



St. Wilfrid's Primary School
Reading For Pleasure Project 2020 -2021



Context

St. Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School is situated in a leafy suburb of south west Sheffield. The number of children on roll is 309. Currently, 17% of the pupils have English as an additional language. We have a very low proportion of children who are eligible for Pupil Premium and Free School Meals (below 5%).

On entry to the school in Foundation Stage, the majority of children are assessed as being at national expectation in all areas. Children are very well supported by parents. However, as the majority of parents are professionals, many children attend both breakfast and after school clubs, and have very busy home lives, which potentially impacts on the amount of time they have to read. Most children have access to books at home, and have reading role models at home.

Explore

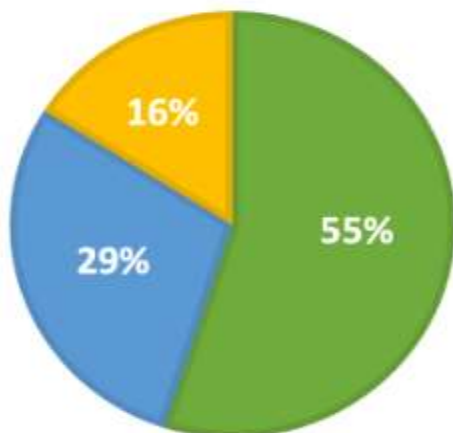
As a school, the majority of children have access to books at home and some use the local library. Parents are aware the importance of reading and are mostly supportive of this. In schools all classes have book corners and story time is timetabled daily and the importance of reading is recognised by all staff. Systems to encourage reading have already established, e.g. KS1 'Super 6' and KS2 'Book Club.' However, on further analysis it became apparent that the reading material on offer to children lacked up-to-date and current titles and authors. Staff also did not take time to chat to children about their individual preferences and their attitudes to reading.

Collecting the baseline data

At the beginning of the project, surveys were carried out amongst the children and staff in order to establish an understanding of attitudes and reading practices across school.

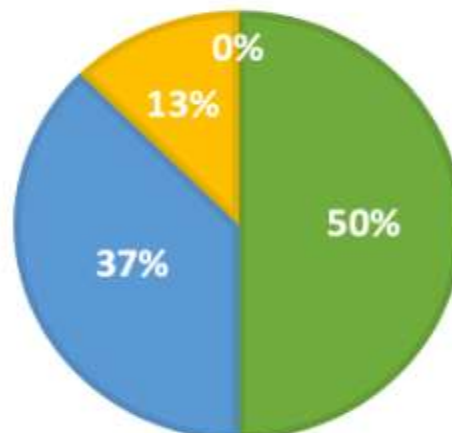
KS1
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT READING?

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



KS2
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT READING?

■ I love it ■ It's okay ■ I'm not bothered ■ I don't like it



Findings from children's surveys

	KS1	KS2
Love reading	55%	50%
It's ok	29%	37%

- In KS1, 16% said they didn't like reading at all.
- In KS2, 13% said they were not bothered, with no child saying they did not like reading.
- In KS1 the children struggled to name a favourite book with few being able to name a specific title, only 27% could name 2 titles of books.
- KS2 80% could name a favourite book with 84% able to name a favourite author.
- In KS2 77% of children preferred to read at home than school
- 95% of KS2 did recognise that their teacher 'loved reading'

Findings from staff surveys

- The staff knowledge of authors tended to rely on popular authors or authors from own childhood. 33% named Michael Morpurgo and Roald Dahl. However, there was evidence of some wider range amongst staff, but this tended to be around the same genre. There was a lack of knowledge of BAME authors and graphic novels. Every member of staff who took part in the survey named the poet, Michael Rosen. Only 28% of staff could name 3 poets.
- Most teachers acknowledged that they didn't provide an opportunity throughout the day for informal book talk and recommendations. Only 28% of teachers said that they regularly talk informally about books with the class.

General findings

- Staff were unfamiliar with graphic novels, non-fiction material and comics, and this range was lacking in classrooms.
- Reading areas were uninspiring and under-used by children. Some areas were overloaded with books and they were not displayed appealingly.

Prepare

Initially the Change Team consisted of Kerry (English Lead), Delia (Head of School) and Lucy (English Hub Lead). However, we decided to expand the team when Delia left to begin her maternity leave at the beginning of the Spring term. Another reason to expand the team was, because Lucy's role is not class based, and without daily contact with children, she could not provide an insight into the day to day impact of the project in the classroom. Rebecca is Reading Lead in school and Hayley is the Year 2 teacher. Both joined the change team in February.

Three focus children were identified in 3 classes across the school. It was decided that the class teacher would meet with these children half termly for an informal chat about attitudes to reading, book preferences, the reading experience at school, and then record notes of the conversations from these sessions.

After the Change Team and focus groups were established, the staff met to discuss the results of the surveys. The change team reviewed the surveys and decided upon the aims for the project in school. The aims were then shared with staff and quick fixes were initially discussed to get the ball rolling.

What we did first

- All staff were encouraged to buy and read 6 current books for their year group and then to share these with staff in following PDMS
- All classes timetabled a daily reading opportunity
- Teachers audited class reading areas reducing the quantity of books, especially the outdated ones, with the aim of increasing the quality on offer to children as the project progressed

Aim 1

To improve teacher knowledge of children's authors in their own key stage

'In order to successfully foster RFP, the teachers as readers TaRs research project found that teachers need a wide and up to date knowledge of children's literature and other texts' Cremin 2014 et al

Actions

- Staff to read books over the Summer holiday prior to starting the project
- Informal book chats between staff at the beginning of PDMS
- Selection of books in the staff room for staff to borrow
- Staff to recommend books to each other
- Shared recommended reading lists to be distributed
- All staff to sign up for RFP website
- All staff to attend INSET day

Aim 2

To increase the percentage of children that say that they love reading

'Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's future success' OECD 2002'

Actions

- KS1 staff to re-launch 'Super 6' and KS2 staff to replenish 'Book Club' books and re-launch
- Set up half-termly focus groups with targeted children who do not choose to read for pleasure
- Following discussions with children, subscribe to magazines across the school
- Widen the range of books on offer to include modern fiction, graphic novels and BAME
- Improve the reading experience when teacher reads aloud to the class – reading area, lighting, seating
- Allow children to choose the class book
- Introduce events to make reading time more special – guest readers, teachers swapping classes

Aim 3

To increase informal book chat throughout the school day in all classes

'Talking about books and reading and making text recommendations has been found to be influential on developing children's will to read,' (Cremin et al, 2014)

Actions

- Introduce daily reading time on all timetables
- Adults in class to display the book they are reading to promote book chat
- Adults to read while the children read independently – Teachers as Readers
- Adults to talk to children about books at every opportunity – lining up, coming in from the playground
- Change group to research strategies to promote book chat on the RfP website and share in PDM
- Staff to trial strategies with classes (3 word reviews, recommendation boards, book blankets)
- Staff to feedback on strategies trialled
- Build a bank of strategies to use across the school

The 3 aims are interlinked and will impact on each other.

As staff develop their own knowledge of children's literature and share this with their classes, this will lead to dialogue naturally opening up, and staff will learn more about children's preferences and recommendations.

Deliver

After the surveys were completed, class teachers were asked to look closely at their own class' surveys, and the findings were discussed during a PDM. The Change Team felt that it was very important for teachers to understand their own class' attitudes to reading. Staff were surprised by the lack of opportunity the children felt they had to talk about books at school. After this, the Change Team met to evaluate the surveys and decide on our aims and focus objectives.

The Change Team then met with staff to share the aims for the project and decide how to make a start. From the beginning, staff were really enthusiastic and wanted to make changes.

Aim 1: To improve teacher knowledge of children's authors in their Key Stage.

- The first strategy was to begin alternate PDMs with a **book swap**. The books were carefully selected by the Change Team to include award winners and recommended books from a range of genres. Books were set out like a book blanket, and staff were asked to browse and chat about the books before selecting one. Next time, staff were asked to share their book and provide some feedback. This has gradually become an informal 'book blether' which everyone enjoys. Staff have started to bring their own books to the PDM to share and recommend to each other. A Teaching Assistant said, "I never thought I would like to read a graphic novel, but I really enjoyed that and couldn't put it down."

Teachers are now enjoying reading children's books. When some new books were delivered, a KS2 teacher said, "I've already looked through them and chosen two to read over the weekend!"

Staff started to want to read.

- Something very simple such as **displaying a reading book** in the classroom or displaying a picture of the book outside the room, had a big impact. Staff started to talk about the books they were reading when they saw each other around school. They began to borrow books from each other. We have not been able to use the staff room to display and swap books as planned, as very few staff are currently using the staffroom.

Aim 2: To increase the percentage of children who say they love to read.

- All teachers reduced the number of books on the class bookshelves at the beginning of the project. If a book was old and unappealing, it was sent to charity. The Change Team then spent some time talking to a selection of children in both Key Stages about their reading preferences. The team then used the RfP OU website and recommended book lists to buy some high quality titles that the children would love to read. These books were then introduced to the children and displayed attractively on book shelves. Graphic novels have had a huge impact on children's enthusiasm for reading. We cannot keep up with the demand! In Y6, a waiting list system has been put in place. The most reluctant readers have found them more appealing and accessible. When they complete a graphic novel, they feel satisfaction and they have begun to identify as readers. Children have started to find new titles and ask the school to buy them.

During a learning walk, one child in Y5 told the Change Team, "My mum used to tell me what books I'd like. Now there are so many good books to choose in the classroom, so she doesn't have to."

The children can now name books they have enjoyed and talk about new authors they have discovered.

- Magazines have been another successful way to engage children. Many children mentioned their love for magazines to the Change Team. We were able to buy an annual subscription to Beano, Match and Story Box with funding from our PTA and the English Hub. When the new copies arrive, the children are always desperate to read them. We bought Story Box for Key Stage 1, but we have found that they also want to look at Match and Beano too. In Y2, a child said, "We all love the football comics."

Aim 3: To increase informal book chat throughout the school day in all classes.

- The first action we took to achieve this aim was to ensure that the children saw the **staff as readers**. All staff ensured that the book they were reading was prominently displayed in the classroom. Staff also displayed a picture of their book on the wall outside the class for children in other classes to see. Everyone agreed to read while the children were reading independently. These actions, although simple, had an immediate impact on informal book chat; staff and children began to notice the books they were reading and make comments about

them. Children started to ask if they could read a book when a member of staff had finished it. A Y5 child told her teacher, "I've read a book by the same author as you."



- We made time to encourage **informal book chat at different times** during the day such as lining up, during handwashing, walking through school etc. By asking, 'are you enjoying your book?' and 'do you think anyone else would like it?' children began to see that reading is about sharing and talking, not just something which is solitary. At first, this book chat was something that was led by the staff, but we have found that children are increasingly talking about books spontaneously between themselves. In Year 6, while packing up at the end of the day, a child who had read the Cogheart series was heard talking to another child who was reading the first book. They were discussing a particularly tense part of the book and how it made them feel.
- Across the school, we began a **voting system** for story time. In KS2, teachers photocopied blurbs for the children to read and vote on. In KS1, teachers introduced a simple visual such as baskets and cubes. This has encouraged staff to consider more carefully which texts to offer the children. It has also promoted discussions with the children about what they prefer and why, and also to share what they have already read. Before this, staff would simply choose a book from the shelf which they were familiar with, rather than actually finding out what the children would prefer.



This simple idea has added more excitement to choosing books, and has enabled the children to take ownership of the class reading time.

- Children now **recommend books** to each other. In KS2, children were encouraged to complete a 3 word review on a sticky note after they had finished a book. These recommendations were then placed on the front cover and displayed front-facing so that the other children could see. In Y6, it was noted that, by doing this, those who already read for pleasure were really encouraging the more reluctant readers to pick up the book and give it a go, particularly amongst boys. One reluctant reader in Y6 said in the focus group, “because I’m in a class who love books, it’s easier to find books that I will like because people recommend them.” Prior to using the recommendation system, some children found choosing a book quite difficult as they had no idea what they would enjoy. In KS1, children have recommended books using a star rating system on a book mark or sticky note. Children have enjoyed talking about and comparing the book ratings, and this has prompted further book chat. In FS, staff have modelled how to recommend books to each other, and the children are now starting to do this with their friends. This has been promoted in ‘snack and chat’. This is an informal time when children choose a book from the book shelf, while enjoying a snack. To begin with, this was a quiet activity, but now at the end of the session, the teacher has introduced an informal book chat using the language ‘recommend’ and encouraging children to explain their recommendations.
- Displays throughout school** have promoted informal book chat. In corridors, books covers are displayed in prominent places. The Book Flix display in the KS1 corridor has encouraged children to stop and talk about the books, and then find them in the book shelf in the classroom. In KS2, children have commented on the display with one child proudly saying, “I’ve read three of those!” In some classrooms, all children are displayed holding their favourite books, creating a sense of ownership, and the children now actually see



themselves as readers.

Children bring books in from home to add to displays, with their own recommendations. Each class now makes a recommendation of 5 books in our weekly newsletter to parents. These books are also displayed by the class in the entrance hall where children can see them and choose to read them.

- **Book blankets** have really promoted informal book chat. Having the books arranged so that children can easily see what is available has enabled children to choose more easily, without pressure. It has provided them with the opportunity to talk to each other about what they have read before and what looks appealing. Book blankets have also encouraged children to explore other genres they may not have considered before. For example, KS2 children now choose to read graphic novels and picture books. The new library trolley in KS1, filled with new books, has led to a real buzz about reading. At the beginning of each session, the books are displayed as a book blanket and teachers have the opportunity to chat with children about their choices and get to know the children as readers.

Review

Finding from Staff Surveys

The surveys were repeated in June.

- Staff were able to name 60% more authors than they could in the Autumn term. Fewer teachers named traditional authors such as Roald Dahl or Michael Morpurgo. The range included Hilary McKay, Onjali Q Rauf, David Lichfield and Piers Torday, SF Said and Sophie Anderson.
- Of the authors named in June, 12% were BAME authors and 8% were authors of graphic novels. These authors did not feature at all in the original survey.
- Through informal discussions during staff meetings, all staff said that they have a better knowledge of children's literature since starting the project, and they have enjoyed reading and talking about children's books, with both colleagues and children.
- Although 63% of staff could name 3 poets, compared to only 28% in the Autumn term, the staff still feel that they are less knowledgeable about poets and the range named was limited to Michael Rosen, Roald Dahl, Benjamin Zephaniah, Kwame Alexander, AA Milne, Roger McGough and Joseph Coelho. This is something we will focus on next year.
- All teachers (100%) surveyed in June said that they regularly informally talk about books.

Results from staff survey in November



Results from staff survey in June

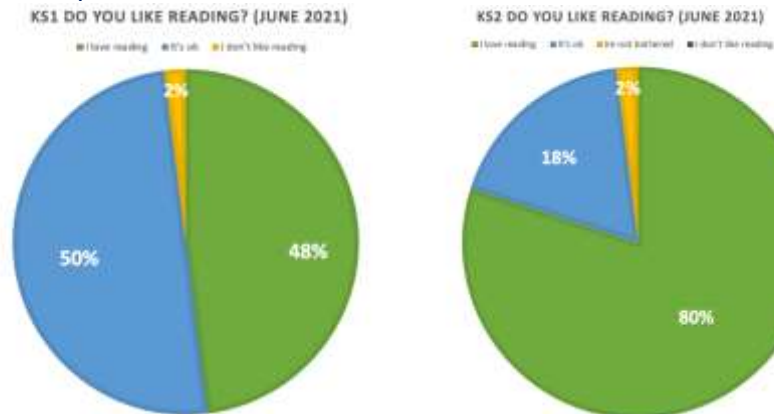


Through informal conversations with staff, the Change Team has seen a real difference in their knowledge and enthusiasm for reading.

“Because of the project, I have discovered other types of reading to enjoy, which I had previously dismissed. I recently read ‘Clap When You Land’ which is written in a loose poetry style. I would not have chosen this before.” Learning Mentor

Findings from Children’s Surveys

The surveys were repeated in June.



- In KS1, 48% of children said that they loved reading. 50% said it was ok. 2% said they don't like reading.
- In KS2, 80% said that they loved reading, 18% said it was ok and 2% said they weren't bothered. No one said that they didn't like reading.

The Change Team has discussed these findings. Although in KS1, the percentage of children who said that they loved reading has remained roughly the same, we feel pleased that more children in June said that reading is ok and none of the children who took part in the recent survey said they don't like reading (in comparison to 16% at the start of the project). In KS2, the number of children who said that they loved reading has increased from 50% to 80%. This has been evident through conversations with the children too.

In Y3, a child said, “The magazines are so much fun. I love the jokes!”

In Y5/6, a teacher reported that when she told the class that they would have some quiet reading time after lunch, they cheered.

In Y6, one child said, “There is a giant waiting list for some books.”

On a recent learning walk, a child in Y5 said, “I like that there's so much time for reading and anyone can recommend a book to you. I love how there's so much around to do with reading. Just look – it's everywhere!”

Parents have also commented on their children's new enthusiasm for reading. One parent noted that on a recent trip to a book shop, her Y3 boy pointed to a book and said, ‘My teacher is reading a book by the same author’ and her Y5 boy picked up a book and read the blurb saying, ‘my partner is reading this and he says it's really good.’ Both boys were thinking about recommendations and choosing to look at books by new authors.

Another Y6 parent talked of the impact that the project has had on her daughter's reading saying it has ‘widened her range of authors and she is now more willing to try new authors.’

In Y5, a parent described seeing in her daughter ‘a real zeal for reading’ since returning to school after lockdown, and she thanked the school as it has ‘enmeshed family ties’.

We feel that the new books and magazines have made the biggest impact on the children's enjoyment of reading. We have taken time to listen to the children talk about their preferences, before carefully selecting titles which have won awards and/or reflect their realities. Then, the staff have introduced the new books with real enthusiasm, which has

led to great excitement from the children. This is something we need to continue next year in order to increase the number of children who say they love reading.

- In KS1, 97% of children in June could name a favourite book.
- In KS2, 82% in June could name a favourite book.

We have discussed these findings. In KS1, the percentage of children who could name a book title has increased from 27% to 97%, which is great. This was evident on a learning walk. A child in Y1 told us, "We all love 'You Choose Your Dreams.'"

Staff have spent more time reading to children from the 'Super 6' and talking about titles and recommending books to each other. When we looked at the KS2 surveys, we felt that the question, 'What is your favourite book?' put some children 'on the spot' and even some of the most avid readers said they weren't sure or they couldn't choose. This could have accounted for the lower percentage here.

In response to the KS2 question, 'Name your favourite author', 76% could name a favourite author compared to 84% in the first survey. We could not account for the slight dip in responses as we have introduced so many new authors this year. However, the actual range of authors named was much wider than the Autumn term. 15 authors named in the Autumn term compared to 25 in the Summer term.

Children have been able to name and discuss their favourite authors with the change team.

"I'm into Victoria Jamieson – graphic novels." Y6 child

"I read Robert Swindells' Room 13 and loved it." Y4/5 child

When asked whether they preferred to read at home or school, 67% of KS2 children said that they preferred to read at home, compared to 77% in the first survey. We have worked hard to improve the reading experience for children in school this year, and many reading areas have been transformed. We have used different lighting, calming music and a 'cracking fireplace' to try to make the reading time really special and different to any other time of the day. However, due to restrictions, we have not been able to use soft furnishings and blankets, or to allow children to move places in the classroom to be with friends for reading time. This is something we are hoping to develop next year.

At the beginning of the project, focus groups were established in three classes. However, lockdown from January meant that the teachers were unable to meet with the children each half term as planned. Sessions resumed post lock down, but they have not been as regular as we intended. The children in the focus groups were identified by the class teacher as children who do not choose to read for pleasure, although they may be fluent readers. In order to ensure that the project had a positive impact on their enthusiasm for reading, teachers met regularly with the group to talk informally about book preferences and the reading experience in school. Some of these children said that they found it difficult to choose a book from the shelf, so teachers helped them to select books. Teachers have found that it vital to get to know the children as readers in order to help them to choose books. Teachers also explained to the children that it is ok to try a book, and then put it back on the shelf if they don't like it. Being aware of this group of children, knowing their interests and supporting them to choose books has had a huge impact, which has been evident in notes from the focus group sessions and learning walks.

In Y6, one child who did not view himself as a reader, and never read for pleasure at the start of the project, has now become a huge fan of graphic novels and can't get enough of them. He even tries to read them under the table during lessons!

Another child in the Y5 focus group said that she had never completed a book in Y4, and this year she has enjoyed reading several authors recommended by her teacher and friends including Cece Bell and Katherine Applegate.

Next year, we would like all classes to identify their focus group (and this process will start with our transition lessons before the end of term), and support them and monitor them for the whole year. Discussions about the focus group will become part of our termly pupil progress meetings with the SLT.

Sustain

All of the staff agree that the project has had a hugely positive impact across the whole school. We have enjoyed seeing the children's enthusiasm for reading grow since the start of the project, and we have felt privileged to take part in conversations with children about their newly discovered love of particular books and authors. There is such a buzz about reading around the school.

However, we do recognise that RfP needs to continue to be a priority on our School Development Plan in order to sustain the progress so far, and to build on it in future years. We have achieved so much this year, but the change team has discovered that it takes some time to change the pedagogy, and then sustain and embed it. Senior leaders and all staff need to be engaged in the project. It is important to know the staff well, and to recognise their strengths, and identify those who need support, and then provide that support.

"Reading for pleasure needs to be an integral element in a school's teaching and learning strategy and teachers need to be supported in their knowledge of relevant quality texts that will engage all pupils." (APPLG, 2012)

We have realised that the provision of new texts, which the children actually want to read is key. By talking to the children about their reading preferences and choosing recommended/award winning books, we have seen a huge increase in engagement and motivation. When the children requested magazines and comics, we bought them. Previously, we would have regarded them as something for fun which would not be valuable in developing a love of reading.

"Honouring children's choice of texts is key, as it is allowing them to exercise their rights as readers." Cremin (2019)

We have also learned that it is vital that teachers and other staff have a good knowledge of a range of current authors and high-quality texts. Without this knowledge, it is impossible to recommend books or to have a meaningful discussion about books with children. It is a way of connecting with children and sharing something special.

"Knowledge of children's literature and of individual children and their reading interests is essential in order to develop young readers who can choose and read for pleasure."

(Younger and Warrington, 2005; Kwek et al 2007)

At St. Wilfrid's, we plan to continue to sustain our RfP focus. The change team will continue to work together to ensure that all that we have put in place so far continues in the future.

- For our transition days in July, we will make RfP a focus for the day. The change team would like teachers to get to know their children as readers as soon as possible so that they can identify those children (20% of the class) who do not choose to read for pleasure, and then support them as soon as the new school year starts. The children who are identified will become the focus group for each class. Teachers will continue to keep journals for the group which will include quotes from discussions and notes from informal observations. This evidence will be shared during our termly Pupil Progress meetings with the SLT.
- We will continue to talk to the children about the books they would like to read at school, and regularly buy new, high quality texts throughout the year. We have identified that non-fiction and poetry books are now required. We intend to have half-termly book blankets to help to engage the children and introduce them to a wider range of books which they may not previously have chosen to read.
- We will continue to improve the reading environments throughout the school. Some changes have already been made: books presented more appealingly on shelves, attractive displays, and recommendation tables. Next year, we will make each book area a more cosy, comfortable space where children can sit together to share books and chat about them on cushions and soft seating. We will encourage them to sit with friends to share a book (something which has not been possible this year).
- We intend to develop stronger partnerships with parents. Building reading communities with parents will enable the school to have an even greater impact on reading for pleasure. This year, we have involved parents as much as possible, but from September, we intend to invite parents to school to take part in regular activities such as 'mystery reader', sharing reading rivers and themed book days.