"Less is More" Book Corner

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Context

I am a class teacher and the lower key phase two leader at Harbinger Primary School.Reading is a key development area for the school – our development plan highlights the need to improve reading attainment throughout key stage 2.

Research Inspiration and Rationale

The *Teachers as Readers: Building Communities of Readers* project by Teresa Cremin (2014) highlights that children across the country "read less indepednetly and find less pleasure in reading" compared with children in other countries. This is a particular concern across the school, as not all children engage in reading at home or choose to read for pleasure. The project highlights the need to "create reciprocal reading communities that nurture children's pleasure in reading" and so I wanted to use my book corner to create a reading community within the class which motivated children to read independently and built a love of reading amongst the children.

Aims

- To build a class reading community where children enjoy listening to stories, reading and discussing books
- To encourage independent reading for pleasure in children

I chose to focus particualrly on children who are lower-attaining, less confident readers. Previously these children were reluctant to read unless prompted and did not readily talk about the books they were reading.

Outline

I noticed that a lot of the reluctant readers in my class procrastinated during independent reading times. They typically spent a very long time choosing a book to read as the book corner was very full and many of the books were quite tattered and unappealing. Often, they changed their minds about the books they were reading after only a few minutes and then wanted to select another. This meant that some children were not actually reading for the majority of the session and it was difficult for me to spot patterns in the books key children typically chose to read.

I decided to reduce the number of books in my book corner, and make explicit links between the books we enjoy as a class and the books which children can select to read independently. Now, there are far fewer books for children to choose from but the books are of a higher quality. They are displayed clearly into four catagories:

- **Our favourite books**. I use daily story time to model my own enjoyment of reading. Once we have shared a book during story time it goes into this box so that children know exactly where to find the books which we enjoy together as a class.
- **Books I think you might like**. This box is full of books which I think the children in the class will enjoy. I select these books based on what we have read together or what I have noticed children reading / heard children talking about.
- **Information books**. These books are tailored to the interests of children in my class
- **Books about our topic**. The books in this box change half-termly to match our new topic. The box is made up of a mix of fiction and non-fiction books.

I regularly add to or change the books in each box. Every time we read a book together as a class it goes in the "Our favourite books" box. Whenever I add a book to one of the other boxes, I show it to the class first to generate excitement about the new book and ensure that children who might like to read it know where to find it.

Impact

Childern are much more engaged in independent reading. Lots of children choose to spend time reading in the book corner during indoor play. The time it takes children to choose a book has greatly reduced and so more time is spent actually reading. Having fewer books has meant that the books we do have are a lot more memorable. Often, children go into the book corner already knowing what they want to read.

Children who find reading challenging are gaining confidence. The "reluctant readers" in my class now enjoy reading independently and can engage in a book from start to finish.This is

largely due to the fact that these children know where to find books which we have read as a class and are familiar to them.

The new book corner has developed a social reading community within the class. Children have been recommending books to each other, without being prompted to do so by an adult. Some of the books have become incredibly popular! Outside of independent reading times, I have overheard children talking about the books they have read. This has given me a greater understanding of what the children in my class enjoy reading and allows me to make tailored reccommendations to my reluctant readers.

Reflections on the impact the TaRs reseach had on practice

The Teachers as Readers project highlighted the importance of creating a reading community within the classroom. Now, children in my class enjoy reading independently and engage in discussions about books with their peers. The reluctant, lower-attaining readers in my class are gaining confidence and enjoy reading a lot more than previously.

Now that I have seen the benefits of developing a reading community within my own classroom, I would like to extend this to the wider school. Within my own key phase, I plan on sharing my findings and supporting the other teachers in minimising their own books corners in this way and using regular story times to develop a class reading community. I am also planning on leading staff meetings to share the findings of the Teachers as Readers project and my own findings with all staff.