

# Reading aloud across school

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## Context

Ash Grove Academy is a single-form entry school that caters for children aged 3-11 years of age. We currently have 240 children on roll. We serve a deprived area of Macclesfield where children live over a mile and a half away from the local library and public transport costs are high.

Both Dwynwen and I (ECAR teacher and Literacy lead respectively) are passionate about reading so over the last couple of years we have had a huge push on reading attainment and reading for pleasure. Many of our children love to read but only really read in school, many don't associate reading with home-life.

## OU Research inspiration and rationale

Reading aloud is one of four pedagogic practices highlighted by the TaRs research as significant to an effective RfP pedagogy. Combined with social reading environments, independent reading and informal book talk and recommendations, reading aloud positively influences children's attitudes towards reading. However, these practices would only be successful if teachers broadened their knowledge of children's literature and allowed more time within the curriculum for children to explore challenging new texts, along with their favourites, and were given quality time for informal book talk.

*Such 'books in common' nurture our pleasure in reading and play a particularly resonant role in helping build communities of engaged readers (Cremin, 2018).*

Some years ago, we acknowledged that with the constraints of the curriculum reading aloud was not given the priority it required and therefore made it our goal to change this. Since having such a big focus on RfP and pushing reading aloud across school, we have seen a big change in children's attitudes to reading and now have more children engaging as readers and RfP.

## Aims

We wanted to:

- Take children to wonderful, new places and experience adventures together.
- Share texts that we love and promote a love of reading with parents *and* children.
- Entice children into the world of literature and create a shared reading community.

## Outline

As a school, we wanted to engage parents within reading for pleasure as much as possible so that they could foster a love of reading within the home environment so we planned a range of initiatives to fulfil this. Here are just a few of the initiatives:

- **Secret Reader** – Staff, governors and parents were invited to sign up to be a secret reader. Each class would have a secret reader turn up in class on a specific day at a specific time to read a story aloud. If the class was really lucky, they'd receive clues throughout the day as to who their secret reader might be.
- **Bedtime Read Aloud** – Parents and children were invited into school in their PJ's to listen to bedtime stories and share cookies and milk.
- **Reading Aloud across the Trust** – We are part of a growing MAT and every term all schools within the MAT (7) receive the same award winning, high quality texts. The idea is that each class has a different story read aloud to them every day and every class in the school has the same texts read to them at some point over a two week period to build up the repertoire of texts in common. At the end of the two weeks, children in all schools have the opportunity to vote for their favourite text. These were last term's results.



- **Book 'n' Butty events** – Parents are invited in to share books with their children in the school hall for the first hour of the day. The idea behind this is that books would be read aloud to children/parents/grandparents/siblings in a relaxed atmosphere whilst enjoying a brew and a breakfast butty.
- **Read on, Get on** – Similar to the Book 'n' Butty event, parents/grandparents/aunts/uncles/support staff/teachers/school staff were invited to drop into the hall throughout the day to enjoy stories with the children. The hall was filled with beanbags, story chests/boxes, cushions and chairs for everyone to use.
- **Story time with parents** – Throughout the year there are opportunities for parents to join in with

story time in their child's class.

- **Chatterbooks** – A book group for different year groups to choose books and blether about them. They also hear a story read aloud in each session and respond through drama and art.

## Impact

- Children are increasingly asking to bring in texts from home or the library that they love and want to share with their peers through reading aloud.
- The texts from Reading Across the Trust ( see photo) are available in the school library, we made a rich display of these and there is often a waiting list for them.
- Spontaneous book talk is more apparent – children are now discussing texts with peers and adults around school.
- More children are reading books for pleasure!

## Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

The TaRs research has further highlighted the importance of RfP and has provided many wonderful ideas teachers can use to create and develop communities of readers.

Even whilst writing this Example of Practice and reminding ourselves of everything we have done to promote reading aloud, more ideas have come to mind on how we can promote this even further. We look forward to the upcoming months and promoting even more exciting reading aloud opportunities. Children, and staff, are now creating waiting lists for texts they have heard read aloud and more children are asking to share their favourite texts through reading aloud.