



Thornhill Primary School

Thornhill Primary School is a mixed community school that serves an area of poor socio-economic background in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. We are a one and a half form entry and have the capacity for 360 pupils. Thornhill serves an area of Rotherham where adults generally have low levels of educational achievement which hinders them in supporting their own children. The ethnic origins of families within the school have changed significantly in recent years. We are proud to have children with 36 different languages within school. We have high pupil mobility and many of these families are new arrivals with no or very little English. A high proportion of our Y6 children do not start their educational journey in our Foundation unit.

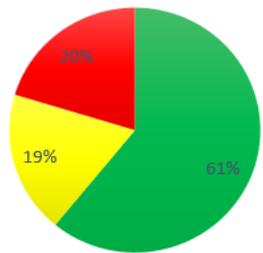


Thornhill Primary School Intention

Initial Data Analysis KS1:

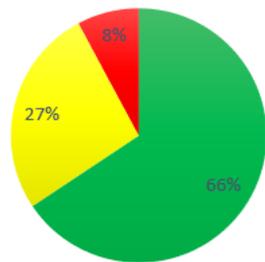
- More children loved reading than did not (61%).
- More children thought they were a good reader than did not (66%).
- 92% of children said they read at home.

1. Do you like reading?



■ I love reading ■ It's okay ■ I don't like reading

2. Are you a good reader?



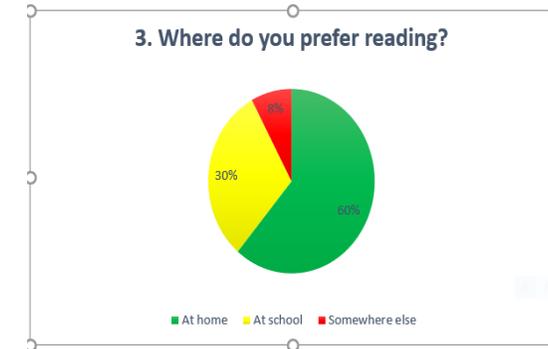
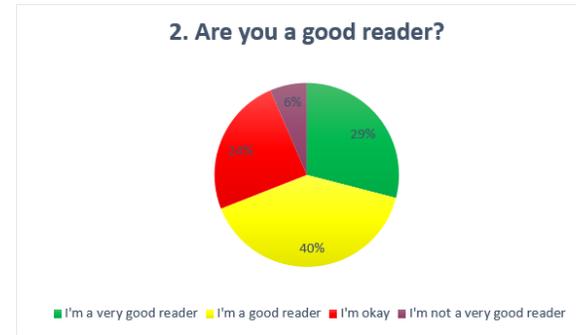
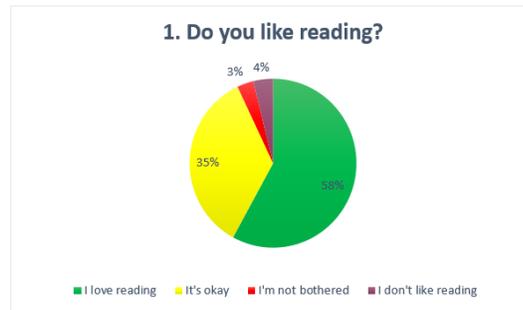
■ I'm good at reading ■ I'm okay at reading ■ I'm not good at reading yet

- Although more children loved reading and thought they were a good reader than did not (61% / 66% respectively). Roughly one third did not love reading.
- 92% of children said they read at home. Evidence from the reading record books did not match this. Discussions with children – children telling us what they think we want to hear. Parents not signing books.
- Many children said they read to lots of different people. Out of 64 children surveyed 50 children said they read to parents, 26 to brothers / sisters, 28 to themselves and 10 to other adults. However, discussion with children found most read to themselves – again children telling us what they think we want to hear.
- Only **1** child liked to read at school.
- Pupil questionnaires showed that the majority of children were unable to name titles or authors. The few that did were reliant on the class novel or books from Disney films.

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Initial Data Analysis KS2:



- As in KS1, more children loved reading and thought they were a very good / good reader than did not in KS2. (However, it still left over a third of children who didn't like reading).
- Analysing children's comments gave more insight, '*reading is alright but it's sometimes hard*' or '*books are boring.*' A child who thought they were not a good reader said, '*I sometimes pretend.*' Even children who thought of themselves as good readers said they '*got words wrong*' and knew they were good because '*Miss*' told them.
- Children's comments were mainly about word difficulties, comprehension and colour book bands. None of the children were excited about the books they were reading. The initial data showed we needed to target and inspire these children.
- 60% of KS2 children who preferred to read at home stated a variety of reasons including it's quieter at home, they liked their personal space, there were no distractions, they could read for as long as they wanted and it's more comfortable.

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Intention



Findings from the teacher's surveys:

Strengths:

- All staff value reading as a priority in school.
- All children are read aloud to either daily or at least 3 times a week.
- All children have the opportunity to choose their own books from either school library or class bookshelf.
- All KS2 children have daily independent reading time and KS1 children 2/3 times a week.

• Areas to improve :

- Staff knowledge of modern children's literature.
- Staff to have knowledge of children's reading preferences.
- To develop informal book talk, inside text talk and recommendations.
- Children to have a more active role in what is read to them.
- Create a reading culture in every classroom.

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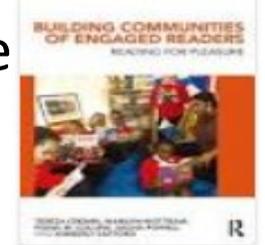
- **Change Team Discussions:**

- Book choice - mainly decided by class teachers (KS1 classes had begun to give a choice. Children voted for the class novel – but still limited to the traditional authors).
- Questioned whether book choice was holding children back from enjoying books / reading. Need to involve children in decision making. Class novel and own reading.
- Provide opportunities for varied reading experiences (to include silent reading, partner reading and talk, reading aloud)
- Teachers were not confident in knowing what individual children liked reading.
- Develop informal book talk, recommendations and book swaps. (In lockdown staff had begun book swap library).
- Promote informal book talk between staff and children. In engaging with the children in book chat, we could model how to share our experiences of books, thoughts about what we were reading and promote a love of reading for pleasure.
- KS1 staff felt that their traditional book areas were uninviting, unused and had too many books squeezed onto shelves that were unattractive to children and difficult to select a text.
- Staff to model / inspire by sharing what they are reading to class (some staff had commented that during the first lockdown they had begun to re-ignite their own love for reading, they had more time, and it helped them to escape from the isolation caused by the pandemic).

Thornhill Primary School Prepare



Throughout the project, we worked closely with the Reading for Pleasure research, using both the 'Building Communities of Engaged Readers' and the Research Rich Pedagogy website.



Aim 1. To develop teachers' knowledge of modern texts in children's literature.

The findings from our teacher surveys followed the national pattern that teacher knowledge of children's literature was limited.

Teachers were heavily reliant on texts:

- They had read as a child / or had read to their own children.
- Teachers from all Key Stages used the same authors. Meaning our children had limited knowledge too.

***'Teacher's knowledge of children's literature is dominated by Dahl and 'celebrity' authors and is insufficient to support reader development.'*(Cremin et al., 2009; Clark and Teravainen, 2015)**

Thornhill Primary School

Prepare



Aim 2. To develop informal book talk, inside - text talk and recommendations.

The survey showed that all children were read aloud to at least 3 times a week, if not daily and had some form of independent reading time. However, the teachers acknowledged that regular, quality time wasn't given for informal book talk and recommendations. Many teachers commented that they were not confident and knowledgeable about the texts they were reading. This time was also used to listen to individual readers. ***'The TaRs research project revealed that a robust reading for pleasure pedagogy encompassed four specific practices: reading aloud, informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendations, and independent reading time within a highly social reading environment. It was not simply a case of employing these pedagogic practices. Their success was dependent upon teachers' knowledge of children's literature, their young readers and the nature of reading. When responsively combined these practices positively influenced children's attitudes and attainment'.*** (Cremin et al; 2014)

This shows areas that we need to focus on.



What do we want our children to achieve?

- Have the skills to decode and to experience the joy of reading - reading to be something they choose, not something they have been told they have to do. Finding the balance so that:

‘The will influences the skill and vice versa’(e.g.OECD, 2010)

- Children to chat / discuss what they are reading naturally to their peers and teachers (any adult in school).
- We want our children to be successful in their life choices and we know that reading is key to this.

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Prepare: Strategies to promote change.



Aim 1: To develop teachers' knowledge of modern texts in children's literature.

Begin staff meetings with a new book / author.

Encourage all staff to sign up to the OU RfP website – signpost staff to award winning books.

To create a box of modern literature for staff to borrow and share with their class in staff room.

Staff to build up their own reading repertoire during timetabled ERIC time.

Teachers to record books / new authors read.

Staff to display what they are reading on their door.

Teachers to make their own special box / book shelf.

Aim 2: To develop informal book talk, inside - text talk and recommendations.

Model informal book chat from book blankets / book blethers.

KS1 children to vote on 2 books for class story each day.

Teachers / children to make recommendations using individual book tracker.

Staff to display what they are reading on their door.

Re-organisation of book area.

Reading Rivers.

Teachers to make their own special box / book shelf.

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Deliver

- **Aim 1: To develop teachers' knowledge of modern texts in children's literature.**
- **Begin staff meetings with a new book / author to develop teachers' knowledge of modern texts in children's literature and model a book club to develop informal book talk and recommendations.**
- Beginning staff meetings with a new book / author and club was successful. Staff acknowledged this had impacted on developing their own knowledge of texts. In the staff meetings, it was usually myself who choose the books and read. As although we were all teachers who read out loud to our classes, not all felt so comfortable and at ease reading in front of other teachers. However, as we progressed through the year individual staff were persuaded. This year, the majority of our texts were picture books. We are planning on continuing this next year and will endeavour to focus on a wider genre.

Thornhill Primary School Deliver

Teacher special box / book shelf

This small gesture has had great impact on the children's enthusiasm for becoming a reader.



One LKS2 teacher said that both he and his TA fetched books into class that they had shared with their own children. These were now available for the class to borrow. They were books they could talk about with the children.

Previous to this, Mr M said he had about 3 children from a class of 27 that regularly brought their books to be changed.

Since the introduction of this special bookshelf, he now has 20 children who regularly access the 'special' books.

Having a dialogue with the children about your own history as a reader, making a personal connection has had a great impact.

The children are seeing their teachers as a reader.

When we discussed this informally, staff in all key stages were experiencing children wanting to read from the teacher's 'special' box / bookshelf. Many staff have a waiting list for specific books.



Aim 2: To develop informal book talk, inside - text talk and recommendations.

KS1 children to vote on 2 books for class story each day.

One of the biggest impacts in all KS1 classes has been the daily voting for the class story. After handwashing, it is the first job of the day as they arrive at school. To take their counter and select either text A or B. There has been a shift in how they choose. In the beginning, it was the front cover and title that helped make the decision as to where the counter would go. Now, the books are in their hands, turning the pages, reading bits before the important decision is made. You can also hear discussion between the children, 'I'm choosing this because I liked....' and shouts of joy when they realise one of the choices is an author we have previously read and they enjoyed. This recently happened with 'Tom Fletcher' and 'Ross Collins'. They huddle together over the book and eagerly await the arrival of their friend to shout them over. It genuinely makes me giddy to see their absolute **JOY**.



Thornhill Primary School Review

Final data analysis KS1:

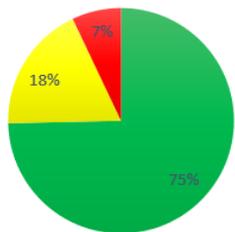
- More children loved reading than did not (75%). An increase of 14% from the initial survey.
- Only 7% compared to 20% in the initial survey did not like reading.
- More children thought they were a good reader than did not (73%). An increase of 7%.

- Nearly all children were able to give a title of a book they could remember having been read to them. The children who couldn't were recent additions to school. Some children also named authors spontaneously.

sofa	bed	outside	school	anywhere	bean bag	my den
17	27	11	2	2	2	2
27%	43%	17%	3%	3%	3%	3%

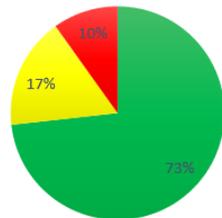
- Although only 1 more child said they preferred to read at school than previously (2 not 1), further analysis revealed this to be more. The percentage of children who preferred to read outside remained the same (17%). But children clarified their answer by saying '*outside on field*' or '*outside on bench with my friends.*'
- Other categories were also added, as the children were more confident and vocal to state their preference, '*beanbag*' and '*my den.*' These too were features of shared reading environment in KS1 and during home learning throughout lockdown.
- One child also stated that, 'I like to read on my bed, sofa, outside, on the teacher chair in fact anywhere.'

1. Do you like reading?



■ I love reading ■ It's okay ■ I don't like reading

2. Are you a good reader?



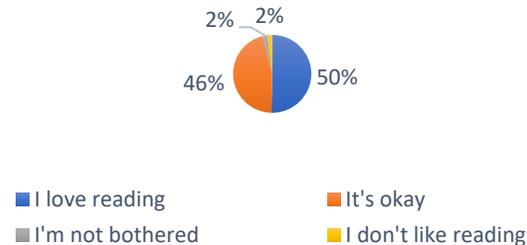
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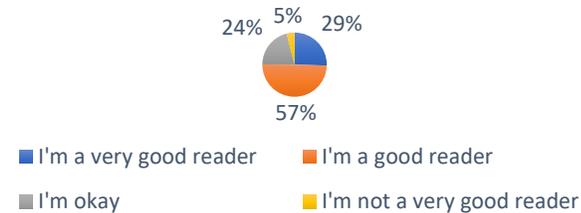
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Final data analysis KS2:

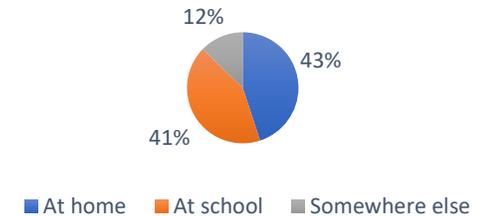
1. Do you like reading?



2. Are you a good reader?



3. Where do you prefer reading?



- More children thought they were a good or very good reader than did not (86%). An increase of 17% from the initial survey.
- Only 4% of children 'don't like reading' or 'not bothered' about reading. Most children commented *'I find out new things, I like reading because it's interesting, it improves my imagination'*.
- Preference for reading was more equally balanced – 43% at home, 41% at school. Most children said they *'liked to read in the quiet, some thought it was quieter with less distractions at home. But others thought it was quieter at school depending on how many lived in their household. Others said they preferred school as there were more book choices. One child said they had no books at home, some children said they preferred to read at school because they could do it with friends or the teachers helped them.'*

Observations show that children have:

- a wider knowledge of authors and books – nearly everyone had a favourite book.
- a more positive attitude towards reading - teacher boxes working well as children eager to read these books.

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- Final data analysis: staff
- Staff have responded positively to starting each staff meeting with a new book.
- Teachers' knowledge of authors was disappointing and varied considerably (some still named the same authors).
- Teachers who were strong advocates for RfP named a wider range of traditional and modern authors than they had previously.
- In conversations and observations with teachers and children, I knew that book recommendations were being made between teachers and children (R-L T to SBH) on WhatsApp groups between staff and children to children.
- Staff sharing books they had bought.
- Incidental book talk in dinner queue, resulting in cook bringing in a book for KS1.

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Focus Children:

Originally each class teacher (11) was asked to select 2 focus children from their class. Taking into account boy, girl, EAL, reluctant readers that can read but don't and enthusiastic readers that can't.

Due to lockdown, bubble closures and some children in Pakistan, some teachers had to change their focus children midway through the RfP journey.

Each teacher shared their own reading river with the class to highlight that reading takes many forms. KS1 created a shared reading river in class and children were asked to create their own.

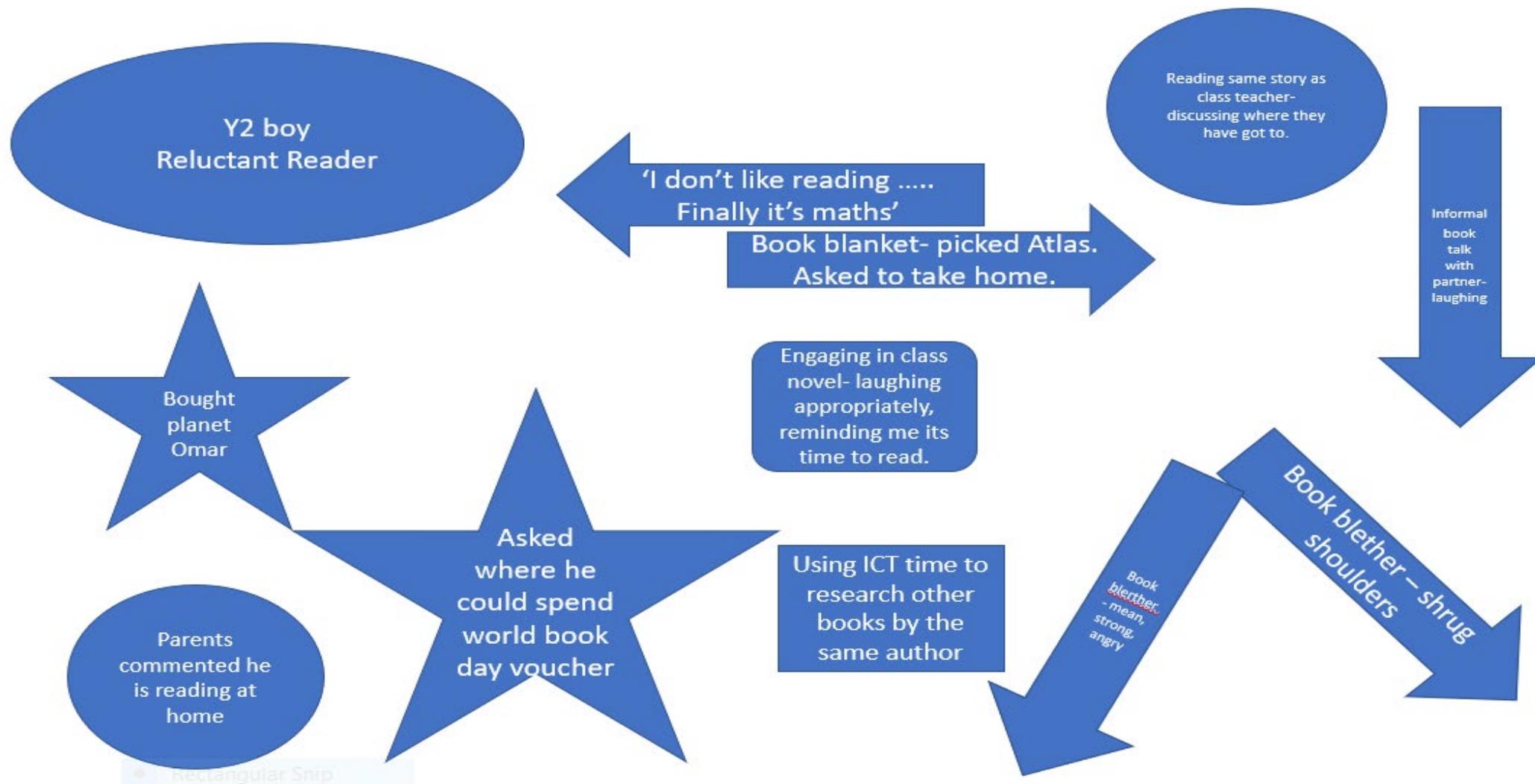
Children who didn't think of themselves as readers began to see that they were reading most of the time – daily visual timetable, choosing their lunch, when they were on their computer games at home, reading instructions, responding to text messages etc.

Teachers were asked to target the focus children in RfP sessions by showing an interest, talking to them, finding their interest.

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Focus Child KS1



Thornhill Primary School Review Focus child KS2



Y5 boy
Reluctant
Reader

Read his Planet Omar book at every opportunity – even when he was supposed to be doing something else.

Asked where he could spend book voucher.

Says he likes reading when the book is good.

Bought Planet Omar with book voucher.

Enjoys reading booster groups and participates well.

K Year 5 "I like reading when the book is fun!" May 2021
"I think reading is good because I like that Omar book and reading gets you ahead in life."
Does your teacher like reading? Yes because she's got a lot of books.
K chose to read all of the Planet Omar books because he enjoyed the first one.

Parents commented that he had been talking about Planet Omar at home.

Still doesn't claim to love reading but his attitude has changed since the beginning of Y5.

Often moans when it is reading time. Asks when it time for daily mile.



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Sustain

What have we learnt during the RfP journey?

- That it is a journey and this is just the beginning.
- Throughout the year we have discussed the difference between the teaching of reading (instruction) and reading for pleasure. It has been harder for some teachers to 'let go' of focusing on vocabulary and comprehension.
- We need a balance.

Reading Instruction	Reading for Pleasure
is oriented towards:	is oriented towards:
Learning to read	Choosing to read
The skill	The will
Decoding and comprehension	Engagement and response
System readers	Readers for themselves
Teacher-led & directed	Child-led & directed
Teacher ownership	Child ownership
Attainment	Achievement
The minimum entitlement:	The maximum entitlement:
(The "expected standard")	(A reader for life)
The standards agenda	The reader's own agenda

Distinctions between reading instruction and RfP (Cremin et al., 2014: 157)



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Sustain

- Whilst upskilling our knowledge of modern children's literature as recommended in the research, we also realised that many of children in school did not have books at home. Therefore books we fetched in from our own or our children's childhood were new texts for our children in school. Sharing our own history as readers, we could passionately discuss these books with our class.
- The children could see, feel this connection and thus the reading for pleasure journey could begin for all. The children in my class get excited when they see my son's name in a book.' This was Josh's book, did you read it to him? Can I borrow this?' This pattern is occurring in many classrooms.
- We know we need to keep on expanding our knowledge of modern children's literature to reflect current themes, diversity and empathy so that what we read to our children is relevant for them today.

What are our next steps?

- We plan to do this by utilising staff with strong subject knowledge.
- Introduce book of the month. (Head to introduce and read new book in assembly – 2 copies one to be displayed and other to be shared around classes).
- To know our children's reading preferences.
- Develop outside reading spaces.
- Promote reading with parents – importance of reading aloud, informal book chat, book swaps.

Thornhill Primary School
Sustain



(Slide borrowed from Sonia
Thompson)

**‘Reading should not be presented
to children as a chore or duty.**

**It should be offered to them as a
precious gift’.**

Kate DiCamillo

