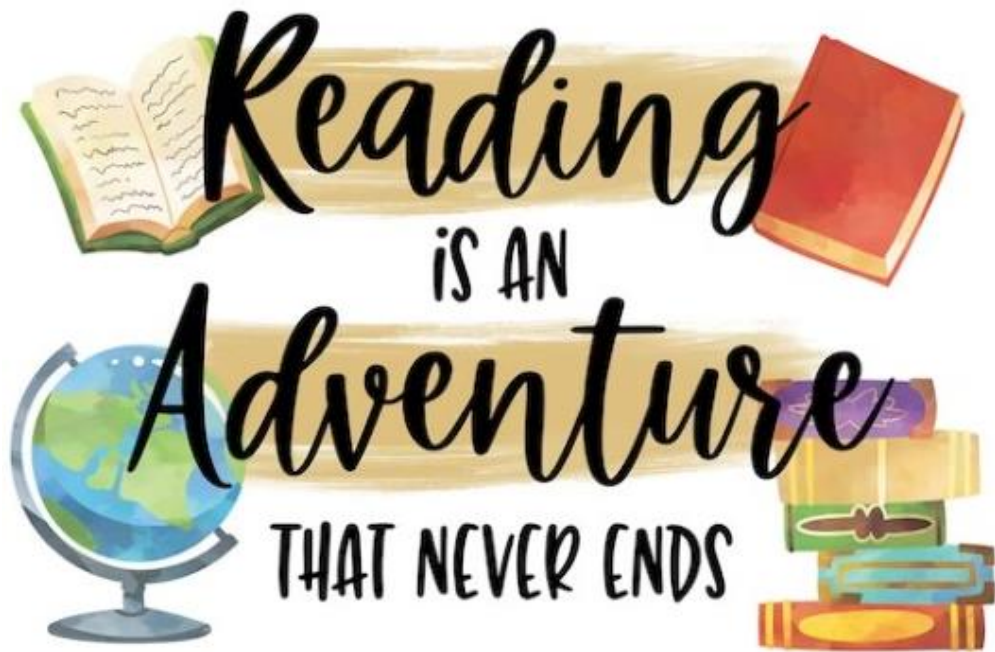




Creating our 'Whiteoak' spine

Kate Bugler-Lane
@MrsB_PrimaryT

Context

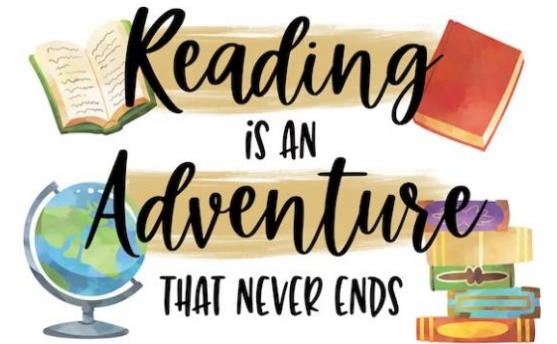
I am a year 4 teacher in a two-form primary school in North Somerset.

At the end of 2021-22 school year our school was inspected by OFSTED. Despite our positive grading, the inspectors reported that they didn't believe that our school had 'fostered a love of reading' in our children.

'Leaders have not built a culture of reading for pleasure. Consequently, too many pupils are disinterested in reading. Leaders should further promote a love of reading and expose pupils to a range of books and texts that might inspire them'.

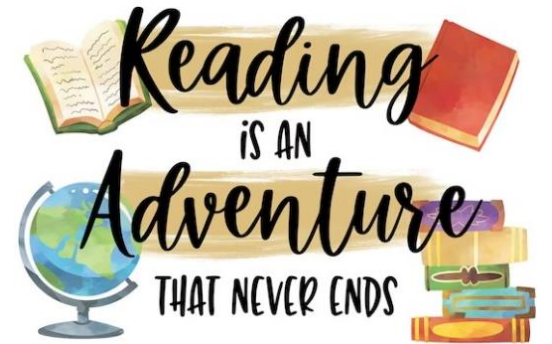
Our senior leadership team decided to introduce a new subject leadership role within the school, 'Culture of Reading Lead' and included developing the schools reading culture on our school development plan.

I undertook this role in 2022-23, during the second year of my ECT and have continued this role this academic year.



Rationale - Our School Focus

We believed that introducing a 'Culture of Reading Lead' would help our school to be able to focus on the key aspects of developing our RfP culture. The role sits within the English team but stands alone from reading teaching, writing and phonics.



After reviewing our current RfP practice and the feedback from OFSTED we decided that our school focus would be on the following:

Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts (Cremin et al., 2014)

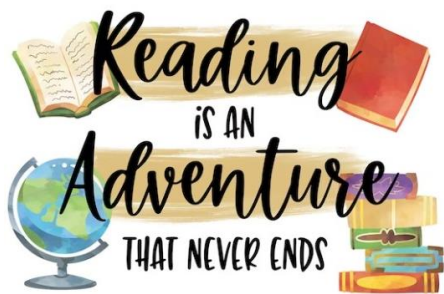
Our concerns were that our staff didn't have sufficient knowledge of up to date reading resources. In a staff survey, the range of different children's authors that staff could name was very limited. Most mentioned authors from their childhood and or 'common' modern authors like JK Rowling and Roald Dahl.

Although staff valued reading highly in their classrooms and enjoyed reading themselves, they were unlikely to read children's books themselves for pleasure. Only a handful of staff, who had primary aged children, said they read children's books for pleasure.



CONSIDERABLE KNOWLEDGE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND OTHER TEXTS

Creating our 'Whiteoak Spine' of book



Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts

Whiteoak Spine

Impact 1:

By providing a focussed list of texts and authors this has allowed class teachers to develop their own knowledge of children's authors. Teachers know the core books they will be using during that year so can then create a reading climate where they can genuinely engage with pupils about reading materials and authors, thus fostering a love of reading.

The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 1



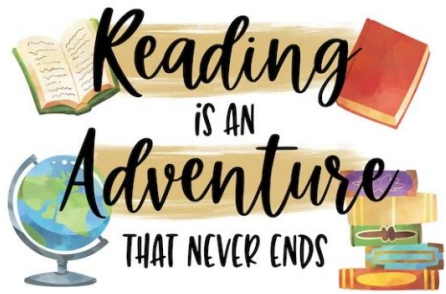
The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 2



Impact 2:

By having a list of authors for each year group this has allowed us to focus on these authors when looking at virtual events and book launches. Children are engaged and excited when they see a new book from an author they are aware of and from which they have read one of their books already. This has led to increased book talk and recommendations between children and adults.





Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts

Whiteoak Spine

Impact 3:

Having a mapped-out curriculum of texts we can help to foster that love of reading through investment in our social reading environments. We have invested in our classroom book shelves through focussed purchasing of texts linked to our 'Whiteoak Spine'.

Example: Year 3 – The Wild Robot.

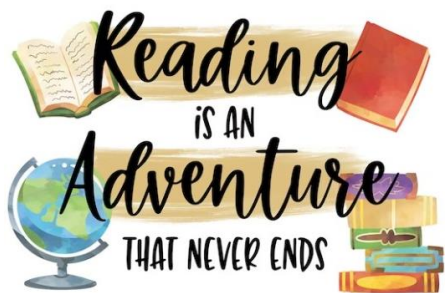
The Wild Robot is a class novel for year 3. We have ensured that the two sequels are available for Year 3 children to access when they have finished their class novel, and that the series are also on the Year 4 bookshelves.

The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 3



The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 4





Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts

Whiteoak Spine

Reflecting and reviewing the spine

In the summer of 2023/24, we did an active review with all members of staff to determine which (if any) books they would want to change or add to their spine.

We completed pupil voice twice in the year to discuss RfP and their spine books. These conversations helped us to identify any texts that needed to be changed.

Example: Year 5 poetry book

Although the year 5 children enjoyed their poetry journal, it was obvious when talking to them about their anthology that it was not as engaging for the children as the texts selected in other year groups. This consultation with the children and the year group team helped us to identify that a change in poetry anthology was needed for the next academic year.



APPENDIX 1

How we created our Reading Spine

Appendix

How we created our Whiteoak Spine

Initial consultation

We decided that we wanted to get the spine in place for the start of the 2023/24 academic year. In January we discussed our plans with teaching and support staff and sent out an online form asking for any recommendations for particular year groups. We also consulted our reading ambassadors.

Questions we asked were:

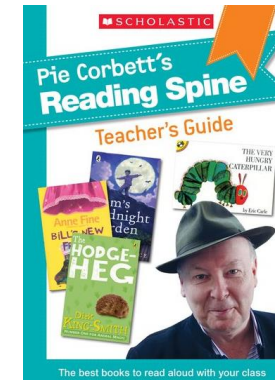
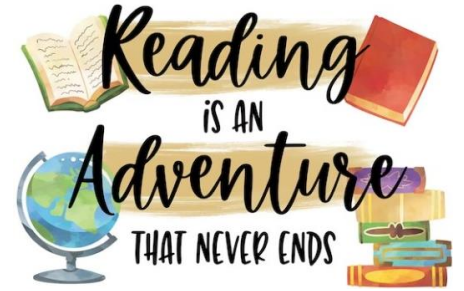
What books are you passionate that our children should be exposed to during their Whiteoak journey?

What books have your year group really loved?

What non-fiction that have supported our learning during our foundation subjects?

What books inspired you during your school years?!!

We also researched other published school reading spines and studied Pie Corbett's reading spine guide to see how and why particular texts are selected (Corbett, 2015).



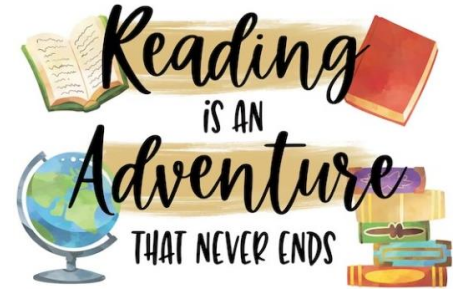
Appendix

How we created our Whiteoak Spine

Content

We wanted the spine to reflect all our curriculum and include a range of different text types and genres. We decided that each year group would have the following within its spine.

- Poetry anthology
- Science non-fiction
- Geography non-fiction
- History non-fiction
- PSHE non-fiction
- Graphic novel (years 2-6)
- Picture book
- Classic novel



Appendix

How we created our Whiteoak Spine

Text selection

Fiction

We wanted to ensure our spine had a wide range of different genres, themes and diverse authors. Using our staff and ambassador recommendations as a starting point we began to build the spine visually.

We used recommended reading lists from various sources including The Reading Teacher (The Reading Teacher, 2024) and Love reading 4 kids (Lovereadings4kids, 2024) to supplement the list so we had around 10 per year group.

We ensured that we selected a range of diverse authors and that the texts included the different basic story plots. A key consideration was to ensure that the texts were also representative of the children reading them, helping to teach children about different cultures and experiences and understanding a character's point of view.



Appendix

How we created our Whiteoak Spine

Text selection

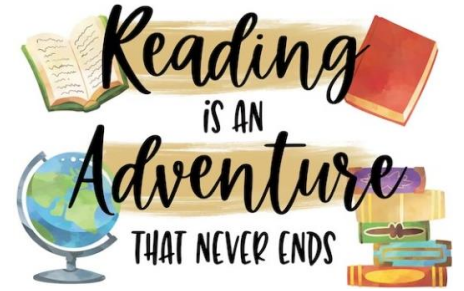
Classics

We wanted to ensure all year groups had a classic novel that was used as a 'read loud' text for one term. We researched different approaches to classifying a 'classic novel' looking at author, age but also ensuring the content was still appropriate.

Using Love Reading 4 kids class blog (McLaren, 2023) we consulted our teaching staff as to which text they would like to include in their year group. Texts chosen were:

Reception – Peter Rabbit
Year 1 – Paddington
Year 2 – Pippi Longstocking

Year 3 – The Iron Man
Year 4 – Charlotte's Web
Year 5 – The Secret Garden
Year 6 – Holes



Appendix

How we created our Whiteoak Spine

Text selection

Non-fiction

We looked at the text currently used within the year groups and decided which ones we felt should be included and where we thought that we could improve the offer.

Poetry

We were recently gifted poetry anthologies from our parent association the previous year, so we brought those anthologies to a staff meeting and discussed their suitability for the spine and if they were applicable to be used in a scrapbook.

Graphic novels

We spoke to our reading ambassadors about what graphic novels they enjoy. I utilised online reading recommendation resources such as Richard Ruddick's padlet (Ruddick, 2024) of graphic novels to get some ideas for appropriate texts for each year group.



APPENDIX 2

Our 'Whiteoak' Spine 2023/4

The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Reception



The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 1



The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 2



The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 3



The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 4



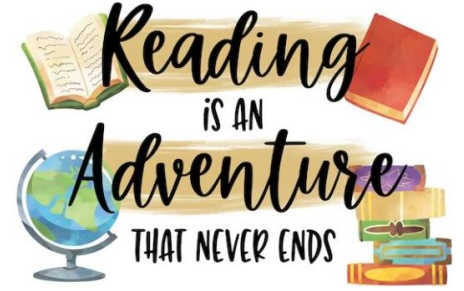
The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 5



The Whiteoak Reading Spine - Year 6



References



Corbett, P. (2015) Pie Corbett's Reading Spine Teacher's Guide. Scholastic

Cremin, T. (2014) Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure. London: Routledge

McLaren, D. (2023) <https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk/blog/go-classic-books-every-child-should-read-6074> (Accessed 2023)

Love Reading 4 kids. (2024) <https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk/> (Accessed 2023)

Ruddick, R. (2014) <https://padlet.com/rruddick9zra/graphic-novels-73uh2srzpbia> (Accessed 2023)

The Reading Teacher (2024) <https://www.thereaderteacher.com/> (Accessed 2023)

