

# Reading Teacher Starter Kit (Early Years Edition)



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# Context



- Bucklesham Primary School is a small school in the heart of Suffolk, with links to the archaeologist Basil Brown (of Sutton Hoo fame). The school has just under 100 children on roll and is part of the FOSS (Federation of Small Schools). There are mixed age classes and an award-winning gardening club.
- The School Development Plan links to the promotion of Reading for Pleasure for all children.



# OU Research Inspiration and Rationale

## OU/ UKLA Teachers as Readers (TaRs) Research.

I had a keen focus on developing:

2. Knowledge of children's reading practices.
3. A reading for pleasure pedagogy: Social reading environments.
4. As Reading Teachers – teachers who read and readers who teach.

*(Cremin et al., 2014)*



To develop children's RfP effectively, the TaRs research showed that teachers need to develop:

1. Considerable knowledge of children's literature & other texts
2. Knowledge of children as readers
3. A RfP pedagogy:
  - ❖ social reading environments
  - ❖ reading aloud
  - ❖ informal book talk, inside-text talk and recommendations
  - ❖ independent reading time
4. As Reading Teachers - teachers who read and readers who teach
5. Reciprocal and interactive reading communities.

(Cremin et al., 2014)

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# Aims

To establish the foundations of an EYFS Reading for Pleasure class, to be an EYFS Reading Teacher.

- ✓ Children read without being asked to by an adult.
- ✓ Children share texts with peers.
- ✓ Children bring books in to share their home reading life.
- ✓ Children intrinsically know texts bring joy.
- ✓ Staff know the children's reading preferences, habits and barriers.
- ✓ Staff are vocal about their own reading preferences, habits and barriers.



# Outline

- ✓ I started my contract (after relocating) in October and decided to observe for two weeks before acting. I monitored the book corner and listened for informal book talk. I saw one child quietly reading by choice in the book corner, she would often return and her choice of text was *Elmer*, she loved returning to this. Children did not talk to me about books.
- ✓ After two weeks my first step was to move and declutter the book corner. I discarded any old and tattered texts. I added several new and engaging titles. I ensured children could access each side of the book shelf and told the children they could play in this space and talk.
- ✓ I engaged parents by hosting *Secret Readers* and *Snuggle With a Book* sessions. *Secret Readers* is where the parent arranges with you to read at story time, without telling the child – this causes much excitement and creates a special story time. Children see that ‘we are all readers’. *Snuggle With a Book* encourages parents and siblings to come and read informally in the space once a term. I often finish the sessions with a read aloud, led by myself. At Christmas we had *Paddington’s Christmas Post* to follow their interests.
- ✓ I invited children to bring in their favourite books for our story time sessions. This allowed me to know their reading preferences from home and meant I could tailor the book corner to their interests, as well as providing reading knowledge and much informal book talk between staff and children, and between peers.



# Outline

- ✓ I added Greg Bottrill's *Drawing Club* to our timetable and it quickly became the highlight of the week for us all. I linked texts with interests, such as a for a boy who loved *Rapunzal* we had Bethan Woollvin's version.
- ✓ I was vocal daily about my love of books but how I also find reading hard sometimes. I answered the children's questions about my reading life. I shared my Reading River (favourite books) with the children and on World Book Day we made Book Crowns with our preferences on.
- ✓ We had a daily story vote. The helper of the day chose two stories and the class got to vote for their favourite.
- ✓ I sent a bag of carefully selected books home for a child who needed supporting with her emotional development.
- ✓ I shared our reading in class on Class Dojo with parents and through reading stories on YouTube for the class to watch at home.
- ✓ I tried to flood the environment with texts that tempt – such as *The Lost Words* when we learnt about birds.
- ✓ The children regularly looked at their *All About Me* posters made at the start of the year – these included family photographs, hobbies, pets, favourite food and holiday photos. The children looked at these regularly in the book corner.
- ✓ EYFS children attended the weekly library book club – Bucklesham Bookworms. They changed their library books weekly with the TA and read to the new Librarians (parent and grandparent helpers).



# Impact

- The book corner was utilised by the children during every play session (three times a day). I observed the space over a period of weeks in the Summer term, and I saw it used every session – by boys, girls, ELG readers and Emerging readers and SEND children. Children would sit and read quietly, role play games with books as objects and make dens to read on the floor in this space.
- I can tell you what every child in my class likes to read, I can tell you which parts of stories they enjoy and what stops some of them accessing reading more often. My knowledge grew as the children's volitional reading grew.
- My TA is active in reading aloud to the children in choosing times, story time and shares her favourite stories with the class. She loves *The Secret Garden* and will even go to our school library to seek it out!
- We have had four parent *Secret Readers* over the year and three *Snuggle with a Book* sessions that have all proved popular with parents, grandparents and siblings.
- Essentially – children want to read by their own volition, they know books are my favourite thing, they would tell you my favourite author is Michael Rosen and that stories bring us love. They could all tell you about a book they like or would want you to read.
- Children bring in stories from home, averaging about four a week from various children. Two parents have shared their own childhood books with me to borrow.
- We have become a Reading for Pleasure class, with a daily book buzz. The children were delighted that I got to meet Michael Rosen!



# Impact



- World Book Day – I made a poster of my class's favourite books. This was displayed and I tried to get as many of these texts in our environment for the children, reading them aloud at story times.

# Next Steps

- With this academic year coming to a close, I will take this information into the new year and my new class. As part of the transition for our new starters, I have gathered reading preference information at the nursery visits and when engaging with children and parents at our play and stays. I have provided the children with a summer activity pack which includes the *All About Me* poster and a version of mine and my job-shares, we made sure our favourite books and authors were on these. During the play and stays I read 'old and gold' texts, I learnt that the children know them and could join in with *The Gruffalo*, *The Hungry Caterpillar* and *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. The children remembered my *Bear Hunt* earrings and drew pictures of me wearing them.
- I am looking forward to my current EYFS class looking after the new starters when they become Y1 and supporting them to find and read books in our weekly library club.
- 'The Life Cycle' of an EYFS Reading Teacher continues – observe, reflect, share.
- I think being an EYFS Reading Teacher is slightly different to being a Reading Teacher. We have the skill of following interests and the power of observation, we can utilise this to support all children. Finding and placing texts that they will want to pick up, whether it's to play with or to look at. What an honour it is to be able to mindfully foster a love of reading for pleasure in our youngest children, and what a worthy cause to donate our time to in EYFS. May we all strive to get to know our EYFS children as the readers that they are.



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