



St. Peter's Cross Keys C of E Academy

English Lead: Emily Sopp 2019-2020

Nurturing a life-long love of learning

Context

St. Peter's Cross Keys C of E Academy is a smaller than average school with pupils who are of predominantly white British heritage. 75% of children come from the village and surrounding areas. 10% of pupils receive pupil premium funding and approximately 20% of the pupils are on the SEND register.

I am an experienced teacher and joined the school in September 2019 as Assistant Headteacher for KS2 and English Lead. I currently teach a Year 5 class. Since joining the team, I have worked closely with the Assistant Headteacher for KS1 to ensure a consistent approach in teaching and learning across school.

Explore

In order to identify our baseline around reading for pleasure (RfP) practice, both staff and pupils completed surveys found on the Open University RfP website. To ensure an appropriate baseline was taken, staff completed their surveys during a staff meeting and teaching assistants did theirs during a Key Stage Meeting. This ensured staff could not research children's authors during the completion of the survey.

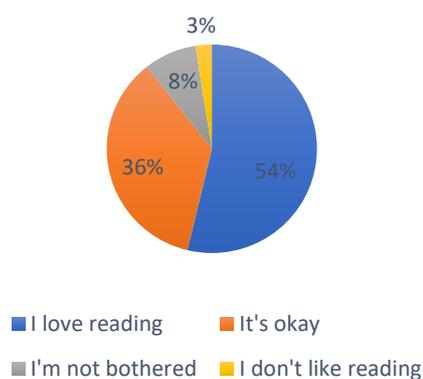
The children's surveys were conducted appropriately according to their age group. For younger children, staff members read the questions to children and supported them to ensure the answers the children wanted to give were recorded accurately.

Pupil Data

The children's surveys enabled us to ascertain children's enjoyment of reading, knowledge of authors/literature and their understanding of 'what makes a reader'.

Children's enjoyment of reading - Whole school data

1. Do you like reading?



2. Are you a good reader?



Children's love of reading - Key Stage breakdown

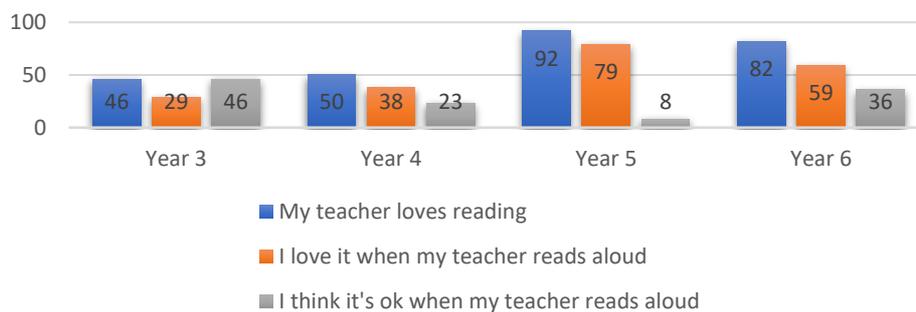
	KS1	KS2
'I love reading'	61%	50%
'I'm a good/very good reader'	69%	76%

Although initially this data looks quite positive and at least 50% of children across the school 'love reading', there was a dip between the key stages. Some children were able to give reasons as to why they enjoyed reading or not; in KS1 this was linked to their opinions about how good they were at it. Some children who viewed reading in a positive way had fantastic reasons: 'It *learns me new facts.*' 'It *helps me calm down.*' 'It *gets me immersed in it.*' Where children did not enjoy reading as much, their responses were: 'It's *boring.*' 'I *find it tricky.*' By KS2, the link between children's opinions about reading and how good they perceived themselves to be at it was less apparent, so needed to be explored further.

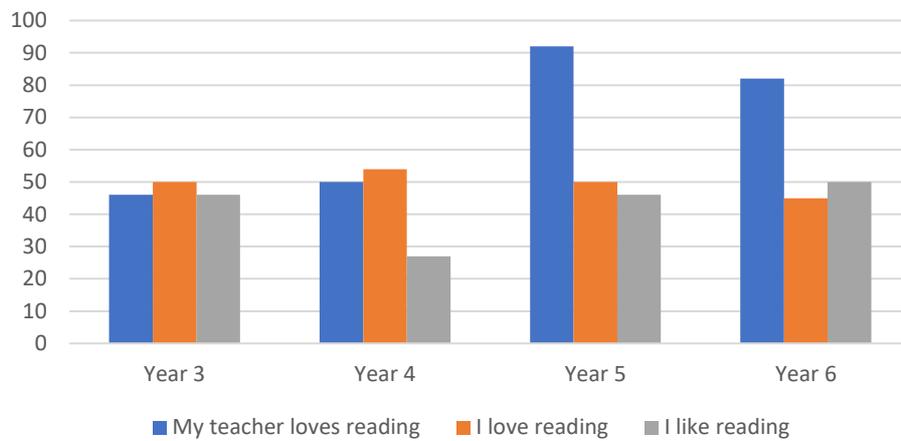
There were links between children seeing teachers as readers and the children's love of reading. Our data demonstrated that where children perceived their teachers as 'loving reading', the children's opinions of how they felt about their teacher reading aloud were more positive. This is particularly important, as research shows '*an enhanced personal and professional awareness of what it means to be a reader, can serve to nurture young readers, who, like their teachers, are likely to become engaged, self-motivated and interactive readers. It can also influence children's attainment as readers.*' Cremin et al., (2014).

This demonstrates that adults need to be explicit in their quest to 'share the love' of reading with young readers. In order to do this, they need to share their own reading habits with children and read for pleasure in order to gain a greater understanding of children's literature to share with children, although what the children and teachers 'count' as reading will also influence this.

A graph to show the relationship between children's perception of their teacher's love of reading and how children feel about their teacher reading aloud.



A graph to show the relationship between the teacher's thoughts about reading and the children's.



Children's knowledge of authors

Children's knowledge of authors appeared limited. Many were not able to name any or relied on well-known authors such as: David Walliams, Roald Dahl, Liz Pichon and Michael Morpurgo. This was of particular interest to me, because as a school we were already following Pie Corbett's reading spine in which a range of texts and authors are introduced and shared with the children each year. The results of this survey suggest this was not being that effective in widening children's knowledge of authors/literature.

Focus children in each year group

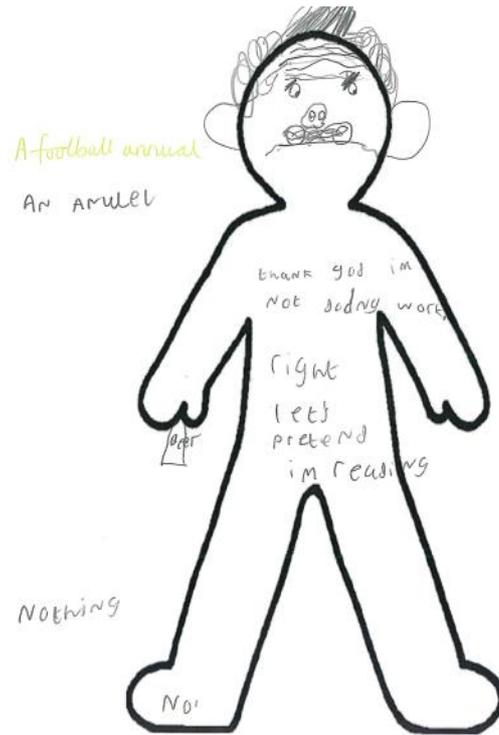
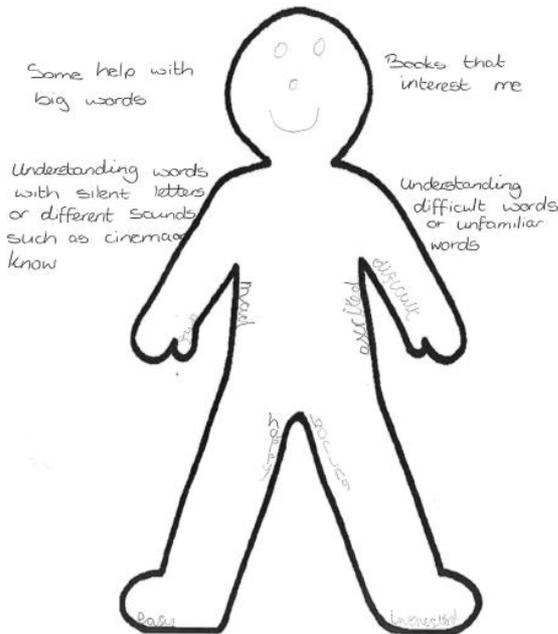
From this initial data collection, small focus groups of children were set up in order to 'unpick further' children's thoughts and feelings about reading. The children we chose to focus on here were those who '*could read but chose not to*'. Each year group was asked to select three children to enable us to identify their thoughts and feelings about reading at a deeper level to hopefully enable us to 'shift' their attitudes to reading over the course of the project.

We believed that if we managed to shift the attitudes of these children, others would come on the journey too. Data captured from these readers continued to reflect what we had already found; children needed recommendations of a good book which they would enjoy reading in order to find pleasure in the process and to 'become a good reader', particularly amongst the KS2 focus children.

This group were invited to draw themselves as readers, this helped us understand them more and the drawings were used to discuss the children's responses with them.

Myself as a reader

- Draw a face to show how reading makes you feel.
- Inside write words or draw pictures to show your feelings about reading.
- On the outside draw or write what you need to become a 'good reader'.



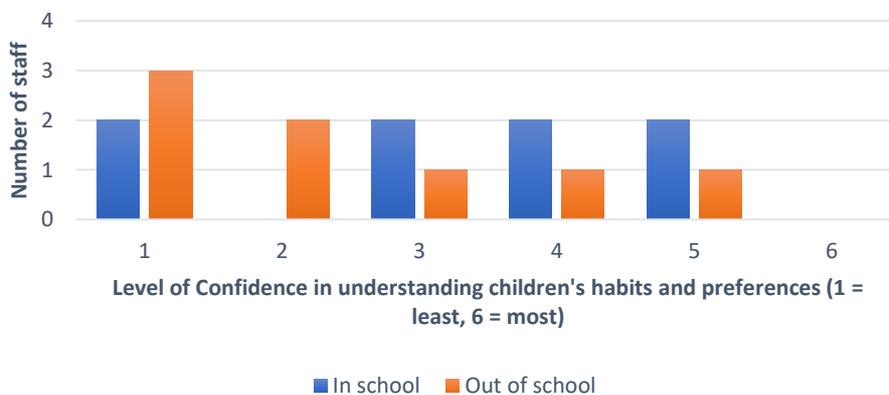
Staff data

I analysed the staff surveys to identify teachers' knowledge of current children's literature; their understanding of reading for pleasure pedagogy; children's reading practices and reading environments.

After looking at the children's responses, the information collated about staff's knowledge of children's authors was not unexpected; staff were reliant on authors such as: Roald Dahl, Michael Morpurgo, David Walliams and Julia Donaldson.

Staff were also asked to rate their confidence in understanding children's reading habits and preferences.

A chart to show staff's knowledge of children's reading habits and preferences



From this, we formed the view that in order for staff to feel more confident about recommending books and authors to children, they needed to know what children like to read and have a range of authors and texts they can recommend. Some staff answered this question with a different view in mind and perceived it as: *'Does the child read at home/in school?'* and therefore these staff's views are not captured here.

Interestingly, some staff also didn't answer this question as they felt it wasn't their role or they didn't currently read with children, this further showed us that this was an area that needed to be a focus for the RfP project.

Prepare

The surveys revealed that both staff and children's knowledge of children's authors was limited and therefore children within our school had a limited 'reading diet'. We decided this was an area that needed to be focussed on.

Our RfP aims for this year were:

1. To widen staff knowledge and use of children's literature
2. To increase teachers' knowledge of children's reading preferences and habits.

Why are these aims so important?

'Teachers of reading need to:

suggest reading material to individual children in order to motivate them as readers;

have a secure knowledge of a range of texts in order to have in-depth discussions with children;

identify books which read aloud well and that their class would enjoy;

and know which books will be fruitful for closer examination' Chambers, A. (1985, 1993).

1. To widen staff knowledge and use of children's literature

Research shows that *'those teachers who have a secure knowledge of a range of children's literature are not only more able to recommend the right text for the right child, but are also better positioned to create a community of readers in the classroom'* Younger and Warrington, 2005; Kwek *et al.* (2007).

2. To increase teachers' knowledge of children's reading preferences and habits

'Pupils need to feel that they are part of communities where the enjoyment of reading is valued.

Such talk can help them see the kind of reader they are and to make choices about the kind of reader they would like to become' Hitchcock (2010:59). Having a good knowledge of children's reading preferences and habits, developing book talk and reciprocal communities, therefore has the capacity to shift's children's attitudes towards reading.

Deliver

The initial launch of the Reading for Pleasure project took place during an INSET day, which all staff attended. Staff were addressed by Professor Teresa Cremin and teachers who had been on the RfP journey themselves. This enabled staff to see real examples of where RfP projects had been successful and hear of stories around shifting RfP culture and building authentic reading communities. This created an initial buzz around RfP. Staff were very enthusiastic and excited to start our journey. Our initial meeting (on the day itself), enabled us to identify some aspects where

we knew we could have an immediate impact: ‘quick-wins’ (e.g., setting up a book swap) and identify a longer-term approach of ideas that would have an impact in our school.

1. Teachers’ knowledge of children’s literature

The Phase 1 Teachers as Readers research found that teachers knew relatively little children’s literature (Cremin et al., 2008a, b). This was mirrored by our own school staff surveys. This was important to identify because, if teachers know relatively little about children’s literature, the diet they provide the children with will be limited and not able to support them in making their own choices about texts. From research by Kaufman (2002) it is clear that if a teacher is visibly an active reader (and writer) then children are more likely to be encouraged to ‘live their own literate lives’.

Staff had been initially supported to get to know some children’s literature through the use of the Pie Corbett’s Reading Spine. This sets out texts that are suitable for each year group. It is an expectation that staff read these prior to reading them with the children. However, baseline surveys showed that staff were not confident in citing these authors.

In order to deepen subject knowledge, staff were encouraged to read a children’s book and share this/their thoughts about it with staff at a staff meeting. Initially I was optimistic about this, as staff were really engaged and ‘buzzing’ about reading after the INSET day. However, on reviewing this in the staff meeting, only limited staff had actually read a children’s book and it was clear that staff needed further support and a welcome push in the right direction to get them off to a better start.

For World Book Day, I carefully considered my knowledge of staff, the year groups in which they worked and purchased a text for each member of staff. Year 6 children then designed and made wrapping paper to make these into presents that

were given to staff in the World Book Day Assembly in March. Staff were asked to read these books and share them with their year groups; they were encouraged to swap books with other staff members working in their year group too and to review the book.

Staff responses were positive.

“I really liked that book and would definitely read books by the same author again!”

Book Review

Book review by: Mrs Fraser

Title: The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

Author: Kate DiCamillo

Non fiction Fiction

What is the book about?

Edward Tulane is an impressive and immaculate china rabbit. Abigail, his owner, adores and cares for him completely, but Edward does not return her love. Edward is self-centred, proud and heartless; he cares nothing for love. Then, through a series of accidents Edward is separated from Abigail. His fine clothes, pride and his body are damaged as he passes through the hands of a fisherman, a hobo and a farmer’s daughter. He learns about love and experiences the pain that comes with loss and death. He wonders if he can bear to risk loving again

Who would this book be suitable for? Age/interests

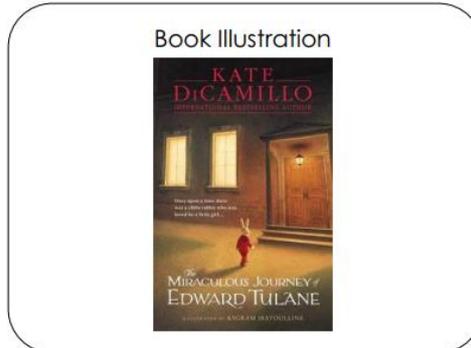
Age: 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 11 12

Interest: Sport **Animals** History **Stories**
 Countries Poetry Cooking Funny **Food**
For Boys **For Girls** **Toys** Activities **Pictures** Other

Would you/would you not recommend the book? Why?

I will admit that I judged this book by its cover and thought I probably wouldn’t enjoy it. However, I picked it up one Saturday morning and didn’t put it down until I had finished it! The short chapters and pictures make it a book that you can easily keep track of the story line. You also meet a wide range of characters and I would be surprised if one or two don’t remind you of someone you know! Although it is a little sad in places, I think this story reminds that us even after sad times, there can also be happy times and we will always have memories to keep and treasure forever! I would definitely recommend this book and whilst I think some boys may be reluctantly to read a book about a young girl’s toy, I really do feel that this is one you will enjoy too!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



I then asked the team to consider whether they could introduce these new texts to shape the reading spine for their year group turning Pie Corbett's Reading Spine into a **St Peter's Cross Keys Reading Spine**. This would directly broaden teachers' knowledge of texts, and impact on the decisions they made about class read aloud texts and developing reading communities in their own classrooms.

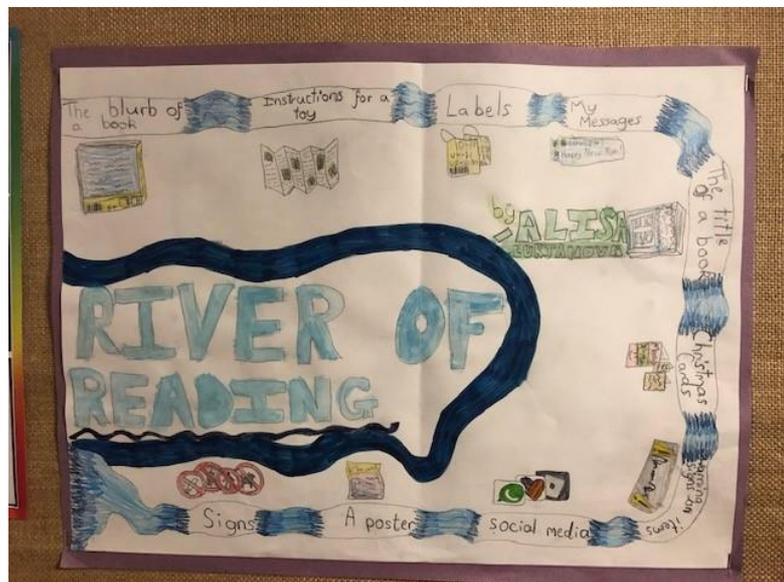
Children's knowledge of literature – providing texts that tempt!

We currently buy in to the Education Library Service (ELS). Usually, this is something that is used to support topics and teachers request books based on this. When reviewing this, we found that although these books, often non-fiction, supported topics, they were rarely used. I therefore arranged for an **ELS book visit to enable each class to pick their own books**. The children selected books that tempted them; books they wanted to read. Many studies have shown that when children select texts for themselves in school, this enhances their motivation and self-determination as readers (Krashen, 1993; Sanacore, 1999; Gambrell, 1996) which is crucial in fostering reading for pleasure. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, this was unable to go ahead, so will be re-scheduled.

Over time, both resource and environmental changes across school could be seen which demonstrate reading was becoming more of a shared and sociable experience. Staff began using their own knowledge of children's texts for class read aloud, such as a Year 4 teacher choosing *Secrets of a Sun King* by Emma Carroll. This increased knowledge of children's texts was frequently being accompanied by enthusiasm and the creation of interactive, sociable reading environments.

2. Teacher's knowledge of children's reading practices

Teachers were able to understand the range of texts children and their families regularly engaged with outside school by conducting [Reading Rivers](#). This 'is an activity which invites readers to create a river collage reflecting their everyday reading over a specific period of time' Cremin et al. (2014). These were completed over a holiday then brought to school so that teachers and children could share and celebrate all of the reading they had done. From this, staff were able to spark discussions with children about what they had read and make links to this in school.



Parent/child reading sessions

In order to build on the school's current strategies to encourage parental engagement and involvement with school life, we gave all classes a weekly timetabled session of 20 minutes where they invited parents/carers into class to read with their child or a group of children. The plan is that this further supports teachers' understanding of children's reading habits and preferences and provides parents with an insight into this too.

Book swap

Twice a week, once before school and once after school a book swap was set up. Parents were initially encouraged to simply select and take a book that appealed. Our aim was to support parents to offer opportunities for reading at home by providing them with books. Staff support the running of this and have taken it upon themselves to ensure the book swap is stocked with books. Many members of staff have donated children's books of their own; staff have advertised on social media our need for books and we have been successful in collecting large supplies from generous donators and others have visited charity shops to gather a selection of books.

After a time, parents began to return books to swap and make their own donations. The book swap has been a great success. There is a plentiful supply of different books, including comics, First News children's newspaper, picture books and novels across a range of ages and interests. There is something for everyone to read and many children visit the swap every week. Informal conversations with parents at the book swap have shown that they value how this resource has engaged their child with reading and this further

demonstrates how we are providing choices about texts for our children, which is particularly important in order to *'reflect the diversification of children's reading preferences and habits in the twenty-first century'* (Maynard *et al.*, 2007; Twist, *et al.*, 2007; Clark and Douglas, 2011).

Reading Recommendations in our Newsletter

Our school already produced a biweekly newsletter to parents, carers and friends of school. We felt that this was a great way of sharing with parents and children books that might be of interest to their children. In every other newsletter, each class was asked to recommend a book. This is written by an individual child or a class. When speaking to children about this, they have responded that they feel proud they are able to share their reading preferences and hope that others choose to read their recommendations.

This has now extended to encompass staff book recommendations – a way to share a wider variety of high-quality children's texts with our school community. Linking back to our initial aims, this shows how teacher's knowledge of children's literature is developing and this is enabling teachers to give children more choice for the texts they might choose to read.



Year 1 recommend [Never Use a Knife and Fork](#)

Author of the book: [Neil Goddard and Nick Sharratt](#)

The reason I recommend this book is [because it made us giggle at all the silly sentences. It has a nice rhyme.](#)

[The pictures are really colourful and hilarious. To make it even better it is all about food. So remember to 'hide spaghetti in your hair and keep crisps.....'](#)

Star rating:

Picture of the book:

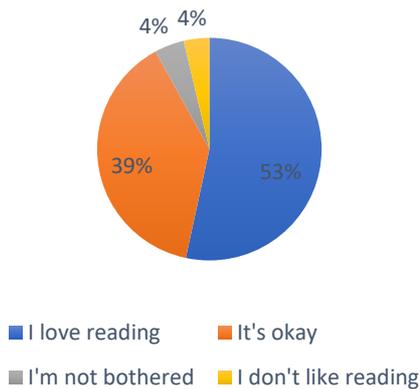


Sustain

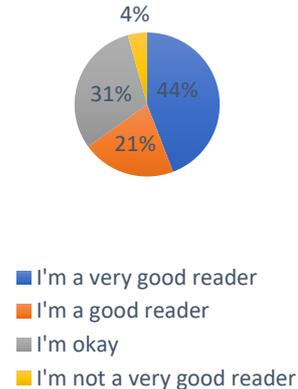
Evidence of Impact

This has been an exciting and rewarding journey for both staff and children, which we will continue. At the end of the project, we repeated the staff and pupils' surveys. Although the children's views about their own reading haven't changed drastically, there are now fewer children with a negative view of reading. To us, the **final survey data highlighted the importance and influence of teachers on children's reading habits.**

1. Do you like reading?

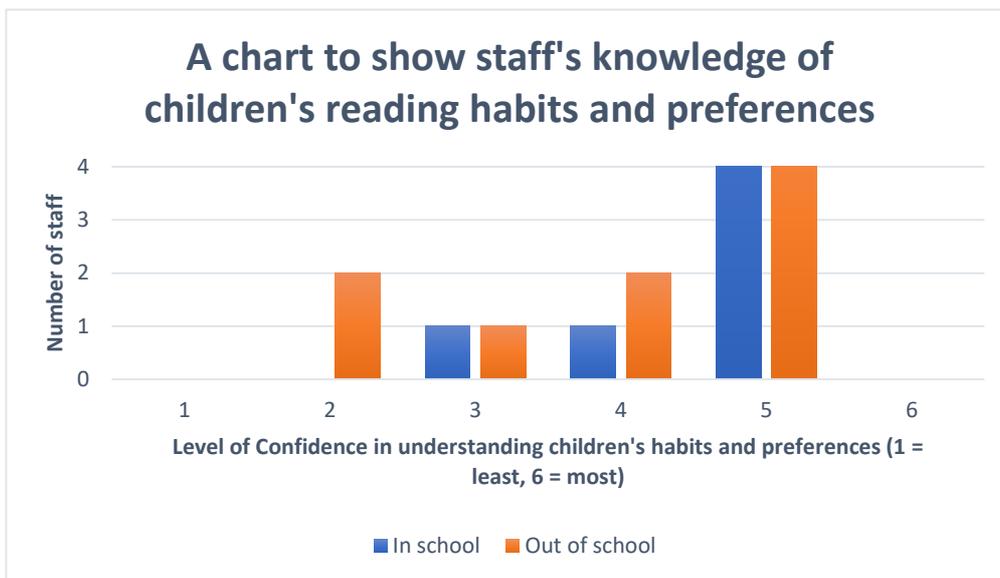


2. Are you a good reader?



	KS1	KS2
'I love reading'	57%	50%
'I'm a good/very good reader'	64%	67%

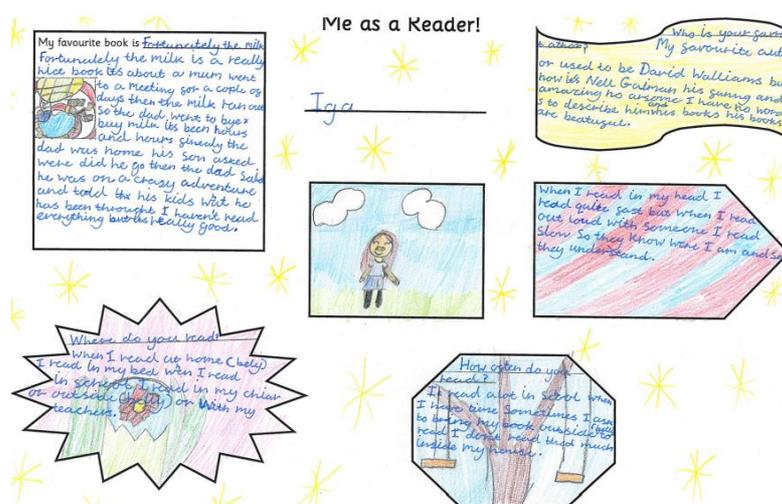
To increase teachers' knowledge of children's reading preferences and habits



More staff now feel they understand children's habits and preferences and can talk about individual reader identities: where readers they like to read and the choices they make about texts. Staff chat informally with children about their reading and have begun to find their own ways of finding out about children's reading habits and preferences.

Different kinds of interactions are developing. As the Teachers as Readers' research found, 'talk about reading and texts became more spontaneous, informed and extended. These changes appeared to be linked to their teachers' enhanced subject knowledge' (Cremin et al., 2014). This has led to a greater awareness of growing trends in children's literature in order to match text choices to individual children. Staff have a greater knowledge of children as readers and are offering a wider range of options of text choices and this has led the teachers to understand the importance of up-to-date knowledge of children's literature more fully.

Ensuring staff invest time 'getting to know their class/individual children as readers' at the start of a new school year supports this. This year staff have set aside time to have discussions with children and complete 'jigsaw' style activities to piece together the child as a reader. Interestingly, no staff felt that this was not their role anymore and they are now being proactive about ascertaining this information. This knowledge will hopefully continue to grow; staff will continue to widen their understanding of children's



literature and this will in turn support book recommendations and widen children's range of literature they read.

Staff knowledge of children's literature has definitely improved. In the final surveys, most teachers cited more modern children's writers, such as Emma Carroll, Chris Riddell and Thomas Taylor. This is a great shift in their knowledge and with their understanding of the children, they are better placed to recommend quality texts suited to a child's preferences. Staff confidence is growing - Year 1 staff have started the December 2020 period with a book advent calendar to excite children around new high-quality texts.



However, we recognise that teaching assistants are still largely reliant on authors such as David Walliams and Roald Dahl and recognise that we need to continue to build their own and staff subject knowledge if this change is to become embedded. This will allow us to continue to develop St Peter's Reading Spine and create a bespoke and engaging reading curriculum for our young readers. Increased staff knowledge will help us make amendments based on individual cohort's likes/dislikes and tailor text choices accordingly.

Creating a reciprocal and interactive reading community which includes the wider school community has become even more of a priority due to the current climate. We had to stop our book swap and our parent/carer reading sessions, and so we need to find new ways to ensure our links with the community are maintained and strengthened. The half-termly Reading for Pleasure newsletter is a two-way process which will continue to develop and further involve parents and the community. As well as staff and children sharing book recommendations, parents now have the opportunity to share their child's reading habits and preferences at home too.



Get Caught Reading!

What do you read and where do you like to read it?

Send your photos to



to be featured in our next Reading Newsletter in December!

