

Case Study: Sally Le Marquand , School Librarian, Bishop Gilpin, C of E Primary School in Wimbledon

The Reading for Pleasure Programme at Bishop Gilpin C Of E Primary School

Bishop Gilpin is a two-form entry C of E Primary School in Wimbledon, London with approximately 480 pupils aged 4-11. This case study examines the implementation of the school's reading for pleasure programme (RfPP), piloted with Year 3 in September 2019 and, from September 2020, including Years 4 and 5. The overall aim of the RfPP was for the pupils to grow as readers as much as they possibly could before they left Bishop Gilpin, setting them on the road towards becoming life-long readers and learners. The RfPP is very much centred around the RfP research by Dr Sarah McGeown and the six principles of reading motivation - namely access, choice, relevance, success, time and social, the research by Prof Teresa Cremin, particularly The Readers as Teachers Project, and the research by Dr Aidan Chambers and the Reading Circle.

To reach the aim of creating life-long readers and learners, the RfPP had two main objectives:

- To embed reading motivation
- To see the impact of reading for pleasure on academic attainment

The RfPP consisted of two stages. The first stage began by asking year 3 teachers to complete a short survey about their own current practice in RfP, their knowledge of RfP pedagogy, their knowledge of children's literature and their RfP instruction, if any, in their teacher training. Pupils were also asked to complete a short reading survey about their own reading preferences and practices. Then, in class, pupils and teachers created a visual expression of their reading journeys in a typical reading week. The pupils were told

this could include any reading they had done such as reading the back of cereal packets, comics, magazines, books, digital reading, text messages, street signs etc. Their reading journeys also included their favourite books, places to read, who they read with at home, etc. The posters were displayed and used as a basis for sharing and exploring the different readers around the class. It was important for the pupils to understand that this was a reading journey that they would all be going on together, including their teacher. To encourage parents in their support of the RfPP a parent mail was sent explaining the aim and objectives of the programme and how we hoped to see pupils grow as readers over the year.

Teachers explained to their pupils why RfP was important, the meaning of different genres and how these might influence their book choices. They also emphasised that no one reader is 'better' than another and that they believed in all their pupils as readers. The intention of these discussions was to sow the seeds of reading confidence and boost pupils' motivation to read. The result was that although there were some lovely displays of their reading journeys, on the whole, these showed how little reading variety the pupils could capture and a lot of the reading journeys were very similar. This told us that the pupils needed much more exposure to different authors and genres.

The next stage was to establish 15 minutes of independent reading for pleasure time in the day, aside from their guided reading time in class, to create a daily reading habit. This was taken very seriously by the teachers who read alongside the pupils at this time, presenting themselves as good reading role models; it was not a time for teachers to do marking or catch up with other tasks but a time for reading with the pupils. Teachers were also able to observe those readers in the class who were displaying disengaged or 'fake' reading behaviours, such as flicking through pages, constantly looking

around, getting out of their seat too often, saying they had finished a book far too quickly and so on. Once the class independent reading time was established, and over time during their observations of reading behaviours, teachers identified pupils that needed more support with their reading. Embedding a daily reading habit was seen as vital to encourage pupils to read more thereby increasing their chances of having more successful and positive reading experiences. Additionally, this addressed the 'gap' between pupils' reported reading (often daily) and their actual reading (often not daily), whether at home or at school.

During these initial stages of introducing the RfPP, pupils came to the library in groups of 4 or 5 from each class in Years 3-5 so that the librarian could talk to them for about 20 minutes about the importance of having the freedom to choose what they want to read, how we make book choices, the different genres and information about the library layout. This was considered to be much more time efficient and beneficial in supporting the pupils than a general class library visit where it is not possible to reach every child and assist with their book choices in one session. This also ensured that pupils were connecting with the library on a regular basis, whereas before some pupils were not visiting under their own volition at lunch times and break times. Throughout the year each class continued to have library timetabled slots so that the librarian could support pupils changing their books, talk to them about their reading, recommend books and, over time, build their confidence when choosing books for themselves. The librarian handed out reading cards and emphasised that keeping a record of the books they had read would give them a visual confidence to their journey as readers, further supporting their motivation to read. The reading cards were also to encourage reading momentum and prevent reading 'stagnation'. For example, before the RfPP was implemented pupils would very often read a book for a few days, not really be that engaged with it and then not pick it up again for 3-4 weeks – or longer - so very little sustained 'independent' reading was actually taking place

at school. Towards the end of the autumn term, after the pupils had got used to the new RfPP arrangement, the librarian was able to develop a Google shared spreadsheet with teachers for each child, particularly targeting those that needed support in their reading choices and engagement. There were also formal and informal feedback sessions between the librarian and teachers about how the pupils were developing in general under the RfPP and how specific pupils were progressing.

In the first few weeks there were inevitable tweaks to ensure the RfPP ran more smoothly; the first of these was that although we found the pupils were very excited about coming to the library to change their books, this caused too much disruption during the reading for pleasure time in class as pupils were coming whenever they said they had finished a book when they clearly hadn't! We decided to restrict the times that pupils could come to the library to change their books to once a week as well as break and lunch times instead., which helped pupils to stick to a more settled reading routine. At this point teachers explained that it was not how fast we read a book that was important but rather how much we enjoy and understood them, dealing with the unhelpful idea that reading is a competition. A second tweak was around the reading cards. At the start of the RfPP pupils were keen to keep them up to date, but as time went by they lost the cards or just didn't write down their reads. They also had reading logs for their daily reading at home and writing in two places was not sustainable. We therefore decided to add a page at the back of their daily reading log books so they could record their books in one place. This had better take up but is still not at the levels we would like and is something we are thinking about for September 2021. The third tweak was that, as teachers were finding it difficult to find the time to update the spreadsheets for pupils with support, the librarian took over this task.

Finally, there were a few SEN pupils, particularly pupils with dyslexia, who undoubtedly found it difficult to engage during

the RfPP time, but who nevertheless wanted to be seen as part of their class community of readers. As we want all our pupils to be fully engaged when budget allows we will look at investing in devices that offer audio books for these pupils, so that they can access stories at the same time as everyone else in class.

Central to our school's mission is the statement 'a firm foundation for a lifetime of learning', and our RfPP was therefore centred on the question 'how do we enable our pupils to become life-long readers and learners?' and how can we improve our pupils' reading experiences to reach this goal. Before the RfPP was introduced, we found that pupils held quite negative beliefs about reading which were apparent in statements such as, 'I don't like reading, it's boring', 'I'm still on the class reading scheme so I'm not a good reader', 'I can't read very well as I'm not a free reader', 'I don't read', 'I prefer watching television', 'I'm not a good reader because I can't read hard words like others can', and 'my mum says I need to read better books if I'm going to be a good reader'. In order to meet one of our objectives 'to embed reading motivation in all our pupils' it was important to reverse these negative statements and endeavour to foster more positive and successful reading experiences.

As a school we also have a gender writing gap of 13% in favour of girls and, although not uncommon in primary schools, we wanted to make sure that the encouragement of more reading for pleasure would have an impact on writing as our boys would have a wider exposure and depth of stories and inspiration to draw upon. So, apart from the statutory requirement for developing a love of reading and the danger that we might be substituting reading motivation over reading proficiency, it was clear that we could do more to raise the profile of reading for pleasure. The SLT's commitment to the RfPP has been crucial in ensuring it has been implemented. Importantly, this also reflects the school's desire for all our pupils to see themselves as readers, within their peer groups and within the wider school community, wherever they may be on their reading journeys.

Our evidence we collated to show how the RfPP has had an impact consisted of: teacher feedback; pupil feedback through reading surveys and conversations; reading logs; and monitoring Google doc logs. The main observations were:

- Teachers noticed that pupils 'are reading many more chapter books than they otherwise would have done' which has had a knock-on effect of enriching their vocabulary and imagination in their descriptive writing.
- Teachers report increase use of punctuation, for example, the use of brackets and speech marks, so it is clear pupils are exploring language in their reading and applying it in their writing.
- Teachers can see that the pupils are feeling much more confident and independent about their reading choices.
- Teachers report that the pupils are excited and frequently ask if they can read their 'reading for pleasure book now' - this is in contrast to before the RfPP when some pupils would aimlessly flick through a book, now they are much more engaged in what they are reading.
- Teachers say they feel more confident about their pupils' reading when talking to parents at parents' evenings.
- The librarian and teachers can see that the pupils really understand why the RfPP is important and enjoy it.
- The librarian and teachers have noticed that pupils are talking more about books and recommending books to their friends and staff.
- The librarian has noticed that pupils are becoming much more confident when navigating the library choosing their books.
- Pupils are increasingly more likely to ask the librarian for recommendations and willing to give a book a 'try'.
- Pupils understand that the guided reading scheme is only a part of their reading experience.

The RfPP will be used in September 2021 with the next incoming Year 3 and continue with pupils as they move up the school. The pupils have clearly benefited from the RfPP and experienced increased reading enjoyment. They are also exploring and applying a wider use of vocabulary and language in their descriptive writing. The RfPP will continue to be monitored and adapted to ensure pupils are enjoying successful reading experiences which will help them to develop life-long reading and learning habits.

The Headteacher and other senior leaders were supportive of the project from the initial discussions. However, the impact of the librarian (and subsequently teachers) on embedding RfP within the pupils' reading habits and attitudes has raised the profile of this area of school development. This has increased the school commitment to prioritising RfP as a key element of the School Development Plan moving forward. School leaders are committed to ensuring the outcomes of this project support the reading of future year groups and are already seeking to share our expertise with other local schools.

Advice for those thinking of undertaking a similar project

1. The most important aspect is for pupils to have regular access to books where they can exercise their own decisions about their reading choices.
2. A reading for pleasure champion or librarian, who has the knowledge of pupils' books, time, commitment and knowledge of how to develop reading in pupils is essential.
3. It is crucial to have the support of the SLT and teaching staff involved and their understanding of why RfP is important.

References

Barrett, Lynn (2010). Effective School Libraries: Evidence of Impact on Student Achievement. *The School Librarian*. Volume 58, number 3, autumn 2010.

Bennett, Colette (2017). Reading Choice Encourages Student Ownership: Choice in Reading Increases Motivation and Engagement. ThoughtCo.

The Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Literacy Group Commission. Boys' Reading Commission. (2012). National Literacy Trust.

Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (2017) Reading for Pleasure: What We Know Works. CLPE.

Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (2017). Choosing & Using Quality Children's Texts. CLPE.

Chambers, Aidan (2011). Tell Me: Children, Reading and Talk with The Reading Environment.

Christina Clark and Anne Teravainen-Goff (2018-19). School libraries: Why children and young people use them or not, their literacy engagement and mental wellbeing. Findings from our annual literacy survey. NLT

Clements, James (2018). Teaching English by the Book: Putting Literature at the Heart of the Primary Curriculum. Routledge.

Cremin, Teresa Professor, Mottram, Marilyn, Collins, Fiona, Powell, Sacha (2008). Building Communities of Readers. UKLA.

Didau, David (2014). The Secret of Literacy: Making the Implicit Explicit. Thinking Press.

Goodwin, Prue (2013). Creating Readers: A Reflective Guide for School Librarians and Teachers. SLA Guidelines.

Lemov, Doug (2016). Reading Reconsidered: A Practical Guide to Rigorous Literacy Instruction. Jossey-Buss.

Mainstone-Cotton, Sonia (2017). Promoting Young Children's Emotional Health & Wellbeing. Jessica Kingsley Publishing.

- McBreen, Miriam and Savage, Robert.(2020) The Impact of Motivational Reading Instruction on the Reading Achievement and Motivation of Students: A Systematic and Meta-Analysis. *Education Psychology Review*.
- McGeown, Sarah Dr (2016). Understanding Children's Reading Activities. Reading Motivation, Skill and Child Characteristics as Predictors. UKLA.
- McGeown, Sarah Dr & Medford, Emma (2012). The Influence of Personality Characteristics on Children's Intrinsic Reading Motivation. Elsevier.
- McGeown, Sarah Dr (2020). Understanding Reading Motivation Across Different Text Types: qualitative insights from children. *Journal of Research in Reading*.
- McGeown, Sarah Dr (2013). Reading Motivation and Engagement in the Primary School Classroom; Theory, research and Practice. UKLA.
- McGowen, Sarah Dr (2018). Reading Motivation. Interview with Christine Quaine. TES Research Series, Supporting Literacy.
- Miller, Donalyn (2009). *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Reader in Every Child*. J Wiley & Sons.
- Miller, Donalyn (2014). *Reading in the Wild: Cultivating Life-long Reading Habits*. J. Wiley & Sons.
- Miller, Donalyn (2020). Reader-to-Reader: Sharing Book Recommendations Builds Community. *School Library Journal*.
- Moss, Gemma Professor (2017). Reframing the Discourse: Bernstein, ethnography and the distribution of reading attainment by gender. *Sage Journals*.
- National Literacy Trust (2012). *Boys' Reading Commission. The Review of the existing research conducted to underpin the Commission's report*.
- National Literacy Trust (2018) *Wellbeing and Reading*. NLT & Place to Be.
- National Literacy Trust (2010). *School Libraries: A Plan for Improvement*. NLT & Museum & Libraries Archives.
- Ofsted (2006). *Good School Libraries: Making a Difference to Learning*. Crown Copyright.
- Oxford School Improvement (2017). *Building an Outstanding Reading School*. Oxford UP.
- Pieper, Kenny (2016). *How to Teach Reading for Pleasure*. Independent Thinking Press.
- Pinkett, Matt and Roberts, Mark (2019). *Boys Don't Try? Rethinking Masculinity in Schools*. Routledge.
- Quigley, Alex (2020). *Closing the Reading Gap*. Routledge.
- Rasinski, Timothy V. Professor (2010). *The Fluent Reader*. Scholastic.
- Rasinski, Timothy V. Professor and Cheeseman Smith, Melissa (2018). *The Mega Book of Fluency*. Scholastic.
- Read On. Get On. (2016). *A strategy to get England's children reading*. Save the Children.
- Reedy, Katharine & Parker, Jo (2018). *Digital Literacy Unpacked*. Facet Publishing.
- Reid, Gavin (2016). *Dyslexia: A Practical Handbook*. Wiley.
- Research Rich Pedagogies: Reading for Pleasure. The Open University. Website.
- Scholastic (2019). *Kids and Family Reading Report: Access Matters, Reading Role Models & Books*.
- SW London OU/UKLA Teachers' Reading Group – October 2018-July 2019.
- Tallent, Linda & Wilson, Gary (2016). *Boys Will Be Brilliant! How we can help to get it right for boys in early years*. Featherstone.
- Teravainen, Anne and Clark, Christina (June 2017). *School Libraries: a literature review of current provision and evidence of impact*. National Literacy Trust.
- Willingham, Daniel, T. Professor (2017). *The Reading Mind: A Cognitive Approach to Understanding How the Mind Reads*. Jossey-Buss.
- Willingham, Daniel, T Professor (2020). *How We Learn to Read: What Teachers Need to Know About Reading*. TES Research Series

Wilson, Gary (2013). *Breaking Through Barriers to Boys' Achievement. Developing a Caring Masculinity*. Second Ed. Bloomsbury education.

Wilson, Gary (2016). *100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Raising Boys' Achievement*. Bloomsbury.

Young, Chase, Durham, Patricia and Rosenbaum-Martinez (2018). *A Stacked Approach to Reading Intervention*. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*.

Podcasts & Webinars

Band, Barbara (May 2020). *Supporting Diversity & Inclusion in the School Library*. Webinar.

Clements, James. (April 2020). *Becoming a Reader and Building a Reading Culture*. Webinar.

Clements, James (April 2020). *Teaching Reading – decoding, comprehension & fluency*. Webinar.

Court, Joy (June 2020). *The Right Book for the Right Reader at the Right Time*. Webinar.

Cremin, Teresa Professor, The Open University (2nd Feb 2020). *Reading for Pleasure. The Emotional Curriculum Podcast*. Episode 4, Series 2.

Handford, Helen (2021). *Reading for Pleasure: Engaging Readers at Home & in School*. NLT. Webinar

Heads, Lynzi (June 2020). *Engaging Reluctant Readers in KS3*. Webinar.

Humphrey, Bev (May 2020). *Promoting Reading in a Digital Age*. Webinar.

Hutchinson, Elizabeth (May 2020). *Framework of Skills for Inquiry Learning*. Webinar.

McGeown, Sarah Dr (September 2020). *Promoting Reading for Pleasure*. Edinburgh University

McGeown, Sarah Dr, Edinburgh University (14th March 2021). *Understanding Emotions and Motivation in Reading*. *The Emotional Curriculum Podcast*, Episode 2, Series 4.