

Me as a Reader

Developing Reading for Pleasure at Harbinger Primary school

by Corinne Greenslade

Context

Harbinger Primary School is in East London where 45.8% of the children are eligible for the pupil premium. 73.1% of children in the school also come from homes where English is not a first language. In 2019, a disappointing 48% of children made the expected standard in reading. The same cohort's parents admitted that their children did not read at home and were not showing any interest in reading. Robust plans were put in place to improve the quality of teaching in reading lessons; however, despite the fact that children were engaged in lessons, there was still not much engagement in reading outside of the classroom. A key target within the school development plan is to improve engagement in reading across the school.

OU Research inspiration and rationale

The Upper Key Stage 2 project was inspired by the findings on *Teachers as Readers/Building Communities of Engaged Readers*, UKLA, which recommends the value of developing 'Reading Teachers' as actively engaged role models and the significance of creating reciprocal reading communities that nurture children's pleasure in reading.

Aims

- Teachers to become aware of their own reader identity
- Teachers will share their enthusiasm for reading with their classes
- Children will be able to discover their own personal preferences and practices.
- Children to develop more positive impressions of themselves as readers.
- Teachers to learn more about the children they teach as readers.

Outline

. **Me as a reader:** I started the new term by showing my class a collage of what I had read over the Christmas break. I introduced each item and explained why I read it, how I found it and any other background information. It was important to demonstrate my emotional engagement (positive and negative) in what I had read

"I was running out of ideas for tasty vegetarian meals and so my sister bought me this vegetarian cookery book for Christmas. I couldn't wait to read it and start cooking!"

"A lot of the time the actors talk in Latin and Spanish so I needed the subtitles so I could understand what they were saying. I thought the film was great!"



"I borrowed this book from the Idea Store in Bow. I chose it because it was Christmas themed and I wanted to get into the Christmassy spirit. I got a few pages in and realised it just wasn't for me. In fact, I found it to be quite silly and I just lost interest. I took it back to the library after a few chapters."

Interview your partner on a book that they read over the holiday

What type of book is it?

Where did you get it from?

Where did you read it?

When did you read it?

Why did you read it?

How did you find it?



. **Reading interviews:** After modelling to the children about my reading behaviours, the children were asked to interview each other about what they were reading and they had been reading recently. They went through the What? Where? When? Why? How? of their reading habits.

. **The 'I am reading' shelf:** During a discussion about when and where we like to read, I explained to the children that I would read every morning on the DLR on my way into work. Sometimes I would read something suitable for their age and other times I would read something more suited for adults. As soon as I came into the classroom, I placed it on display in the reading area. After morning register, I would make a comment about what I read that morning.

"I laughed out loud on the DLR today; I think I surprised the person sat next to me."

. **'I am reading' register:** Every so often I would ask the children to say 'Good Afternoon' followed by the name of the book they were reading.



. **My book in three words:** If I wanted to recommend a book to the class, I would give the children three words to describe the book and invite them to do the same about whatever they were reading. We made waiting lists for some of

the books that had the most enthusiastic reviews.

. **YOYO (You on your own) reading time:** This was a set aside time in the school day to read our own books. During this time, I read my own book but soon started to feel guilty. I found myself tempted to read with a child but this was my opportunity to model myself a reader. YOYO reading times always started with a quick chat about what we were reading, why we chose to read it and what we thought would happen in the part they were about to read.

Impact

Staff

This RfP initiative has had a positive impact on staff in Upper Key Stage 2 and how they incorporate books into the school day.

- Teachers have become better readers! Mindful of their position as role models of good reading habits, teachers have been reading more often and widely.
- . They have an increased repertoire of children's literature, enabling tailored recommendations and informal book talk with pupils.
- . They feel more confident in talking about books with children.

Pupils

Reading surveys taken at the end of Spring term were showing that children had a positive view on reading, providing the books weren't too challenging to read.

Children were signing up for recommended books and were keen to read the books that came 1st and 2nd in the Tower Hamlets book awards.

Children were overheard talking to each other about books they were reading and whether they could read it after them.

Children were becoming more confident and articulate when talking about their preferences in reading.

Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

Over time, these subtle adjustments to the school day enabled more dialogue about reading between teachers and pupils and between pupils and pupils; however, more implementation time is needed to see measurable impact.

The next steps will be for teachers across the school to make some of these adjustments to their every day practice. A new reading curriculum statement and guidance has been written up for September 2020 which includes: Teachers sharing their favourite books with pupils and their reading habits; an expectation that teachers read some children's literature so that they can recommend books to children and invite dialogue about books they have read; incorporating independent child-led, choice led reading time into the timetable.

In September, surveys and pupil voice will be conducted across Key stage 2 and again at the end of the academic year to measure impact of these practices.