



Reading All Around Emma Strange



North Crescent Primary School, Wickford, Essex

Context

North Crescent is a single form entry school in the centre of Wickford, with just under 200 pupils. Wickford is a small town, in Essex, approximately 30 miles from London, surrounded by rural land. In 2016, North Crescent joined a local multi-academy trust. We have approximately 40% children on our Pupil Premium register and the second largest TRG (Traveller/Gypsy/Roma) community in Wickford—approximately 40 families. Just under 30% pupils have SEND provision, 40% of which have EHCP.

Reading is recognised and treated as crucial, school-wide, and is taught through synthetic phonics in EYFS and KS1, with interventions for pupils throughout KS2. In KS2 we teach reading for comprehension through teacher modelling in shared reading, with the whole class and whole class text – using VIPERS as structural prompts.

OU Research inspiration and rationale

Using the research from Cremin et al (2014) I was able to identify the core elements of reading for pleasure (RfP), namely:

- independent reading
- informal book talk
- reading aloud

I wanted to raise the positive profile of reading not only as a teaching tool from 9am to 3pm, but to encourage children by our school celebrating reading and providing opportunities to read outside of lesson times.

Aims

To make reading visible throughout the school.

To make interactions related to reading less formal

That our school implicitly celebrates reading for pleasure

Outline

Reading is at the heart of our school development and includes: phonics, word gap and reading for pleasure. In the last year we have, engaged with support from DfE funding through the English Hub, for CPD and explicit phonics strategy, plus we won a bid for funding to invest in our library area, and engaged with Essex Library Services to organise our library and use their topic loan system.

Analysis of our reading out of school, as a snapshot in June 2019, showed that we had in some wide gaps in engagement. Data collected for home reading during a holiday break

shown amongst our Year 6 pupils only 13% read and recorded the reading, whereas pupils in Year 2 showed 65% in the same period. Our home-reading strategy, which rewards reading at home, is the type of strategy identified by Cremin et al (2014) as one which only 'performs' RfP. Our data suggested that it does not reach all of our children, arguably to some degree due to a lack of parental support for some. Conversely, pupils, who do record home-reading regularly enjoy, not only the reward but the sense of achievement. We know that they read for pleasure, because they are the children who engage in 'book talk', and not wholly identified as reading below the expected standard. However, the data displayed a need to repair and develop the ability and desire to read for pleasure.



We carried out surveys in EYFS, KS1 and KS2, in December 2019 to ascertain data about attitudes to reading. The response was largely positive, encouraging and in some cases indeed repairable.

Year group	Agreed / strongly agreed they liked to read
EYFS	88%
1	86%
2	91%
3	86%
4	76%
5	88%
6	73%

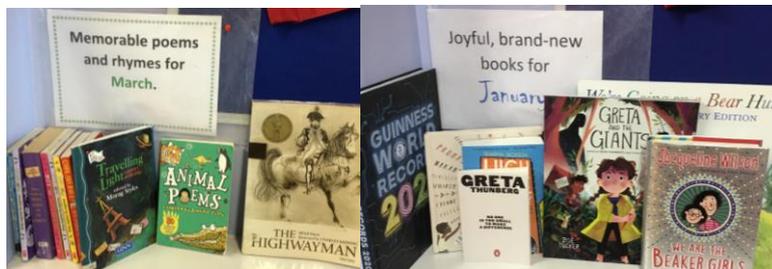
But how could the results be better? How can we make reading a more rounded experience for all children and promote reading for pleasure, without having to dangle the golden carrot?

First we increased the promotion of all reading activities in and out of school:

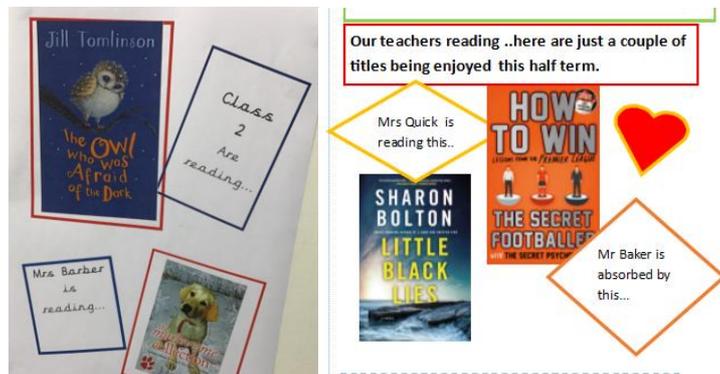
- **Posters around school, facing inward and outward: windows, corridors, foyer, classroom reading areas**
- **Posted on our website**
- **Reminders in all assemblies**
- **All events, where parents visited us from EYFS through to Year 6, had a reading element**
- **Increased the informal chatter about reading**
- **Writing by hand personalised messages in home/school partnership journals, to encourage reading at home**



We started a themed mini-library in our foyer, where families and visitors pass through or have to wait.



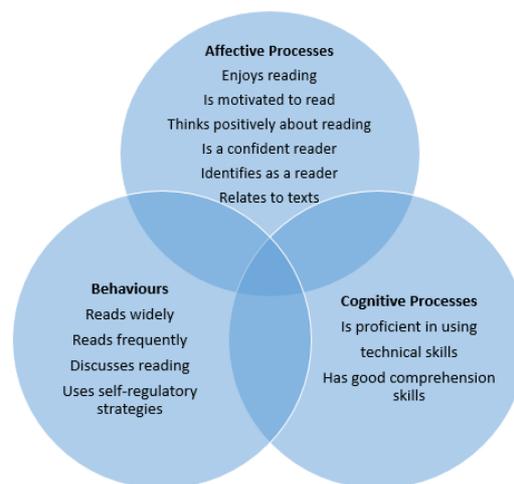
We promote the books we are sharing in class and have begun to promote the teachers as readers. We've made posters for classroom doors and added a section dedicated to what our teachers are reading, on our newsletter.



We have championed adding some fun to sharing different texts. In December we had a some new books gifted to the school, which we wrapped and then unwrapped in assemblies leading up to Christmas. Each unwrapping led to lots of interest and informal chatter – other books by the same author, themes and memories of sharing *that* book. At closer quarters, I offered my class a similar activity. They had to choose a book that they were given a name of a classmate and asked to find a book they might enjoy – they could sweep every bookcase in the school. The books were wrapped and offered as a surprise over a half term holiday.



Impact



ROGO model evidence base National Literacy Trust 2017

Behaviours

The changes and innovations have been quite small, but have altered the reading landscape in the school. Reading is now the first area of learning you meet as you enter the school. I have seen books being browsed in our foyer, seen the evidence of the books having been browsed (a satisfying mess) and even caught children and parents red-handed sharing the books. One parent even asked to borrow a book overnight...it was returned!

I have consciously talked to children about the books they are reading – simply by being more observant in the playground, looking for books poking out of bags or carried in hands. I am on duty every morning meeting children on arrival and at break times, which has given me ample opportunities to informally chatter. It's given me a better picture of popular texts and then make recommendations verbally or leaving a few books or other texts for children in their classrooms. In my experience, the children enjoyed having these chats and being able to share what they know – they are the expert on their book and get to inform the teacher. This has started to permeate other staff members.

My class have enjoyed the innovative approaches to RfP, but I've not explicitly explained the purpose, apart from that *I love reading and all teachers surely, are in habit of promoting reading so that's what is happening*. We have had to start three waiting lists for books we've used for lessons, our 'end of the day book' and a book that was shared by a pupil. The number of children reading at home and the number of reads they have

recorded has increased, whilst the number of reported, anecdotal reads (not recorded) have increased also...especially when we've wrapped books,

Affective Process

With reading so high on school's agenda, book talk has increased amongst the staff. At our meetings we're sharing books we've used in class, and some have made concrete suggestions on complementary texts to support the topical list. Our staff have made posters for their doors, which advertise the class 'end of the day' book and a book the teachers are reading home, for pleasure. I sent out an email to ask for the titles of books that our staff are reading for pleasure, ready for our new year newsletter – it was the most comprehensive and fastest email response I've ever had. Clearly our staff were itching to share their reading-crushes.

Cognitive Process

Focusing attention on specific groups of readers and types of books, which were highlighted in the school survey. I was able to extract that children with ASD (Autism Syndrome Disorder), were less engaged with books without illustrations – I discovered an increase in reading if recommended graphic novels. The ever-challenging groups of boys who appear to rarely read, had a small increase in reading outside of school, first by tempting them with brand new books and second sourcing subject matter that grabbed them. This group also increased their reading out of school by increasing the frequency of reading 1:1 in school. This was a challenge but it became apparent that investment in reading methodology and comprehension, with a sincere interest in the shared moments, had a positive impact on motivation in solo reading for pleasure. This was observed in years 2, 4 and 6, who have the greatest number of male TGR pupils in our school.

Reflections

Spending time examining all areas of reading in our school has been valuable and necessary. Without the pedagogy and strategies derived from the research through the OU, English Hub and peer support of like-minded colleagues, it would be easy to overlook RfP as the responsibility of the pupil and their family. However, what we have felt to be only small changes and innovations in daily, school-wide promotion; through the actions of the staff collectively and individually, have opened quality opportunities and quantitative tools to celebrate our current provision and where to make further improvements.

Many thanks to all of the researchers and practitioners, who have unveiled lost strategies and revealed the new.

Our next steps are:

to build and develop the core reading skills across all year groups, in order to make children feel competent, confident readers

locate sources of investment in quality texts that represent diversity and contemporary subject matter, for all ages

meanwhile, maintain the routines alongside the reactive, positive attitudes being shared by teachers, pupils and their families

develop the ideology of what a reader *is* and celebrate the multitudinous moments that we rely on as readers eg make and share reading rivers or 24 hour reader

