

Context:

This year, we set up a staff book club which meets on a Friday after school in a local café once per half term, to discuss an adult book and a children’s book. We have had attendance of over 10 members of staff each time and more who read the books but are unable to attend.

OU Research inspiration and rationale:

We have been working on developing a reading for pleasure culture at Elmhurst for a number of years. We have talked a lot in INSET sessions about the need for teachers to have a considerable knowledge of children’s literature as evidenced by the TaRs research (Cremin et al, 2016) but few of these sessions actually gave staff time to read. We decided that to fully embed a reading for pleasure culture for our pupils that we would need to do the same for our staff.

Aims:

The aims of the staff book club were:

- raise the profile of reading in school amongst staff
- improve teacher knowledge of children’s (and other) literature
- increase informal book talk between staff

Outline:

I knew staff were keen to set up a book club so I chose the first books and created a poster for our first meeting – giving plenty of time to read each book. Staff could choose whether to read either the children’s book, the adult’s book or both.

In the run up to our meetings, I reminded staff at regular intervals and ensured that posters were displayed around school (so that not only the staff knew about it, but the children did too). When we had author visits, I ensured that one of the author’s books was one of the book club choices for that term.

Staff Book Club – get reading!



Venue: The Erstwhile Parrot Coffee House, Green Street
Date: Friday 11th May
Time: from 4.30pm
All welcome!
Read both or either of these books: one for adults, and one for children.

Educated: A memoir – Tara Westover



The Song From Somewhere Else – A.F. Harrold



We then met up for our first official meeting, discussed both texts and set new texts for next term. We tweeted our photos to the authors of the books we read on a couple of occasions, and even got some responses!

Impact:

- Lots of informal staff book blether now takes places regularly in corridors and classrooms before, after and during school (probably more than in the book club itself).
- An average of around 12 members of staff came to each session.
- Staff members make book recommendations to each other on a more regular basis. From this an understanding of the power of recommendations for adults, and therefore for the children has developed.
- Children saw teachers as readers more readily as teachers shared the fact we have a book club.
- We have now had 6 meetings – and so most of the staff involved have read 12 books that they might not have otherwise.
- Some staff who don't attend the book club have begun reading the books and discussing with colleagues.
- Teachers who hadn't previously identified themselves as readers now do. One teacher said, 'I've read more this year than I have in the last five years!'
- Some teachers have now read these books aloud to their classes, increasing their own repertoire of children's literature.



Reflections on impact the TaRs research had on practice:

The impact of the Teachers as Readers (TaRs) research has been vast – this is only one aspect of the changes we have made at our school. We are still working on developing reading for pleasure pedagogy and will continue developing reading aloud.