



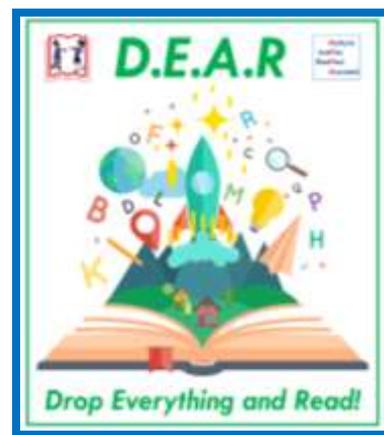
Park Primary School Tom Roddison Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) Independent Reading



Context

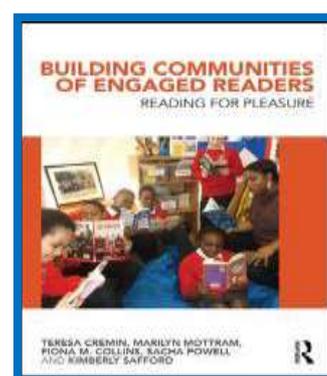
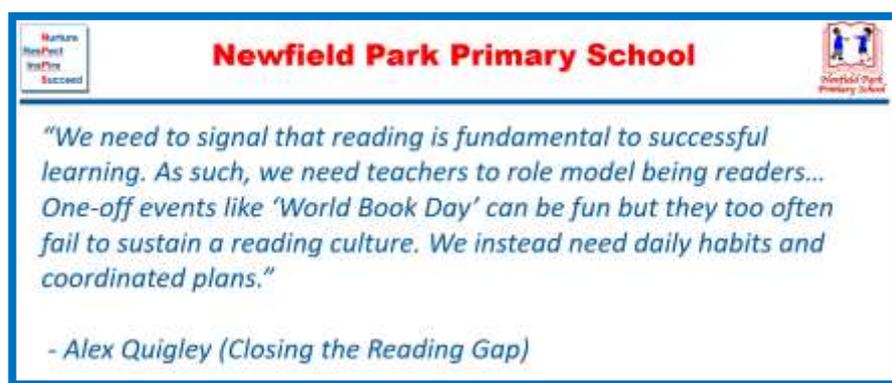
Newfield Park is a larger than average primary school. The school serves a mixed but predominantly White British catchment from a wide area which includes a significant proportion of social, rental as well as private housing.

English (and in particular reading) made up a main part of our Learning Improvement Plan for 2021-22, a year in which OFSTED visited the school. It was Reading for Pleasure that was at the heart of what we wished to improve regarding our reading provision in 2021-22. With this in mind, and inspired by the pedagogy of Reading for Pleasure and sessions with the OU/UKLA Teachers Reading Group at Windsor High School, we developed our 'Drop Everything and Read' mantra.



OU Research inspiration and rationale

There were a number of the Open University's Teachers as Readers (TaRs) findings that inspired us to develop our RfP of D.E.A.R. It was clear that a 'Reading for pleasure pedagogy' was the most important thing for us to enhance: the reading aloud of books, the opportunities for independent reading, the improvement (and use) of social reading environments and structured book talk. As well as this, in CPD done in 2020-21 it became apparent that we also needed to use our expertise amongst the staff to improve others to become 'Reading Teachers', empowering them with the knowledge of contemporary and classical authors, of superb book choices, and to encourage a love of reading amongst them *as well* as the pupils.



Aims

The aim of DEAR was to improve the Reading for Pleasure pedagogy of the school, thus enhancing children's enjoyment of reading, and to aid this by improving teachers' understanding of RfP.

We chose to take a sample of 38 children who would be given a baseline questionnaire/assessment. This deliberately diverse sample of 38 pupils comprised of children who both enjoyed and disliked reading. Additionally, parents would be asked to share their opinion on the project.

Newfield Park Primary School

"Reading for pleasure is more important for children's cognitive development than their parents' level of education and is a more powerful factor in life achievement than socio-economic background."

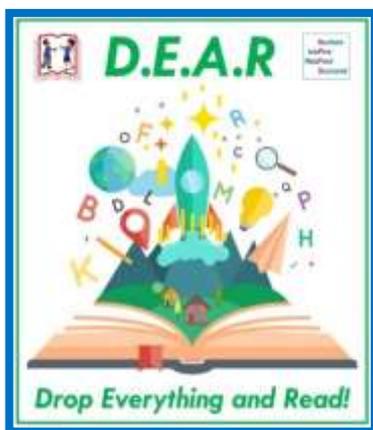
- OECD (2010) PISA 2009 results



Outline

D.E.A.R

All children have 2-3 sessions (20 minutes each) to 'Drop Everything and Read'. These sessions are based on the evidence that children need quality, independent time to explore their books and foster a love for reading. Teachers also take this time to read their own book, role-modelling to the children what a 'master reader' looks like. These sessions are protected in the timetable. The sessions are also used for 'book talk' where children can discuss, recommend and ask questions to each other pertaining to their books. Question stems are available for all pupils (and teachers) in school to aid them.



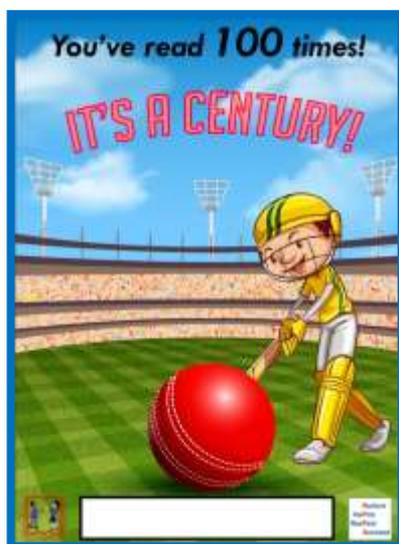
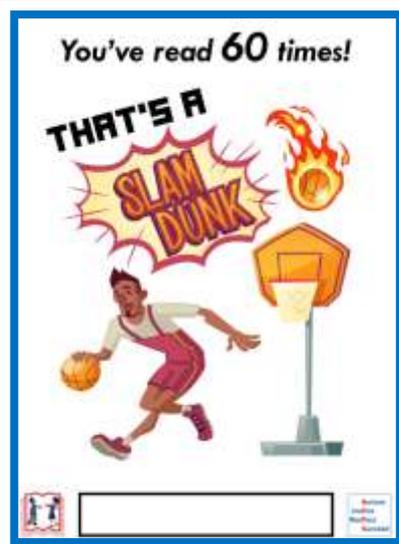
Newfield Park Primary School

"In the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessment, the data for the UK showed that the year 5 pupils in the survey who liked reading the most scored, on average, 45 points more than those who said they did not like reading... Making sure that children become engaged with reading from the beginning is therefore one of the most important ways to make a difference to their life chances, whatever their socio-economic background. For this to happen, however, children need to learn to read as fluently as possible and be motivated to continue reading."

The Reading Framework – Department for Education (2021)

Galactic Readers

Our children collect 'reads' for how much reading they are doing at home and at school. Children are then given bespoke certificates once they reach certain milestones. These certificates are to ensure that children, in-line with research, are not *reading for reward* but are building the intrinsic motivation to read and because it is based on the amount children read, it is not unfairly weighted towards older year groups.



Author Visits

As a school we welcomed a number of authors to Newfield: Phillip Reeve, Christopher Edge, Sarah McIntyre, Kenneth Oppel, Peter Bunzl, Jack Meggitt-Phillips, Sharna Jackson, Petr Horacek and P.G. Bell have all been in to discuss their latest books.

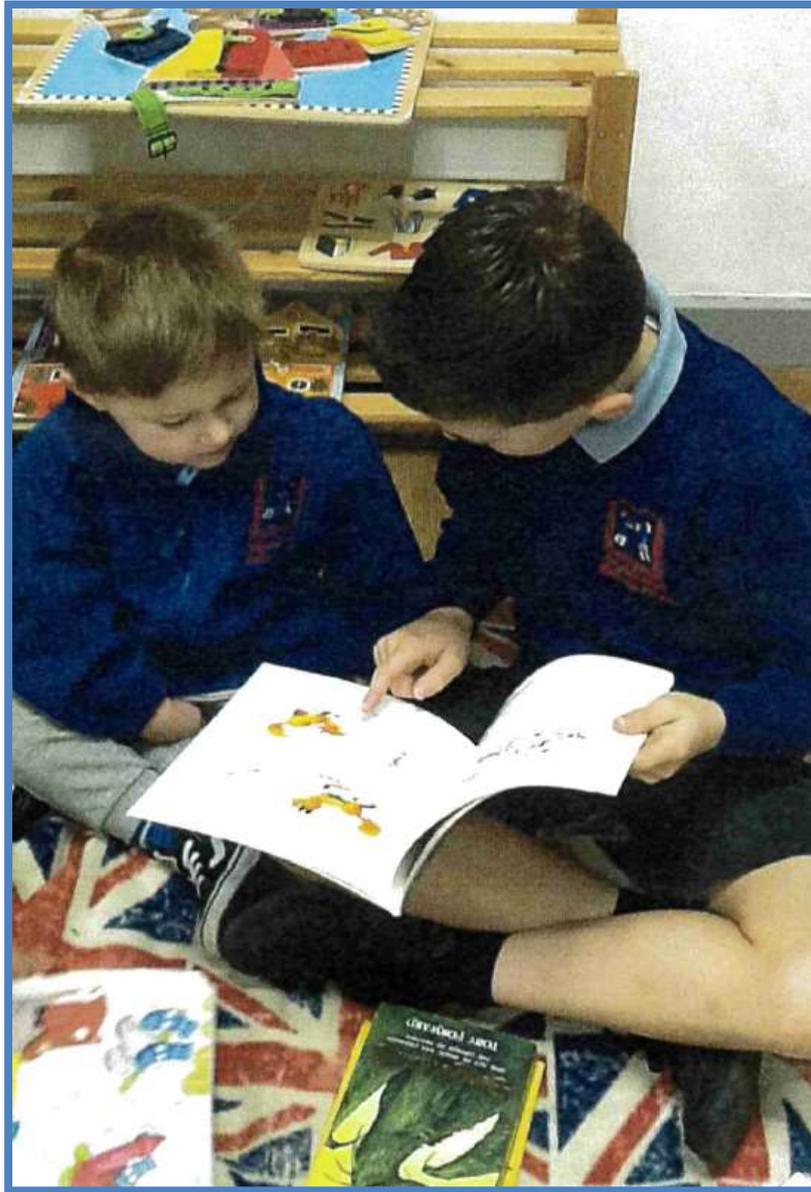


Secret Reader

Every week, Early Years staff invite a 'Secret Reader' in on a Friday to read to the children. The reader may be a parent, a governor, a member of staff, an older child or even a member of the local community. The Secret Reader brings along a book, poem or non-fiction text to read to the year group.

Reading Buddies

From November, our Year 5 pupils have read to nursery children on a weekly basis. Additionally, Year 6 pupils have read to Year 2 pupils – they also leave them comments on what to work on next and what book might be a good one to choose.



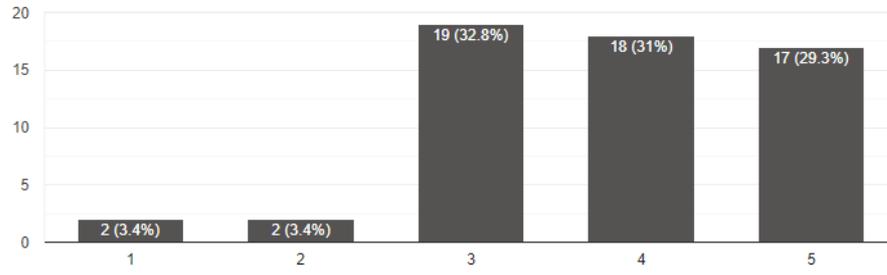
Reading corners and libraries

In line with recent advice by the Department for Education (DfE, 2021) and the Open University's Teachers as Readers (TaRs) (Cremin et al. 2014) findings, our Reading corners and libraries have been revamped this year. The impact on libraries in school can be seen below, with only 4 children saying they did not enjoy spending time there. Please note, all graphs show answers ranging from 1 = strongly disagree through to 5 = strongly agree.

I like spending time in the upstairs library

 Copy

58 responses









“What I’m Reading”

To further improve children’s reading engagement, we have encouraged all staff to update their ‘What I’m Reading’ on classroom doors. Our Reading Ambassadors then check in with staff and report findings back to their class. In our end-point questionnaire, in our sample group only 5 of the children did *not* know what their teacher was reading – a huge improvement over the 12 on the baseline assessment in September.

Newfield Park Primary School

"It can be hard to make time for children to read independently in a packed school curriculum. Nevertheless, many children's home environments are not conducive to independent reading, and thus schools should try to provide this opportunity, even if it is only for a short time each day... Where every child in a class is able to enjoy independent reading, the teacher can join the children in reading silently, modelling a love of books and helping to nurture a reading community within the classroom."

- Christopher Such (The Art and Science of Teaching Primary Reading)



Read All About It!

In Key Stage Two, we now have a special monitor which is updated weekly to reflect key news stories that are of interest to the children. These news stories are available to read throughout the week at break and lunchtimes.

"Reading Reps"

This year we have created **Reading Ambassadors** known as **Reading Reps**. These ambassadors are used in a variety of roles, promoting reading across the whole school. They visit other classes to recommend books, promote book-talk across school and ensure our communal areas of engaging and up-to-date.

The Book Wish Box

If children really want to read a book but it's not in the library then **The Book Wish Box** comes in handy. They can post requests or 'wishes' in the Book Wish Box and the school will purchase at least one copy of the book for the child to read.



Newfield Park Primary School

"Pupils talk excitedly about reading. They have a wide range of books from which to choose. They can also ask leaders to buy a particular book for the library. They receive certificates for the amount of reading they do. Pupils know a range of authors."

(Newfield Park OFSTED report; December 2021)

Superhero Readers!

We invite parents (or **Superhero Readers!**) in to read regularly with children. As of June 2022, we have **12** Superhero Readers meaning a total of **66 children** (normally vulnerable, Pupil Premium or disengaged readers) are having additional time for reading. These sessions are based on the OU findings of the reading aloud of books, the opportunities for independent reading, the improvement (and use) of social reading environments and structured book talk.



Recommended Author/Book Lists (including diversity)

This year, we have created lists of recommended authors/books; they were put together using suggestions from staff, children and from recommended reading spines/websites. We have also created a specific list focused on diversity and inclusion.

Year 5 / 6 Author List: <https://tinyurl.com/5h23p5rt>

Year 3 / 4 Book List: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhdhe7s>

Diversity – suggested topic books / novels for KS1 and KS2 primary-aged children: <https://tinyurl.com/4m25hn99>

Diversity (Book Suggestions)



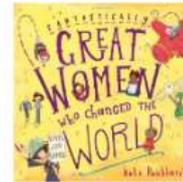
Journey to Jo'Burg *Beverley Naidoo*

A compelling story about the power of perseverance and humanity in the face of adversity and racism. Set in apartheid-era South Africa, 13-year-old Naledi runs away to find her mother in Johannesburg, where she works in a white-only area as a maid. A modern classic, this is a moving book readers on dark-red or black book-bands. A brilliant, thought-provoking and mature read.



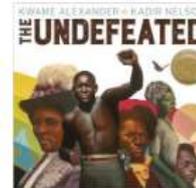
Fantastically Great Women Who Changed The World *Kate Pankhurst*

Featuring a diverse and inspiring cast of women who made the world a better place, including the civil rights advances of Rosa Parks, the adventures of Mary Seacole, the exploration of Amelia Earhart, the enduring legacy of Anne Frank and the artistic perception of Frida Kahlo. This brightly illustrated is suitable for any children in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) who want to find out more!



The Undeclared *Kwame Alexander*

A powerful illustrated black history told through snapshot biographies of key figures and inspirational poetry by leading BAME writer Kwame Alexander; it is used extensively at Secondary Schools but is also appropriate for Years 5 and 6. Covering slavery, politics, segregation, and recent events in America, this accessible and unique picture book is a modern classic and full of interesting and inspiring stories.



Sunflower Sisters *Monika Singh Gangotra and Michael Dias-Hayes*

Despite comments from their conservative Auntie, Amrita and Kiki are empowered to wear their fabulous outfits to the family weddings. With vivid illustrations and lyrical text, this uplifting story provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to help children discuss how to deal with negative comments



Year 5/6 Author List



Abi Elphinstone

Born in Scotland on June 24 1984. Abi Elphinstone was a curious girl that spent her childhood building dens and treehouses which helped in turn build her imagination! She's also taught in London and as far as Africa too! If you like reading adventurous books, then this would be a perfect author for you! She even made one of her story book characters after her sister-in-law with down-syndrome as she learnt so much with her! As a relatively new author, it's exciting to see what Abi produces in the next few years: watch this space!



Terry Pratchett

Sadly no longer with us, Terry Pratchett is one of the most influential fantasy authors of the past few decades. He was aged 66 when he died in 2015. He is best known for his Discworld series of 41 novels. Pratchett's first novel, *The Carpet People*, was published in 1971. His books have been widely adapted for movies, TV shows and even on the stage. If you love fantasy, adventure and action, Pratchett would be a fantastic choice for you!



Neil Gaiman

Born on 10 November 1960, Neil Gaiman is an English author of short fiction, novels, comic books, graphic novels, nonfiction, audio theatre, and films! His works include the comic book series *The Sandman* and novels *Stardust*, *American Gods*, *Coraline* and *Odd and the Frost Giants*. If you enjoy reading fantasy, horror, science fiction, dark fantasy, or comedy, then you will enjoy reading Neil Gaiman's incredible writing. Known as the 'British master of fiction', Neil was able to read at the age of four and was particularly good at most subjects in school – just look where it's got him!



Book Swap!

To try and help our teachers become Reading Teachers, we introduced a bookcase in the staffroom with three purposes:

1. Academic book swap – allowing teachers to read new, academic texts which would help them with reading, writing and phonics
2. QR codes to videos pertaining to teaching and learning
3. A book swap to encourage staff to 'get reading' and discuss what they were reading with one another. It has proven very popular.

Newfield Park Primary School

When teachers developed as Reading Teachers, this positively influenced children's:

- Knowledge and perception of their teachers as readers
- Reader relationships with teachers
- Attitudes towards reading
- Frequency of reading for pleasure at home and school.

(Cremin et al., 2014)



Impact

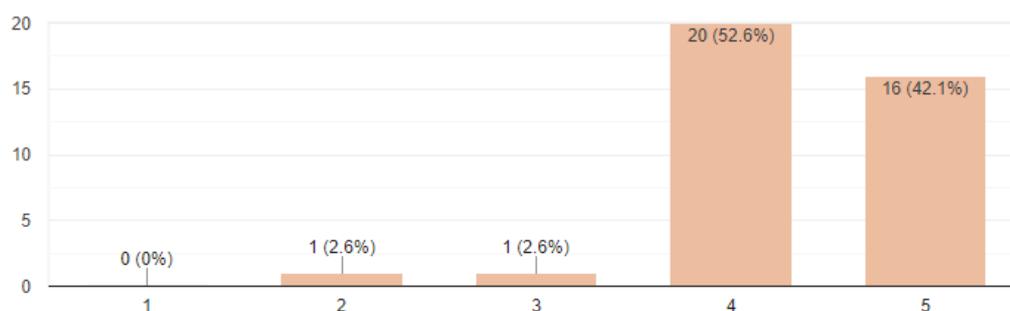
1. End-point questionnaire (June 2022)
2. End-point Parental view questionnaire (May 2022)
3. Pupil voice interviews (June 2022)

1. The main statement of *I enjoy reading at school* has shown the biggest increase. **95%** of children now say they enjoy reading at school up from **79%**; an increase of **14%**:

I enjoy reading at school

[Copy](#)

38 responses

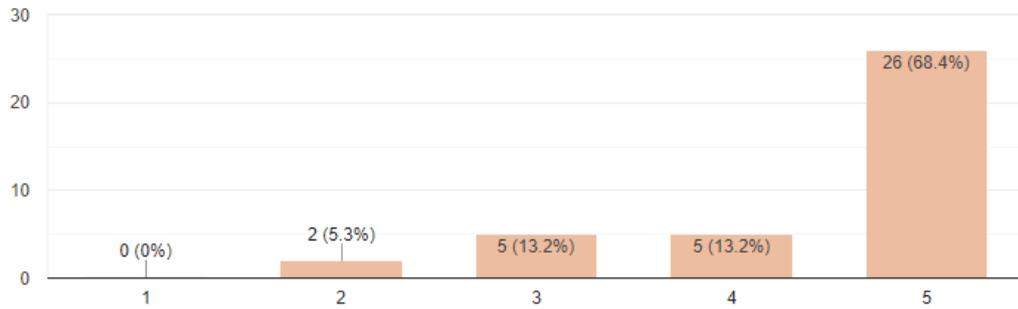


There has also been an increase in children's enjoyment of reading at home. **11%** of children said they did not like reading at home on our baseline, but that percentage shrank to **5%** on our end-point assessment:

I enjoy reading at home

[Copy](#)

38 responses

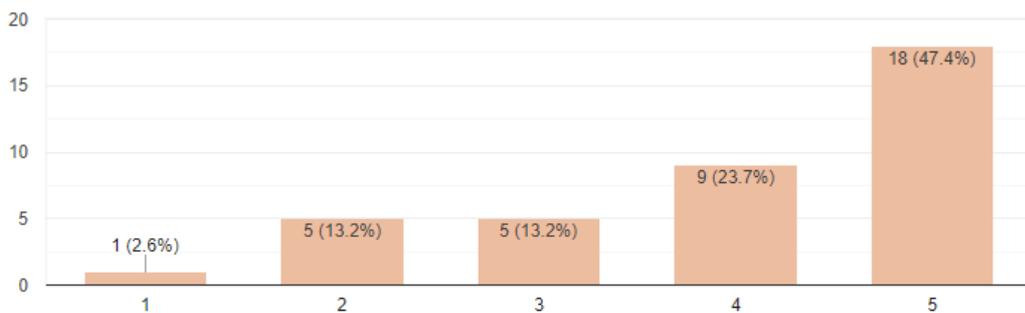


When given the statement *I believe I read enough* there has been a slight increase. **71%** of children now believe they read enough, up from 55% on our baseline. An increase of **16%**:

I believe I read enough

[Copy](#)

38 responses



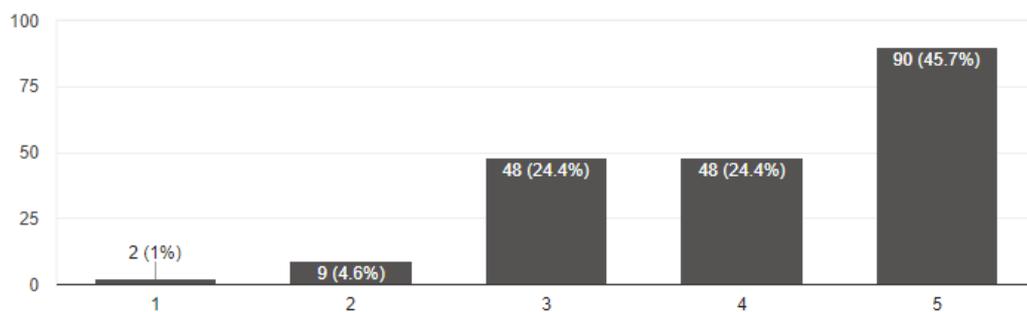
2. Parents/carers:

Only 5.6% of parents (10 responses) said their child did not enjoy reading.

My child enjoys Reading

[Copy](#)

197 responses

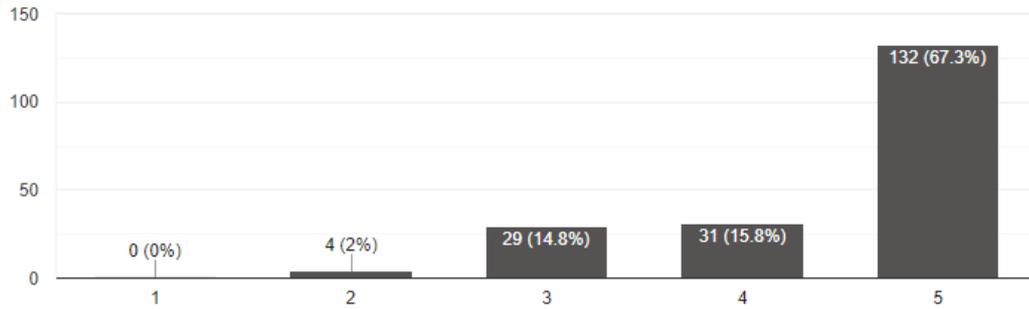


Additionally, there was a positive response for our *Galactic Readers* reading certificates scheme:

My child enjoys collecting 'reading certificates'



196 responses

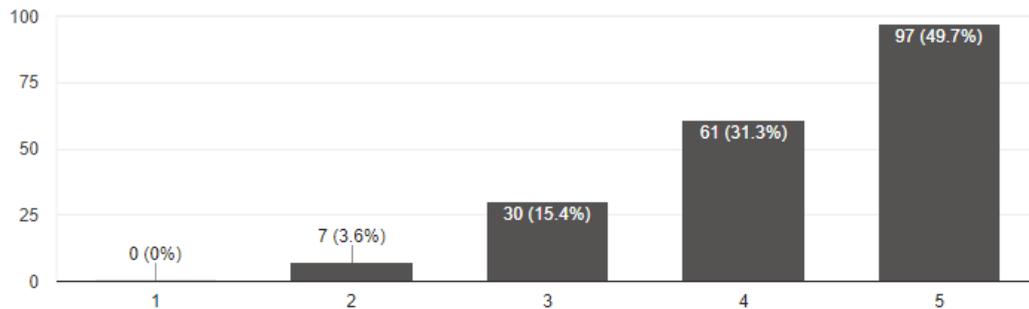


The vast majority of parents felt the school supported their child well in reading. Only 7 parents/carers felt otherwise. Those parents/carers were contacted to discuss if there was anything more the school could do.

I feel the school supports my child well in reading



195 responses

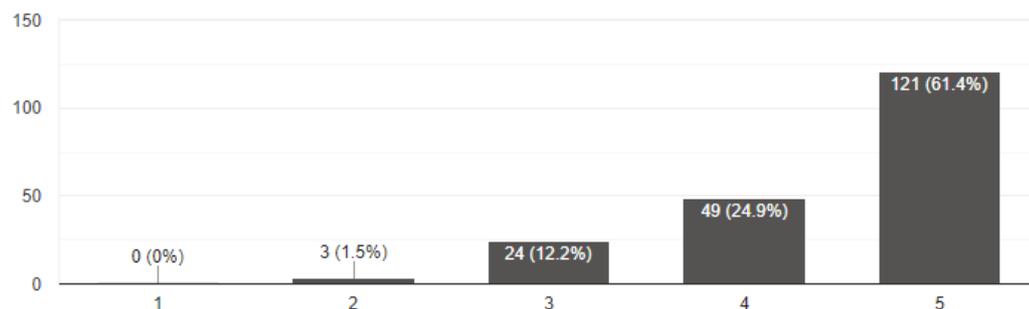


Finally, parents overwhelmingly believed that whatever strategies were being put in place were having an impact on their child's reading ability. Just three parents felt their child was not improving. Again, these three parents were contacted to discuss next steps.

I feel my child is improving in their reading ability



197 responses

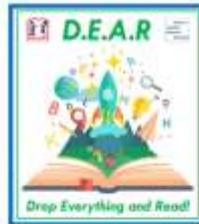


3. Finally, we asked Year 6 pupils to give us their opinion on how reading for pleasure had improved at Newfield Park over the last year. We asked Year 6 pupils as we felt they were better placed to give an honest assessment of how it was now compared to previous years:

"It's really cool that there's a new space in the library just for new releases – I prefer to read brand-new books and that's really helped this year." - Jack

"I really like the libraries as they're inviting and comfy to sit in; it gives you a chance to read in a nice, cosy space. Also, the range of books has definitely improved this year." - Evie

"I really like that the school added The Wish Box. Now we can get books that we want when we see them, especially new ones!" - Scarlett



"The new library area and our reading corner (with the sofa!) has really sparked my reading this year. I have really enjoyed sitting there during DEAR time." - Harry

"The Superhero Readers are really helpful and it's so kind they give their time to come read with us." - Oliver

"The new way our books are organised (in genre order not book-band) is much more interesting and it's so much easier to find the book you want; it reminds me of Netflix!" - Vivienne

"Being a Reading Rep is brilliant; it's so lovely to see how inspired the younger children are when we talk to them about reading." - Ava

"The new author lists (and the diversity one) has been really useful. It's meant we've got more books from different view points and perspectives in the library" - Annika

"I absolutely love meeting authors and getting the chance to ask them questions about how and why they write!" - Noah

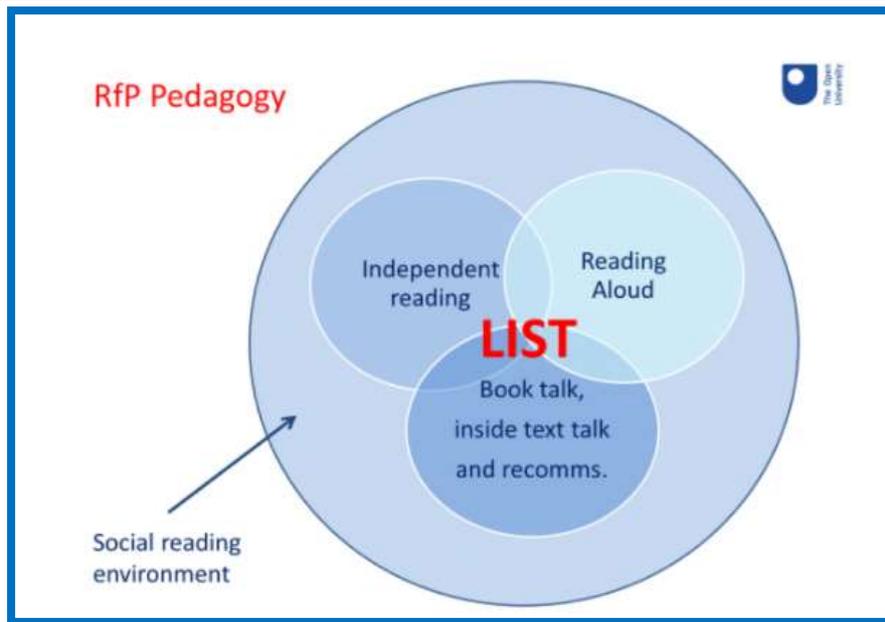
Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

The TaRs clearly had an impact on our practice at Newfield and directly/indirectly helped with most of the strategies listed above. Further to this, the in-person meetings really helped suggestions for new books and new strategies. In terms of wanting to improve our teacher's understanding and love of reading for pleasure, we used the following summary to help guide discussion as to what it would look like:

Reflecting on their own and others' reading practices, enabled teachers to:

- Extend their understanding of what it means to be a reader
- Appreciate the social nature of reading and the role of interaction and affect in RfP
- Recognise the significance of reader identity in reader development and frame their pedagogic practice in responsive ways
- Share aspects of their reading lives in schools alongside younger readers
- Build strongly reciprocal and interactive reading communities.

However, our main focus was to improve the reading for pleasure pedagogy of the school. We shared the LIST approach with staff:



The 'self-checklist' for independent reading was a useful document to highlight how little independent reading time we were giving; it helped us to develop the core fundamental concept of D.E.A.R:

READING FOR PLEASURE

The Open University

**Reading for pleasure pedagogy:
Independent reading**

Review your practice

This self-review document is designed to help you consider your practice with regard to independent reading. In the TaRs research, time for children to read independently and, crucially, to talk about their reading in a social, interactive and reciprocal environment was central to building rich reading communities. The research showed that teachers' knowledge of texts and readers, along with the accompanying reading and informal book talk strands of an RfP pedagogy were essential in generating authentic reader engagement and interaction.

Looking forward, it is key that more work needs to be done to improve our reading for pleasure pedagogy, but it has clearly moved on a significant amount this year. We will continue to implement the strategies listed above but need to quality-assure which strategies are having a real, lasting impact and which need tweaking. It is also crucial that other staff become skilled in the leading of Reading for Pleasure; a member of staff who has shown a key interest in reading will be attending the OU/ UKLA RfP sessions next year.