

## Developing the Role of Reading Ambassadors

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## Context



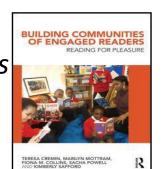
- Heath Primary School is a large school, which serves an ex-mining community across the villages of Holmewood and Heath, Derbyshire.
- The number of children who are eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. Many children enter school with lower-than-average levels of development.
- A barrier to education in our community can be due to low aspirations and a lack of awareness of career opportunities as well as limited life experiences. Therefore, we aim to give children a thirst for lifelong learning by promoting the relevance of our curriculum to future life as well as providing as many opportunities as possible for children to experience and discover more about the wider world and be inspired.

## OU Research inspiration and rationale



This project was inspired by the *Teachers as Readers* research (Cremin et al., 2014). At Heath, we encourage reading at any time possible and do our best to help children foster a love of reading. We focus on all strands, but, when developing the role of Reading Ambassadors, I looked in particular at the following:

- 1. Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts
- 2. A reading for pleasure pedagogy which includes:
  - Social reading environments
  - Reading aloud
  - Independent reading
  - Informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendations
- 3. Reading communities that are reciprocal and interactive.



## Aims



- To embed a reading for pleasure culture at Heath.
- To develop children's ability and enthusiasm for talking about books.
- To make a wide range of up to date, high quality texts readily available to the children and staff.
- To improve staff and children's attitude to reading.
- To improve the staff's knowledge of children's literature.
- To develop social reading environments.





First, I advertised the Reading Ambassadors in the Reading Newsletter. I wanted to be able to select children passionate about reading who were willing to help me further develop and embed the reading for pleasure culture at Heath.

### **Heath Needs Reading Ambassadors!**

Are you a book worm? Do you like reading a variety of texts and love talking about these? 10 Reading ambassador badges are awaiting Heath pupils who love reading. To apply, please create a poster to encourage your peers to read your favourite book and bring it to your class teacher by Monday 24th May.

Looking forward to seeing your entries!



My plan was to empower our Reading Ambassadors so they could play an active role by:

- promoting the love for reading;
- supporting their peers with book recommendations;
- offering suggestions on how to further develop the reading for pleasure in our school;
- introducing and developing book blether at Heath.

## Outline

## Reading Ambassadors



• To ensure a good representation across school, I selected 10 Reading Ambassadors from across all phases.



### ## HPS Business Manager @BusinessHPS - Jul 2

Absolutely loving our new reading shed on the playground, thanks to friends of school for buying this through their fundraising events @ @MrJonathanLynch @embarkfed @M13E14 #readingforpleasure #books



 Reading Ambassadors are actively looking at ways to promote reading at Heath. One of their suggestions was to bring a book into the assembly and read together. The assembly, according to staff and pupils was a huge success.





Reading Ambassadors are taking on the important job of choosing the winner of the Royal Society Young People's Book Prize 2021. During Book Club sessions, our ambassadors will be reading and reviewing 6 science books taking into consideration the ease of reading, interest, look and feel and inspiration. The most important job will be to select a winner based on individual reviews and group discussions.

## Outline:

## **Reading Ambassadors**

 Our Reading Ambassadors are always on the playground during breaks and lunchtimes, ensuring the books are regularly checked and equally promoted in our Reading Shed. They often read to younger pupils and reward stickers to those who are helping them promoting reading at Heath.







 All classrooms at Heath have their own Reading Spine with quality books. Reading Ambassadors have contributed to these collections by either selecting the books they wanted to include or suggesting genres they would like listening to during reading times.

At Heath we held a **Book Swap**, so all children could have a new book to enjoy over the Summer Holidays. As our school was still organised into bubbles which could not mix, Reading Ambassadors helped running this event.





### Heath Primary School

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#### Reading Newsletter

Welcome to our Heath Reading Newsletter. This half-term's reading newsletter contains links to useful materials, news, offers book recommendations and updates about what is happening in school. As always, your support, advice and suggestions are welcomed and hugely appreciated. Mrs Brough and Miss Spall (Finglish Team)

#### Book Swap:

We would like to hold a book swap in each phase. This will take place in the last week of term and is a brilliant opportunity for children to swap their pre-loved books for new ones to enjoy over the Summer Holidays.

In line with Covid-19 guidelines, we will quarantine the books before they are given out. If your child would like to take part, bring any books into school and give to your class teacher , who will exchange these for vouchers to swap for new ones. All books need to be handed in to your child's class teacher by Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 as the swap will take place on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July.



We would like to introduce our Heath Reading Ambassadors: Rafe, Evie, Myla, Aleigha-Mae, Seth, Dylan, Maisie and Olivia, Big well done to our Reading competition winners: Olivia D, Hollie D, Rafe and Alaia.



#### News:

We are pleased to share that our Reading Shed is open and is proving very popular with lots of children at breaks and lunchtimes. Thank you to our fantastic Friends of Schools and to all our parents who are consistently supporting their initiatives, which made this possible. A special thank you to Mrs.

West for giving up her time and supporting our project.

We thoroughly enjoyed running a Booknic for our transition day! It was so lovely sharing our love of reading (and biscuits!) with our new classes.

Staff at Heath have entered a Teachers Reading Challenge and we really hope our pupils will enter the Summer Reading Challenge too, which is held again, at our local library. Please visit the link for more details: https://www.merreadingchallenge.org.uk/





 Our Reading Ambassadors were very excited about their new role and asked to have a peek at the new newsletter. They offered suggestions on how to further improve this so it appealed to more pupils in our school.

They suggested books we should purchase to raise the profile for reading.











They helped delivering our first Reading Assembly.

Reading Club LKS2- Over 50 pupils applied for a place in our Reading Club. It was great seeing Reading Ambassadors helping with the selection by recommending to their peers.



### Our UKS2 Book Club recommend:

### The Boy Who Made Everyone Laugh By Helen Rutter

A fantastic book about not giving up. Billy (the main character) is trying to achieve his dream but first he needs to get rid of his stammer. This is a great story that teaches children with disabilities and without, to be confident and follow their

dreams no matter how hard it could be. It is an amazing book and we would recommend buying it for a gift for anyone.







Some of our Reading Ambassadors took part in UKS2 Reading club and **recommended** their book in our Reading Newsletter.

## **Impact**

The impact of the Reading Ambassadors is already evident in our school:





- Increased 'book blether.'
- Since all staff received a Heath Reading Spine crate, children are accessing great quality books as these readily available.
- Staff's attitude to reading has improved and over the summer, four members of staff have entered the Teachers Reading Challenge.
- Staff often swap books and there is a visible buzz about new releases and award-winning books. We Reading at Heath

Here are the books staff at Heath are currently reading:

Miss Spall	Mrs Wild	Mr Antcliffe	Mrs Ford  NOW S  CATCH  STAR	Miss Raymond-Baines  FAMOUS FIVE	Miss Davenport  The Suitcase
Mrs Amans  HEAL WE A R E	Mrs Bates CHECK MATES	Mrs Brough ORPHANS	Mrs Ottewell michael morpurgo The Last Wolf	Mrs West  Harry and the Bucketful Dinosaurs	Miss Ward MOON
Mrs Gomery  ALBERT'S TREE	Miss Parmley The Tiger Who Came to Teo	Mr Bushell	Miss Flavell	Mrs Horton  State Statement  Act of PROUDEST  BLUE	Mrs Wileman



## **Impact**

- Reading ambassadors are nurturing relationships with our younger readers.
- Younger children have access at books as our Reading Ambassadors are always available
  at breaks and lunchtimes and they are often seen reading and recommending books.
- The profile and importance of reading has been raised and continues to be maintained.

The Reading Ambassadors feel empowered and as their confidence has increased, they
are sharing their knowledge and passion for reading.





bring the copies for school

tomorrow 😊





## **Impact**



- The children love books and think positively about reading. They are keen to read and always **look forward to reading time**.
- Children are reading a variety of genres. A pupil in my class read Harry Potter 16 times
  and refused to read anything else! As he was keen to become a Reading Ambassador, I
  told him in his role he will have to review and recommend books to his peers. I didn't have
  to say anything else. Now he reads EVERYTHING! He recommends me books he enjoyed
  reading and vice versa and now we often borrow books off each other.
- In pupils' interviews, one child who said they didn't enjoy reading at the beginning of the year, now loves reading and bought me a book for my birthday, because she knew there is nothing I love more than books!





### Mrs Brough @M13E14 · Jul 8

When children ask to stay in at lunchtime to finish a collection of poems you teased them with for few minutes before the lesson! 
#TeachersAsReaders #RFP @OpenUni\_RfP @HPSDerbyshire





DI like reading poems because they rayme, and give

The eavourite book that Mrs Brough how reads to me in "Little Leaders in Black History".

4 My gavourite book I read this year the is "the

Wolg's postprint"

50 Course Because it gives you good knowledge a

I O READING!

# Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

Developing the role of Reading Ambassadors in our school has had a great impact We're looking forward to seeing their role further develop as they are taking more ownership of their positions. There were only a handful of pupils willing to help me set the foundations of this group. Now, lots of children stop me on the playground, tell me what they read or how inspired they were by one of the assemblies or initiatives I ran and how much they would like to join the team.

The informal book-talk, which was reciprocal was at the heart of this initiative. Children were encouraged to talk to one another about their current reading, interests, book recommendations, ideas to promote the love for reading amongst their peers and, in no time at all, child-led talk was established. To be done effectively, book blether needs to be modeled first!

**Pupils need to see you passionately share what you've been reading**, to see how receiving a book delivery puts the biggest smile on your face and it makes you feel it's Christmas morning.

Finally, and most importantly, I also think that **my own knowledge of children's literature** which I gained from the #TRGYorks run by the fabulous @kashleyenglish and @giddyteacher, own research, OUP website with great examples of practice, Teresa Cremin's research and webinars have played the greatest role and ultimately led to the success of this.