

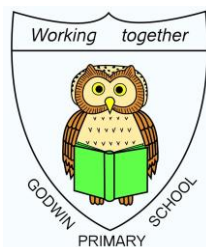
## **Title: Author of the moment**

**Name: Petrice Tomlinson**

### **Context**

At Godwin Primary school in Dagenham, we have devised a plan to bring reading back to the forefront of the children's education. We believe that reading is the key to learning - not just being able to read and comprehend but reading for pleasure.

When discussing reading with the children, it became apparent that they perceived assessments, comprehension and identifying the use of vocabulary as reading - rather than reading for enjoyment. Armed with this information, we decided as a school to address this, to revive the love and pleasure that reading and books can offer. We decided that the focus for reading on the school development plan should be about 'creating a love for reading so that every child left Godwin with an enthusiasm/passion for reading and books.'



### **Inspiration and rationale**

*'Reading Teachers – teachers who read and readers who teach, and who explore the classroom consequences of their insights into reading... really opened up as readers in class and shared their personal affective responses with children.'* Cremin, T. (2019)

Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for Pleasure by Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Collins, F., Powell, S. and Safford, K. (2014) sits at the core of this project. This research highlighted the need for reading for pleasure to have a raised profile in order for reading attainment to be increased. This research makes it clear that there is a need for teachers to be Reading Teachers: teachers who know about children's books; have knowledge about what being a reader means and are willing to engage and share their experiences with the children they teach.

By creating 'Author of the Moment,' I hoped to build a stronger reading community within school that would also spill into the children's homes. It would also develop teachers' awareness of children's texts and authors, the first finding of the Teachers As Readers (TaRs) research.

### **Aims**

- To create a Reading Community within the school where children read for pleasure;
- To engage all members of the school in the reading journey;

- To raise the profile of reading for pleasure in the school by engaging staff and children in children's authors and books;
- To develop staff's personal knowledge around children's literature in the school;
- To create an environment where book discussions and recommendations take place regularly;
- To remove the focus of reading being solely on the mechanics of reading and responding to comprehension questions, and refocus it on enjoying reading.

## Outline

### Engaging staff before the big reveal!

- Initially, I wrapped a book range of books and gifted each teacher one to read over the half-term holiday.
- On the staff training day after the holiday, teachers were given the time to discuss in groups the book they had read. The discussions included their personal responses to the book – what they liked, disliked, links to other texts and authors' work, etc.
- Staff were then asked to list a range of authors that they believe children should be exposed to over the course of their primary education.

### Sharing the vision: 'Author of the Moment' with staff

- The vision was at story time, across the school all classes would read a book by the same author. At the end of each period of time, an exit point would celebrate that author's book and share enjoyment. Exit points have included: plays, puppet shows, retelling of a book, writing author biographies etc.
- Where possible, the same author would be used across the key stages. NB: some authors were not deemed age appropriate for EYFS and KS1 and therefore a split was needed.

Year 6 read William Shakespeare.

Years 3 to 5 read Jeremy Strong.

Reception and KS1 read Dick King-Smith.



Other authors celebrated included:  
Malorie Blackman, Michael Morpurgo, Julia Donaldson, Roald Dahl, Jacqueline Wilson etc.

Please note the deliberate choice of authors that staff were aware of. This helped with promote the idea before leading staff from their comfort zones.

## Impact

The impact has been excellent. Children, staff and parents are now able to name and discuss a range of children's authors and some of their titles. I have been stopped countless times by children from different year groups and questioned on the next author. Their enthusiasm for this is contagious! In addition, children have requested books and spoken about their own opinions and thoughts about different authors' work with increased confidence.

### Impact on staff



Some examples of reading environments and displays since the work began.

Author of the Month was a really fun way to explore new authors as a class. We had a lot of fun reading Charlie and the Glass Elevator! Mrs. Tomlinson has done a great

Job  
Spreading the Love of reading and thinking of fun new ideas to explore reading.  
Miss Henry

As a teacher, I have enjoyed exploring different authors of the moment because it creates a buzz around the class/school. The children love discussing the different authors and finding their other books. It was also lovely to see them perform in the exit points.

Author Focus has given me permission to put Reading for Pleasure at the heart of my curriculum. I have enjoyed discussing books and making recommendations that have enriched the vocabulary of the children.

Using the shared experience of Author of the Month really helped to sell the excitement of reading to the children. It meant, for example, that when we had our school production, our shared experiences of William Shakespeare could help us all really engage with the play in a richer way.  
Mr. Graybe Year 6 T.A.

### Impact on pupils

William Shakespeare is my favorite author because his stories range from comedies to romantic tragedies. He made me try out for Shakespeare in a production by reading his books.  
Ryan Rowther aged 10

I think the author of the moment, Malorie Blackman, has increased my reading! Her books have gotten me more interested in more spooky books as the book showed that some books like them are funny.  
Jayden

My favourite 'Author of the Moment' is Malorie Blackman because her stories were so fascinating and they inspired me to write better narratives.  
Greta

My favourite author of the moment is Michael Morpogo because his books are very inspirational and relatable to all of us.  
- Tatyanna

William Shakespeare  
William Shakespeare has influenced me to read more love stories since most of his stories are so relatable and down to earth.  
Ellie age 10

My favourite author of the moment is William Shakespeare because rereading his books inspired me to play the role of Juliet  
Chloe

I like Malorie Blackman's books because she is black and some books are about white people and she decided to do a story about two black people's children and it was really fun.

My favourite author is Roald Dahl because his books are funny I think the best book is the Midnight gang!

My favourite author of the moment is Michel Morpago because his stories are imaginative. I believe in unicorns. I really like unicorns.

I liked doing poetry because we did the poetry recitals.

Alex 3C

I love the author's writing. I get excited about the new author.

Emily

I liked ~~author~~ author of the month because it was fun learning about new authors and reading their books.  
-Anna 3H

I enjoyed author of the moment this year because I got to read books by authors I've never heard of before.  
Chloe White 3H

My favorite author is Jess Kinney.

I enjoyed it because we did the investigation by Obeki 3H

I thought Julia Donaldson only wrote books for young children, but I enjoyed them and I am in Year 5!

Author of the moment introduced me to Malorie Blackman and I love her books as well as reading as a group because of watching people's reaction.

Chloe

Jeremy Strong is the funniest author I have read. And of the moment we read more of his books.

## Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice

As mentioned previously, reading for pleasure is vital for children and the TaRs research gave me the concrete basis from which I could begin this journey. It has had a huge impact upon my knowledge of how to encourage and embed reading for pleasure and I have been able to pass this on to the staff.

Staff knowledge of children's literature is developing, and they are willing to read books they might not have chosen for themselves or authors' work who they are unfamiliar with. The TaRs research states that this knowledge of children's texts is crucial: *'to motivate young readers and nurture the development of positive reader identities, a breadth of knowledge of good-quality children's literature is essential'* (Cremin et al., 2014).

As a school, we now need to continue to develop reading for pleasure and continue to widen the staff's knowledge of children's authors. The children need to see that this is an ongoing part of their school life and not just a phase.