

Widening Knowledge and Pleasure in Reading in Children's Literature

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Context



I am the English lead at Dunholme St Chad's Primary School in Lincolnshire. We are a one-form entry school in a small village with approximately 220 pupils on roll. RfP is on our school improvement plan as we feel that we need to reignite a love of reading within the pupils. Our vision is to ensure every child leaves our school with the ability to read widely and for pleasure. We are in our first year of the OU's Reading Schools Programme and I have achieved my NPQLL this year.

OU Research Inspiration and Rationale

Baseline Data

- Staff knowledge of children's literature needed development: Most staff named classical authors, or one's from their own childhood. There was very little diversity within the named authors.
- Frequency and quality of reading aloud was inconsistent.

Do you like reading?



■ I love reading ■ It's ok ■ I'm not bothered ■ I don't like reading

- Most classroom reading corners needed updating (limited variety of text types, not diverse or well organised).

Pupil survey data:

- Only 44% children loved reading
- The older children thought they were better readers and read most days.
- 60% children enjoyed listening to their teacher's read to them.

I decided to focus on two strands of the OU/ UKLA Teachers as Readers (TaRs) findings:

1. Considerable knowledge of children's literature and other texts

"The Phase II project demonstrated that, when teachers recognise their professional responsibility to expand their repertoires of children's literature and other texts, they are enabled to talk about such texts, make tailored reader to reader recommendations and foster reading for pleasure. Without secure subject knowledge and thoughtful appreciation of reading and being a reader, teachers are not effectively able to employ a reading for pleasure pedagogy." (The Open University, 2021)

2. A reading for pleasure pedagogy which includes:

- Social reading environments
- Reading aloud

"Reading aloud and discussing the text was a crucial strand of the RfP pedagogy identified in the TaRs research. It enabled children to access rich and challenging texts, offered a model for silent independent reading, prompted the children's affective engagement and created a class repertoire of 'texts in common' to discuss." (The Open University, 2021)

Aims

- Improve teacher's knowledge of children's literature and diverse texts
- Develop teacher confidence in developing and nurturing a reading for pleasure culture
- All classrooms to have an inspiring reading environment
- Update the school library

Outline

The **Reading Schools Programme (RSP)** was introduced at a staff meeting. **Benefits of RfP and TaRs research** were explored, giving staff a greater understanding of why RfP is important and how impactful their role can be.

Strategies for increasing staff knowledge of children's literature and other texts:



- **Research spotlight authors.** During a staff meeting, staff were given the opportunity to research up to date authors and create a list of 10 books that they would like to have in their classroom to read to their children every day. They were encouraged to choose a wide spread of genres and ensure they were diverse in authors.
- **Book Blankets.** Staff spent time with their classes talking about their choice of reading books.
- **Virtual Author Visits**



- **Book recommendations** by all staff were displayed (forward-facing) in the library.

Strategies for developing the RfP pedagogies:

Reading aloud



- Each teacher read 3 Laugh Out Loud books to their class. The children voted for their winner and this was announced in a whole school assembly.
- Reading aloud for 15 minutes every day.
- The librarians started a book club once a week during break times.
- Reading buddies continued with Years 6 & 1 and Years 5 & EYFS once a week.

Developing Reading environments in the classroom and library.

- All teachers were asked to create an inspirational reading display in their classroom.
- All books in the classrooms were reviewed.
- Teachers were asked to review their recommended reading lists for their class.
- During a staff meeting, the library was given an overhaul and all the reading materials were reviewed and categorised.
- New books were ordered and placed forward-facing. The school librarians (four Year 6 pupils) were tasked with refreshing them every couple of weeks.

Impact

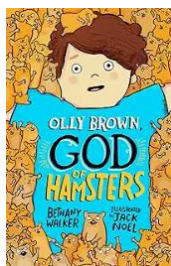
- All teachers researched and created a wish list of books for a bookcase in their classrooms. Next year, the children will choose a Reading Aloud book from this selection for their teacher to read every day.

I love listening to my teacher read – they use silly voices for the different characters.

Year 6 pupil

- Children are choosing the new forward-facing books from the library to read, and this is exposing them to a range of texts.

- Children are asking to do another book blanket and talk about the different books that they are all reading.



- Following the Virtual Author visits, children were purchasing the discussed books, and we had to make a queue for the school purchased books. I even managed to get one signed by the author and this made it even more popular.
- Reading displays were updated in the classrooms with children's recommendations.



Next Steps

- Continue to develop and expand our **Reading Aloud** practice by:
 - Keeping up to date with new reading material
 - Refreshing the forward-facing books regularly
 - Ensuring Reading displays are updated regularly with children's recommendations
 - Sign up for more Virtual Author events
- Create an **outdoor reading environment**
- Share and promote **informal book chat** at a staff meeting
- Librarians to be more involved in recommending books