

Loving our 'Little Friends' Library

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For consideration for the Farshore Reading for Pleasure Award:
Experienced Teacher



Context

- Prestfelde is an independent school in Shropshire, for pupils 3-13
- We operate over three departments. The main focus of this case study is 'Little P', our pre-prep department for children from Nursery up to Year 2
- I have been teaching at Prestfelde since 2008 and have always had a passion for reading. As a child, the library was my favourite place to go and have always tried to instil that love of reading in all our pupils



Aims

As we changed our phonics and reading policy based on recommendations from The Reading Framework, DFE July 2021, we knew that we needed to do more to promote reading for pleasure. After reading 'Teachers as readers: building communities of readers' (Cremin et al, 2019) I was inspired by the idea of developing a reading community and promoting a reading for pleasure pedagogy, particularly the area of social reading environments, and was keen to look at ways that we could promote this in our school.

'The earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy practices, the more profound the results and longer lasting the effects' (Clark and Picton, 2012)

Inviting parents to be a part of our library was paramount. With the COVID-19 restrictions over the last two years, it has been difficult to invite parents and carers onto site so a new library, open after school, gave us the perfect opportunity to welcome parents back in again, in an environment filled with inspiring books that promote reading for pleasure.

Aims

The aim was to create a central reading hub filled exciting, up-to-date, diverse, high-quality texts that would get the children, staff and parents enthusiastic about reading for pleasure. We decided to completely overhaul our existing, barely used library area, into a cosy, comfortable, relaxed space that inspired reading and book talk, and where parents are welcome too.

‘In order to support young readers it is also clear that new and more equivalent reading relationships need to be constructed with families and community members; the potential synergy between teachers’, children’s and parents’ reading lives and practices deserves to be explored.’ (Cremin et al. 2009 Teachers as readers: Building communities of readers)



Outline

- After securing funding from our parent committee, Friends of Prestfelde in September 2021, I set the task of having the library restocked with **a wide range of high quality texts with a more inclusive and diverse representation.**
- We currently have nearly 800 books covering fiction and non-fiction. We also have a board book section which has proved popular with younger siblings not yet at school, as well as our Nursery pupils
- We also created **an outdoor library trolley** for pupils to access books at playtimes, containing a range of fiction and non-fiction books



Outline

- In March 2022, we invited **award-winning LGBTQ+ author Simon James Green** to come to Prestfelde and officially open the new 'Little Friends' library. He stayed for the day and provided an amazing day of activities to inspire our pupils such as a comedy workshop, story writing for the Year 2 children and a reading and performance of Llama Glamara, a story of self-acceptance and celebrating differences.
- The library has been open since then and all pre-prep pupils visit at least once a week with their class teacher and it is also **staffed three evenings a week after school until 4.45pm, for parents to visit with their children.**



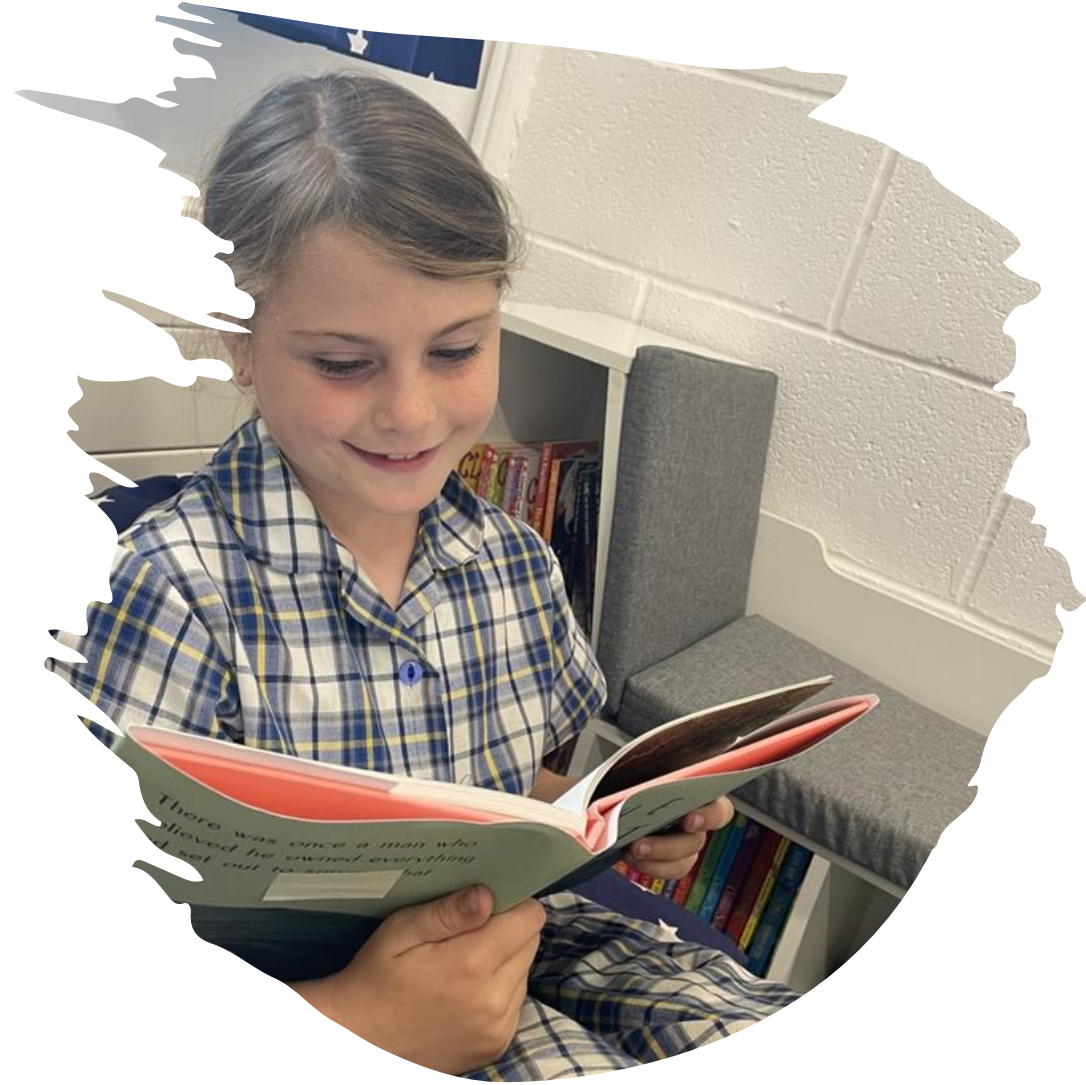
Impact

- We believe that all of our pupils are benefiting from the library, there is such a positive buzz around reading for pleasure now. Some of our Year 2 boys who were previously disinterested in books are now asking their friends when they are returning a certain book, as they want to read it next. We hear children walking by after school, seeing the library is open and asking their parents if they can come in, as well as parents emailing to say how much their child loves the library
- The greatest impact seems to be with those who find reading a challenge and are still developing their reading skills. For those children, books have been transformed from something that can be tricky and effortful to something that is relaxing, entertaining and enjoyable. This in turn, is inadvertently motivating them to persevere with their reading skills and have a more positive attitude to books in general.



Impact

- There are also increased discussions amongst staff about books and recommended authors, with staff often sending suggestions of new releases that would be good additions to our library. It is wonderful to hear teachers recommending books to children as well as just enjoying browsing the books themselves.
- Parents are more involved with their children choosing books for pleasure. They can select books together, ask for a teacher's help with finding a book for a specific purpose or simply get cosy on the beanbags and read a story with their child before collecting an older sibling.





Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

By opening up our library to parents, carers and grandparents, we have created a community buzz around books and reading for pleasure which can only positively impact on our pupils and their attitudes to reading.

Moving forward, we plan to;

- Implement a 'Mystery Reader' programme with parents, carers, grandparents or older pupils in the school coming in to read the end of day story
- Have a 'What's next?' display, so parents and pupils can see which new releases we have ordered and start getting excited
- Host reading events so that children can share books with the grown-ups in their lives such as a reading café and a book swap
- Keep our pupils, parents and staff inspired and enthused about the magic of books



References

- Cremin, Teresa; Mottram, Marilyn; Collins, Fiona; Powell, Sacha and Safford, Kimberly (2009). Teachers as readers: building communities of readers. *Literacy*, 43(1) pp. 11–19.
- Clark, Christina and Picton, Irene, 2012. *Family Matters: The Importance of Family Support for Young People's Reading*. National Literacy Trust