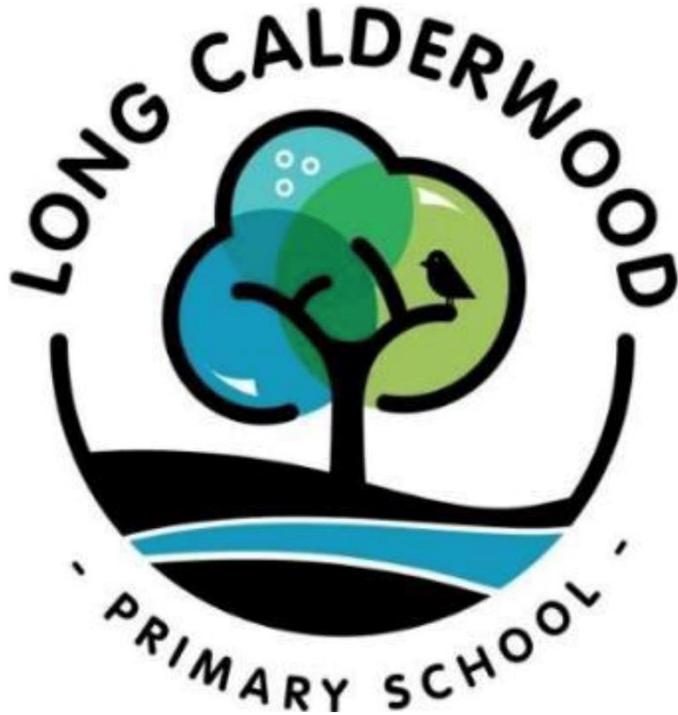


Everyone is a reader

Carol McTaggart

Context



- My primary school is Long Calderwood Primary in South Lanarkshire.
- A key part of our recovery improvement plan is to raise attainment in Literacy and Numeracy.

"Promote a reading culture beyond the core literacy curriculum with a particular focus on reading for enjoyment".

OU Research inspiration and rationale

- I was inspired by the findings in the OU Teachers as Readers research (Cremin et. al., 2014), specifically the work around Reading for Pleasure (RfP) Pedagogy.
- In particular, I wanted to develop our **social reading environments and informal book talk** across all stages of the school.
- I found this article from the National Literacy Trust (2019) to be of particular interest as it discussed the impact and characteristics of school libraries and reading spaces.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/10Zjk6NvFc7cTowOi4b7BtpXqN_tC8XSg/view?usp=sharing

OU Research inspiration and rationale cont.

Teachers need to develop:

1. Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts
2. Knowledge of children's reading practice
3. A reading for pleasure pedagogy which includes:
 - Social reading environments **
 - Reading aloud
 - Independent reading **
 - Informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendations
4. As Reading Teachers: teachers who read and readers who teach
5. Reading communities that are reciprocal and interactive. (from Cremin et al., 2014, above).

Aims

- To ensure all pupils in the school have access to a wide and varied range of reading for pleasure resources and comfortable spaces in which to read.
- To offer a variety of ways for pupils to access reading for pleasure resources both in school and at home.
- To inspire staff to place a high importance on reading for pleasure and embed in their weekly plans.
- To support staff in deepening their knowledge of children's authors and texts, therefore allowing informal book talk with and between pupils to become more reciprocal.

It is clear that teachers need considerable support in order to find the time and space to widen their reading repertoires and develop an appropriately personalised reading curriculum which is both responsive and inclusive (Cremin et al., 2008d)

What did we do?

Initially, in order to provide an overarching aim, we registered for Scottish Book Trust's Reading Schools accreditation.

Specific aims and related initiatives

To ensure all pupils in the school have access to a wide and varied range of reading for pleasure resources and comfortable spaces in which to read.

School Library

- Story Sack Club
- Books at Bus Stops
- Creating comfortable reading areas

What did we do? cont.

To offer a variety of ways for pupils to access reading for pleasure resources both in school and at home.

- Reading buddies
- Including Reading for Pleasure in home learning.
- Communicating with families about the school's reading projects.

To inspire staff to place a high importance on reading for pleasure and embed in their weekly plans.

- DEAR time

To support staff in deepening their knowledge of children's authors and texts, therefore allowing informal book talks with and between pupils to become more reciprocal.

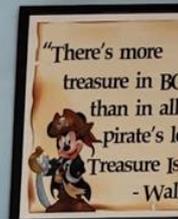
- Improving informal text talk times

Reading Schools

- We registered in the Scottish Book Trust Reading Schools Accreditation Programme.
- We established a Leadership Team, comprising of pupils and staff.
- We created and submitted our action plan.
- We created a Reading Schools display, showcasing all the opportunities we have for RfP during the school day.
- We were awarded our accreditation in April 2022.

READING SCHOOLS

Cosy corners



Reading buddies



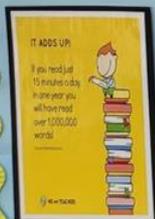
Story sack club



Books at bus stops



Library visits



Scottish Book Week
P2 and P7 reading buddies



Impact

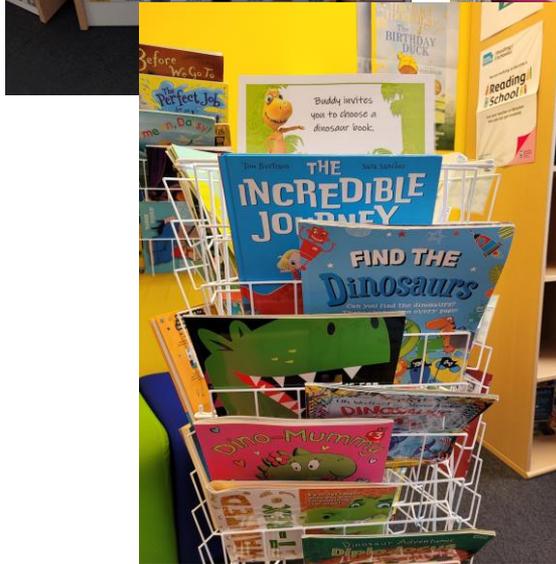
Reading Schools works well alongside our TaR's group. Many of the initiatives for one complimented the other.

Our reading schools action plan gave us focus areas to target and allowed us to delegate sections to members of the leadership team, including pupils.

The research materials provided through the TaR group were ideal for sharing with staff, prompted discussion and enable reading for pleasure to be kept at the forefront of our improvement work.

School Library

- The school library is up and running successfully.
- Classes are timetabled weekly to visit the library.
- Librarians are appointed. They assist classes with book selections, check books in and out, supporting individual learners with strategies for choosing books and keep the library organised.
- Librarians organised a Design a Library Logo competition for the whole school and promoted it to classes.
- QR codes are in place for use by classes. Each class has also been given a folder of the QR codes suitable for their stage for pupils to use at home.
- Library displays are regularly updated to reflect key events, e.g. Burns Day, pupil interests e.g. dinosaurs or to highlight an author, e.g. David Walliams
- An area of the library is set aside for staff, where a number of CPD and non-fiction books are available to borrow.



School Library - Impact!

Our library is a vital part of our school. We moved it to ensure it has a prominent position near the front entrance. This helps parents and other visitors to see that we place a high importance of the value of RfP and it is highly satisfying when visitors comment on classes enjoying their weekly library visit.

It is a comfortable and welcoming area that pupils can also access at times other than their allocated class time. Sometimes pupils who need a quiet 5 minutes will be there, quietly reading or looking at the books.

Supported groups also work there on Build to Express or Phonological Awareness activities.

Pupils look forward to their library visit as identified in a recent survey we conducted with P1-3 pupils (results can be viewed below).

https://docs.google.com/document/d/16LmCClo4D1NzroOiz4ftlosqWi_Zu2GVMRMFbuk6UpE/edit?usp=sharing

Story Sack Club

The Story Sack Club ran for several weeks. Pupils work with a reading buddy or sibling to share stories, chat about them, explore the resources and have a snack and drink in a safe and comfortable environment. Pupils also have opportunities to develop oral comprehension skills through teacher-led group discussion.

We provide a range of Story Sacks which include quality resources that enable the pupils to summarise and sequence stories, puppets to hot seat and retell as well as non-fiction books relating to the story to give context.



Story Sack Club - Impact!

The Story Sack Club is one of the key ways in which we are working to embed reading for pleasure in our school. Ensuring we provide comfortable reading environments, with high quality texts and resources helps us to show our pupils that reading can be for all.

Ensuring equity for our pupils is highly important as some of our pupils do not have access to books at home. By attending Story Sack Club they can experience similar opportunities to their peers.

Pupils were highly motivated and excited to attend Story Sack Club (and not just because of the juice and a biscuit!) The chat around books was infectious and it was lovely to hear the children engaging with each other and witnessing collaboration and support.

We hope to run the Story Sack Club every session.

Books at Bus Stops

- Benches are located around the playground.
- Boxes of books at bus stops are provided based on several different themes, e.g. Fairy Tale Forest, Picture Book Place, Horrid Hills etc.
- Pupils are free to choose books to read/share during play and lunchtimes.
- Boxes are maintained and monitored by librarians.



Books at Bus Stops - Impact!

Books at Bus Stops have provided opportunities for pupils who enjoy reading to extend this to their playtimes. It has also encouraged more reluctant readers to try out some books, especially when they have the support of older children to help. Often our older pupils can be found delivering a 'storytime' to our younger pupils.

Books at Bus Stops is also an excellent way to utilise pupil voice. Pupils are able to make requests via the librarians for new bus stops, based on a particular theme. Some ideas have been 'Minecraft Meadow' and 'Football Forest'.

Creating comfortable reading areas

- We completed an audit of classes - book provision, soft accessories, space etc.
- We moved our class library to allow more space for browsing and also more comfortable seating.
- DEAR areas were created around the school where cushions and blankets were provided for classes to use during DEAR time.
- A plan was made to fundraise to purchase outdoor cushions and beanbags for use in the courtyard.



Creating comfortable reading areas - Impact!

Pupils have commented on their enjoyment of the new areas.

“I love reading in the tent because it is quiet and it is fun” (P3 pupil)

“Going to the library is my favourite time of the week” (P2 pupil)

“It would be cool to have some beanbags and cushions outside” (P6 pupil)

Pupils look forward to their turn to use DEAR areas. As we move forward, and as budgets allow, we would like to increase what we can offer so that more than one class can have access at any given time.

Reading Buddies

- Reading buddies work with our younger pupils to offer additional opportunities to practice reading aloud. Some older pupils also work alongside school volunteers on the Scotland Reads initiative, allowing them to hear a fluent adult read aloud.
- Classes also have a buddy class and staff incorporate some RfP activities within their buddy time planning. This included outdoor reading times.
- During DEAR times, some of our P7 pupils prefer to read to our younger pupils.



Reading Buddies - Impact!

Engagement and confidence with reading has increased throughout the school.

P2 pupils were delighted to share books they had written with their P4 buddies and proudly retold their stories with confidence.

Our older pupils enjoy choosing books for their reading buddies based on their interests and make a real effort to engage them with their storytelling.

Including Reading for Pleasure in home learning

We have looked at ways to include reading for pleasure in home learning. These include:

- Providing pupils with QR codes which they can use on their devices at home to listen to stories.
- Including links to Authors Live recordings as part of online homework,
- We also have a virtual library available for pupils to access from home.
- Pupils have opportunity to borrow from school library on a weekly basis.

During World Book Day, all P1-3 pupils were gifted with a picture book and some P4-7 pupils took part in a Book Swap.



Pupils can access a paper copy of these QR codes to use at home.

Example of one of our virtual libraries.

<https://www.thinglink.com/card/1406688310872506371>

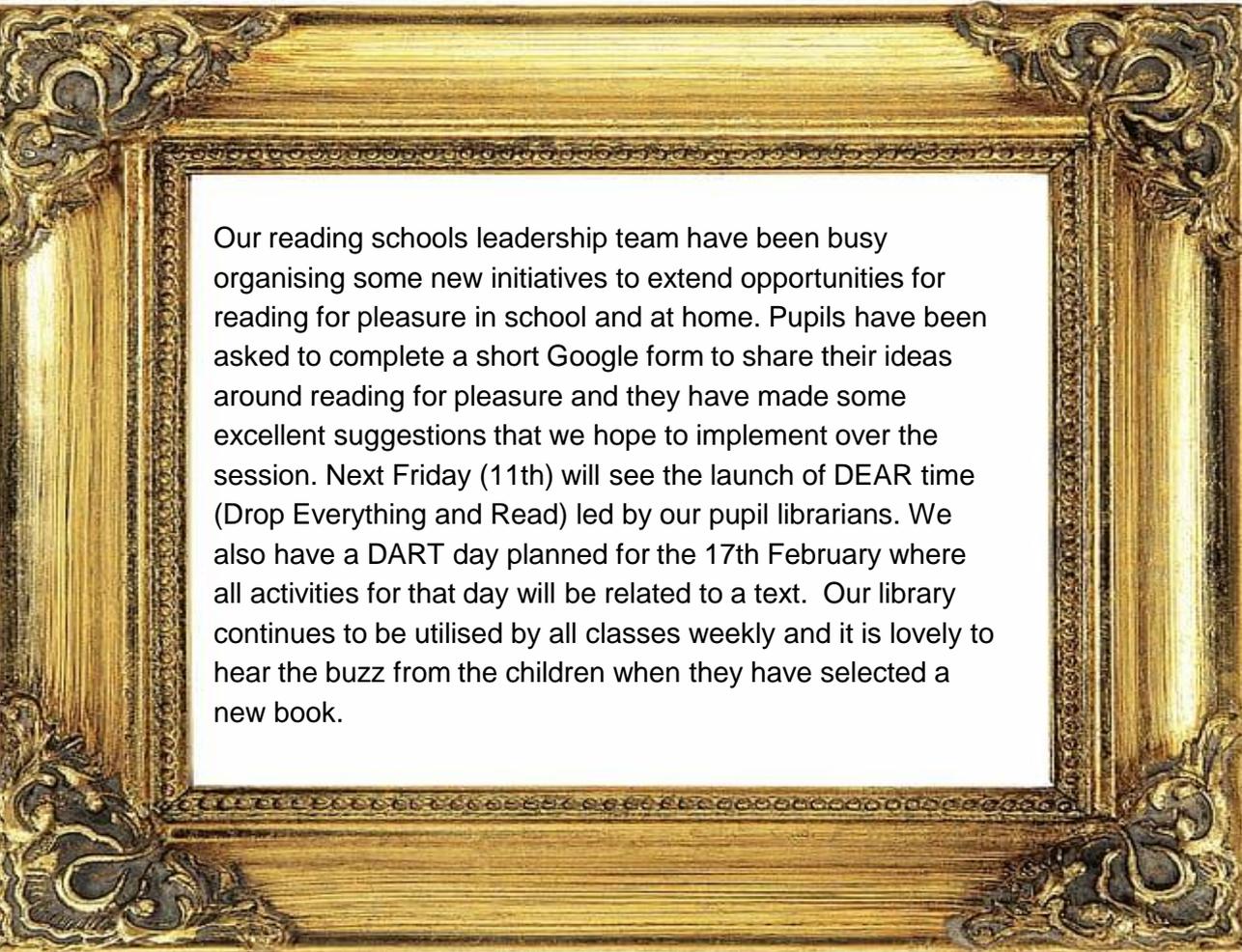
Including Reading for Pleasure in home learning - Impact!

Pupils across stages are enthusiastic about the books they can borrow from the library to read at home. Recent new additions to the library in the form of books about famous footballers were cleared within minutes by our P6 class. This included pupils who hadn't shown a previous interest in reading at home. Pupils were discussion the books and recommending them to each other.

Informal conversations with pupils have suggested that they like the alternative of using the QR codes instead of reading at home themselves. However, this is something we would like to explore further in the new session and hopefully also get some feedback from parents as to what would help them to help their children with reading for pleasure at home.

Communicating with families

- Currently, we include a reading for pleasure segment in our termly newsletter to parents. This enables families to hear about new initiatives connected to reading for pleasure.
- We also have increased our Twitter presence and many families follow us for updates. This allows us to share photos of pupils enjoying reading for pleasure activities and shows the whole school community how much we value and promote reading for pleasure to our families.
- Moving forward into next session, we plan to create our own reading for pleasure twice yearly newsletter. Our librarians would have a pivotal role in creating this and include contributions from classes or individuals.



Our reading schools leadership team have been busy organising some new initiatives to extend opportunities for reading for pleasure in school and at home. Pupils have been asked to complete a short Google form to share their ideas around reading for pleasure and they have made some excellent suggestions that we hope to implement over the session. Next Friday (11th) will see the launch of DEAR time (Drop Everything and Read) led by our pupil librarians. We also have a DART day planned for the 17th February where all activities for that day will be related to a text. Our library continues to be utilised by all classes weekly and it is lovely to hear the buzz from the children when they have selected a new book.

Example of
termly
newsletter
contribution

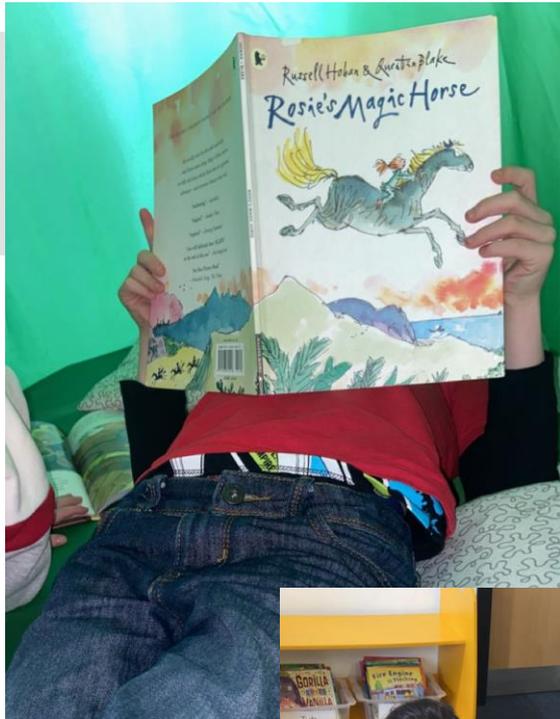
Communicating with families - Impact!

We have received some highly complimentary feedback on our Twitter presence. Parents have noted that it helps them to stay aware of initiative happening in school and the activities and learning that their children are involved in daily.

DEAR time

DEAR time takes place every Friday after assembly for 15 minutes.

- This involves EVERYONE!
- In infant classes, sometimes this involves the teacher reading to the class or the children reading on their own or a mixture of the two.
- Older pupils are encouraged to bring something to read during this time, but in the event that they don't have something, they can visit the library and either choose a qr code to use with an ipad and headphones or select a book to use for the duration of DEAR time.
- There are comfy corners around the school, where pupils can read. These include the library, comfy cushion corners and reading benches. Classes are timetabled for these. When reading in their own classes, pupils are encouraged to get comfy: to turn their chairs around, to read on the floor, even to go under the tables.
- For staff who forget, there are CPD books and a small selection of fiction books in the Staff area of the library.



DEAR time - Impact!

DEAR time has been very successful in our school. Pupils are engaged and motivated and full of ideas for what we could do to enhance the time, e.g. being able to read outside when the weather allows.

We are in the process of enhancing the DEAR spots in the corridors and hope to complete this during next session.

Pupils comments on DEAR time include:

“I find DEAR time helps me relax” (P3 pupil)

“It was clam and the pillows were comfy. I really like DEAR time”. (P6 pupil)

“I like the chance to do extra reading”. (P3 pupil)

Improving informal text talk times

Raising the profile of reading for pleasure in our school has allowed teaching staff the permission to prioritise and enjoy informal conversations with their learners around books and reading. Initially, pupils required some direction and sessions were very much teacher led. However, as pupils have got used to and become more confident in book blethers, the role of the teacher has changed. Often these chats will take place before or after DEAR time and became a protected part of the week.

Pupils share their favourite authors and talk about the types of books that they enjoy. Teachers are able to make suggestions as to other books their pupils might like to try.

Classes participating in Book of the Month allows the opportunity to share books that have been enjoyed with other classes. This can be done through oral book chats, blogs or video reviews.



Example of
Book of the
Month book
review by P4

Improving informal text talk times - Impact!

- These informal chats have proved pleasurable for both pupils and staff and provided a real opportunity for teachers to find out a little more about their pupils. Often they find that they are able to discover new things about their pupils that wouldn't necessarily have come out in the everyday busyness of daily school life but by having a more informal, relaxed time to regularly chat, likes and dislikes emerged and relationships were strengthened.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

As we are nearing the end of the session, and have recently been awarded our Core Reading Schools Accreditation, it is time to reflect on the impact this project has had thus far and what we want to do next.

The TaR's research provided a springboard for our initiatives by providing quality research that could be shared with staff and parents on the benefits to be gained from reading for pleasure.

My first observation is that this initiative has been desperately needed. After the difficulties of learning and teaching through Covid, and subsequent pressure to create and implement quality recovery programmes, staff and pupils were ready for something a little less taxing, but nevertheless rewarding.

Our school has always placed a high importance on reading but by raising the profile and regularity of opportunities provided to read for pleasure, we can sense a real shift in mindset from both pupils and staff.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

There is a real buzz in the school, particularly around DART days and DEAR times but it is much more than that. The library has become a real integral part of our school: pupils across the stages can be heard chattering about books; pupils value their suggestions being considered; and a real testament to the popularity of our library was a recent application form put out to the P6 class to ask for initial interest in the role of librarian for next year. We received 19 applications out of a class of 24.

Moving forward, we have so many motivated people (pupils and staff) who wish to be part of our continuing journey. Many ideas have already been suggested and these include:

- Opening the library to families and eventually extending to include the local community.
- Book awards
- Investing in outdoor cushions and further developing reading areas around the school.
- Extending the frequency of Book Blethers in classes.