

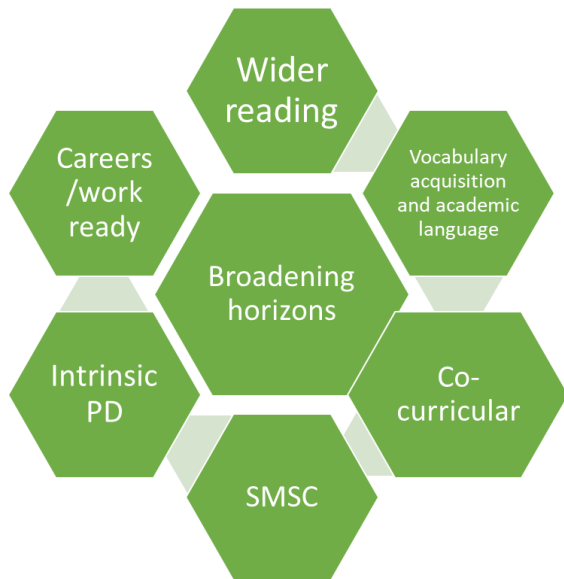
Classics Reading Club: It's an age thing!

Mrs S Cassells

Lead Practitioner - English

Some Context:

I work at Colne Park High – joining in September 2021. There is already quite a good reading culture at the school; however, I wanted to enhance the access/exposure to classics. English Literature is the lower performer out of the two GCSEs and this exposure is something I wanted to foster to encourage more experience with the wider reading.



Taken from school website to show commitment to developing wider reading: <https://www.park-high.co.uk/curriculum/broadening-horizons>



OU Research Inspiration and Rationale

What specific RfP area of focus have you identified in relation to the RfP research evidence base that will benefit young readers?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts2. Knowledge of children's reading practices3. A reading for pleasure pedagogy, encompassing:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. social reading environmentsb. reading aloudc. informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendationsd. independent reading time4. As Reading Teachers - teachers who read and readers who teach5. Reciprocal and interactive reading communities
What are your specific aims linked to one or two of the Teachers as Readers research findings 1-5?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on developing reader-reader relationships• Celebrate communities of readers

Approaching this initiative as a secondary teacher initially posed some challenges. I wanted to create a 'reading community' but I knew this wouldn't involve our parents. Typically, parents of secondary-aged pupils are less involved with homework and reading.

Our 'reading community' was teacher (me) and pupils (my class). I wanted to make this extra-curricular to ensure the pupils were engaging in reading voluntarily – really Reading for Pleasure.

Aims:

Focus on developing reader-reader relationships

- Read with pupils in an extra-curricular setting; allowing discussion around books that isn't 'knowledge' or 'study' based and foster natural conversations about books, plot, character and theme.
- Foster a culture of 'book talk' between pupils.

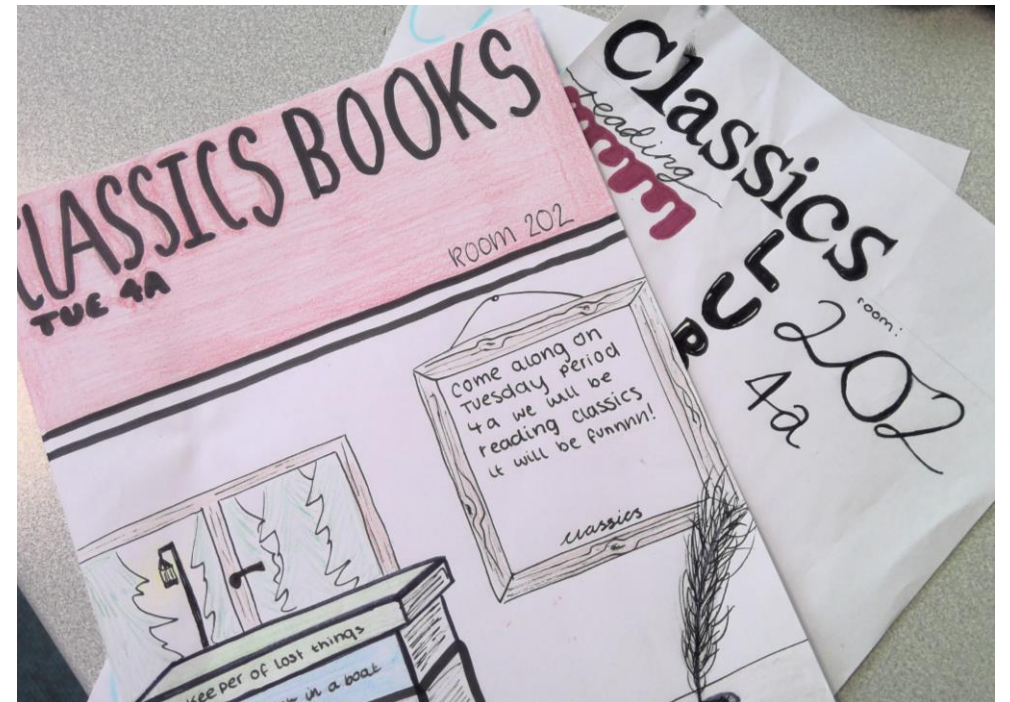
Celebrate communities of readers

- Create a reading community within the school.
- Create a reading community with local primary schools.
- Celebrate the 'Classics Reading Club' at the end of the year with public (in school) recognition.

So, how did I do it?

Stage 1 – Starting the group

Initially, I asked a few pupils from my Year 10 top set to join our 'Classics' group, meeting at lunchtime immediately after their English lesson. *Frankenstein* was chosen as our shared text and founding group members made posters to encourage others to join (pictured here).



So, how did I do it?

Stage 2 – Starting the reading

We decided to read our chosen text, *Frankenstein*, communally using an audiobook with scrolling text on screen (link below). After listening to the opening paragraphs, we discussed moral dilemmas:

- Would you dig up dead bodies for science?
- Is it right to work on humans for the sake of science?
- Is it ever ok to kill?
- What about rejection/abortion of the thing you've created?

[Frankenstein - full audiobook with rolling text - by Mary Shelley - YouTube](#)

So, how did I do it?

Stage 3 – Widening the community.

- a) We've made a link with Laneshaw Bridge Primary School to establish an **'inter-school' reading community**. This will happen in two phases: (1) The Classics Reading Club pupils are going to choose a book and record themselves explaining what the book is, why they chose it and explaining which bit they're going to read and (2) The Classics Reading Club are going to visit Laneshaw Bridge and read their chosen book to the year 5 pupils.
- b) We also **widening the club to other year 10 pupils**. At present, there are a core of ten who attend Classics Reading Club. This has increased from four or five and is something we will promote in the next term. We will put this on internal notice boards and use word-of-mouth to encourage more membership.



A visit to Laneshaw Bridge... growing the community

The Classics Reading Club took a trip to Laneshaw Bridge on Monday 9th May. As part of the visit, we read an extract from one of our favourite classics: *The Secret Garden*. We shared reading with the Year 5 class and discussed what we would have in our own secret gardens. After a short break (with play and custard creams), the Classics Reading Club were invited to take part in the **table reading communities** in the Year 5 class. A love of reading was shared by all with some excellent discussions on books.



Impact (and intended future impact)

On pupils:

There is already a Reading for Pleasure culture at the school. We have a batch of 'Reading Ambassadors' who support the library, however, the Classics Reading Club gave a **more academic focus to the reading** and, because it was Key Stage Four focused, it allowed for more mature discussions.

On me:

I have really enjoyed **entering into 'book talk' mode with pupils that isn't solely on the school's curriculum**. We can talk about books we enjoy and not just books we are studying. The group have mentioned Young Adult fiction for me to read too. I have focused on reading behaviours of pupils as I want to continue to foster the activity of RfP, rather than JUST the study of a text.

Reflection on my aims (against TaRs):



Focus on developing reader-reader relationships

- Read with pupils in an extra-curricular setting; allowed discussion around books that isn't 'knowledge' or 'study' based and foster natural conversations about books, plot, character and theme.
- Fostered a culture of 'book talk' between pupils

Celebrate communities of readers

- Created a reading community within the school
- Created a reading community with local primary schools
- Celebrated the 'Classics Reading Club' at the end of the year with public (in school) recognition.

Pupils regularly spend two lunchtimes a week with me. This has opened up natural conversation about books we've read, are currently reading and want to read together in future.

We started *Frankenstein* but have now changed to *Jekyll and Hyde*. We also plan to read *Jane Eyre* in future!

We talk as a collective about the books we've read so far and a few members of the group even bring in their books to discuss.

My Classics Club was an add on to the excellent work already started in the wider RfP community in school.

Classics Reading Club will be getting awards in their assemblies at the end of the year. I am also going to use the pupils to promote the club next year.