is too quiet and formal and this makes me struggle to focus'.

'It is hard to read at home with my brothers and sisters being annoying.'

'I like reading at tables because it is quiet'.



Impact:

Taking ownership of reading

When asked on how we can improve our reading environment, the children asked to re design it themselves.

We created hot air book balloons with all of their favourite books, added some plants, new books, cushions and blankets to the book corner.

We also create a reading dome on the field with willow tree, when it is sunny the children often ask to go outside and read.



Developing our reading environments



Reading for pleasure and to reflect on their reading

We now read daily for around 20-30 minutes, the children often ask to do this. We snuggle up with blankets and pillows with friends or lie on the field. Sometimes the children read a book to their friends, or read a magazine or newspaper.

A few times a week we share what we are reading to the class and provide recommendations. We also have a book review system where children comment on sticky notes inside the book to help others decide whether the book is suitable for them.

In September only 6 /20 children liked reading. Year 4 - 5/24 enjoyed reading
In May now 16/20 children like reading. Year 4 18/24 enjoyed reading.

What do the children think of reading near the end of the academic year (Year 5)?

'I like reading now, I read a lot more at school and at home'

'We have new books and blankets and cushions which makes reading more comfy and relaxed'

'Our teacher shows she likes reading and so we spend more time doing it'.

'We share our books with friends and sometimes lend ours to our teachers to read'

'It can be hard to concentrate on reading if people are reading out loud to a friend'.

Reflection and next steps

We have enjoyed spending time developing our reading environments and the children have liked taking ownership of their reading areas. Daily reading is now part of our everyday routine and for teachers it is a relaxing time with our pupils to share books and read to each other, the children often request for extra reading time! By adding new books to our book corners children are starting to recommend books to each other, bring in their own books and swap books with the teachers.

Rosie led a staff meeting where she emphasised the importance of this daily reading session, with it being a relaxed environment shared by the teachers and children.

Next steps:

From September we are hoping to have our Library back up and running with each class having weekly library sessions. We have been unable to do this this year due to COVID-19. A range of research shows that school libraries have a positive impact on pupils' general academic achievement, reading and writing skills as well as , as well as positive impact on attitudes towards reading (Teravainen and Clark, 2017).

We will be monitoring the daily reading sessions and will conduct a pupil voice in the Autumn term throughout the school.