



1. Context

The Oval School is situated in Yardley, Birmingham. We are a three form entry school with a nursery, and there are currently 627 pupils on roll, with an almost equal split of boys and girls.

32.1% of pupils have English as an additional language (national 21.3%). 14.4% of our pupils have SEND and 52.6% of pupils receive free school meals (the national average is 22.4%).

Pupils join us from a wide variety of backgrounds. We presently have 8 religions and 23 races in school. A truly 'multicultural community' we celebrate all the major world religions and our religious education features intercultural topics such as places of worship and holy books - so all of our community are included and valued.

Our progress score for reading in Key Stage 2 in 2019 was well above average and we have a well-established reading curriculum.

We are part of the drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust which consists of nine primary schools.

2. Explore

At The Oval we have an established reading curriculum. We have everything in place to *teach* our children to read. However, we share the ambition set out in the National Curriculum (2014), for all children to 'develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information'. We know that we have work to do if we want to achieve this.

Intention: define the problem and establish a baseline

We had access to the Reading for Pleasure (RfP) research based pedagogies and website and used pupil and staff surveys to help us to secure an accurate baseline for our RfP improvement work. In autumn term, we conducted the surveys and analysed the data.

The main findings were:

- Staff knowledge about current children's authors was either limited or poor. Most responses from staff about authors/ illustrators consisted of staff naming authors promoted by school or traditional well known/ celebrity authors. On closer analysis, it was clear that the vast majority of authors, poets and illustrators listed were those that staff were likely to have encountered as children themselves, studied themselves at school or read with their own children. Other than this, staff named a small number of standard contemporary classic authors and illustrators such as Julia Donaldson and Roald Dahl.
- Children's knowledge of books was also limited. As a favourite book, some children named either their current book banded book, their Accelerated Reader, or the class reading book. On the whole children could not name a range of authors and books and did not have a strong emotional response to texts.

- On the whole, staff did not know about the reading preferences of the children in their class.
- The responses from staff about reading aloud every day to their classes varied greater.
- Most children were not read to at home.

January INSET Day

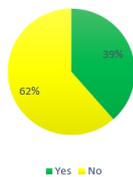
This was a very significant part of our preparation. It energised the staff and gave them a sense of ownership. This included teaching assistants and even office staff. The day created a ‘we can do’ atmosphere across the school at a time when moral was low. For this reason, we have written a separate section about this day below to provide more detail about how and why it worked so well under such difficult circumstances.

During the January INSET, staff all completed ‘Reflection sheets/learning logs’. This captured individual learning points and enabled staff to share their own ideas about how they could promote RfP in their classrooms. These are some of the ideas from staff:

- Document children’s reading choices and make more informal observations of their reading
- Develop the children’s informal book talk
- Increase the amount of RfP opportunities during the day
- Improve social reading areas (COVID dependent)
- Introduce a wider range of texts to their class including those with characters children in their class can identify with
- Introduce texts that tempt and add to our ‘Old and Gold’ texts with our ‘New and Bold’ texts
- Read for pleasure – without an ‘academic’ follow up
- Develop their own knowledge of children’s literature by reading more children’s books and reading them before sharing with the class
- Read aloud more - read every day and make sure it’s a quality experience
- Give children more choice about what texts are read to them

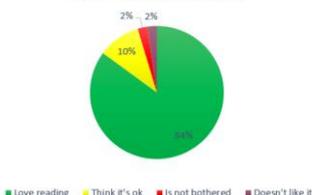
Children’s baseline surveys:

11. Do you ever chat about what you’ve chosen to read? At school



We were aware that children did not get many opportunities to discuss the books they were choosing. Many of the children saying they did get chance to talk about what they chose to read talked to their friends about their books.

12. Does your teacher?

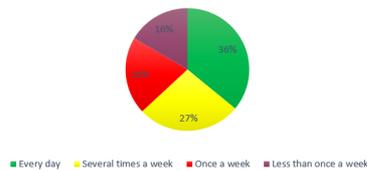


Most children already perceived their teachers to love reading. We noted though that there was still room for improvement here.

‘Pupils should be taught to participate in discussions about books that are read to them

and those they can read for themselves, building on their own and others' ideas and challenging views courteously' (National Curriculum 2014)

13. Does your teacher read aloud to the class?



This question elicited a wide range of responses and there was clearly no consistency throughout school about how often teachers read to their class. This was certainly an area that needed looking into.

Whilst this question was not asked in Key Stage One, previous results from learning walks also showed that the amount of time teachers spent reading aloud to their class was inconsistent. What some staff perceived as storytime was also not consistent as teachers sometimes allowed children to watch stories online instead of reading to them themselves. The quality of these stories was sometimes questionable.

We also established that parents' involvement with their children's reading was very inconsistent across school. With the COVID 10 pandemic, the impact on reading at home had been considerable. This is something that needs addressing but is not specifically part of this project. All staff acknowledged that the impact of the pandemic on parents' participation with their children's reading in school was significant and that many of the responses on the questionnaire would have been very different pre-pandemic.

We had to be realistic and focus on where we felt we could have the greatest impact on the reading lives of children.

'Reading for pleasure is strongly influenced by relationships between teachers and children, and children and families.' (Cremin et al, 2009).

Prepare

'Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator for success in life, more than family circumstances, educational background, or income'
Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development

Intention: Our RfP aims:

- Broaden staff knowledge of current literature and other texts so that staff can use growing expertise to promote a love of reading across the school.
 - Expand staff knowledge of children's reading preferences, behaviours and attitudes so that reading for pleasure is valued and has high priority across school.
 - Increase and improve class read-aloud sessions.
1. **We developed an action plan to address each of these aims.** School showed its support and commitment to the project by including Reading for Pleasure as part of teachers' performance management. Leaders of the project wrote the performance management targets to ensure that they were pertinent to driving

the project forward. Our Multi Academy Trust provided the money for us to buy a range of books. This enabled us to purchase books from new year group authors for Nursery to Year 6; contemporary non-fiction; books about contemporary topics that were representational of our school community and a wide range of award-winning texts.

2. We asked a small group of staff to help us to lead this improvement work. They became part of the project with us and were identified as **'The Change Team'**. They supported us with staff INSET and they led some of the different strategies detailed below.
3. We asked every teacher to identify three or four children who were not motivated to read, had negative views of themselves as readers. **These children may or may not be in the lowest 20% of readers in the class. These became the 'focus children' that teachers would keep a close eye on to note any reading behaviours/any changes in attitudes etc.**

We are also very aware that we need more engagement from parents, but due to the pandemic, decided this would not be our focus. We had a wealth of ideas about what we wanted to do and had to ensure we were specific with what we wanted to achieve.

With the Change Team, we planned for our Reading for Pleasure Inset day for staff.

Reading for Pleasure Staff Inset Day – January 2021

Our school had been closed since the beginning of December due to a Covid outbreak. The inset was planned for the first day back. Staff were understandably anxious about returning and concerned about the pupils returning the following day. It was a time of educational unrest and unions were lobbying for schools to close. We were informed that our school would be closed the following day and that remote learning would be delivered to pupils at about 11am on the day of our staff Inset. We were nervous about how staff would engage with the TEAMS meetings and had spent a considerable amount of time planning the logistics and ensuring that the workshop activities were both Covid-safe and of a good quality. We had already established our Change Team who delivered the day's activities to different year groups.

Despite this unsettledness, the day was a huge success. All staff, teachers and teaching assistants fully engaged in all activities. Teresa and Marilyn hooked them immediately with their enthusiasm and passion for the project and this **was further enhanced by the Change Team. We felt honoured that people shared with us the impact reading had had within their lives. They were then able to relate this to the importance of children developing a love of reading and the impact this could have on their lives.**

"It is not true that we have only one life to live; if we can read, we can live as many more lives and as many kinds of lives as we wish." (S.I. Hayakawa)

Workshop 1- developing teachers' knowledge of children's literature.

We shared the results of the questionnaires; staff were not surprised and understood the need for improvement.

"Teachers' subject knowledge is key to fostering readers. It is needed to make tailored text

recommendations, role model being a motivated reader and develop effective RfP pedagogy. Practitioner passion and knowledge enables the effective sharing of the pleasure to be found in reading.” (Cremin, 2019)

It made a huge difference to have the actual books available for the staff to explore via a book blanket and this certainly helped spark everyone’s enthusiasm. Knowing that school was going to remain closed, and the nation was in lockdown, staff were keen to borrow books to read at home - both for their own pleasure and to share with the children at a later date. It certainly reignited many peoples’ interest in reading. This quickly spread to staff who were not present at the training- the office staff were keen to share their own adult- choice reading preferences and the books they enjoyed sharing with their own children and grandchildren- much amusement was had at Wonky Donkey’s expense!

Workshop 2: Promoting informal book talk

Mary Ann Wolpert and Jon Biddle spoke about the differences between informal talk and the more traditional ‘book talk’. We shared this video clip with staff to challenge their understanding of formal and informal book talk. **For most staff, this was a new way of looking at ‘book talk’. We recognised that, this aspect of the project needed more exploration.** Staff were asked to reflect on their practice in class and consider opportunities they could make to ensure informal book talk happens in their class.

Whilst the pandemic certainly meant we had to adjust our plans, we were determined to launch the project with as much gusto as possible. We identified a range of strategies to achieve each aim.

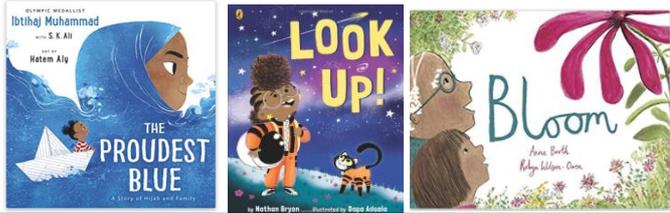
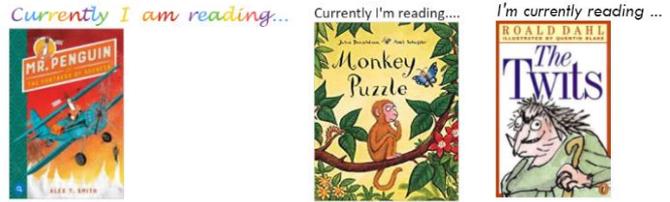
Deliver

We had to quickly adjust how we were going to launch the project with the children as we were in National Lockdown and children were not going to be in school. At this point in time our children had been off school for nearly 4 weeks and many were not engaging well with remote learning. We knew we needed some engaging reading ideas to excite and engage the children.

The following tables detail some of the strategies, taken from our action plan, for each of our Aims. It is not easy to pinpoint the most effective strategy, staff engaged in different ways.

- Aim One: Broaden staff knowledge of current literature and other texts so that staff can use growing expertise to promote a love of reading across the school.

Strategy	Reflection
Sharing a children’s book at the beginning of (mostly online) staff meetings. Books from new year group	Staff commented that they enjoyed this. It gave them the opportunity to hear books by new authors that many then went on to share with their class. It also promoted book talk between staff members. This is a

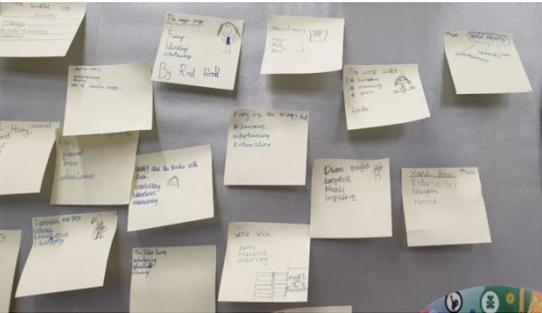
<p>authors were promoted alongside other texts.</p>	<p>strategy that we will be continuing with next year, developing the range of texts shared to include poetry ad a wider range of texts.</p>
<p>Purchase a range of new books and share with staff. Staff to select new texts for their classes and discuss with their year groups partners.</p>	<p>We spent some time selecting a wide range of quality texts looking at award winning authors as well as books representing the diverse school community. These were shared with staff and teachers had access to them to read and share with their class. We purchase sets of some of the books so they could be used with groups if needed.</p> 
<p>Staff email signatures included 'I am currently reading...' and a picture of the book they were reading at that time.</p>	<p>This connected staff as readers. Within school some staff began to swap books. We became more aware of each other's reading habits and both adult and children's books were shared this way. This also piqued the interest of staff as we noticed when each other changed their texts and when we were reading books we had seen others read already.</p> 
<p>Teachers displayed new texts read in their classrooms along with children's responses.</p>	<p>Teachers were able to see the texts their colleagues were using. During planning time teachers discussed texts that the children had enjoyed. This also raised the profile of read texts with the children – encouraging more informal book talk.</p>

Purchasing the wide range of books had a huge impact on the quality of texts we were able to offer to the children. Many of these books were purchased following feedback from teachers during our Inset – where they had identified books they would like to have access to to share with their classes. It was also **these books that often began to appear on teacher's email signatures, and ultimately that were shared with children during read aloud time.**

All of the above strategies **got teachers talking about different books.** During planning sessions teachers discussed which texts they were going to read and some became class texts as a stimulus for writing (even though this was not the initial intention). We know from our second round of questionnaires that teachers' knowledge of current authors

increased considerably (as seen in the 'Review' section).

- Aim Two: Expand staff's knowledge of children's reading preferences, behaviours and attitudes so that reading for pleasure is valued and has high priority across school.

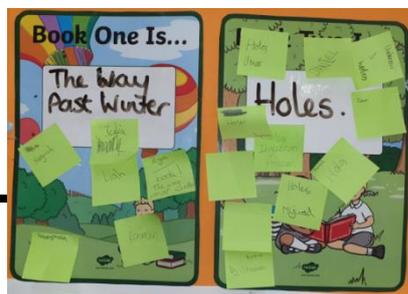
Strategy	Reflection
<p>Three word feedback. We used the the staff meeting shared texts to model how the audience could respond to literature and used the example of three word feedback.</p>	<p>This worked well in a range of situations. During lockdown, children began to respond to the stories being read to them with the requested 3 word feedback. This was via our online learning platform – ClassDojo. In classrooms, displays appeared and the 3 word feedback promoted informal book talk. It helped children to hone in on the 3 most important words to describe texts, or their responses to them. Children began to speak more about what they were reading or listening to, and could say why they liked or disliked certain texts. This worked well across school as it was accessible from EYFS to Year 6.</p> 
<p>Informal book talk during reading sessions and at other times</p>	<p>Teachers chatted about the texts children were reading. They discussed authors and genres. This led to children also requesting books by certain authors. Some teachers shared their own reading preferences with children. A lot of this was more incidental talk. Teachers moved away from 'testing' the children on texts they were rereading and began chatting more informally about the texts.</p>
<p>Book plates on doors around school for all staff (not just teachers) with books currently being read</p>	<p>This led to discussions between staff and children. Teachers began to recommend books to each other. Staff also recommended further children's books once they knew which books certain staff had read (as evident from the book plates on their doors). This also led to a variety of informal text talk between staff as they discussed the books each other read. On one door an AHT had the text that the Year 3</p>

children were reading, Planet Omar by Zanib Mian, in a corridor where they would line up at the end of every day. This promoted frequent informal text talk as the children were excited to see their class text on a teacher's door. This resulted in lots of conversations about the book with a wide range of children. They discussed elements of the book they enjoyed and why, and whether they would like to read more books by the author Zanib Mian. They loved that she too was reading a book by their year group author and asked if she liked it, which part did she like, which part did she find funniest. To exploit this, AHT targeted questions and started discussions with the focus children from Year 3.

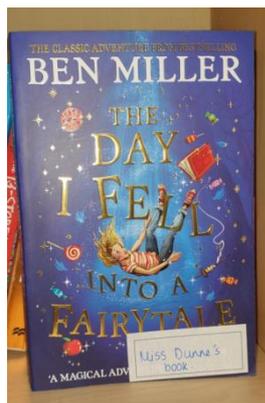


Book Votes

This happened during lockdown in some classes, and in the classroom once children were back at school. During lockdown, teachers shared 2 books and asked the children to vote via message for the book they wanted to hear the teacher read. This also engaged parents. The children commented below the post and the most popular book was read that day. Once children were back in school, teachers organised a variety of ways for them to vote for the texts they wanted to hear. Some used marbles or cubes in a basket, one used a balance (link to maths!) to see which side was the heaviest and therefore the most popular. Other teachers had children write their names on post it notes and stick them on or near the book they wanted to hear. This helped teachers to understand more about the texts the children enjoyed. Children were given the opportunity in Key Stage One to choose books they had heard before.



Informal book talk during lockdown	Teachers discussed what children were reading during lockdown over live feedback lessons using TEAMS. As well as engaging the children, it gave parents first-hand experience of witnessing informal book talk. This also enabled teachers to recommend different texts to children and in some cases, recommending and sourcing specific books for certain children.
Displays to promote informal book talk	Displays around school were planned to promote informal book talk. We had character silhouettes around school for children to identify, which led to discussion about texts and what children had read. They were placed in areas where children might have to line up in order to give them opportunities to discuss them.
Individual recommendations to children	During lockdown (and again once back at school) some of our more vulnerable children (lowest 20%) had additional books sent home. Staff based their selection on the feedback children gave from the books they had been sent. This encouraged children to read more at home. In some cases teachers contacted children to ask how they were getting on with texts sent home in order to adjust the choices they would make for future books.



“Building up to spontaneous ‘inside text talk’ with a class can take several months of scaffolding and modelling. In its early stages, it will need to be led by the teacher.” Jon Biddle

We used the story that had been shared in the staff meeting to model how the audience could respond to literature using 3 word feedback. **This has been one of the most successful strategies and evidence of this can be seen throughout school in many classrooms. It was also a very successful strategy during remote learning, encouraging children to engage with the stories their teachers read to them without an onerous task to complete.** Across school, children responded to stories read aloud by their teachers via our online learning platform ClassDojo. Here are quotes from Year 5 children about “My friend Walter.”

Shocking, worrying and surprised
I wonder if the boy will still tell his parents about
Walter stealing the jewels and Walter being a real
ghost.

Heart-warming, mysterious and exiting. I wonder if Will
might tell someone. Yesterday, I predicted that Walter
stole it because there was no trace and I was right. I
predict that Walter, the kind-hearted ghost, will save
the farm by selling it.

In school, displays reflect that this has become common practice in many classrooms.
During staff meetings, teachers were asked to respond this way to stories read to them.



Children voting for books has also been
very powerful. This happened in a variety
of ways during lockdown. Teachers would
ask children to vote for their choice of
book during their lunchtime at home, then
read the chosen book online to complete
the day's learning. This continued once

children were back at school and the process naturally led to the children discussing their
choices with their teachers - thus promoting informal book talk. The children are very
enthusiastic about this and it has also promoted book talk amongst them as they share
their choices with each other.

During group TEAMS meetings with children, teachers talked to children about what they
had enjoyed reading. Again, this had the added benefit of parents witnessing this "book
talk" and encouraging them to participate.

World Book Day

We celebrated World Book Day in the week before we returned to school. **The Change Team chose the activities and competitions very carefully to promote reading for pleasure.** The extreme reader competition photographs provoked informal book talk and enabled children to see their teachers as readers. Children and staff were invited to share a photograph of themselves in a (safe) extreme reading position. Many of the children



engaged in this and also shared with their teacher's information about the books they were reading in the pictures. We also had a masked reader competition where teachers recorded themselves reading a story with a mask on. These were uploaded to our learning platform and comments were invited. We had lots of responses from the children including many guessing the book that the teacher was reading.

World Book Day was also the launch of ERIC time in school (Everyone Reads in Class). Children were also invited to create a book character from items they had a home – with the suggestion

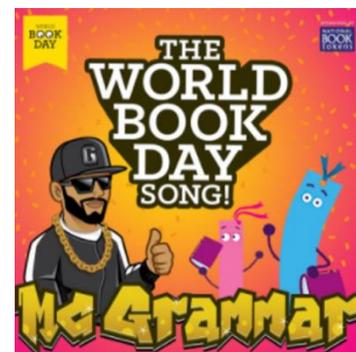
of using a potato, roll. Ideas for to each year group's author were shared, reminder to read 'Old and Gold' Wickes' PE session included a World



spoon or toilet activities linked 'New and Bold' as well as a books by their authors. directed to Joe online which Book Day quiz,

and our very own PE teachers did a live World Book Day Wake Up Shake Up dressed as a pirate and a parrot!

The World Book Day Rap song by MC Grammar was also shared with the children. It was a competition to name book titles and the answers were shared on the school website. One of our focus children commented after the answers had been published:



Nabeela Yasmeen (Eshal S's parent)
Miss, you forgot Billy's Bucket.

- Aim Three: Increase and improve class read-aloud sessions.

"When children are read aloud to, they are enveloped in a risk-free learning environment that 'removes the pressure of achievement and the fear of failure, allowing the freedom to wonder, question, and enjoy reading material beyond their reading abilities.' " (Cremin

et al., 2014)

Egmont research (2019) found that only 32% of children are read to daily at home.

Strategy	Reflection
Reading stories daily during lockdown on our online platform ClassDojo	Lots of children watched these and there was a consistently high uptake across school. This was evidenced by the number of views the stories had on our online learning platform – ClassDojo. Children were also encouraged to comment on the stories they heard and in some classes they were asked to vote for the story they wanted next. Different teachers read stories and these were posted across the year group. Some year groups also ran live read aloud sessions and invited children from their class to join. This meant they could interact during and after the session and informal book talk happened as a result of this. This also meant that parents could join in and learn themselves how to chat about books informally with their children without the need to test or assess them.
Share the range of quality texts in school with daily reading sessions	Teachers selected quality texts to read aloud to the children in their classes, both during lockdown and when back in school. The new books we had purchased went home with staff. With many children being part of the voting system for stories, they had ownership about what they were listening to. As read aloud had been modelled during staff meetings, and prior to the project by other teachers, staff had a good understanding about what was expected for a good read aloud session. Previous comments from children had informed us that they like to listen to texts uninterrupted, so this is what teachers set out to do.
Modelling reading aloud during staff meetings	Read aloud had been modelled during staff meetings to ensure staff were clear on how to engage children during these sessions.

This was definitely one of the unexpected advantages of remote learning. Teachers and teaching assistants became skilful at recording themselves reading books aloud. The children absolutely loved their teachers reading to them in their homes and it had the unexpected benefit of modelling to parents how to read aloud and enjoy book talk with their children. Parents also commented, and in feedback sessions said how they had enjoyed watching the online read aloud sessions with their child. More parents realised the importance and pleasure of reading with their child. We had a high level of engagement across school. We could see how many parents/ children viewed the online stories and we encouraged comments. Some teachers asked a question, some asked for a three word response. The children enjoyed this and teachers modelled their responses

too in some cases.

Review

- Aim One: Broaden staff knowledge of current literature and other texts so that staff can use growing expertise to promote a love of reading across the school.

We saw a huge impact from this over the year. Even during lockdown staff were keen to read to their children and read many of our new texts. We created a bank of live stories for teachers to use with their classes, read by teachers across school. The results of the teachers' questionnaires were impressive. Back in January the range of authors teachers could name was extremely limited in most cases. There were a couple of exceptions as we have some teachers who were already very passionate about reading and had a good knowledge of children's literature.

Whilst the initial staff survey mostly had teachers naming very similar, traditional and celebrity authors, such as Roald Dahl, Julia Donaldson and David Walliams, the June 2021 survey was a very different picture! **Staff named current, award winning authors, as well as, and including a range of authors that reflected the cultural diversity of our school.**

Authors listed included:

Karl Newson, Onjali Rauf, Louis Sachar, Alex T Smith, Zanib Mian, Nathan Byron, Anne Booth, Katherine Rundell, Kes Gray, Andy Shepherd, Cece Bell, Tom Percival, Mini Grey, Valerie Thomas, Kiran Millwood Hargrave, Amy Wilson, Elizabeth Laird, Matt Haigh and

Louis Sachar
Anne Booth
Anne Booth
Kiran Millwood Hargrave
Alex T
Amy Wilson
Onjali Rauf
Tom Percival
Karl Newson
Cece Bell
John Bond
Benjamin Flouw
Matt Haigh
Mini Grey
Kes Gray
Sophie Anderson
Elizabeth Laird
Katherine Rundell
Smith
Andy Shepherd
Zanna Davidson
Pamela Butchart

Sophie Anderson. Books written by these authors were also celebrated around school, in classrooms and on classroom door book plates. Evidence of the wider range of books the children were experiencing could also be seen in the choices they were making when asked about favourite books and books they had read. Whilst JK Rowling still played a big role as one the favourite authors for children in Key Stage two,

the range of authors they named as their favourites had widened considerably and included Zanib Mian, Onjali J Rauf, Amelia Cobb, Sophie Anderson, Katherine Rundell, Cressida Cowell, Phillip Pullman and Tom Fletcher. This was a considerable change from the much more limited responses previously. Many of these authors also featured in the children's favourite stories which included Planet Omar by Zanib Mian, The Creakers by Tom Fletcher, The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf, Turtle Boy by M. Evan Wolkenstein, The Night Bus Hero by Onjali Rauf and The Girls who Speaks Bear by Sophie Anderson.

In Key Stage One the books children said they had enjoyed listening to, and that were their favourites no longer included their guided reading books. Children's responses were far more diverse and included The Golden Glow by Benjamin Flouw, Tidy by Emily Gravett, The Penguin who Wanted to Find Out by Jill Tomlinson, Billy and the Mini Monsters by Zanna Davidson, Bloom by Anne Booth, Ruby's Worry / Meesha makes friends/ Ravi's Roar all by Tom Percival, Mini Rabbit Not Lost by John Bond, The Last Wolf by Mini Grey, The boy who grew dragons by Andy Shepherd, I'm Going To Eat This Ant by

Chris Naylor-Ballesteros, Wigglesbottom Primary stories by Pamela Butchart amongst many others. Not only had the range of books children named as their favourites increased, but children could all name two favourite books as well as others they had enjoyed listening to. Displays in classrooms also reflected this change in book choices with 'New and Bold' texts and authors displayed.

There was a direct correlation between staff who continued to name older more traditional texts and the books cited by children in their class - proving a very clear link.

- Aim Two: Expand staff's knowledge of children's reading preferences, behaviours and attitudes so that reading for pleasure is valued and has high priority across school.

With the introduction of regular ERIC sessions promoting informal book talk, teachers have had more opportunities to get to know their children as readers. Reading for Pleasure has been a high priority and children have had access to more quality texts introduced to them by their teachers. In our Autumn surveys, 39% of children reported that they talked about their reading at school as opposed to 59% now. Delving a little deeper, many children who had previously reported that they discussed their reading at school were actually speaking with their friends about their books. Most of the children who say they now speak about what they read at school mean they do so with a teacher. Due to the informal nature of the book talk, they may not even realise that is what they are doing!

The '3 word feedback' children have been writing has meant staff are more proficient in recommending books to specific children and their class. Teachers offer choices to children and as a result the books the children are reading are of a broader and better quality. The children have also been requesting more books by certain authors. We have responded by sourcing them whenever possible and there is a definite excitement when new books are brought into classrooms!

Quotes captured by one of our Change Team:

"I'm liking reading more because our new books are entertaining and funny." BI Year 6

"When the teacher says time to read I whisper YESSSS to myself!" SK Year 6

Teachers are also recommending more texts to the children and refining their choices for the books read aloud in class. In many Key Stage Two classrooms the books the teachers read aloud are chosen by the children.

The texts the children are choosing as their favourites are also testament to the fact that teachers are choosing texts well for their children.

- Aim Three: Increase and improve class read-aloud sessions.

Comments from the children and the data from the questionnaires evidence how this has improved across school. Children's opinions about their teachers as readers has also changed with 90% of children perceiving their teachers to love reading as opposed to 84% before the survey. 71% of children reported that their teachers read to them every day or several times a week. Of these 47% reported their teachers read every day.

Interestingly, the statistics behind their views on whether they liked listening to their teachers read had not changed significantly, with 87% of children saying 'I love it' or 'It's okay'. However, on deeper analysis, the second questionnaire revealed that many of the children were not enthusiastic about listening to their teachers read because they wanted to read themselves. Prior to the project there were far more comments about children not enjoying the texts, finding them boring or just not wanting to listen. Following the project, the children that did not enjoy listening to their teachers were more likely to be more able readers who would prefer to read at their own pace, in their own time and when it is quiet.

There were lots of very positive comments about teachers reading aloud such as:

"It's relaxing and calming."

"I like it when he talks about words we don't know."

"I like listening to someone else read and they do actions for us which is funny."

"I like it because it makes me feel like I am there. Like I am in the book."

"It helps me to understand the book if I can just listen and relax."

"The teacher is a better reader than me so I like to listen to stories she reads."

"She makes it more interesting and does different voices for the different characters. It's funny sometimes."

The less positive comments included:

"I don't like it when she stops at the most exciting part and we have to wait to find out what happened."

"I prefer to read alone at home so I can read as much as I want to and stop when I want to."

"I don't like some of the books my teacher chooses."

Many of the books children listed as their favourite books were as a result of read aloud sessions - with children sometimes naming books that were beyond their own reading ability. Teachers reported that children often requested the same stories – particularly in Key Stage One.

In Key Stage one the initial data questionnaire did not ask the children about their teachers reading to them, but as this was an important element of the project we included this question on their final questionnaire.

78% of the 134 children asked in Key Stage One said their teachers read to them every day. 13% said they read to them a couple of times a week and 9% said their teachers don't read to them. Interestingly however, all children in Key Stage one could name at least one book that their teacher had read aloud to them!

The Impact of Reading for Pleasure on our Focus Children (including those among the lowest 20%)

The impact on our focus children has varied across classes. Below is a selection taken from teachers' notes and observations this year. This puts us in a better position to move forward next year and keep our focus children on the radar. Our second questionnaires have identified more children to focus on next year.

Year 1 Focus Child - TP

TP was a very reluctant reader at the beginning of the project. **He often put his hood up when the teacher read stories and he didn't respond to book talk in the classroom. He did not read his home reading book and needed a lot of encouragement to engage in reading at school.** TP said "Reading is boring." He didn't want to choose books to read. Initially, during remote learning he did not engage well. During online guided reading sessions TP began to talk more about books. He was asked to watch his teachers reading stories online (whilst with his nan) and started to respond to this with comments on the



books read. TP's mum messaged school to say that he was enjoying the online stories read by his teacher. **When he returned to school his teacher maintained his interest by encouraging him to vote for the class stories each week. This was done using a balance and cubes – the heaviest side with the most cubes won each week.** Children had to put a cube in the bucket on the balance next to the

text they wanted to read. TP's enthusiasm grew and he started to talk more about the books being read in the class. TP began to enjoy choosing books and **was heard by the class teacher engaging in informal book talk and asking other children which book they were voting for.** When talking about a story TP commented "I knew Dreadcat was going to win in the end. It's just like Tom and Jerry." He developed favourite stories and also engaged more during reading lessons. His enthusiasm for reading has grown and he has also enjoyed additional 1-1 support with his decoding- asking the teacher who worked with him frequently if he could read with her again and take home some more words on cards. The change in his attitude to reading has been remarkable. He has also begun to bring his home reading book into school. He now considers himself a good reader and says he loves reading which is a huge turnaround for him.

Year 1 Focus Child – KB

KB was very reluctant to engage in storytime sessions. He found it difficult to sit still and often distracted the other children on the carpet. He was encouraged by his teacher to vote for the story that would be read on a Friday each week. He was not very bothered by this to start with but his interest was piqued and he became invested in the weekly vote. KB started to make sure other children had voted and he was excited about the Friday reveal. As a result he started listening more to the chosen story for the week.

Year 6 Focus Children

In Year 6, three lower ability children were not completing reading activities during lockdown. Their teacher spoke with them during live feedback sessions to find out more

about their reading preferences so that she could find books that they would be interested in. She ensured they received the books and spoke with them about the texts whilst they were at home. When they had finished the books she ensured they had more, drawing on the informal book talk chats they had had to help select new texts. As a result of this all three children became more engaged with their reading and happily read more books than they had ever done before.

Year 2 Focus Child FL

The image shows two versions of a 'Reading for Pleasure KS1 Children's reading survey' form. The left form is the initial survey, and the right form is the survey completed later. Both forms have a 'Name' field with a redacted name. The left form shows the following responses: '1) Do you like reading?' with 'I don't like reading' selected (sad face icon), and '2) Are you a good reader?' with 'I'm not good at reading yet' selected (sad face icon). The right form shows the following responses: '1) Do you like reading?' with 'I love reading' selected (happy face icon), '2) Are you a good reader?' with 'I'm good at reading' selected (thumbs up icon), and '3) Do you read at home?' with 'Yes' selected.

Sometimes we don't know what exactly made a difference – but we are glad it did! FL in Year 2 completed his questionnaire at the beginning of the project and frequently described himself as not being able to read. **He is amongst the lowest 20% of readers in his class. Once in class he was given a poem that was well within his**

capability but he would not even attempt to read it as "I can't read Miss." The change in his confidence is now reflected in how keen he now is to read and is also recorded in his survey. At the start of the project he did not like reading and perceived himself to not be good at reading. Now he sees himself as a good reader and he loves reading! FL has engaged well with new texts and now speaks more confidently about books he reads. He has also had some 1-1 support with his reading this year.

EYFS Focus Children M and AS

In EYFS teachers ensured that books that children had read before were clearly displayed and accessible during choosing time. This has supported the children and enabled them to recognise familiar books and select them to read again. **M has developed his confidence and now likes to retell his favourite story 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear' and confidently reads it to the class. AS, who was not previously interested in books, now spends more time visiting the reading area.** He is beginning to develop more of an interest in books.

Year 5 Focus Children

JG is now choosing books and reading them for longer. He still prefers non-fiction books and newspapers and will choose these as free reads but he is now finishing his home reading books and talking about the text. **N has fallen in love with the Planet Omar books and will confidently talk about them and read them all quite quickly.** She enjoys relating elements of the lives of the characters in the stories to her own life.

Other evidence:

One reception child (AS) would rarely visit the reading area and now is excited by the vote and visits the reading area to choose a familiar book to read.

Reception teacher: "Discussions surrounding reading have become richer with more enthusiastic children."

Year 2 child: "I used to just look at the pictures at the beginning (of Year 2) but now I want to read the words so I can find out what happens. And I can!"

Year 1 child who was not interested in reading now keeps a familiar book on his table so he can read it later and attempts to read it independently. Previously he would frequently become frustrated and throw books.

Year 5 focus child thought she could only read orange book banded books until a discussion with her teacher. Her teacher then sourced her some interesting books that she could read which has resulted in an increase in enthusiasm and confidence. "I don't like normal books Miss – I like scary ones."

Sustain

The Reading for Pleasure Project has truly been an honour to be involved in! Developing an understanding of the importance of children reading for pleasure **has altered the mind-set of many members of staff at school and challenged perceptions of reading.** Watching children developing a greater love of reading, and seeing them enjoy the new quality texts at school has been phenomenal. So many members of staff have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the project. I know I have been on a huge learning journey.

As a result of this project we will be making adjustments to our whole school reading policy to clarify the expectations and importance of reading for pleasure. We will ensure there is always time in the curriculum for this and that best practice is shared across school. Through regular pupil voice we will ensure all agreed strategies are in place.

Managing school improvement has certainly had its challenges. I have definitely learnt that it is very important to keep everyone on board and together. Identifying the Change Team has been instrumental in this. Next year, more regular feedback to staff and sharing things that have worked well will be needed.

We had a lot of ideas when this project started and possibly took on and tried too many of them meaning it was not as simple as it should have been to pinpoint which had the greatest impact. Keeping our expectations more focussed and succinct should help with this.

The next steps for sustaining and developing Reading for Pleasure across school will include:

- Sharing good practice across school - starting with using feedback from the children's questionnaires
- Keeping RfP alive in the minds of everyone – including developing displays around school
- **Identifying children who have negative opinions of reading and/ or themselves as a reader and making sure that we provide appropriate support for RfP**
- More parental involvement (more difficult this year due to the pandemic!) with regular feedback to parents explaining why RfP is so important – including producing a half termly reading newsletter and including data and quotes!
- Including more pupil voice when making reading decisions – including investing in pupil reading leaders/ monitors in school

- Track children as they move from Key Stage One to Key Stage Two where opinions of themselves as readers beginning to decline – investigate why this is with regular pupil voice
- Develop post pandemic reading areas
- Have an author of the month and develop displays promoting new authors around school – not just in classrooms

This is not the end of our journey – it is very much the beginning!