

Blakesley Hall Primary School

Context

Blakesley Hall Primary School (BHPS) is a Local Authority, community school situated in Stetchford, Birmingham. It is a larger than average sized primary school with 630 pupils on roll. At BHPS:



- pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds (the largest group within school are Pakistani)
- there is a high turnover of pupils in some year groups (last year, nearly 30% of our Year 6 pupils did not start with us in Reception)
- the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average
- the proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is well above the national average
- the proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is well above average



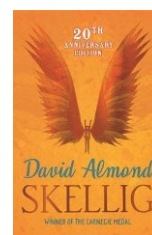
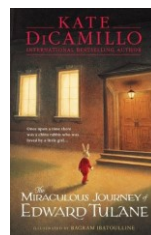
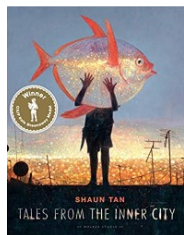
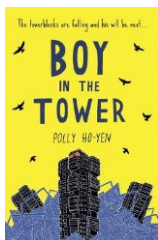
The story so far

Reading has been a priority for a number of years, with much of the focus being on the teaching of 'reading skills'. There is now consistent practice across school, higher quality discussion around texts and we have also developed a strong focus on raising the quality of the vocabulary we use with the children.

Alongside focussing on the teaching of reading skills, we have also undertaken a lot of work around reading for pleasure. Each year we hold a month-long Blakesley Hall Book Festival, with author workshops, visits to the local library, parent and child reading breakfasts, competitions and much more.

Last year saw the reintroduction of class sets of class novels, with all teachers reading with their pupils every day. High quality children's books have also been placed at the heart of our writing curriculum, with much stronger emphasis on 'reading as a writer' and

'writing as a reader'. Children are becoming more skilled at discussing the effect they want to have on their reader as they craft their own writing.



A selection of our class novels

Throughout the Open University (OU) 'Developing Reading for Pleasure Across the School' project, the school's librarian and I worked closely together – and as time went by other colleagues came forward and asked to take the lead on driving key aspects of RfP (Reading for Pleasure).

Explore

Establishing a base-line

At the outset of the project all pupils and staff completed baseline attitudinal surveys and reflected on the school's current RfP practices. For this, we used the OU's RfP 'Review Your Practice' self-review document and their 'Children's Reading Surveys' for KS1 and KS2, which can be found here:

<https://researchrichpedagogies.org/research/page/developing-reading-for-pleasure-in-your-school>

Microsoft Forms was used to create e-questionnaires for all pupils in KS2 and all staff (Teachers, TAs and SLT). The use of Microsoft Forms made the collation of results very easy and supported the analysis of the findings. Pupils in KS1 completed their Children's Reading Surveys as a class, rather than on an individual basis.

Key findings from pupil surveys

The baseline data from the pupils across school (KS1 & KS2) revealed the following:

Strengths:	Development points:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy reading • Children enjoy being read to by adults • Children are read aloud to frequently in school • Throughout KS1 and KS2 pupils report that they are supported with their reading at home • Pupils can name their class novels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil perceptions of their reading ability • Continue to increase the exposure of children to a wide variety of authors • Children can name the titles of books but not authors/illustrators

Across KS2, 51% of pupils reported that they 'love reading', with a further 34% of pupils reporting that reading is 'OK'. Only 8% (26chn) of pupils across KS2 said that they 'don't like reading'.

When asked about their favourite authors, a range of contemporary popular authors were named by KS2 pupils e.g. Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Morpurgo, Roald Dahl, JK Rowling, David Walliams, Jeff Kinney and Anthony Horowitz. However, many children struggled to name authors/illustrators, although they could name the titles of books. What was also noticeable was that there was not a great deal of variation in author choice across year groups.

The picture was similar in KS1, with pupils stating their favourite books were e.g. Monkey Puzzle, Room on the Broom, Elmer, The Hungry Caterpillar, The Gruffalo, Stickman, Owl Babies, Toys in Space, Beegu and We're Going on a Bear Hunt.

Key findings from staff surveys

The baseline data from the staff within school revealed the following:

Strengths:	Development points:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of time allocated for independent reading • Frequency of reading aloud to children across school • Teachers feel they know their classes reading habits in school reasonably well • Texts read aloud are chosen by teachers and pupils • Majority of teachers feel their classes interact with the reading environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher awareness of high quality children's literature • Diversity of authors and illustrators • Knowledge of children's reading habits at home • Opportunities for children and teachers to talk informally about books • Teacher's views on their class' perception of them as readers

Examples of key questions and findings from the OU 'Review Your Practice' Teacher Survey:

7. How frequently do you set aside time for children to read independently?

[More Details](#)

● Daily	22
● Weekly	4
● Occasionally	0
● Never	0



10. How often do you read aloud stories to your class?

[More Details](#)

Daily	24
Weekly	2
Monthly	0
Infrequently	0



16. How often do you informally talk about books- that are not being studied in literacy or guided reading sessions- with your class?

[More Details](#)

Regularly	8
Sometimes	8
Rarely	9
Never	1



17. How often do you provide opportunities for children to talk informally about their reading and their preferences as readers?

[More Details](#)

regularly	3
sometimes	16
rarely	7
never	0



18. How often do you make specific tailored recommendations to particular children?

[More Details](#)

regularly	3
sometimes	16
rarely	5
never	2



1. Name three authors whose work you value

KS1	KS2
JK Rowling	Michelle Magorian
Roald Dahl	Michael Morpurgo
Julia Donaldson	Charles Dickens
Tolkein	Terry Pratchett
Malorie Blackman	Neil Gaiman
Jacqueline Wilson	Philip Ridley
Eric Carle	Shaun Tan
Shakespeare	Rick Riordan
Enid Blyton	Mark Haddon
Charles Dickens	Tolkein
	Malorie Blackman
	Enid Blyton
	Roald Dahl
	Benjamin Zephaniah

2. Name three picture fiction creators whose work you value

KS1	KS2
Julia Donaldson	Shaun Tan
Allan Ahlberg	David Weisner
Michael Rosen	Quentin Blake
Clarkson	Kes Gray
Mini Grey	Quentin Blake
Nick Sharratt	Allan Ahlberg
Judith Kerr	Nick Sharratt
Anthony Browne	Julia Donaldson
Sandra Dieckman	
Eric Carle	
Jill Murphy	
Helen Niccoll	
Alan Moore	
Shaun Tan	
Michael Foreman	
Axel Scheffler	

Whilst there were plenty of opportunities for children to read throughout the day, our baseline survey findings revealed that staff had not developed pedagogic practices that are RIST:

- Reader-led
- Informal
- Social and with
- Texts that tempt

However as Cremin notes, 'reading for pleasure is more closely associated with intrinsic motivation; it is reading that children do for themselves at their own pace, with whom they choose and in their own way' (Cremin 2019, NATE Primary Matters, Summer 2019).

From a closer look at the staff's responses, it was clear that the vast majority of authors, poets and illustrators listed were those that they are likely to have encountered as children, studied themselves at school, read with their own children or they are standard contemporary classics e.g. Julia Donaldson and Roald Dahl.

The OU Teachers as Readers project found that when teachers widen their knowledge and pleasure in reading children's literature and other texts, and become more aware of

their own and the children's reading practices, they 'reconceptualise reading from the inside out, and more effectively build a reading for pleasure pedagogy and strong communities of readers within and beyond school' (Cremin et al., 2014, Building Communities of Engaged Readers).

Upon further inspection of our staff baseline survey responses, it was also clear that the majority of the authors, illustrators and poets that staff could list were white and male.

The underrepresentation of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) characters in children's books is something that The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) have highlighted in their Reflecting Realities reports.

The key findings from their 2020 report summaries the extent of the problem:

Key Findings from the 2019 Survey



You can read the CLPE Reflecting Realities reports and learn about their work to examine the extent and quality of ethnic representation and diversity in children's publishing in the UK here:

<https://clpe.org.uk/aboutus/news/announcing-our-new-reflecting-realities-blog-series>



If we wanted to successfully foster RfP at BHPS, it was apparent that staff needed a wide and up to date knowledge of children's literature and other texts. We also recognised the importance of celebrating diversity and ensuring ethnic minority representation.

'Reflecting realities, individuals, identities, cultures and communities is rooted in the importance of elevating all lived experiences and recognising them as worthy of note and exploration' (CLPE, 2019, Reflecting Realities).

Prepare

Deciding on our areas of focus and developing a plan

As we embarked on our year-long research and development project, we held a whole-school development day for all staff (including TAs and, for parts of the day, the administrative team too). The day was led by Teresa Cremin, Professor of Education (Literacy) at The Open University and Rebecca Kennedy, Primary Advisory Teacher at CLPE (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education). During the conference, research evidence was shared with staff and they took part in a number of workshops exploring reading aloud and independent reading. Lots of practical ideas were also shared with staff, focussing on reader-led informal book talk.

As previously noted, this distinction was crucial – staff needed to understand that reading for pleasure and reader engagement required a higher profile 'to foster readers who not only can, but who choose to read and who grow as readers, as learners and as young people' (Cremin, 2014, Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure).



Staff holding up their favourite reads on the development day

The development day was crucial in sharing key messages regarding RfP with staff and in inspiring them. Building up to, during and after the day there was a real buzz around school – staff could be found in huddles around school discussing their favourite books, making suggestions and swapping titles. Indeed the following week, I was greeted by many staff with news of their latest bookshop purchases over the weekend! Holding a whole-school conference was the perfect way to kick start the project and ensure 'buy-in' from the staff.

Feedback from staff on the development day:

I found the training really useful and reignited my love for reading again, reminded me that I am a reader in lots of different ways (e.g. recipes, podcasts, magazines) not just novels.

Thank you for organising a thought-provoking and enjoyable day last Friday on Reading for Pleasure. The questions were high quality and were evidently led by people who had a love of reading.

As a year group we have already started Choice Tuesday where children are free to bring in their own books, share a book with their teacher, be read to, choose a book from the teacher's special box of books and just relax and enjoy half an hour of reading for pleasure.

From a personal viewpoint it has got me thinking that I should get back to doing more of my own reading regularly rather than just bingeing during the holidays!

I've already bought a book that Jane recommended.

I went straight to Waterstones and bought 5 books straight away. I also read myself at the weekend.

Hi there, I loved Friday as I love reading to children and especially to my three and half year old granddaughter. I have recently purchased books for her birthday. Two of them are, I need a new bum and my bum is broken. Katy read 'I need a new bum' during our library session and I was crying with laughter and the children's faces made my day. I can't wait to read it to Rosie-May she will love it. Thank you for a lovely training day.



The development day was also crucial in sharing our vision that reading for pleasure should be seen as complementary to reading instruction. The message was clear - that reading for pleasure is a worthwhile activity in its own right. Indeed the National Curriculum for England states that literature plays a key role in developing pupils 'culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually' (NC, DfE 2013). But what was also compelling, was the growing body of international evidence (which was shared with staff), of the relationship between reading engagement and reading attainment, and upon wider academic attainment across the curriculum (OECD, 2002, Reading for Change: Performance and Engagement Across Countries: Results from PISA).

We strongly believed that although in a low socio-economic primary school like ours, the temptation might be to focus on technical proficiency and the standards agenda, we should draw on research examining the 'potential of reading for pleasure pedagogies to disrupt the 'pedagogy of poverty'. That in order to have a more socially just education system, we should 'create pedagogical spaces where children could develop volition and skill as readers' (Hempel-Jorgensen et al, 2018, Pedagogy for reading for pleasure in low socio-economic primary schools: beyond 'pedagogy of poverty?').



We wanted to develop the staff's conceptions of reading, for them to build reading communities within their own classrooms and for them to develop as reading teachers. Hence, the first step on this journey and the focus for our action research project, was to pay more attention to teachers' knowledge of children's literature. To motivate and nurture our young readers, a breadth of knowledge of high-quality children's literature was required.

'But we also know that learning to read is a social process, to be successful you need to connect with your reading material, you need to be able to see yourself, in some way, in what you read. The under-representation of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic characters means that readers from a range of backgrounds do not always have the opportunity to make those connections' (Louise Johns-Shepherd, CLPE Chief Executive).



Hence, alongside our aim to develop the staff's knowledge and use of children's literature, we also wanted to choose representative books for our children to ensure more and better inclusivity.

'The call for more inclusive books is as much about volume as it is about quality. Better representation means just that, better in all regards, because all young readers deserve just that, the best that the literary world has to offer' (Louise Johns-Shepherd, CLPE Chief Executive).

As well as incorporating research and practical suggestions from 'Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure' (Cremin et al, 2014), we drew on the research, resources and case studies published on the OU RfP website <https://ourfp.org/> for ideas and inspiration.

Deliver

Implementing our development plan and documenting impact


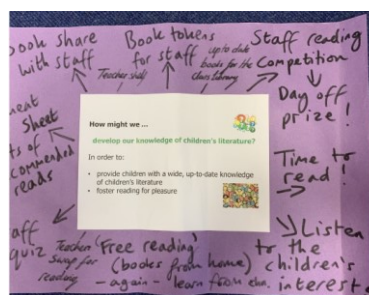
Harnessing the enthusiasm of staff following the initial conference was crucial. The following week in INSET time, we shared with staff the findings from our pupil and staff surveys. In their year group teams, they were then asked to look at the survey findings for their classes and to consider:

How might we ...

develop our knowledge of children's literature?

In order to:

- provide children with a wide, up-to-date knowledge of children's literature
- foster reading for pleasure

Working in their teams, staff identified as many ways as they could to address this, before developing their own year group plans:

OU RfP Action Research Project

How might we ... develop our knowledge of children's literature?

In order to:

provide children with a wide, up-to-date knowledge of children's literature
foster reading for pleasure

We will (staff):

Each member of staff (inc. TAs) to research a genre or author - share

Book talk - author appreciation (CS. Lewis)

Curriculum week

- Share our faves. (kids + adults)

We will (staff):

Place the books in our reading corners

Allow ch to vote for a story at the end of the day

Book display about what we have read

Order a range of books (banned upon arrival) Emphasis on poetry books

From the week - Once a week listen to a CD or listen to a CD

As a team, we will:

Have a wider range of texts

Be involved in "Book talks"

People can share their opinions

Be open to a wider range of text

Better knowledge of poetry

Spring 2 (Start)

Ask the ch to bring a book (home library, school) to school to share (small group or class)

That book can stay for a bit for other children and adults to read.

* Be more willing to share their books/stories

* Encourage ch to read different books by different authors

Examples of year group action planning

In shifting attitudes around RfP amongst the staff, we did not want our plans to be a 'top-down' model – instead we wanted the ideas to 'bubble up' and believed this would be more effective in bringing about long-lasting changes.

Most year groups explicitly included 'up-skilling' themselves in their action plans, placing the onus upon themselves to improve their knowledge of children's literature. However some year groups hadn't made this explicit. Though the action plans included reading and book talk

activities they had included in their plans would have enhanced the staff's subject knowledge, we wanted to support them with this.

This began with myself opening every weekly INSET session with a book pitch. As the weeks went by, these were compiled and shared with staff - this also set me, as subject lead, the challenge of choosing and reading a text to share each week.



Hello

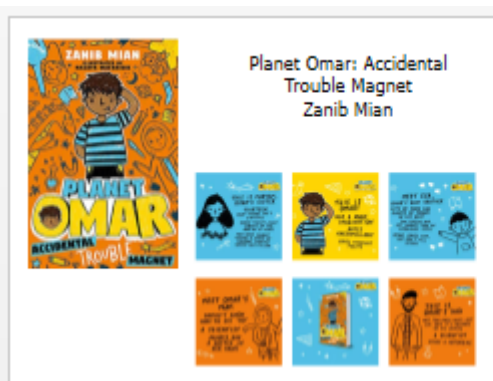
Here are the 'book pitches' so far...

Each one has a brief synopsis, suggested age range and author website links.

I will be looking for other people to 'pitch' good reads next term - let me know if you would like to give staff a reading recommendation.

Thanks

Rachel



7+

Omar is worried because the family have just moved house - will he make friends at school? He does of course, but Daniel the school bully seems to have it in for him. A school trip to the Science Museum sees the two of them lost in London, but Omar knows just what to do and in the process realises that maybe he'd got Daniel wrong.



9+

Running. That's all that Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But never for a track team. Nope, his game has always been ball. But when Ghost impulsively challenges an elite sprinter to a race -- and wins -- the Olympic medalist track coach sees he has something: crazy natural talent.

Thing is, Ghost has something else: a lot of anger, and a past that he is trying to outrun. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed and meld with the team, or will his past finally catch up to him?

<http://www.jasonreynolds.com/>

Examples of weekly book pitches

Initially, I took the lead in pitching books but as the weeks went on, other members of staff came forward, wanting to share their good reads. As well as demonstrating that people were engaged and 'on board' it also helped to spread the message, as it wasn't the English Lead standing up the front talking about books again!

I also noticed that other people had followed my lead and were sharing what they were reading in their email signatures. We were starting to talk more widely about what we were reading and with whom.

Rachel Hack
AHT (English)
Blakesley Hall Primary School
0121 783 2148

Kind regards,
Surinder Paddam

Pamela Key
Assistant Headteacher - Inclusion
Blakesley Hall Primary School
Tel 0121 783 2148

Miss Rebecca (Becky) Watson
Year 6 Class Teacher
Blakesley Hall Primary School

Dionne Cameron
Deputy Headteacher

Blakesley Hall Primary School
Yardley Green road
Birmingham
0121 783 2148

Currently, I'm reading:



Currently reading:



I am currently reading:



I am currently reading ...



I'm currently reading:



Examples of email signatures

RfP now had a weekly slot on the timetable and year groups were employing a range of activities to discuss their reading habits and preferences, talk about what they were reading, and to expose readers to a more diverse range of books. Walking around school, you could see book blankets, reading in strange places, boxes of teacher recommended books, book swapping sessions, free choice Tuesdays, reading rivers, reading teddies and more. The staff had been given license to focus on enjoyment and had the confidence to do so. Evidence of reading for pleasure could be seen in assemblies, in classrooms, on doorways, in displays, in books and in class learning journeys. For ideas on how to develop RfP classroom strategies visit <https://ourfp.org/reading-for-pleasure-pedagogy/>



Examples of RfP around school

I also started to have very different conversations with staff. The email below (from the school librarian) is a good example of this. Whereas previously such an email might have been to tell me of difficulties with reading scheme books or how classes were leaving the library in a mess, here the conversation had shifted considerably.

Hi Rachel,
Since the training about Reading for Pleasure I've had quite a lot of feedback from staff:
Boxes of teachers books in most classrooms and children are loving them so teachers are feeling good too!
Year 3 are having RfP sessions each Tuesday afternoon when children can bring toy and book to read and that's getting positive response from children too.
4P having RfP session when it's library visits for 4R & 4K, Mrs Pauley brings books from home and children can sit on carpet/cushions and explore the books with her (she's enjoying it as much as the children) and this is becoming a firm favourite in the timetable!
Reception book returns are improving with children being more excited about books, Mr Wareham has asked for lots of advice as a new teacher and has been very keen, this has had an effect on his class too (he was already very pro-active but feels his knowledge of authors/titles needs to develop) and their enthusiasm.
I'm also being asked for more resources to support topics and ways of using resources.
Generally, people are talking more about reading and asking for guidance/help more which is great! The children are seeing staff who are keen to talk about reading and their interests, this has had a very positive reaction and I think the children feel their relationships with staff improving too (we always have had good relationships but now they are chatting about interests they have deepened).
I feel better about my role here too, I feel more like a librarian again! It's difficult to explain but I feel more useful and have brought more of my resources from home to share and hopefully inspire. I'm also changing my main displays to have a 'Book Buzz' campaign which I'm going to use throughout the year and another with flying books (like we discussed a couple of years ago!).
anyhoo, just thought I'd let you know the 'buzz'!

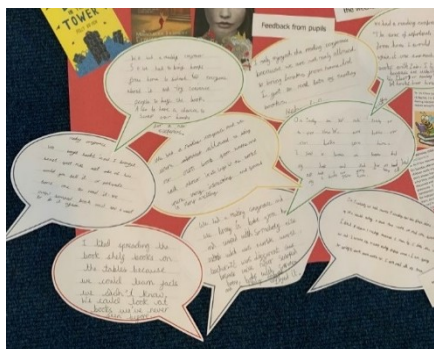
Staff were also starting to grab me in corridors and talk to me about their latest bookshop purchases; what their class were enjoying reading; what they were reading with their own children at home and asking for recommendations – and they wanted more books. Also these 'must have' conversations were not focussing on attainment data. A culture shift appeared to be occurring, as exemplified in the email below:

RfP has helped me talk about reading to other adults and with my class. We try and talk about our class novel and other books more often. It has made me realise that I do not discuss enough with my class about me as a reader. We are doing that more now. I have really enjoyed including RfP on the timetable, I was hesitant at first (Y2 pressures!) but I really enjoy it and most importantly so do the children,

At around the same time, the OU Developing Reading for Pleasure teacher group were asked to create a mood board to share with colleagues from other schools.

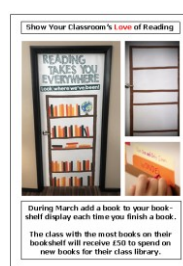


Our mood board



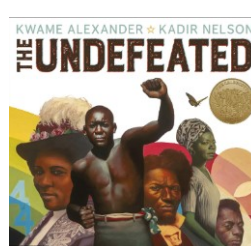
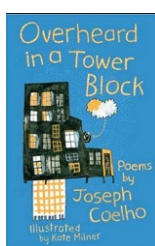
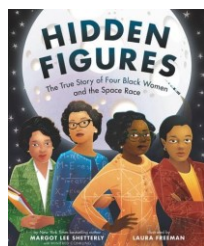
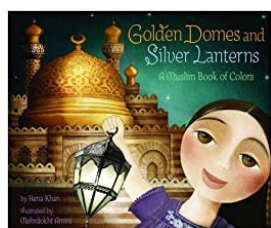
In pulling together the work undertaken so far, we carried out staff and pupil voice exercises. The children reported that they had read their class novels far more since the start of the project and were enjoying the opportunity to share books from home and find out about each other as readers. Once shared at the group meeting, this was displayed in the staff room to celebrate our progress as a school.

With the arrival of March, we began our month-long book festival in school. In previous years we have organised a wide variety of author, poetry, illustrator and story-telling workshops. However we were not able to fund the BHPS Book Festival in the same way as previous years but rather than have visitors who turned up and provided a one-off 'wow' experience, the emphasis this year was on staff developing their own RfP activities. Possible resources, websites and new texts etc were shared with staff, and each week had a different focus.



Posters displayed around school promoting the book festival

As part of developing the staff's knowledge of children's literature, we wrapped up and presented each teacher with a new 'mystery' book – and set the challenge for the teacher and everyone in their class, to read it within a month. For these titles, we sought out texts with diversity of race, culture, gender, ability and life experiences:



Developing reading for pleasure in a lockdown world



Hello,

For a fun online performance, featuring music and song why not watch this adaptation of the mischief-maker and master spinner of yarns 'Anansi'.

<https://www.unicomtheatre.com/whatson/290>

Older readers may prefer a gruesome selection of theatrical readings from Phillip Pullman's 'Grimm's Fairy Tales' and to enter a perilous world of murderous step-mothers, devious Kings and fearless children...

<https://www.unicomtheatre.com/whatson/296>

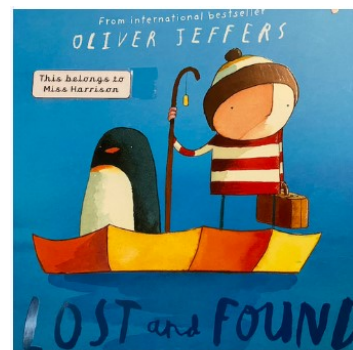
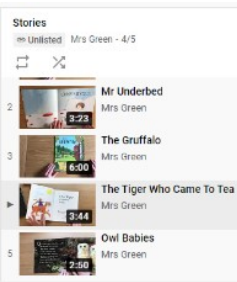
Have a lovely weekend,

Ms Hack

Covid-19 arrived just as we were beginning to establish our reading networks, forcing schools to close and we quickly had to find ways of working remotely. This was going to present a challenge in terms of keeping the children reading but also in keeping going the development of the staff's knowledge of children's literature.

Fortunately, we had a well-established learning platform in use, and teachers and parents were already familiar with posting messages, accessing learning online, and uploading photos of their work to the site. We were very quickly able to make contact with families throughout the day, set home-learning activities – and promote reading for pleasure.

Posts on the school's learning platform



Good Afternoon Year 1,
 Below is a link to listen to me reading the story Lost and Found, by Oliver Jeffers.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VChUKRIETV>
 Enjoy

The school librarian and I made regular posts to the school community promoting podcasts, e-books and sharing publications made freely available during the pandemic. With the relaxing of copyright rules by many authors and publishers, we also experimented with filming and recorded the reading of books and poetry. And so did other members of the staff too.

Whilst away from school, we were contacted by children, parents and the staff asking for book recommendations and enquiring where they could find the next chapter to extracts being shared. Throughout Lockdown, the librarian and I promoted different and varied reading opportunities to both pupils and staff - and the staff also continued to make recommendations to each other.

To: blakesley briefing

Hello all

I know many of you have been reading during lockdown - if you are interested in widening your knowledge of children's literature you can tap into the Open University's #OURfPBookBlether (see below) and their newly launched facebook page **OU Reading for Pleasure group**.

Thanks

Rachel

#OURfPBookBlether

OU/ UKLA Teacher Reading Group Leaders share their recommendations and advice in a 10 part 'blether' series on Twitter!

Join us to widen your knowledge about children's books and how to use them to foster reading for pleasure.

Tuesdays from 26th May
8-9 pm



THE FOCUS	THE DATE	THE LEADERS
Picture books 7-11	26 th May	@rcharlesworth Rich Charlesworth
Fiction 9-11	2 nd June	@jonnybid Jon Biddle
Non-fiction	9 th June	@simonegoward Simone Goward
Fiction 6-9	16 th June	@gdavisreads Georgie Davis & Emma Simons
Picture books 5-7	23 rd June	@mattheweduk Matt Courtney
Graphic novels	30 th June	@RuddickRichard Richard Ruddick
Series fiction	7 th July	@kat_Brereton Kathryn Brereton
Comics & magazines	14 th July	@one_to_read Ben Harris
Fiction 11-16	21 st July	@MissGreads Hannah Grace
Poetry	28 th July	@PrimaryEnglish Rachel Clarke

Hello all,

I hope you are all well.

Following on from Rachel's email, I just wanted to say that I take part in a few book blethers on Twitter.

This book blether is really fun and has some great people leading it.

You join in with the chat on twitter answering questions and responding to other people's answers.

Everyone is really friendly and Simone who is leading it tomorrow is really nice.

I have taken part in the first two myself and I will be taking part tomorrow.

I have learnt a lot and I have come away with lots of books I want to add to my to read pile.

The hour goes really quickly.

I hope you can join in too if you fancy giving it a go. If you have any questions about it, I'm more than happy to help.

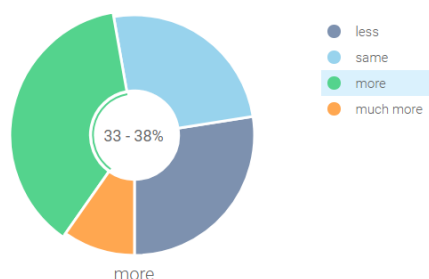
I've had an email from Esa's Mum asking for some good Year 4 book recommendations. I wondered if you could help me with some good recommendations! Mine are probably a little old fashioned now 🙄

Thank you.

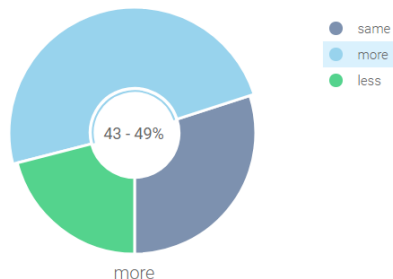
Staff emails during Lockdown promoting RfP

Whilst working in school with groups of 'key worker' children during Lockdown, I discussed with them their reading habits during Lockdown. I shared with them that I had been unable to settle to read my usual 'go to' novels but had realised that I was reading a lot more non-fiction. I was surprised to hear that the group of children I was talking with, were reading at home and reported that they felt they were reading more than usual. This prompted me to message our parent community with an e-questionnaire asking them about their children's reading habits during Lockdown.

During lockdown have you read.....



In the last few months have you enjoyed reading...



Eighty-Seven parents, with children from Reception to Year 6, responded. This revealed that 38% of children felt they had read more than usual during the Lockdown period (with a further 9% reading much more). Importantly, 49% reported that they had enjoyed reading more in recent months. Here's a sample of their reasons why:

I have had so much time to enjoy reading time with my family, specially getting lost in a book.

Because I can stay up later so I have more time to read and then I finish my books quicker

I can read what I want instead of being told what to read.

Because i have more time at home ..

Because I discovered how much I love books.

Because I don't have to worry that the next day is school and we have to do other things but instead all day I can spend my time making a comfortable place to read and read my book for as long as I want

English CPD & Activities for Staff

- Listen to Just Imagine story Centre Podcasts – podcasts for teachers who are interested in reading children's books and reading <https://justimagine.co.uk/podcasts/>
- Watch the Learning Lady on youtube has a series of short films offering support for early reading https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpFvWz-nBp0JesGtI8C-QUQ/videos?view=0&sort=dd&shelf_id=18&app=desktop
- Check out the CLPE (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education) website e.g. the Power of Pictures report https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/research?utm_campaign=11474635_Resend%20of%20POP%20resources&utm_medium=email&utm_source=CLPE&dm_i=1RW5,6TXXV,OPM2SX,BDHRK,1 or e.g. access the CPD on following an authentic writing process <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/teachina-approaches>
- Explore the UKLA (UK Literacy Association) website. If you want to 'unlock' articles that aren't free let me know as I have individual membership and can download it for you <https://ukla.org/resources/search/free-resources>
- Explore the Writing for Pleasure Centre website. The centre acts as a think tank and as an action research community <https://writing4pleasure.com/>
- Explore the OU Research Rich Pedagogies website that Rebecca Kennedy & Teresa Cremin shared with us <https://researchrichpedagogies.org/research/reading-for-pleasure>
- Read up on Voice 21: Oracy, Curriculum, Culture and Assessment Programme <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/voice-21-pilot/>
- FREE online course: The Writing For Pleasure Centre have put free online courses together for people who'd like to brush up on their teaching of writing
- FREE online course: An Introduction to Teaching Vocabulary <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/developing-vocabulary/>
- FREE online course: An introduction to speech, language and communication <https://www.thecomunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/professional-development/online-short-course>
- FREE online course: How to make a Poem <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/how-to-make-a-poem>
- FREE online course: Start Writing Fiction <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/start-writing-fiction>
- FREE online course: English in Early Childhood: Language Learning and Development <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/english-in-early-childhood>
- FREE online course: TESOL Strategies: Supporting ESL Students in Mainstream Classrooms <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/tesol-strategies>

A period of time in isolation also provided staff with time to complete CPD, with all teachers and TAs being set the expectation to complete a certain number of hour's online training. In drawing up a suggested list of online CPD opportunities for English I was able to promote podcasts, articles, free online courses and websites to explore. Several of these focussed on RfP.

Sample of CPD activities promoted to staff

Returning to school and re-focussing our efforts on RfP

Following six months away from school, it was wonderful to begin the first teacher training day by sharing the findings of the e-questionnaire (on our children's reading habits during their time away from school). Staff had been anxious about the impact of Lockdown on learning and this gave them hope that our children (if not all of them) had been reading – and enjoying it!



For our return, we made the decision that the whole school would read, enjoy and complete two weeks' worth of activities linked to Oliver Jeffers' book 'Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth'. It was great - the whole school was reading and talking about the same book, and a compilation video was created to showcase the art work, writing and PSHE activities inspired by the book.

'Here We Are' art work

Other world events have also impacted on our RfP work. The outcry following the death of George Floyd has seen protests turn to policy changes across the world and we too are looking afresh at our curriculum and school. We had already begun to review and make changes, to make sure that our e.g. driver texts for English, sets of class novels and library books are quality, inclusive, representative books that reflect the realities of our children. This process of reflecting and reviewing will continue. The staff have responded very positively and have been reading, promoting and sharing books and resources amongst themselves, and requesting alternative driver texts for English – and sharing them with the children.



Hello all,

On the one-drive I have added a folder called Books - in the Curriculum all you need folder.

In the folder you will find PP's and lists of books with BAME characters or books written by BAME authors.

It also has 2 documents with QR codes that you can scan and listen to the books. These have been shared by kind people on Twitter.

Email from a teacher to her colleagues

Sustain

Project Review

The project has drawn to a close but on our RfP journey, attitudes are continuing to shift, stronger reading networks are being formed and improvements are continuing to be made. This academic year RfP is priority 2 on the school development plan - not as something we need to 'fix' but as something we wish to celebrate and strengthen. Staff are continuing to promote RfP across school and are supporting each other with their subject development. A number of members of staff have also begun to make links with authors/illustrators and have arranged for BHPS to have an author in residence – very exciting news!

I was talking to Becky W today and we were talking about our class doors. We both thought about promoting our class novel books on every door. Put up info about the authors and their other books and predictions about what the children think will happen in the story.

What do you think? I'll take charge of it but show you everything first.

RfP Session

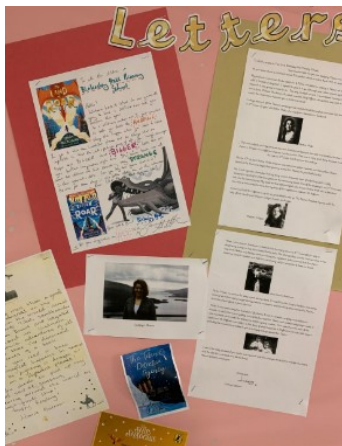
There are lots of author interviews, online readings & story-telling shows available till the end of term from the Cheltenham Literary Festival. They are free to access once you've registered and could be used for your weekly RfP session.

E.g

Possible year group	Author	Example title
5 / 6	Tom Palmer	After the War
3	Lauren Child	<u>Pippi Longstocking</u>
KS1	Guess How Much I love you <u>storyshow</u>	
6	Humza Arshad	<u>Little Badman</u>
4	Katherine Rundell	The Good Thieves
KS1	Oliver Jeffers	What We'll Build
5	Joseph Coelho	Poems Aloud
5 / 6	Anthony Horowitz	Alex Rider
5 / 6	Liz Pichon	Shoe Wars
KS2	Draw along with <u>Dapo Adeola</u>	Clean Up!
KS2	Draw along with Maria Isabel <u>Sánchez Vegara</u>	Little People Big Dreams

<https://cheltenhamliteraturefestival.com/the-den/>

Thanks, Rachel



Letters and tweets from authors and our new author in residence

Final reflections from the staff:

'I found it surprising how many children were keen to read and read a range of texts and how so many children don't get the opportunity to do this, unless it is in school. I have also started to share my reading experiences more and I am asking children more frequently about the books they are reading' (Y4 teacher).

'It has started a conversation amongst staff and children. When good conversation happens, change occurs. I've seen staff more enthusiastic about the books they are reading with children and therefore children have been too. A much wider range of texts have been shared too which opens up reading to a wider audience. Children seem to be enjoying their reading (and enjoying sharing what they've read). Reading for Pleasure sessions are great because it is dedicated time to share and enjoy books. Children get

time to explore a wider range of books and talk about them. It has helped reading gain more of community feel' (SLT).

'I enjoyed completing the survey with the children because I got a sense of how much they enjoy reading and how often they read. Last time, when the children completed the survey themselves using an iPad, I enjoyed getting the data of the children's responses from you - again, for that reason. It has brought to my attention how little I read for pleasure with the children during the school day and how I should read with the children more often. I love our newly revitalised dedicated RfP lessons as the children get a chance to explore new reads and you can really see the 'pleasure' on their faces. I like that the time is dedicated to the children's enjoyment of reading, without pressures of a 'structured' lesson' (Y3 teacher).

'WE COMPLETELY changed RFP sessions. Children adore the texts, and the creative and structured RFP sessions really help' (Y5 teacher).

'It made me want to read more children's books. I look forward to recommendations from the children and enjoy sharing books with them. As a whole, the class are more engaged in reading outside of lessons and are keen to share books with one another. There are also frequent discussions between the children and myself about the books we are enjoying, whereas before there wasn't time or opportunity for these discussions to be had. I will continue to share my love of reading with children and listen to the thoughts of children about what they are reading and what they would like me to read. It has broadened my horizons!' (Y4 teacher).

'I would say that the children have become more enthusiastic about reading and really look forward to the reading for pleasure sessions. They are also keen to recommend books to each other and to myself, so we have made it a class feature each week for a child to create a weekly book recommendation. For myself, it has encouraged me to talk more frequently with the children about what I am reading. There are now more informal discussions about reading in general' (YGL).

At the start of the year my class said that they didn't really enjoy reading especially reading for pleasure. I personally bought lots of books that I wanted to read and share with my class and I created a reading for pleasure library. The children were really excited and wanted to read the books as I also included some books written by BAME authors.

For our reading for pleasure activity we discussed a range of books and books that they would like to read. I have also contacted authors and poets on twitter to engage the children. The children enjoy reading for pleasure and they enjoy discussing the books that they are reading. Some children have chosen to pick up their book to read when they have finished their work. There has been a noticeable buzz in the classroom during reading time and reading for pleasure time. As the teacher I have modelled reading for pleasure and my love of reading and this has helped. I will continue to read for pleasure while the children are reading for pleasure and I will continue to discuss books and authors with the children - the children recommend the books to me and to the other children in class. I want to continue to add more books to the class library including comics (Y6 teacher).

From taking part in the project, it has really highlighted to me the importance of reading and sharing good quality stories and texts with children. During the time I have made sure that there is a 'protected' time for whole class stories and that the children choose

which story that they would like to hear, based on the blurb and recommendations from teachers. Personal I have found that when reading a story, it is so important to bring the text to life by background music, doing 'silly voices' and even laughing along with the children. My biggest take away is that when reading, we are like mirrors to the children - if we don't show a passion and enthusiasm about reading then they neither will they (Rec teacher).

Keep talking about the importance of reading and where it can lead to. I need to make sure that I can continue to show that reading is a pleasurable experience which can transport you to magical/different worlds. The children need to know that books are equally as much fun as a computer game or TV programme. I will continue to have fun around books and hopefully inspire children to read, read, read (Y3 teacher).

I had waited for so long (always the bridesmaid, never the bride as it were) for reading to be on the national and school agenda. You and I had been (quietly) plugging away for so long with Book month, class library development and reading passports but I felt newly invigorated and my confidence was boosted by the announcement that we would have a school focus on Reading for Pleasure. I thought we would have a hard road ahead but actually the staff grasped RfP by the throat and came at me from everywhere asking for help and inspiration! It was great! Even before I could get into the hall on our training day, I was 'mugged' by staff for my books and requests for purchase details!

The enthusiasm kept going with regular emails, people popping in to the library (and being grabbed whenever I left the library!) for new titles and "what do I try next?", websites and book shop recommendations, booklists for specific children, and finally (yay!!) books to support topics and further reading around them! The enthusiasm and open-minded approach was palpable from all over the school community (pupils, parents, teachers, TAs, mentors, SLT and kitchen staff!) and when we got to our Book Month there was a definite change in the reception of the themes and proposals. I had more teachers asking for books to read aloud, Teachers were bringing in books from home and letting the children spread out on the floor and share them, magazines and picture books were being read in the corridors and I had teachers agreeing to extra library time so I could lend books to the children then have time for reading together without dashing back to class.

Then Covid came. I thought we would lose the momentum and that would be that. I thought it would be ages till the library opened and I would have to build up our reading enthusiasm again. I then started getting emails for booklists, websites and Bug Club ebooks from pupils and staff. I then saw the Class Dojo messages about reading and listening to audio books. People who hadn't read much before were now reading for GOLD! We came back to school and the staff picked up where we left off and I see reading and hear reading and I'm asked for books and recommendations again. I think RfP is here to stay and I can't wait for the library to open again but I don't feel it is the only reading environment anymore. We are a reading school with books at the heart of our community and I think we couldn't get through this horrible time without our Reading for Pleasure project! (School librarian)

Key findings from the end of project surveys

The final surveys and comments show that the staff have developed a better understanding of the principles of reading for pleasure and have a broader knowledge of children's literature. Teachers are moving away from the stereotypical 'canon' and the

childhood reads that they began with at the start of the project. An increasing number of contemporary authors, recent prize-winners and BAME authors/illustrators are being shared, celebrated and promoted. In the final staff survey when asked for three authors / illustrators whose work they valued, staff listed:

Anthony Horowitz	Joseph Coelho	Martin Waddell
Paul Jennings	Shaun Tan	Malorie Blackman
Terry Pratchett	Brian Selznick	Alice Walker
Mark Haddon	William Shakespeare	Mini Grey
Philip Pullman	J.R.R.Tolkien	Julia Donaldson
Catherine Johnson	Roald Dahl	Oliver Jeffers
Onjali Q Rauf	Liz Braswell	Neil Gaiman
Tom Palmer	JK Rowling	Rick Riordan
David Olusoga	Michael Morpurgo	Jacqueline Wilson
Michael Rosen	Ted 'Dr' Seuss	Drew Daywalt
Enid Blyton	Anthony Browne	Scott Snyder
John Boyne	Nicola Davies	Eric Carle
Tom Fletcher	Raymond Briggs	B J Novak
Nick Sharratt	Emily Gravett	Judith Kerr
Caroline Birch	Janet and Allen	Jez Alborough
Shel Silverstein	Ahlberg	Axel Scheffler
David Wiesner	Shaun Tan	Guy Parker-Rees
Aaron Becker	Yuyi Morales	Marcia Williams
Areee Chung	Petr Horáček	
	Grant Morrison	

Comparison between staff responses at the start and at the end of the project (those highlighted in yellow were 'new' additions to the baseline list of authors)

Internationally, studies have shown that for children to make thoughtful choices about what they read, and for them to become independent, fluent readers, effective teachers require good subject knowledge of children's literature. It is also noted that to become more critical and discerning, children need to be provided with the space to talk more about their reading choices.

The growing confidence, subject knowledge and knowledge of their pupils as readers, is impacting on our staff's use of a richer and more diverse range of texts. There is also a growing awareness from staff that their personal childhood reading is not necessarily relevant today. Indeed, there is a real desire amongst many staff to keep up-to-date with new authors and publications – and significantly they are taking responsibility for doing this for themselves. They have developed their own personal collections, added to collections in school, and made suggestions to and loaned books to colleagues. But most significantly, their increased knowledge and enthusiasm has caused a shift amongst the reading habits of our children.

The impact of the staff's increased knowledge of authors and illustrators is clearly evidenced in the pupils' responses in their end of project survey. At the outset, the pupils struggled to name many authors, mostly providing the titles of books or when they could name authors, giving the names of popular, celebrity writers like David Walliams and Roald Dahl. At the beginning of the project, a typical lower KS2 class' response, when asked to name their favourite author, looked like this.

1	anonymous	I like all
2	anonymous	Darcy Bussell
3	anonymous	Jacqueline Wilson
4	anonymous	Arthur and the golden rope.
5	anonymous	Every author
6	anonymous	Toni rose
7	anonymous	Tony Ross.
8	anonymous	Todd Anthony
9	anonymous	God
10	anonymous	God
11	anonymous	Joe Todd
12	anonymous	Ronald dahl
13	anonymous	Samuel Pepys
14	anonymous	Tony Ross.
15	anonymous	Ronald Dahl
16	anonymous	Ronald Dahl
17	anonymous	Ronald Dahl
18	anonymous	Roland Dahl
19	anonymous	Enid Blyton
20	anonymous	Role Dahl
21	anonymous	Toy story Author
22	anonymous	Roald Dall

Example LKS2 responses to 'Who is your favourite author?'

In contrast, the compiled list of authors named from across school at the end of the project was far richer and varied:

Edward Lear	Sibeal Pounder	Charles Dickens	C S Lewis
Brian Sepezanos	Jeff Kinney	Rick Riordan	Dr Zeuss
Dave Pilkey	Lewis Carroll	Onjali Rauf	Liz Pichon
Oliver Jeffers	Jennifer Uman	Jane Hardstaff	R L Stine
Nathan Bryson	Anthony Horowitz	Liam Brown	Alleg Kenren
Mini Grey	Adam Blade	Brian Selznick	John Boyne
J K Rowling	Michelle Paver	Jacqueline Wilson	Rachel Renee
Roald Dahl	Valerio Vidali	Chris Riddell	Russell
Tony Bronman	Rachel Renee	Joshua Seigal	Jade Wilson
Tony Ross	Russell	John Boyne	Adam Blake
Malala	Francesca Simon	David Walliams	Liz Pidman
Sarah Millican	Michael Rosen	Ann Jungman	Michael Morpurgo
Jerry Thompson	Julia Donaldson	Sophie Anderson	Clare Kelly
	Kathy Hoopman		Martin Wadell

The number of book titles they were able to name had also increased massively, with 110 titles being named across the school. (The baseline survey was completed by KS2 pupils individually, whereas the final survey had to be modified due to Covid-19 restrictions and was completed as a class. Bearing this in mind we feel the list of authors / illustrators and book titles would have been longer still had the pupils had the chance to complete the survey individually).

But importantly, one of the biggest shifts in attitudes around RfP was revealed in the pupils' responses to the question, 'Do you like it when your teacher reads aloud?' At the start of the project, 44% of pupils said 'I love it' – by the end of the project, 70% responded that they did. Through continuing to read aloud to our classes for pleasure, we hope to further grow our success in this area.

How often do you provide opportunities for children to talk informally about their reading and their preferences as readers?

	Baseline Survey	Final Survey
Regularly	12%	33%
Sometimes	62%	43%
Rarely	27%	24%
Never	0%	0%

When comparing the responses from staff regarding the frequency with which they provide opportunities for children to talk informally about their reading and their preferences as readers, it is clear that staff are providing more time for this. With our continued focus on RfP this academic year, we expect this to increase further.

Next steps

This is not the end of the journey. As previously mentioned RfP will continue to be high focus for us. This academic year, we intend to build on the initial excitement created by being part of the OU RfP project. We will continue to develop staff subject knowledge and promote high quality, representative texts to children. We will continue to develop our RfP practices around book talk, in the belief that the opportunities for discussion created by teachers (about different texts, authors, preferences and readers' responses) will lead to informal child-led 'text talk' – and that this will 'foster readers who not only can, but who choose to read' (Cremin, 2014, Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure). We also plan to capitalise on the success of teachers reading aloud to children and further develop staff confidence in doing this across the curriculum.

